

Analysis of the "othello" written by william shakespeare

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Othello is a play written by William Shakespeare in the year 1603. It is a story that was adapted from a book known as "Un Capitano Moro" which was written by Cinthio. Cinthio was an avid follower of Boccaccio. The initial book was published in 1545. The tale is one filled with several twists and turns. Through the play, we get to learn plenty about the main characters. We get to understand their specific roles in the story (Werstine 57). The two tales, both the play by Shakespeare and the novel by Cinthio are based on the main character "Othello" and his unfaithful Ensign, Iago. Othello was a celebrated army veteran who had amazing stories to tell. So amazing that he wooed Desdemona and even married her. Iago's intentions are rather hard to understand in this plot. He seems to be a psychopath who likes playing both sides of the fence. On one side he is helping his friend, Roderigo to woo Desdemona away from her husband, but he pretends to also be on the side of Othello. His aims are quite unclear but he is a man who is very fond of chaos and violence, and it would appear that is all it ends. In my essay, I shall make a thorough psychoanalytical criticism of the play, "Othello," by Shakespeare by giving a summary of the play; I shall complete full psychoanalysis of the play including the characters and the author of the play.

The plot opens with an argument between a wealthy man known as Roderigo and Iago. The former had paid the latter a sizeable amount of money to help him in his suit of Desdemona (Werstine 75). He came to find out that she had already gotten married to a man known as Othello, to whom Iago served as an esquire. Iago confesses to hating Othello and promises to help Roderigo to steal Desdemona from her current husband and into his hands. Iago held

a grudge against Othello because Othello had passed him by on promotion and gave it, instead, to Michael Cassio. Iago and Roderigo cry out to Brabantio, Desdemona's father, that her daughter had been stolen by witchcraft and was now married to Othello. Brabantio became infuriated with this news. He gathered a group of a soldier to go and locate Othello. Iago, not wanting his hate of Othello to be known, runs ahead of them to go to Othello. Simultaneously, Cassius was arriving at Othello's residence to tell him that his services had been requested in Venice to prevent the imminent Turkish invasion. No sooner had he finished reporting this, than a Brabantio arrived and said that they all go to Venice before the Duke and the Senate. The Duke and the Senate are convinced with Othello's narrative that he wooed her using the tales of war (Shakespeare 23). Desdemona confirms this and says to her father that she was not under the influence of witchcraft. Brabantio, being very cross with his daughter. He, grudgingly, accepted the decision of the Senate and allowed the meeting to proceed.

The Senate sends Othello to Cyprus to help them defend that front from the Turks, whose approach seemed inevitable. The following day they got news that all the Turkish boats had capsized in the waters and their attack was defeated like that. Othello and others then resume home and are received warmly. Little did they know the plans that Iago had in store for them. Iago finds a way to convince Roderigo to slay Cassius. They hatched a project that involved getting Cassius extremely drunk. Then Iago would tell him to go and fight with Roderigo. Cassius charged towards Roderigo thinking that he had provoked him. He chased Roderigo across the stage, and when governor

Matano attempts to hold Cassius down, he gets stabbed. When Othello finds out that entire mess, he asks who was responsible and Iago, feigning reluctance, pointed the finger to Cassius. Cassius tried to get on good terms with Othello by using Desdemona (Kastan 460). By so doing, Cassius used the situation to fabricate a false story about how Desdemona was having an affair with Cassius. Othello's rage went even higher when his wife asked him to reinstate Cassius to his position. He took this to mean that the news from Iago was entirely accurate.

