

Othello shakespeare's thoughts about women

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Shakespeare was a great playwright of his time and created some of the most revisited literary works in history, but even someone as experienced as he can sometimes be lacking in ideas. Ironically, Shakespeare uses women in his plays just as they were used in the renaissance era. The three women in this play are all somehow seen as whores.

Shakespeare uses the women characters in the play and Othello, to further the plot and only introduces them when it is convenient for the progression of the story. In short, Shakespeare uses his characters as tools to fill a gap in the plotline: Desdemona, Bianca, Emilia.

Immediately into act one, scene one, Roderigo, Iago, and Brabantio, are speaking with one another about Brabantio's daughter, Desdemona. Of hearing about Desdemona's new fiance, Brabantio exclaims, " how got she out?"(I. i. 6). In his words, he implies that there is no way that she is to be married because she is not allowed to be outside her home or that there is some form of restriction. Desdemona would not have fallen in love had she been locked away where she is supposed to be and detests her because of it. " Ay, to me. She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted by spells and medicines bought of mountebanks. For nature, so prepost'rously to err, being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense, Sans witchcraft could not"(I. iii. 11). Brabantio goes to Desdemona's new fiance and asks Othello how it is that he could sway his daughter into loving someone as low in the hierarchy as a moor. With his prior prejudice toward Othello, he accuses him of witchcraft, spells, and medicinal concoctions that invoked these feelings from Desdemona. In Brabantio's opinion, there is no situation in which she would make this decision for herself.

Othello defends his honor and tells Brabantio to summon Desdemona to speak on his behalf. Othello is more than faithful in Desdemona, so much so that he offered his execution if she claims that any wrongdoing has occurred. This is one of the first occurrences that a woman is used to help aid in a situation. It may be small, but Othello uses Desdemona to vindicate him since he is apparently unable to verbalize his defense; However, it is quite ironic because the literary genius, A. C. Bradley, suggests that, " Othello is, in one sense of the word, by far the most romantic figure among Shakespeare's heroes," and that, " Othello's most famous speeches [...] and if one places side by side with these speeches an equal number by any other hero, one will not doubt that Othello is the greatest poet of them all"(Derby, 5: 30). This shows that the use of Desdemona was unnecessary in the slightest to the situation. In reality, Othello could use his words to great effect and would not need to call upon someone else to persuade them of his innocence. What seems to be a simple discrepancy can prove to be a larger misdirection. With Shakespeare's talent, there is no doubt that he made this scene as drama-filled as he could make it, but would the scene have the same effect if Othello could defuse the situation himself?

The next woman that is used in the play is Iago's wife, Emilia. Emilia is also treated like a whore and an object, mainly by her husband Iago. He is constantly degrading toward her and always makes sure that she knows about her flaws. He constantly belittles her even when she does whatever she can to please him. One such example is when she retrieves the handkerchief from Desdemona's quarters. His first reply to her is, " Good wench; give it me"(III. iii. 50); Instead of " thank you," or a kind reply, he

sounds as if he is scolding her. She then genuinely asks him what it is he needs it for and is concerned that Desdemona will get upset if she thinks she lost it. "What will you do with 't, that you have been so earnest to have me filch it?"(III. iii. 50). His reply to the question shows how little he appreciates her. "[Snatching it] Why, what's that to you?"(III. iii. 50). His defensive stance toward the question confuses her and she says that she would like to return it if he would be kind enough. He responds with a scowl and tells her to leave him be. Their marriage is portrayed as to being one-sided in love. He seems to only use Emilia as a tool for his benefit in the end. His mistreatment of Emilia and deception to her was his downfall. If Iago was to let her in on his plan, she might have had more respect toward him and not expose his plans. Maybe, she would have helped him complete his plot of betrayal.

The last woman to highlight is that of the Bianca. In the play, she is the foil character and complete opposite of Emilia and Desdemona. Bianca, a model of sorts, is the one example of what a prostitute truly should be viewed as. The men of the play seem to look past the fact that Emilia, Desdemona, and Bianca are massively different in comparison to one another, yet they still put them on the same plane as her. Emilia and Desdemona do not share any distinguishing qualities with Bianca, but on several occasions, they both have been subject to the same behavior that Bianca would receive. This is a key example in showing how much importance the men seeing women of that era. Men do not see women as different or unique from another woman, rather having the same stereotyped behavior and that no conversation with a woman has any real substance.

Women in the play Othello are portrayed to be nothing but extra space being taken up and a stepping stone to further one's schemes. Women are portrayed as this naïve and incompetent subculture in that no respect is needed to be given to them. They are used in petty situations that could easily be handled by the male that is asking them, or rather instructing them, to help them. One such example is when Othello was describing how his relationship with Desdemona began. He was completely capable of forming his defense but rather was too lazy or too apathetic handle to the situation for himself. That is why, similar to many other occasions in the play, the woman that was being addressed was selfishly abused and manipulated to benefit themselves. seemed that in the process of writing the play, Shakespeare chose to use a women's role to easily further the plot or cause more drama in the scene. Women in medieval times and of the Shakespearean era are merely perceived as objects. This common view of women translated into the play Othello when Shakespeare wrote it. Othello is a strong example of bias and preconceived notions being embedded in one's literature even if the writer does not mean to do so.