

David Lurie's Character Development in Disgrace

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Disgrace, written by J.M Coetzee, is the first novel written by the author. It provides a relevant background story and context to the situation that was faced by people during the apartheid era. The main focus of the novel is how white people in South Africa are treated and what sort of discrimination is being faced by them. The central character of the novel provides a good insight into the way racial undertones work in everyday life as well as how his sexual encounters the beliefs he had over the notion of White Supremacy.

One of the better things that one gets to see during the novel is that despite the novel being not written in the first person narrative, the readers get to see the thought process of David all the time. At the same time, some of his actions might not be morally right, but readers can feel and emphasize that readers, in some ways invested in his storyline (Wenzel and Smit-Marais, 2006). It is one of the reasons that the reader starts to make sense of the emotional turmoil that David tends to face (Wenzel and Smit-Marais, 2006). It would be interesting to see how sexual escapades are an important part of the way he tends to resolve his emotional conflict (Barnard and Coetzee, 2003).

When Sonya, refuses and threatens him about never calling again, his feelings are there for every reader to see.

"But then, what should a predator expect when he intrudes into the vixen's nest, into the home of her cubs? He puts down the telephone. A shadow of envy passes over him for the husband he has never seen."

The key thing that can be seen is that despite the fact that he is yearning for some emotional attachment from the casual flings that he has, deep inside, he has a fair idea that it is not a good idea to get too emotionally invested in these escapades. Thus, he has a discrete approach toward how these things should be taken care of. In some ways, his flings provide him with an escape from reality.

Another thing is that it seems that other than the physical aspect of the whole thing, he also tends to enjoy the risks that it brings with it. For instance, he was attached to one of his partners, and despite the fact that she had a family of her own, he was persistent. Eventually, his advances were rebuffed by her. Later on, he tends to show his interest towards a University Secretary and, in a strange twist of events, starts to ignore her completely. Thus there is no definitive pattern to the way he conducts himself during the whole period.

Another interesting thing that can be seen is what sort of logic and rationale he presents for all of his sexual escapades. There are instances when he justifies his stance by quoting Western Literature. On the other hand, he also cites human knowledge and intellect when talking about his affairs. At

times, it feels like he is not convincing the other person but himself regarding the ethicality and morality of these filings. It shows that he is in emotional turmoil with regard to his encounters, and his mind just needs a passage of sorts to make sure he convinces himself about it (Leist and Singer, 2010). In some ways, the parallels can be drawn from the character of Eros regarding how David completely abandoned his affiliation with Sonaya and went for Melanie, as was witnessed in the case of Eros. Even if someone refers to him as his friend, in his mind, he has developed an interpretation of the word friend as someone who is used in the same context as the term lover. Thus, great details are shown regarding all the transgressions that are made by him during the and the conflicting emotions he goes through. Throughout the narrative of the novel, David Lurie has made up some twisted interpretations of the word Love, and one of the ways through which he defines love is his lust and desire to capitulate in some ways. For instance, when seducing his student, he says

“Because a woman’s beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She must share it.”

Carrying out the critical analysis of the character and his earlier life, it can be seen that all his life, he was surrounded by women and all sorts of things that just because he is surrounded by women, he is in a position to make a judgment about the way they think and how they are supposed to run their life.

The most poignant moment that goes to show the internal conflict that he is facing is witnessed when despite the fact that he is conscious of the shame and dishonour that it brings to him. He still somewhat validates his behaviour at the given point in time. Even after apologizing to Melanie’s father, he again focuses his interest towards Melanie’s sister and justifies that he is learning from William Blake (Barnard and Coetzee, 2003). There are subtle hints about the incestuous behaviour being witnessed in the novel if one looks at the profile of the women he is trying to get linked with, but that is a separate story (Barnard and Coetzee, 2003).

Works Cited

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