On a fateful day, Desdemona was arguing to herself about why the attitude of Othello had changed so sharply. While they were taking a meal, Desdemona tried to tie her handkerchief, the first present that Othello gave her, around his head (Kastan 470). He claimed it was too small and let it fall to the floor. Emilia, Iago's wife. She found the handkerchief and gave it to Iago. Iago then asked a seamstress to replicate the design and keeps one copy in Cassius' room where he would see it. The king was already furious and asked her about the handkerchief. She said she had no idea where it was. Then she attempted changing the subject by revisiting the reinstatement of Cassius. Iago also organized for a meeting with Cassius, and they met with Othello just outside of earshot. They talked about hookers and, eventually, Cassius laughed, and Othello took this as confirmation that they were having an affair. Later that night, Desdemona comes with Lodovico who has papers calling Othello to Venice and leaving Cassius in charge (Kastan 469).

The letter was the final nail on the coffin. Othello flew into a rage-blinded by jealousy and ordered Desdemona to wait for him in bed somewhat ominously. She obliged. He then came back and smothered her with a pillow until she died. Simultaneously, Iago had organized for a fight between Roderigo and Cassius. Roderigo missed his mark and was killed. Iago then came to the court complaining that Roderigo had assailed him. After killing his wife, Emilia inquires why he killed her and his response. Emily asks him why he killed her and he responds that infidelity was the main reason and cited the handkerchief. Emily goes on to explain how she was the one who found the handkerchief and gave it to Iago. Othello then realized that Othello had duped him. He attempts to kill him but is disarmed. Iago then kills his wife and flees but is caught by Ludovico and Montano. Cassius, now in a chair, is also brought in. The plot ends with Othello ending his own life with a hidden sword after they told him the potential consequences of his actions.

Psychoanalysis

The first feature to be noted here is the presence of hate. The first line that Othello said in the first page was "Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate." (Shakespeare 12) Hate is as a central ground for psychoanalysis as is love. The two seem to merge as you cannot have one without the other. In the hearts of both Iago and Rodriguez, we can see a very hostile attitude towards Othello. The rationale behind the hate that Roderigo had for Othello. He was of the opinion that Othello had taken Desdemona away from him. He was jealous of that fact. His hostility led him into trusting someone as spiteful as Iago. He plotted with Iago on the best way to get Desdemona

from the clasp of Othello without knowing that he was only being used the whole time. Iago made sure that Roderigo overreacted so that he could commence his selfish plan which is to see the destruction of the house of Othello solely. Desdemona was so consumed with hatred and spite for Othello that he merely followed blindly to whichever direction Iago would point. He became the tool via which Iago could perform his destructive plan but not be liable for any part of it. Roderigo went a step farther and attempted to kill Cassius as he had been told to do by

Iago is perhaps the most hateful villain in the whole play. He understands how to meticulously plan something so that it happens in perfection and during the play, he aimed to destroy the Othello. He hated Othello with a great hatred that is hard to fathom. According to what he told Roderigo, Othello had been passed by on the promotion to become the right-hand man of Othello and Cassius had been chosen in his place instead. He feels like this gives him a right to destroy Othello. He lays out well-orchestrated plans to put an end to his enemy, and he collaborates with Roderigo who also has a significant amount of hate for Othello. He assumes that because he hates Othello and Roderigo also hates Othello, they can unite on this.

The first step that he takes is by going to Barbantio and insinuates that Othello has stolen Desdemona through the act of witchcraft. He was hoping this would tear them asunder, but the plan backfired completely (Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust). Othello was able to convince the Senate as well as the Duke that the only thing he used to woo his current wife was his mouth. He enthralled her with stories about the war and that by so doing,

she fell in love with him. In addition to this, Desdemona stood up to defend her husband saying that she was there entirely out of her free-will. She said this in the presence of her father who went ahead to disown her swiftly.

