

Sir John Vanbrugh's 1696 play 'The Relapse' was written as a critical response to Colley Cibber's comedy 'Love's Last Shift'. With some characters ~~remaining~~ returning, 'The Relapse' comments on the sentimental comedy used by Cibber, used to justify the behaviour of some characters. A theme explored widely in not only the extract, but the whole play is that of constancy. The idea of being constant was contentious during the Restoration period, as it was so subject to change. Changes in the monarchy, travel and science and the theatre itself manifested in the exploration of the importance and temporance of loyalties. This extract demonstrates how certain notions of constancy are solidified, ~~constancy~~ and how expectations of constancy are gendered.

Top Section
Natural imagery is a heavily used literary technique in describing the human condition. To compare oneself to nature is to make intangible feelings relatable and give a sense of timelessness. Loveless, on the surface a rakish character - especially in 'Love's Last Shift', uses natural imagery when trying to convince his wife of his ~~loy~~ loyalty to her and his marriage. Having, in Cibber's play, abandoned and neglected his wife, Loveless resorts to explaining that the "Rock of Reason" solidifies his love. The idea of a "rock" (literally) makes his devotion concrete, as Amanda can see his stubbornness and ~~ever~~ everlasting love for her. His constancy to her is given a timelessness and ~~eternat~~ eternity by likening it to a piece of the Earth, which has been there for much longer than humans. ~~Furthermore~~, Loveless Amanda echoes Loveless' natural imagery by rebutting his persuasive speech by likening his faith as one of the "strongest vessels", which "may possibly be lost". Her comparison of his love and constancy as a ship shows its need for good guidance ~~and~~ as it "may possibly get lost" by the engulfing sea. This is a metaphor for Amanda's ~~wor~~ worry that when Loveless leaves for town his constancy will be engulfed. By drawing comparisons to love and nature, the characters are ~~stare~~ referring to a bigger power which governs

human agency. Vanbrugh is able to make ~~as~~ ~~solid~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~Earth~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~sea~~ ~~as~~ ~~overwhelming~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~outside~~ ~~world~~ ~~which~~ ~~Loveless~~ ~~will~~ ~~expose~~ ~~him-~~ ~~self~~ ~~to~~ ~~as~~ ~~overwhelming~~ ~~and~~ ~~powerful~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~sea~~ ~~through~~ ~~his~~ ~~use~~ ~~of~~ ~~natural~~ ~~imagery~~. ~~And~~ ~~what's~~ ~~the~~ ~~point~~ ~~he's~~ ~~making~~ ~~here~~...

'The Relapse' also explores constancy in the character type of the rake. In Cibber's ~~lost~~ 'Love's Last Shift', Loveless appears as a supervice lavish character. First presented as a neglectful husband, he is then tricked into realising he is in love with his wife. In this extract we find Loveless persuading his wife of his new loyal outlook on ~~marriage~~ marriage. This type of behaviour is unbelievable of a rake unless it is a lie and so Vanbrugh is forcing his audience to be critical of this character and work out what is truth and lie. This analysis of the audience is especially provoked by the question "Can you then doubt ~~my~~ my constancy, Amanda?". ~~He~~ When faced with a lavish character, the audience are ~~trained~~ trained to be ~~sceptical~~ sceptical of this ironic questioning; ~~how~~ but, given Loveless' standing after 'Love's Last Shift' the question for the audience is not if he is faithful, but how long it will last. This in itself is much more analytical reading of the character and ~~his~~ his constancy. This sentimental comedy looks to punish the outlandish and promiscuous behaviour of the rakes and fops by allowing the audience to laugh at them and not with them. In this way Vanbrugh is posing his Loveless ~~as~~ as a comment on characters such as Dormant - a notorious rake. This moral tone allows for a much more psycho-analytical reading of the characters and their approach to constancy in regards to marriage and also consequences, as rakes are punished and not only used for farical means. Through deepening and subverting the character of the rake, Vanbrugh ~~can~~ ~~present~~ pose interesting questions on the expectancies of constancy.

NOT only does Vanbrugh explore constancy within the human condition ~~as~~ through his male characters but his female ones too. Amanda is presented as an abandoned wife in 'Love's Last Shift', who must

always first word in sentence

trick her husband in order for him to recognise her. However, contrastingly, in 'The Relapse' Amanda is much less forgiving of the situations her husband finds himself in and makes herself be more sceptical. As a wife, Amanda joins a group of Restoration ~~era~~ comedy characters whose job is to remain constant, even when neglected, ^{and} abandoned ~~and~~ at the hands of their husbands. In this respect Amanda not only signifies constancy to Lovell and the audience but she herself finds herself conflicted between the ~~the~~ sanctity of marriage and lust. Melinda in Farquhar's 'The Recruiting Officer' is another example of a woman demonstrating constancy. ~~When she does not have~~ First asked to be Wortney's mistress, she is only deemed good enough to be a constant presence in his life when she has gained a substantial fortune. Often when characters are labelled as a wife they are deemed to be a constant yet passive character. Amanda demonstrates this by commenting that her husband is a "man" and she "a wife". She tries to explain to her husband that her worrying is "the weakness of a woman" and that a expectation of loyalty is shown through her labelling herself "a wife" and not a woman. Vanbrugh's analytical view on constancy is shown through a considering the difference between its meaning for men and women. For women, constancy is an expectation and for men it is something they must prove they can achieve, yet often ~~don't~~ do not.

Constancy is something explored by Vanbrugh in order to present an analytical presentation of the social norms of the Restoration period. By asking the question of whether constancy is sustainable and not something only women need adhere to, Vanbrugh is holding the immorality of some Restoration comedies responsible for ~~condemning~~ condemning.

This is a pretty good essay, ~~especially~~ especially that first paragraph which is one of the best I've read.

My only real quibble - your techniques move Marjorie is that I think you need to think harder about husbands and wives, My sense is that husbands don't always take always have a veneer of glamour - because an unfaithful husband is never glamorous

But the seizing of a throne and running into it really works in old drama.

Blank lined paper with horizontal ruling lines.

