

On the Causes of the Tragic Ending of “Othello”

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Abstract: The four tragedies of Shakespeare, a famous British playwright, are well-known classics, among which “Othello” is regarded as a play that can greatly arouse people's sympathy, and the lessons it conveys are more suitable for solving life problems than Shakespeare's other plays. It can be seen that it is very important to probe deeply into the causes of the tragic ending of “Othello”, which is also of far-reaching significance for personal development and the construction of outlook on life. Therefore, this paper attempts to analyze the deep causes of “Othello” tragedy.

1. Introduction

Introduction

Throughout the ages, people have agreed that the cause of Othello and Desdemona's love tragedy is Iago's evil. After further reading the plays, the author finds that Iago's evil is caused by his deep jealousy, and it is Iago's desire for money and honor that drives him to do evil constantly. The evil means is to take advantage of the fragility of interpersonal trust relationship. Under Iago's hypocrisy and rhetoric, people have absolute trust in Iago, and think Iago is a loyal and kind-hearted honest man. On the basis of gaining the trust of all people, Iago launched a plan to destroy the trust network among others. Looking at the overall situation, Iago not only destroyed the trust relationship between husband and wife, relatives, but also destroyed a series of interpersonal trust relationships between superiors and subordinates. Next, the author will discuss in detail how Iago realized the imbalance of interpersonal trust, thus achieving the process of deceiving everyone.

2. Death of Trust in Love

Objectively speaking, Iago is the most direct reason for the disappearance of trust between Othello and Desdemona, but we can't exaggerate that all of them are the causes of Iago's troubles, because Othello's own character and background are also very important reasons. First of all, although Othello was a great general in Venice, he was a Moorish with dark skin and thick lips, and Moorish was a disparaging name for Muslims in North Africa in medieval Spain and Portugal. At the beginning of the play, Iago called Othello a “black general” [1]4, Venetian gentleman Roderigo also called it a “guy with thick lips” [1]5, Desdemona's father Brabantio also called Othello an “ugly nigger” [1]11. “From the attitudes of all social strata in Venice towards Othello, we can easily see the severity of racial discrimination in the society at that time. Othello's skin color and blood origin determine his position in Venetian eyes. In the hearts of white Venetians, Othello is a low, dark-skinned alien, rough and violent, and feared by ordinary people. “[2]67-68 It is precisely because of racial discrimination that Othello is not truly respected by Venetians. “Venice's ubiquitous insults and denigrations of its ethnic identity have humiliated Othello's personal dignity. It is conceivable that Othello has a sense of distance from Venetian society, and there is no trust between him and the Venetian society he works for.” [3]129 “Although Othello has made great efforts in cultural identity, Venice still refuses to regard him as a member of his own society equally: his different ethnic background and his dark skin color are an insurmountable gap between him and Venetian society.” [6]116 Secondly, Othello was sent to Cyprus on the wedding night, and his feelings with Desdemona were not further cultivated and sublimated in the best time. These objective factors constitute the weak emotional foundation between Othello and Desdemona, and

the trust relationship between them has not been established in time, which laid the initial foundation for Iago to finally break the trust relationship between the newlyweds.

Obviously, Iago is a villain who covets money and personal honor. From the dialogue between Iago and Roderigo and Iago's inner monologue, it is not difficult to see that Iago is still a man with strong jealousy and revenge. As Cassio chose the position of lieutenant, Iago set up Cassio and caused Cassio to lose his position by a series of means. Iago didn't stop there. He used Desdemona to intercede for Cassio to distort things, and made Othello fall into conspiracy step by step with despicable means and slanderers. In this process, Othello's trust in Iago gradually increased, while his doubts about Desdemona gradually deepened. Until the end, Othello never listened to what Desdemona said. Because Othello was occupied by jealousy at the moment, "jealousy deeply influenced Othello's behavior, and his innocent young wife was destroyed. In turn, credulity has increased his jealousy. " [5]61 In the end, it became a sad tragedy.

When it comes to the trust between husband and wife, we can find Iago distrusted his wife. He suspects that Emilia, Othello and Cassio have different proper relationship, and Iago's suspicion of his wife is born out of thin air. It can be seen that Iago is a suspicious person who likes to make things out of nothing. "Iago's projective jealousy is obvious. He projected his infidelity impulse to Othello, and finally projected this infidelity impulse to Desdemona through Othello. " [7]101 Therefore, Iago's persecution of Othello and Cassio is partly the reason. In addition, we find that Iago himself has love for Desdemona, and he is jealous of Othello--An ugly moor can get the beautiful Desdemona, but a white man has lost to a moor, which is also a great shock to the jealous Iago. "One of the main reasons why Iago hates Othello is that he is a Moorish, and people with this status can actually prevent him from realizing his ambitions and get the beauty and love he dreams of." [8]87 In a word, Iago's ugly, suspicious and jealous personality is the reason why he destroys the feelings between Othello and Desdemona. His observant eyes, sinister heart, meticulous mind and rhetoric make Iago easily grasp the weak points of feelings between newlyweds--the lack of trust, this leads to Othello's tragedy of killing his wife with his own hands. At the same time, it is also the breakdown of the most important group of trust relations in the drama.

