

Othello: same in
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Othello: The Tragedy of Human Nature
In the tragedy Othello, Shakespeare creates a mood that challenges the way a person sees his or her self and the world. Subjects like racism, sexism, love, hate, jealousy, pride, and trickery are thoroughly developed in the play of Othello to enable the audience to view the characters and also themselves. The Shakespearean tragedy of Othello was written in a time of great racial tensions in England. According to Eldred Jones, in 1600 just three years before Othello was written, Queen Elizabeth proclaimed an Edict for the Transportation of all “negars and blackmoores” out of the country (“Othello- An Interpretation” Critical Essays 39). It is in this atmosphere that Shakespeare began the masterpiece of Othello, a drama about a noble black Arab general, Othello, who falls in love with and marries, Desdemona, a young white daughter of a senator.

From the above knowledge one may conclude that Shakespeare wrote Othello to express that all people, of all ethnicity, are basically the same in human nature. Shakespeare borrowed the idea of Othello from an Italian love story by Giraldi Cinthio. However, Shakespeare focuses more on the differences in color and age between Othello and Desdemona than Cinthio. Shakespeare does this to escalate Othello's isolation from the rest of Venetian society and to display Othello's vulnerability due to his color. In the tragedy not only is Othello susceptible to weaknesses but so is every major character .

The tragedy reminds humans that even one's good nature can be taken advantage of for the worse. The drama Othello expresses, through relationships and emotional attitudes, a theme that all humans are vulnerable to destruction even if they are in positions of power and glory. All

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the relationships in the play are used to demonstrate the vulnerability of people when involved personally with other people. Each of the relationships in Othello portrays insecurities in each person, except Iago. In fact, all of the relationships with one character, Iago, are focused around him and his devilish plot for the demise of Othello. However, most of the relationships in Othello bring about unintentional frustrations and vulnerabilities. The marriages in Othello are the most important relationships in conferring vulnerability because they bring out the best hopes and attitudes, and the worst fears and emotions in each character. Shakespeare, in designing Othello's marriage to Desdemona, shows that although one can truly love a person, the need for human control can destroy any relationship causing heartbreak and turmoil.

From the very beginning, Othello faces a dilemma of vulnerability because of his marriage. In his essay, Eldred Jones has concurred with this by stating that Othello made himself available to public criticism and assaults on his character by marrying a young white girl ("Othello- An Interpretation" Critical essays 142). Furthermore, the couple's constant struggle over power and control makes them susceptible to destruction of their happiness.

Othello seeks complete control over his wife, Desdemona. Othello claims this in act 3. 3 line 267-270. That we can call these creatures ours, And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad And live upon the vapor of a dungeon.

Then keep a corner in the thing I love Othello is clearly showing that he sees Desdemona's love, faithfulness and submissions as criteria for his manhood. His feelings demonstrate how vulnerable people can become in putting their

self-value in another person. Desdemona also plays the power game. She swears to Cassio: "Give thee my warrant, assure thee, I do vow friendship to thee; the last article my lord shall never rest; I shall watch him tame and talk him out of patience. These words of Desdemona clearly present Desdemona's assertion to use sexual power to control Othello's actions. Emily Bartels states that Desdemona "Promises to make it fearful and difficult demands desiring a subject to command Othello's love" ("Strategies of submission" *Studies of English Literature: online*). Shakespeare, in developing the power struggle of Othello's marriage, reminds the audience that to control a person fully only brings about turmoil.

Like the sexual relationships, the non-sexual relationships in *Othello* emphasize the vulnerability of people when involved with other people personally and especially when dealing with people of shady character. The two adversarial relationships in the play develop out of Iago's master