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Review of the film production of the play Othello

Othello, a play by William Shakespeare has been beautifully filmed by Olive Parker's in 1995. The film has significantly captured the true passion and love between Othello and Desdemona. Different elements had added to the feeling and understanding of the film such as camera angles, background music and setting along with its cast. This essay will review the film production of the play Othello in terms of its staging/setting, plot, casting, theme, tone and symbolism in order to analyze the effectiveness of the use of the original, written work.

This film was a reworking of William Shakespeare's Othello. The set of the film is designed to show the feelings of that time. The film director, Parker desired to make the film more quick story so he omitted original text when producing this film. The plot of the film was that the Othello was being convinced about the unfaithfulness of his wife, Desdemona. His thinking was manipulated that he had an affair with his Lieutenant Michael Cassio. However, in reality the situation was different and this was just a part of conspiracy. Othello as a Moor has in secret married his native Venetian lover Desdemona. He has to fight against a Turkish invasion who are trying to occupy the island of Cyprus. During this fight, Cassio, the faithful lieutenant of the Othello is with him. When they lastly arrive at the Cyprus, they find the destruction of the Turkish fleet as a result of storm. Then Othello is reunited with his lover, Desdemona.

Moreover, the film casting includes Laurence Fishburne as Othello, Irène Jacob as Desdemona, Kenneth Branagh as Iago, Nathaniel Parker as Cassio, Michael Maloney as Roderigo, Anna Patrick as Emilia, Nicholas Farrell as Montano, Indra Ové as Bianca and Michael Sheen as Lodovico. These characters have performed well in the film and viewers get the same feelings as they got with the play.

In addition, different themes of the film includes racial prejudice, manipulation, and jealousy that have resulted in the tragic conclusion of the film. The film is showing the racial prejudice as Othello in the film is black while his wife, Desdemona is white. There is a use of racist language by characters that show this racial prejudice. For example, Othello in the film is called as an 'old black ram. Moreover, being white Desdemona's father does not accept the truth that his daughter is in love with the black man. The other theme of the film is the manipulation and Iago is a master manipulator in the film. He pretends to be friend of him but it was his character who was manipulating the Othello mind to doubt on his wife sincerity. For this purpose, throughout in the film he twists the information. In addition, tragedy is another theme of the film. Othello is shown in the film as the most tragic character, who loves his wife but also do not trust her.

These themes have made the mood of the film as tragic. Throughout the film viewers can see the tragic scenes and conspiracy that make the mood of the film a tragic one. Moreover, different symbols have also been used in the film that show the main themes of the film. Handkerchief is one of the main symbol. Iago snips Desdemona's handkerchief which was the symbol of her love and her promise to Othello. This was then used as a symbol of her betrayal.