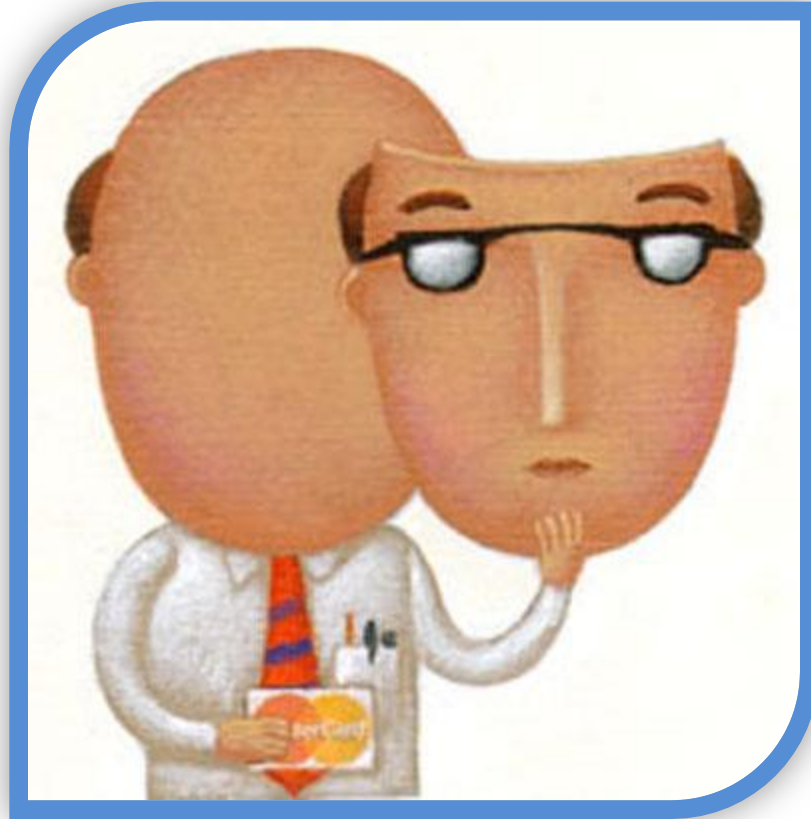


Trust in the Traitors

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Renowned English poet, Shakespeare, tried to warn his readers that “fair is foul, and foul is fair”. People will often wear disguised smiles on their faces in order to deceive others and hide their true “foul” intentions, making them appear “fair”. Trusting such an individual’s deceptive appearance can cause him or her to suffer negative and long-lasting effects. Shakespeare’s “Othello” exemplifies the effects that can occur, should an individual decide that others will always have his or her best interest at heart. Likewise, Tom Curry’s visual “Facing Reality” showcases how trusting the wrong person’s artificial mask can cause long-lasting harm to those who believe the innocent expressions on untruthful people. Unfortunately, a person will have to experience the effects of being deceived by the wrong people before they can learn to do otherwise, and this is best illustrated through the five-act drama “Macbeth”, by William Shakespeare. Victims who trust the deceiving faces of those the dishonest will always have to suffer through the negative consequences that follow. This is effectively demonstrated through the poetic works of William Shakespeare.

Scene three in act two of William Shakespeare’s tragedy “Othello” presents the negative consequences that can occur when an individual, without question, trusts the wrong person’s deceptive appearance. Cassio, a good-looking and inexperienced soldier, is given strict orders from his general, Othello, to ensure that revellers do not disrupt Cyprus’ streets at night. Othello’s ensign Iago, who is very jealous of Cassio and his achievements, decides to deceive his peers and ruse them into committing acts that would offend the citizens of Cyprus. To destruct Cassio’s position as lieutenant, Iago decides to convince Cassio into drinking enough wine to intoxicate him, thus blurring his sense of morality and judgment. “Come Lieutenant. [...] I’ve got a jar of wine,” he tells him, “and there is a brace of Cyprus lads outside who want to drink to

the health of black Othello”. Even though, at first, Cassio rejects Iago’s offer, Iago is able to convince him to give in to his suggestion, even though he “[does not] like it.” With Cassio under Iago’s control, he is able to manipulate Cassio into committing a frowned-upon act, which will subsequently cause him to lose his position as lieutenant. Cassio loses any trust that he might have gained from Othello, due to his evitable trust in Iago. Like Cassio, an individual can suffer from negative and long-lasting effects should they trust the deceiving appearances of a truth-concealing person. Just as Cassio is affected by this, as are the men in the visual “Facing Reality”.

