

Racism and its part in the play othello

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



Racism has long played a huge part in history, both ancient and modern. A play, written by Shakespeare, about the downfall of a great black general in the Venetian Army. The play, " Othello", describes his fall using the questionable hero technique along with many others, including racism. In the play " Othello", race plays a huge part in the destiny of the characters. How Othello is treated, Desdemona's love to Othello, and how the play might have went if he faced the courts instead of suicide, all relate to the race of the hero, Othello.

One main factor in racism is how the racists will refer to the victim, or mainly, how he is treated. What really stands out in the first sections of the play is that none of the characters actually refer to Othello by his name. " An old, black ram is tugging your white ewe. " (1, 1, 89-90) Iago here is referring to Othello as an old, black ram. He is the main racist in the play, and the one who plotting the downfall of Othello. By white ewe, he was referring to Desdemona, referring to her as a gentle creature and most importantly, a white one.

In that same part, Roderigo is also insulting Othello in the same racist manner that Iago is using. On the other hand, there are some people that respect Othello, and not only use his name, but with respect too. " Valiant Othello we must straight employ you. " (1, 3, 47) The Duke is showing respect to Othello, calling him valiant, and telling him that he is the first one the country would turn to for help. It must not be forgotten, that Othello has served his country well. He has fought many battles and rose the ranks to general of the entire army. This is probably the way the Duke shows his gratitude.

It might be argued that the Duke is overlooking the fact that he is black on purpose, but it is hard to prove since people back then have had a really hard time doing that. The Duke probably just does not care. Desdemona's father Brabantio, is on the other extreme. " She is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted... " (1, 3, 60) The father views Othello as an abuser and corruptor. This is a serious accusation, especially since he is saying it to the Duke, who was just praising Othello for his bravery. This shows what hate can make a human do, refer to the one thing a person cannot change, his race.

Love is a completely different thing. Desdemona shows and proves to us throughout the play that she loves Othello. She has never once mentioned his race in vain. She defies her father, who is obviously doing the wrong thing here by referring to Othello's race as a reason for his daughter not to marry him. It is a classic scenario between father and daughter that definitely still exists today. " I am hitherto your daughter. But here is my husband... " (1, 3, 23) Desdemona tells her father that she is his daughter, but this is her husband who she has the duty to respect and love, and that is exactly what she is doing.

Desdemona even defends Othello from the racists who insult him. " My noble Moor is true of mind and made of no such baseness as jealous creatures are. " (3, 4, 23) In this passage, she was talking to her friend Emilia about Othello, and how noble and completely not jealous he is. Unfortunately for her, she said this line two seconds before Othello started accusing her of cheating with Cassio. This, however, does change the fact that she defended

him in front of other people, showing how much she loves Othello. At her deathbed, when Othello has vowed to kill her, she still remains loyal to her husband. " Nobody; I myself.

Farewell, commend me to my kind lord. " (5, 2, 125-26) In this passage, Desdemona rises to speak her final words just after Othello murdered her. Even then, she takes all the blame off of Othello and wishes him the best. If Othello had not cracked under the pressure, he would have gotten away with murder. This is the extreme example of overlooking race, and of course, love. Committing suicide is often seen as taking the easy way out. All it takes is convincing the mind that there is nothing else left in this world, and this usually happens after extreme depression, or in this case, finding out something after it was too late.

O! O! O! falls on bed... " (5, 2, 197) Othello is an extreme case of shock after he finds out that it was Iago who manipulated him into killing his own wife. Although race plays a small part here, it must not be forgotten that racism is probably what started this entire tragedy. Othello then commits suicide by stabbing himself. The others in the room are shocked, and this includes Cassio. " This I did fear, but thought he had no weapon, for he was great of heart. " (5, 2, 356-57) Cassio has long been known as the gentleman in the play, along with Othello.

Again, he plays the role of the gentleman by summarizing Othello in a few words: he was great of heart. Like Desdemona, this is another extreme example of overlooking racism, something that might not have happened if Othello were to face the law instead of suicide. Race has once again played a

huge part at the end of the play. If Othello had been white, there probably would not have been any tragedy involved. He would have also almost got away with murder in the courts. This goes to show how big a problem racism is and how it still is today.