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

Jacobean Revenge tragedy is a dramatic element in which the protagonist seek revenge. The story is usually centred on characters of noble birth loving men of low class, with a complex plotting and the desire for revenge is see obviously. It also involves physical horrors such as torture and poisoning. Jacobean drama is a drama written and performed during the reign of Elizabeth's successor James¹. Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, the plays were becoming more edgy and human situations were being more exaggerated. Extreme violence was being portrayed on the stage. The playwright was focusing on the human being's capacity for selfishness and exaggerating such renaissance forces as human ambition

and its effects. They were exploring the nature of evil, pushing things to the extreme of human behaviour. The stories were full of sex and violence.

In comparing the Duchess of Malfi as a Jacobean revenge tragedy, the play contains the depth of extreme violence from starting to the end. The play begins as a love story with the Duchess who marries beneath her class and ends as a nightmarish tragedy as her two brothers undertake revenge, destroying themselves in the process. The Duchess was tortured by her brothers Ferdinand and Cardinal for being in love with Antonio.

There are a lot of elements of horror, like when the Duke gives the Duchess a dead man's hand to her and she kisses it, taking it to be the hand of the Duke, the spectacle of waxen images of the dead bodies of Antonio and children presented before the Duchess and lastly Julian is poisoned in a cold-blooded manner. Taking revenge and murdering people is an integral part of revenge comedy and it is seen in this play.

Meanwhile, as a restoration comedy, through the use of satire the play reveals and examines societal issues such as the stereotypical role of the female, Element of

class-consciousness and role of faith in a patriarchal society. Comedy of manner, otherwise, known as restoration comedy, ridicules the pretension of those who consider themselves socially superior deflating them with satire and witty dialogue and cleverly constructed scenario. Comedy of manner is that kind of comedy that focuses on the manners, attitudes, conventions, social behaviours of the artificial yet sophisticated Aristotles work. They are often represented by stock character and have a stock plot

There is cynicism in the play, Duchess was under the control of her brother and couldn't live her life the way it pleases her, It also depicts quest for power, Ferdinand and Cardinal brothers to Duchess were against her remarrying so that the throne will be retained by their family forever.

Comparing Aphra Behn's Rovers as a restoration comedy, there is cynicism, in the sense that a character is always in the influence of wealth and material things this is portray through the character (Florinda's father) who insist that the daughter must marry Don Vincentio because of his wealth and affluence, this also is found in "the Duchess of Malfi". Cynicism is their true nature in

the work. Selfish desire, money and material things seems to motivate these characters. Florinda's father want her to marry Don Vincentio, a rich old man because of his affluence and wealth meanwhile Florinda, as a character who is free from this cynicism detest Don Vincentio. Florinda tells her siblings that she hates Vincentio and that she has confidence in her brother's ability to divert their father's will to marry such a man. Even Pedro implore her to consider the wealth of Vincentio, Hellena is free from this cynicism, she argues against Florinda marrying Vincentio for his money she is rebuked by Pedro who considers her opinion as a uniform nun who is, "not design for the conversation of lovers". Both "the Duchess of Malfi" and "the Rovers" have macabre principles but they have different plot structure.

Conclusively, the characters here are usually of noble birth or characterised as high class citizens yet they happen to be engrossed and have affection for the lower-class citizens. The Duchess falls in love with Antonio and secretly have babies for him even though she was the ruling Duchess and is asked not to marry. Florida happen not to love the wealthy man her father wants her to

marry, she is entangled in the thought web of Belvile and ends up marrying him.