

Rationale

For my written task in part 3 of the IB, I chose to write a blog post reflecting the opinion of a so called *social justice warrior* (SJW) on the play *Othello*. In doing this I tackled the following learning outcome: Understand the attitudes and values expressed by literary texts and their impact on readers.

I decided to write a blogpost which, while not reflecting my own, was able to contain a strong opinion on the play. The blog on which the post ought to be featured is a rather personal one. This can be seen from the informal introduction. The audience will thus be people who read blogs on the internet and are interested in the opinion of the writer. To understand the point of view of the writer, it might be useful to give a small description of the earlier mentioned *social justice warrior*. This term describes people who engage in arguments on the internet about social justice. They often do this from a rather narrow and badly substantiated point of view. Since the blog is written by a SJW, it can be assumed that the reader agrees with this way of thinking.

I tackled my learning outcome by writing a review on *Othello* from the narrow point of view of a SJW. There are only comments made on the injustice of interactions between characters and not on the quality of the play's literary characteristics. While seeming a bit exaggerated, this is truly some people's world view.

What do I think about *Othello*

Hey guys! Today I'll be talking about a play by William Shakespeare which I've had to read for the last couple of weeks. This might be a bit of a departure from the usual topics I talk about on this blog but after having finished reading the play, I really felt the need give my opinion on the play. If you haven't read the play and do not want to have the story spoiled, I suggest you reading it first before reading this post.

Let me first give some information about the play. It's called *Othello* and it is one of the more famous plays by William Shakespeare. The play is about the main character Othello (shocking), who's a Moore serving a high rank in the army. Because of his ethnicity he's being opposed during the entirety of the story which in the end results in him taking the life of his wife and his own.

The story starts off strong with an argument between the characters Roderigo and Iago. These two privileged males whine about the fact that they can't always get what they want. In the case of Rodrigo it is a wife. Rodrigo desires Desdemona who is, as will be revealed shortly, recently and in secrecy married to Othello. Desdemona has no interest in Rodrigo so he's been paying Iago, who works for Othello and so close to him and Desdemona, to help him win over Desdemona. But Iago also has his own problems. In the beginning of the story he tells about himself not chosen by Othello as his new lieutenant. Instead of him Cassio has been given this position. This 'unfair' decision angers Iago so much that he starts ventilating his hatred for his boss.

After the argument Iago and Rodrigo decide to go to the house of Desdemona's father Brabantio. They want to tell him about the secret marriage between Othello and Desdemona. The only reason for doing this is Iago's and Rodrigo's deep-seated jealousy. This is not the worst part however. When hearing about his daughter's relation he acts in an even worse way. He is not interested in the happiness of his daughter and rages merely about the fact that she has married a coloured person. Desdemona is also being talked about as if she's her father's possession. This becomes clear when Iago says the following: "Sir, y' are robb'd!" Robbing in this sentence implying that a possession has been taken from Brabantio, which refers to Desdemona being married to Othello. After Brabantio has been informed about these recent happenings he immediately makes his way to Othello and argues with him about the whole ordeal.

Othello, after he has been confronted by Brabantio about the marriage, tries to defend his love for Desdemona. He holds a lengthy monologue about the reasons why he loves her. He says things like: "She gave me for my pains a world of sighs; She swore, in faith 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange; 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful. She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd That heaven had made her such a man. She thank'd me, And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her, [...]." During this speech, Brabantio continues to argue that his daughter is not destined for a marriage with a black man. He doesn't acknowledge Desdemona's right to choose with who she wants to live her life. In the end though, Brabantio gives in and leaves this case for what it is.

Othello's part in all this doesn't seem like such a bad thing, so why am I mentioning it? Well, while he does seem genuine when defending his love this is, later in the story, completely negated. Iago, who hasn't succeeded in setting up Brabantio against Othello is still seeking revenge. So he comes up with a plan. He will try to make Othello believe Cassio and Desdemona are secretly in a relationship. The reader might think this will not succeed after Othello's passionate plea earlier, but this reader will be disappointed. It takes only one handkerchief to convince Othello of this lie.

What I find most unbelievable of all is the ending. Desdemona, who has done nothing wrong is killed by Othello. Even while dying, she defends Othello, which is something I can not understand after all the things he has done to her.

Why, you might ask, did I feel the need to discuss this play on my blog however. The answer is quite simple. I (spoiler alert) hated the play in a major way, because it's filled with awful examples of both sexism and racism. Two of the things I despise most in this cis white male centred world. Having teenagers reading this does, in my opinion, not help in making this world a fairer place for suppressed minorities. This is why I believe that teenagers, myself included, should not be exposed to this kind of material.

Sources

Blizio. (2016, May 17). Social Justice Warriors Triggered Compilation. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCtv4O9tv1g>