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Subject

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The Rover Paper

Two main themes in the popular playwright ‘The Rover’ are friendship and disguise. Aphra Behn has used these themes to a larger extent. The concept of friendship becomes visible when Florinda is forced to marry her friend Antonio. This also reflects that the writer has attempted to build relevance between love and friendship. Behn has stressed more on the notion of disguise and deceit. The discussions of Florinda and Hellena about their oppressed lives build relevance with the concept of disguise. It is only through disguise that they manage to attain freedom. They take bold steps that set them free from the public spheres. Disguise remains a more dominant theme in Behn's play, reflected in the struggles of the women for freedom.

The themes of love and friendship are visible in Florinda's relationship with Belvile. She wants to marry him because he is a good friend and Florinda thinks he is a perfect match. Behn has focused more on the themes of disguise than friendship. The make disguise has been portrayed by Behn that makes the desire for freedom more apparent. The author of the play talks openly for providing better insights into the characters. The main focus is to evaluate the feminine characters by reflecting on their inner state of mind. Their dissatisfaction is the result of disguise, that is again linked to feminine oppression. To emphasize more on this theme the author has attempted to associate feminism with sex. The play makes it clear that a woman is approached for sex that in a way is linked to her oppressed state. In the beginning Florinda’s father orders her to marry Vincentio for his wealth. This reflects the oppressed state of the females where she is forced to act according to the male desires. However, Florinda lacks courage because she is not outspoken like her sister Hellena.

Women in the play wore masks for concealing their true identity. The inclusion of the bold roles taken by the females such as that of prostitute depicts lack of female power. This also reveals that females are exploited by male characters who hold more power and have a dominant role in society. a different appearance is accepted by the women for rejecting the social taboos and constraints. However, they fail to recognize that it is still linked to their state of oppression. Female characters like Helleane and Florinda are portrayed as the ones who wear a disguise. Hellena in the play takes a bold role by rejecting social constraints. She believes in making her decisions without other people's interference. Disguise defines the character of Helena who is determined to take a role different from that of a traditional woman (Behn).

Behn has relied on the themes of disguise for exploring the deeper nature of the females. The character of Helena pays the role of a stubborn woman who wants to prove her passion and boldness. Her defiant nature is apparent in her decision of convincing Willmore for marrying her. Similarly, the controversial roles played by the female characters such as the prostitute convey the meaning of disguise (Goodson). Themes of disguise are visible in the play as author mentions “although women might crave higher degrees of autonomy and sexual expression, their lives still fit within the boundaries of three roles: nun, prostitute, or wife” (Behn). The boundaries encountered by each female in the play transmit themes of disguise and submission. The make characters like Lucetta follows a traditional definition of females in which make plays the patriarchal role. The themes of disguise are visible in the text, “between the categories of virgin and "whore" lay avoid, not a spectrum; one could give "the whole cargo or nothing” (Behn). The character of Lucetta also shows relevance with the themes of disguise. The man conceals his real identity and controls the prostitutes. His role conveys the message of female oppression and subjugation. This indicates that the character of pimp is responsible for encouraging females to wear a disguise.

The deeper analysis of the play depicts that disguise is not worn by prostitutes only. In reality, all females are concealing their identity either by taking the role assigned to them by society or by rejecting it. In the play, Behn has used the mask for hiding the sorrows and worries of the females. They are unable to attain freedom and the life that they desire of resulting in their demise and dissatisfaction. The play depicts that the women are lacking the capability of taking an independent role irrespective of their determination and will. This is due to the old patriarchal settings of society.

Although themes of friendship and disguise are apparent in the playwright the author emphasizes more on the second theme. Behn has stressed more on the notion of disguise and deceit. Florinda lacks courage because she is not outspoken like her sister Hellena. Disguise conveys the message of female oppression and subjugation. The playwright excessively uses the concept of disguise for representing the repressed state of the females. The central focus is to evaluate the feminine characters by reflecting on their inner state of mind. The character of Lucetta also shows relevance with the themes of disguise.

Work Cited

Goodson, Ellen T. "Aphra Behn's The Rover: Evaluating Women's Social and Sexual Options." Inquiries 2.7 (2010).

The Rover. By Aphra Behn. 1677.