

Informative essay on othello essay

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Gender Overplay The representation and relationships of women in Venetian society in terms of gender relations and equality are explored throughout the play. The character of Iago, adopts the sexist and discriminatory attitudes towards women that was common in the patriarchal society of Venice. Iago was someone who thought women were infinitely exploitable, dispensable objects and driven by sexual desire only- " That she may make, unmake, do what she list 'even as her appetite shall play the god. (Act 3 Scene 3). As Iago soliloquies, the repetition of " make" emphasizes the view of the relentless nature to which women approach relationships that was adopted by the patriarchal society. The view that women were characterized in such a derogatory and disparaging fashion, articulates the discriminative societal views that were upheld in Venetian society. Similarly, Iago's characterization of women is representative of the dominant societal view that women were inferior and nonsensical beings.

Interestingly, Emilia contrasts Iago's belief concerning the sexual desire of women by expressing her belief that men use women to satisfy their own sexual desire- " They are all but stomachs, and we all but food; / they eat us hungrily, and then when they are full/ they belch us. " (Act 3 Scene 4). With the use of a metaphor to express the exploitation of women, combined with figurative language, Emilia illustrates the gender tensions and views of women existing in a pre-feminist society of women's oppression.

The gender tensions that were present in the Venetian society existed on a basis of assumptions, having been predetermined by central societal beliefs. The resolution of play necessitates the death of Desdemona and Emilia due to their anomalous attempts to usurp the Elizabethan chain- mite I'll not shed

her blood/nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow/yet she must die, else he'll betray all men. "(Act 5 Scene 2) The use of an assertive tone, combined with figurative language expresses the belief that women were represented as threats to Venetian patriarchal structure.

Desman had set herself outside the bounds of accepted female behavior, and her death signifies a return to patriarchal control. Othello is a warning for those who attempt to usurp their position in Venetian society. Those people, who endeavour to challenge the Elizabethan chain of being, are punished for their actions. Othello continues to engage audiences through its exploration of gender power plays- perennial, universal concerns that transcend time Racial Overplay Racial tensions explored in Othello are perennial themes which continue to engage audiences.

Othello is considered as the 'outsider' as he comes from outside of Venice and 'retains some of his alien origins.' In entering into marriage with Desman, Othello is stepping outside his expected role in society and challenging the Venetian hierarchal 'chain of being power structure. The racial discrimination and views on interracial marriage are expressed through use of binary opposition, using the analogy of a black ram and white ewe to highlight the bridge that exists between Othello and Desman belonging to different racial backgrounds- " Even now, now, very now, an old black ram is tipping your white ewe. (Act 1 Scene 1). Bestial imagery is also used with anthropomorphism to convey the racial prejudice expressed by Abortion and also the wider Venetian societal views on race and interracial marriage. This view characterizes Othello and intern his racial background as being

associated with something that has negative connotations attached to it- "old black ram". Throughout the plays evolution, the audience witnesses as Othello absorbs the explicit racism and black imagery, resulting in self-hatred.

This is communicated through use of allusion as Othello utilizes his own "blackness" to characterize himself as savage- " Her name, that was fresh/ as Din's visage, is now begrimed and black/as mine on face. " (Act 3 Scene 3). Othello reflects the Venetian racial elucidation that blackness was a representation of evil and iniquity. At the conclusion of the play, it is clear to the audience that Othello is completely immersed in the racial based discriminatory values that are upheld by Venetian society.

Before ending his life Othello mentions 'Turk', expressing a view of himself as the enemy to Venice- " Where a malignant and turbaned Turk/beat a Venetian and traduced the state" (Act 5 Scene 2). The allusion to the Turkish emphasizes the comparison that Othello is making of himself to something savage and unrelenting. This communicates the depth to which Othello has allowed himself to be pervaded with the dominant racial societal views. Resolution to the social challenge could only come wrought the death and disgrace of those who attempt to usurp the Venetian 'chain of being power structure.

Othello is a warning for those who attempt to usurp the Elizabethan chain of being power structure. Those people, who attempt to contravene the divinely constructed social order, are punished for their anomalous actions. Through extracting the perennial power relations of the play, a Marxist and Feminist paradigm can be adopted. Shakespearean domestic tragedy Othello

continues to engage audiences through its exploration of race and gender power plays- universal concerns that transcend time and place.