In addition, the disappearance of trust between a couple in the play is also closely related to Iago, that is, Cassio and his girlfriend Bianca. Iago turned Cassio into Othello's "rival in love", and at the same time, it also contributed to the breakdown of trust between Cassio and his girlfriend Bianca. Iago designed and framed Cassio to find the handkerchief that Othello gave Desdemona, but Cassio liked the pattern on the handkerchief very much, so he gave it to his girlfriend and asked Bianca to help embroider the pattern on the handkerchief. Cassio asked Bianca to help embroider patterns out of his trust in his girlfriend, but unexpectedly, this incident also caused misunderstanding between two couples, which eventually led to the disintegration of trust between Cassio and Bianca. The evil Iago even tried to frame Bianca through the misunderstanding between two lovers, creating a false image that Bianca killed Cassio in retaliation for Cassio's new love, so that Cassio could be a scapegoat.

3. The Breakdown of Trust in Family Relations

At the beginning of "Othello", Iago tricked Rodrigo into making trouble with Brabantio, and Iago used Rodrigo's feelings for Desdemona to entice him to do things for himself. Iago was rude to Desdemona in front of Brabantio. He used almost all the ugly words to describe the love relationship between Desdemona and Othello, such as: "An old black sheep is mating with your white ewe." [1]6" Your daughter is doing the same thing as an animal with that moor now. [1]7 and so on, "Iago ignores women's consciousness as human beings, equates women with the body, weaves ethical evaluation and moral judgment about women's bodies with language, and judges and defines women's characteristics." [10]46 Iago's words made Brabantio fly into a rage. Brabantio, who was prejudiced against the Moors, made a decision to sever the father-daughter relationship with her daughter after confirming the fact that her daughter was married to Othello. Imagine that if Iago hadn't yelled at Brabantio's residence in the middle of the night and made Brabantio lose face, the relationship between the father and the daughter might not have been so bad, which eventually

caused Brabantio to lose trust in her daughter directly, and the trust relationship between the father and the daughter broke down. Brabantio even claimed in front of everyone: "I would rather raise an adoptive son than have children by myself." [1]18 Iago wanted to separate Othello from Desdemona by his own tricks, which was not only his revenge for Othello not choosing himself as a lieutenant, but also the outbreak of Iago's jealousy and hatred for Othello to get Desdemona. However, Iago never thought that Desdemona resolutely chose the former between love and affection. "She showed her persistent pursuit and yearning for love to the patriarchal society with her candid behavior. In Shakespeare's view, it is very commendable that women dare to liberate themselves from the shackles of feudal thought and form their own personality. "[9]59 I have to admit that Desdemona dared to break through the prestige of patriarchy and bravely pursue love at that time. "To some extent, she was the earliest feminist-she knew how to fight for her right to love in a strict patriarchal society." [4]160

When Othello became suspicious of Desdemona, Iago continued to make trouble in it. He used dark means to make what people saw was not true. All this was Iago's scheme. He gossiped about right and wrong among people, which changed the attitude of Odovico, a relative of Desdemona's family, towards Othello. On the one hand, this is because under Iago's careful design, Othello had already had a serious suspicion of Desdemona at that time, and lost the rationality of calm thinking. Even in front of Rodovico, facing Desdemona's harsh words, Rodovico, who saw this scene, was shocked and said with emotion: "This is the heroic Moorish who is praised by our entire Senate and called all-rounder and all-virtuous? Is this the noble nature that emotions can't shake it? Can't the arrow of fate scratch it and wear it out? " [1]87; On the other hand, Iago spoke ill of Othello to Rodovico, which further deepened Rodovico's disappointment and distrust of Othello. Therefore, this also represents the breakdown of the trust relationship between Desdemona's relatives represented by Rodovico and Othello.

4. The Destruction of Other Trust Relationships

In addition to the destruction of the trust relationship between love and family, there are other trust relationships, such as the breakdown of the trust relationship between Othello and Cassio, Montano and Cassio, Othello and Emilia, etc. However, the reasons for these trust relationships breaking step by step are not directly caused by the individuals of both sides, but by the tricks and lies of Iago, a third party.