The visual “Facing Reality”, by Tom Curry, illustrates how a person can often ruse others into believing that he or she is innocent, and the effects that this can have on the people he or she deceives. The picture features a double-headed and straight-faced woman sitting on a red couch in between a man with a newspaper and a taller, standing businessman, whose hand is resting on the woman’s shoulder. Behind the woman, outside a red-curtained window, is a serpent spiraled around a perfectly circular apple tree. Combining the symbolism of sin (from the serpent and the apple tree) and her two-headed-look tells us that the woman represents a two-faced traitor. It appears the businessman has a deeper connection with the woman (as he is affectionately resting his left palm on her shoulder), such as marriage. Contrasting this, the man on the left, wearing a summer shirt, appears to be a spontaneous person, who would entertain the woman in ways her busy husband could not. The excess use of the color red on the right side of the image gives us the impression that the woman has more love for the fun man on the right, than she does for the businessman on the left. Clearly ashamed, by adopting her innocent facial expression, the woman is not allowing one of the men to know about the other. If they were to realize that her disguise

had been a distraction from the truth and decide not to fraternize with her at all, they could avoid being humiliated by her two-sidedness. The two men in this visual experience the negative and long-lasting effects that can occur when an individual trusts the deceiving appearances of their peers and this is also presented through the play “Macbeth”.

“Macbeth” exhibits an entertaining representation of how an individual can be negatively affected, should they trust the fake masks on others, who surround him or her. Duncan’s poor judge of character harms him when he appoints the Thane of Cawdor with his position and again when he appoints Macbeth as Thane in his place, even though he announces that “No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive”. Furthermore, after admitting this mistake to his sons, Duncan stubbornly adds that “there’s no art to find the mind’s construction in the face: He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust”, in an attempt to conceal his stupidity, which later lead to his unfortunate demise. His son, however, learns from his father’s mistakes and tests Macduff’s loyalty before trusting him in battle. While Malcolm’s smarts save him from avoidable humiliation, Macduff finds himself embarrassed after he believes Malcolm’s lies about his own greed, lust, and sinful qualities. Just as Macduff is affected by Malcolm’s artificial personality, as is Macbeth by his wife’s falsities. Lady Macbeth puts on a brave face for her husband, and hides her true unsettling feelings, in order to support him on his journey to becoming king. She asks for the spirits that assist murderous thoughts to “unsex [her] here, and fill [her] from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty” in attempt to cover her true sensitive feelings toward the crimes they were about to commit, and show a brave front in order to support her husband’s ambitions. Her confidence deceives Macbeth and pushes him too far into his plan,

until he reaches a point where he has “step’t in so far that, should [he] wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o’er”.

The five-act drama “Macbeth” effectively describes the negative consequences that can occur should a person place all their trust in people that should not be trusted. Similarly, the visual “Facing Reality” sets a substantial example of how a person can deceive others into believing they are innocent, and subsequently harm them, just as the excerpt of “Othello” teaches its readers not to trust that other individuals will always have his or her best interest at heart. An individual will always have to suffer through the consequences of trusting the wrong person, before he or she can learn the difference between who and who not to trust. Shakespeare, through the character of Malcolm in “Macbeth”, told his readers that “all things foul would wear the brows of grace, yet grace must still look so.” Determining the differences between a distrustful individual and an trustful one can prove to be a great challenge, seeing as even though those that are deceiving will want to look innocent, those who are good will look innocent, as well. One must always remember to keep their own best interests at heart when conferring with a new “friend”, for that “friend” may not have your best interest in their heart. Should an individual master the art of doing so, he or she will be sure to have a happy, safe and successful life ahead of them.

Works Cited

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