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English Pd. 1

Othello The Moor Of Venice

In William Shakespeare's, Othello the Moor of Venice, feelings of jealousy and envy inspired Iago to commit the acts of betrayal and revenge that he does. Literary critics and people knowledgeable on the subject have commented on, analyzed, and interpreted Iago's actions to mean many things. Susan Snyder writes, "The question of what drives Iago to ruin Othello can be many things... Othello has made Cassio his lieutenant rather than Iago... Iago suspects his wife, Emilia, has betrayed him with the Moor. Iago wants revenge, whether by possessing Desdemona (to be "even with him, wife for wife")... he wants to use Cassio as an instrument because he is attractive to women and a threat to Iago's husbandly wife" (Othello: A Modern Perspective)

There are many reasons for Iago's desire for revenge. It is believed that "Iago's actions and his hatred of Desdemona – whose marriage usurped his place in Othello's affections" (Dana Ramel Barnes) is the cause of his jealousy. Before Desdemona came into the picture, Othello and Iago were together in everything from overseas voyages to bloody battlefields, they were inseparable. Then Desdemona came along and everything changed, Othello no longer had as much time for Iago like in the past, this drove Iago to dislike Desdemona. "I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted"-Iago 1.3.408-409

"Iago's only motivation is an immature urge toward instant pleasure" (Dana Ramel Barnes). Iago may have played these mind games with Othello just for the fun of it. He could've found amusement at watching other people suffer because of his doings.

Iago's desire for revenge could also have come from his suspicions that Othello slept with Emilia. "I hate the Moor, and it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets' he has done my office"- 1.3.429-431. This is one of the reasons he chooses to use Desdemona in his game. Iago believed that if Othello could use Emilia, then he had the right to use Desdemona.

Iago's treachery didn't stop at revenge; he did what he had to do thus leading him to betray many people. Throughout the whole book he lies Othello about Desdemona's faithfulness. Roderigo was a pawn in Iago's game from the beginning; he manipulated him into doing his bidding by telling him that Desdemona would soon be all his. During the fighting scene in Cyprus he stabs Roderigo and puts the blame on Cassio.

"Iago...subtly and unobtrusively plants deceits of suspicions against Cassio..." (Dana Ramel Barnes). He persuades Emilia into giving him the handkerchief that Othello gives to Desdemona, and then plants the handkerchief in Cassio's room. Othello calls Iago "honest Iago", but little does he know that Iago is two faced and the cause of his suspicions against Desdemona.

"From the moment that jealousy strikes, a person divorces himself or herself from rationality" (Dana Ramel Barnes). The characters themselves produce proof of this statement. Iago tells Othello "O beware my lord, of jealousy; it is the green eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on". 3.3.195-197. Because Othello's subjection to jealousy he lost the two most important things in his life, the only person he ever loved and life itself. Jealousies lead him to become so paranoid that he questioned every action and statement of Desdemona. He lost his ability to sensibly reason because he was so

blinded by his suspicions. This caused him to kill Desdemona and then himself once he realized the truth.

Emilia tells Desdemona “Jealous souls will not be answered so; they are not ever jealous for the cause, but jealous for they are jealous.” 3.4.180-182. Emilia’s statement is not entirely true. For Othello a question of Desdemona’s faithfulness would not have arisen if Iago had not planted it in his mind. In Iago’s case he was suspicious of Emilia’s faithfulness from the beginning. He believed that she had “been around the block” a couple times. This one thought lead him to create all the chaos and mayhem that he did.

Iago’s jealousy and hunger for revenge lead him to play a deadly mind game with the people around him. He did not stop at anything to achieve the vengeance that he so strongly felt he deserved. For many centuries, individuals have studied his personality and can only derive assumptions as to why a person would want to do what Iago did.

Evaluation

I think that Othello The Moor Of Venice, was an interesting book. At first I didn't want to read the book because it's not a book I would pick up on my own. After reading it, I really liked it. The book has many themes in which you are more than likely to learn something from. It also opens you to a bigger, better, Shakespearish vocabulary. I enjoyed how when reading the book we had many things to discuss. I would recommend this book to anyone who thinks they would never read a book of this sort.

Reflection

I liked our essay topics because we choose what we wanted to discuss, what we had interests in. The book also makes me want to read other Shakespeare books. I liked the theme I choose because jealousy was a large theme in the book. It shows how jealousy can lead to vengeance.