

Free thesis on othello the moor of venice

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Introduction:

Othello is perhaps one of the best known Shakespeare plays and it explores the theme of doomed love as well as tragedy and envy throughout. Apart from being a play, it has also been written as an opera by Giuseppe Verdi in a version which is actually almost as famous as the original. The play explores the unhinged jealousy of Othello regarding Desdemona, his wife whom he suspects of having an affair with Cassio urged on by the supposedly faithful lieutenant Iago who eventually leads Othello to taking his own life. It is a dark and classic tale of jealousy and intrigue set in the ambit of Venice although Othello is actually governor of Cyprus.

Plot and analysis

The first act demonstrates the anger of Desdemona's father when she elopes with the Moor Othello and is an astute reflection of the racial prejudice against blacks by Italians. Shakespeare's commentary on the situation demonstrates the tragic connotations which eventually erupt at the end of the play. We are almost enthused by the prospect of Othello eloping with Desdemona as they go to Cyprus and the sea voyage which is fraught with dangers also shows that the Moor is willing to take risks to protect his newly found bride. The character studies created by Verdi are intensely powerful and show that jealousy is perhaps the main ruination of man who is without blemish initially but who is corrupted by women and the lust for power. The intrusion of Iago into the story demonstrates that there is evil imbued in every man whilst one cannot escape the ravages of envy.

Shakespeare is also very deft when analysing the scheming and wheeling

and dealing which characterises Iago's character. It is also interesting to note that when Desdemona enters and greets her husband in the second act, Othello receives her with ironical tributes to her purity. Desdemona ignores his sarcasm and repeatedly asks forgiveness for Cassio – this unwitting excites her husband's anger as he flies into a rage. The handkerchief which was Othello's first gift to Desdemona then comes into the fray. Here we have the whole crux of the play since Desdemona cannot reproduce the handkerchief since it has been unfortunately stolen by Iago. The exchange between husband and wife where Desdemona repeatedly pleads for forgiveness and her husband engages in brutal insults is probably one of the most powerful elements in the play.

The scene where Othello spies on Cassio is also extremely revealing and powerful, another masterful stroke by Shakespeare with regard to jealousy and human intrigue. When the handkerchief is subtly placed by Iago in Cassio's lodgings and Othello discovers it, we have the classic case of the love triangle which culminates on Othello's murderous intention to do away with his wife. Iago continues to encourage and goad Othello to perform the thankless deed, although this appears to be in jeopardy and in doubt when Othello is recalled to Venice and Cassio is to be appointed in its place.

When Othello announces that he is being recalled to Venice, Iago is alarmed as his plan seems to have gone awry. Desdemona then approaches Iago imploringly but after working himself up into a terrible rage, he actually curses her, another of the important points in the opera.

The final act is a tour de force for Shakespearian drama. Othello is seen by Emilia who is Desdemona's aide at the threshold of the secret door of the

bedchamber. As he enters the room, he raises the curtains and even kisses his wife three times. After asking whether she has prayed for forgiveness of her sins, Othello again aggressively asks her why she has had an affair with Cassio. She continues to deny the claim insisting that she never did such a thing and was always faithful. Othello who is crazy with envy and jealousy then goes about strangling her and after performing the fatal deed learns that Roderigo, his faithful aide has been killed in a duel with Cassio. Seeing all his world collapse in one fell swoop, there is nothing left for Othello but to take his own life which he does so with alacrity and despair. The whole circle of human drama and tragedy has turned full circle emphasising the incredible dramatic power of Shakespeare in creating a plot without comparison.

Conclusion

Works cited:

Shakespeare, William. Four Tragedies: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth. Bantam Books, 1988.