Othello chose Cassio as the lieutenant at the beginning, which shows that Othello trusted Cassio very much, and Cassio was also honest with Othello. Cassio could have been assisting Othello to serve the country, but they were eventually turned into a "rival in love" relationship by Iago, and Othello hated Cassio very much and even decided to end his life. Iago did whatever it takes to achieve his goal, and Iago was full of malice towards Othello and Cassio after the position of lieutenant was won by Cassio. After seeing Cassio kiss Desdemona politely, Iago had already figured out his own plan-to use Desdemona to destroy the harmonious and trusting relationship between Othello and Cassio. Under Iago's mastermind, Cassio succeeded in becoming Othello's "rival in love", so Othello, blinded by jealousy, lost trust in Cassio, but the saddest thing is that innocent Cassio never seemed to notice the change of Othello's attitude towards himself. It was Iago who framed Cassio again and again, which made Othello's trust in Cassio gradually disappear. If Othello and Cassio had not been stirred up by the scheming Iago, there would not have been so many misunderstandings and contradictions, and it would not have led to tragedy in the end.

Besides, the breakdown of the trust relationship between Montano and Cassio is also reflected in the plays. With Othello's hard work, the Turkish fleet was finally defeated, so everyone prepared to enjoy drinking and feasting at night. Othello ordered Cassio to keep watch, but Cassio was drunk by Iago, who was honest, kind, faithful and reliable in people's eyes, and Roderigo deliberately challenged Cassio, which made Cassio make a mistake. Iago, on the other hand, screamed out for fear of chaos, which alarmed Othello, so Othello could only punish Cassio, and finally removed Cassio from the post of lieutenant. In this process, we can find the change of Montano's attitude towards Cassio in the play. At first, they talked with each other and got along politely.

Unexpectedly, after Cassio got drunk, Iago told everyone in front of everyone that Cassio was an alcoholic and did not do things seriously, and he might have missed the great event. Under Iago's lies, Montano's attitude towards Cassio changed, claiming: "It is a pity that this noble Moor should let a person infected with this evil habit as his assistant." [1]41-42 In addition, the drunken Cassio fought fiercely against Montano who came to persuade him to fight, which made Montano believe in Iago's words more firmly, and his trust in Cassio finally disappeared. Iago's tricks and Montano's distrust were the reasons that eventually led to Cassio's dismissal by Othello.

The tragic ending of Othello's killing of his wife is also related to Othello's distrust of Emilia. When Othello tentatively asked Emilia whether her wife had ever had an improper relationship with Cassio, Emilia firmly denied that Desdemona had ever had any intimate behavior with Cassio. Emilia told Othello: "general, I bet my soul that she is chaste. If you suspect her of indecent behavior, get rid of this thought as soon as possible, because it is a stain on your psychology. If any bastard puts this thought into your head, let God punish him for becoming a snake and being cursed forever! If she is not chaste, virtuous and loyal, then there is no happy man in the world; The purest wife will become the ugliest whore. [1]89 Evidently, Emilia trusted Desdemona very much. She not only testified Desdemona's innocence, but also kindly reminded and advised Othello to dispel her doubts about her wife. Sadly, Othello was controlled by jealousy at this time. He not only didn't believe Emilia's words, but also thought Emilia was a cunning whore, so the trust between Othello and Emilia was out of balance. Emilia trusted Othello to persuade him, but Othello was completely distrustful of Emilia, which brewed the ultimate tragedy. If Othello listened carefully and believed Emilia's words, then perhaps at this point, Othello would have doubts about Iago, reflect on his credulous behavior of Iago, and stop the loss in time without causing the final tragedy.

5. Conclusion

It is not difficult to see that Iago used the principle of unbalanced interpersonal trust relationship to destroy the trust between people. Among these examples of imbalanced trust relationship, one person in each group was blinded by Iago's lies and tricks. Their similarities are as follows: they all believed Iago's words without warning, and thus doubted their lover, relatives, subordinates, etc., but the suspected party was always kept in the dark, just like Desdemona was killed by her husband without even knowing what she had done wrong; Othello's suspicion of Cassio, but Cassio knew nothing about it; Similarly, Othello's distrust of Emilia was not felt by Emilia ... This caused the imbalance of trust between people. A close reading of the plays reveals that Iago is a man who does no evil. There is no soft part in his heart. His evil seems to be completely beyond the mental range of normal people. His mind is terrible, and his lies can be believed by anyone. Iago is like a collection of evil. He is more like an evil force, not as simple as a person. He can destroy the trust among all people, but only makes everyone firmly believe that Iago is an honest, kind and reliable person, which is the reason why the story finally leads to tragedy. The trust between people is unbalanced because of the credulity of Iago and the distrust of their friends, relatives and loved ones.

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