

William hazlitt's opinion of the characters in othello

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Othello was a book that was published by William Shakespeare in 1603 based on the story of a Moorish captain and his disciple. The main characters of the story were Othello, Iago, Cassio, Roderigo and Desdemona. The tragedy novel has a variety of themes ranging from love to repentance. William Hazlitt is a novel critic and in the later years after the book was published he published a book where he expressed his opinions about the characters that Shakespeare used in the book.

The book is a story about a man named Othello who is married to the beautiful Desdemona. They live with a house maid named Emilia. Emilia and Desdemona were close and most often are depicted to confide with each other. Emilia is married to Iago who is the bearer of Othello and hates him so he devises a plan to make Othello think Cassio an assistant of Othello is having an affair with Desdemona. He makes Othello believe it to be true and he sets him up. Othello kills Desdemona and later after realizing that he was deceived he is sorry and thus kills himself. We will therefore look at the main characters Desdemona, Iago Othello and determine if William's opinion of their characters is true.

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Gentle/tender/ humble: This is the first character of Othello that we see in the book. This is seen by the way he treats his subjects and his wife before Iago poisoned his mind. He appoints Cassio a man with no experience and royalty to be his right hand man. Following this illustration from the poem I agree with Williams opinion of Othello's gentle nature.

Hot tempered: This character led him to brood hatred for his wife and in the end he kills his wife. Even when he learns that Iago was deceiving him and that he shed Desdemona's innocent blood, he attacked Iago without thought. When he questions Desdemona about her perceived infidelity, she replies by questioning about his response to Cassio's apology (Hazlitt 33-56). He's hot tempered character comes in place here where we see him strike her. From this illustration, I totally agree with William's definition of Othello's character.

Loving: Although many people would argue against this trait considering he killed his wife. I would personally argue that this was a case of his hot-blooded nature blinding his reasoning therefore leading him to commit the act. His love is evident when he realizes that his actions were based on a false lie. Othello, therefore, kills himself so that he can join Desdemona in the afterlife. Therefore, this, in my opinion, shows that William is right in defining Othello as loving.

Loving: I agree with William when he describes Desdemona as a loving person in nature. When Emilia tells her about Othello's jealousy and thought towards her, she questions what she thinks about him. She replies that despite her thought towards her, she replies that she still loves him as he is despite the fact that he doubts her loyalty towards him (Hazlitt 33-56). This is indeed a deep sense of love and I agree with William's description of her as a loving person.

Sympathetic: She sympathizes with Cassio and even offers to defend him. The most striking illustration of this character is when even though she has knowledge of her husband's thoughts towards her and Cassio, she still

continues defending Cassio despite knowing that this could only fuel his rage. It is therefore for this illustration that I agree William could not have described her better.

Contentious: Iago throughout the book has been driven by content to commit the evil acts that he has committed. His hate is driven when Othello appoints Cassio a low ranking officer to take place of lieutenant. This bred his hatred for Cassio and Othello and plans his revenge. I agree with William in the character of Iago.

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/hazlitt/william/characters-of-shakespeares-plays/chapter4.html>

Hazlitt, William. Characters of Shakespear's Plays: & Lectures on the English Poets. Macmillan, 1903.

<https://assignbuster.com/william-hazlitts-opinion-of-the-characters-in-othello/>