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Feminism in Female Characters in David Lindsay-Abaire's Rabbit

Kamalpurna

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Mothering in Past, Present and Future: The Elements of Cultural Feminism in Female Characters in David Lindsay-Abaire’s Rabbit Hole (2006)

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Introduction

This paper revisits Rabbit Hole, the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by David Lindsay-Abaire, a male author, as the play contains elements of cultural feminism that can be discerned in themes, as well as characters and characterisations. Previously, many earlier feminist scholars believed that feminist writings must be done by feminists or female playwrights, as stipulated by Helene Keyssar, who justified that feminist drama is about female issues and agendas written exclusively by women. Nonetheless, in the 1990s, many male playwrights were beginning to write plays dealing with issues on women, highlighting their plight with both cynicism and sanguinity. It is strongly believed that male playwrights are more associated with cultural feminism as it identifies with femininity and the exposure of female attributes in everyday life. Rabbit Hole comprises the quality of motherly love, blending harmony and woman-ness into a domestic atmosphere, an amalgamation of elements from cultural feminism. This paper is highlighting and explaining the aforesaid elements and focusing on the three principal female characters: Becca, the grieving mother; Izzy, the future mother; and Nat, the mother who holds the family together. Throughout the play, both Izzy and Nat are constantly keeping Becca occupied with their presence. When they are around, they are trying to insert some sense of normalcy around Becca and within her household; she is less emotional and combative as compared to when she is with Howie, or any random stranger.

In general, the majority of cultural feminists upheld the “connection” theory by stressing the fact that women are related to all of human life and frequently believe that the "woman's way" is the better way, as women are connected to all human life materially (pregnancy, intercourse and breast-feeding) and existentially (moral and