The second plan that he made came utterly out of pure luck. While they, Iago, Desdemona, Emily, and Roderigo, were standing awaiting Othello's ship to dock, Cassius greeted Desdemona by clasping their hands together. Iago sees this as an opportunity to entrap Cassius. He says how he will take advantage of "as little a web as this" to trap Cassius (Shakespeare 29). He decides to deceive Othello that Cassius and Desdemona are having an affair. His plan, this time, was to use Cassius by making him stay in poor graces with Othello. During the reveling, after they won in the war, Iago made Cassius stone drunk and incited him against Roderigo. Because of the poor judgment caused by the alcohol, Cassius charged against Roderigo causing a huge commotion. Governor Montano tried to restrain Cassius, but Cassius stabbed him ((Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust). Iago sends Roderigo to raise the alarm in town. When Othello came out to know why there was commotion, Iago narrated the whole ordeal but first pretended to be reluctant to betray his "friend" Cassius. The king was so furious that he stripped Cassius of all his titles.

The final part of his plan was to make Othello believe that there was an existing sexual relationship between Cassius and Desdemona. The purpose of this is to make him jealous. Iago thought that the best way to finish Othello was by taking Cassius out of the equation. He organizes for Cassius to meet Desdemona in private to increase the suspicion in the mind of

Othello. When the meeting is over, Cassius walks timidly past Othello because he is not sure whether Othello has forgiven him or not (Bevington et. al np.). It was out of respect that he humbled himself. However, the king was suspicious of him, and Iago kindled the fire that was within him. He suggested that the only reason one would walk so timidly is if he had something actually to hide. Desdemona pities Cassius and over dinner talks to her husband about reinstating him. Her action ended up making the king even more jealous. She ended up bringing up the issue three times, and on the final time, she had lost the handkerchief that he had given her. In advance of this, Iago had staged for a performance where they would talk with Cassius just out of earshot from Othello (Bevington et. al np.). The happy nature of their conversation, in Othello's mind, had the effect of confirming that Cassius had an affair with Desdemona.

Additionally, the woman they were talking about, came with a handkerchief that was a duplicate of the one that Othello had given his wife as her first ever present. Eventually, Othello smothered Desdemona with a pillow until she died (Kirsch 258). The degree of hatred that Iago had in his heart for Othello cannot even be quantified. It is hard to understand what his goal was indeed but it was not forged from a place of happiness.

Jealousy is another psychoanalytical criteria that are present in the play. The most magnificent depiction of jealousy in the play is that of Othello himself. His resentment is fueled by two main things, false information given to him by Iago and a lack of trust for his wife. Iago saw his wife holding hands with Cassius and decided that he would take advantage of that to

bring Othello and his wife asunder inevitably. When Iago told Othello that his wife was having an affair with Cassius, he was not sure whether to believe him or not (Bevington et. al np.). Over supper, he did not bring up the subject, but Desdemona asked him whether he could reinstate Cassius to his former position. Her act cast a considerable shadow and just like that; he believed what Iago had told him. Later, Iago staged a show for Othello to see but he would not hear what exactly was going on (Kastan 480). However, after all that, his wife was still insistent that Cassius is reinstated to his former position and this was driving the commander mad because she seemed to be confirming what Iago was claiming. Her loss of the handkerchief appeared to be the last nail in the coffin. He was so jealous that he ended up killing her. His mistrust was also another reason for his jealousy. In the play, he did not, even once, ask her whether the claims were valid and even to give her a little time to defend herself at least. He took someone else's word for it, and he ended up killing his wife who protested the whole time that she was innocent.

Where there are hate and jealousy, there must also be love. These features are interdependent. Othello had a great love for his wife. He accepted to take her with him to war because she insisted. He also defends her in court saying it was her decision and that he did not have anything to influence her decision (Shmoop Editorial Team). Desdemona is also shown to have a great love for her husband. In the courthouse, she was disowned by her father because he did not approve of the man she had married. She stuck by her man at the risk of losing her father.

Othello is in line with Shakespeare's traditional approach to literature. He places a heavily drawn out, considerably extravagant, phrases or narcissism. His sense of style most times is pompous or even extravagant. He is always looking for theatricality. Additionally, he places a lot of tragedies in his plays. Most end with the main characters dying due to some unnecessary family feud. He continually uses metaphors to create melodrama (Freelance Writing 2016).