



VIDHYAYANA

ISSN 2454-8596

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

A Critical Study of the Play Othello



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Introduction

Othello is the only one of Shakespeare's four great tragedies to be based on a story dealing with the contemporary world. Othello is a cosmic tragedy. Shakespeare did not divide the human nature into the masculine and the feminine; but he aspersed in woman and man a unifying force of the two opposing gender impulses. To talk about his Shakespeare's women is to talk about his men, because he refused to separate their worlds physically, intellectually or spiritually. The Shakespearean conception of tragedy was that the closer the relationship between persons of the opposite sexes, with the interchange of essential characteristics of predominance of reason in man and emotion in woman the result would be surely the occurring of tragedy in their lives.

Iago's words "I am not what I am" awakens a deep sense of fear and brings about consciousness that in future he is going to upraise difficulties and

Iago's word "I am not what I am" awaken stay deep sense of fear and brings about conciseness that in future he is going to apprise difficulties and problems in the life of Othello and Desdemona. Iago develops hatred for Othello and account of frustrated official ambition and Rodrigo has been jilted in love as a result of which both Iago and Rodrigo are ready to join hands in the act of breaking their marital relationship. Rodrigo being left blind after Desdemona fails to understand his Iago's warning word "I am not what I am". Iago is a shrouded person and has dual personality and a perfect master in the art of plausibility take one and all are gullible. Iago is a Marvel of a dual personality. His inner life is sealed to the outer world life has no necessary connection with his inmost being. He must have early discussed for himself that self-control is sex control. When Rodrigo complains, "it is not in my right to amend." Iago states that being so fond of Desdemona that, "I will incontinently nearly drown myself" Iago teaches him:

Virtue! a fig! 'tis in our ears that we are thus, or thus. (Act I, Scene 3, Lines 323)

Love to Iago is nothing but malice and bodily pleasure and Desires. His own mastery over sex is such that it stands almost completely eliminated. He considers physical sex on the end half a matter of business when it matters to one's purse or personal ambition. He speaks subtlety calling love as a master reason and a ruthless sex-mutilator. He is even a great critic of female character, he says to Desdemona that you women are,



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"Players in year houseuri....., and housewives in your beds". (Act Ii, Scene I, lines 113)

Here there is a play on the double meaning of housewife in mistress of a house and every kit is women likely not serious about their relationship but who frequently change their opinions and beliefs as a wife.

History of Amelia for his wife does credit to his sense of a sexual fitness. For she too, is able to abore Iago and love in spite of his dominance over her in various matters. He is well in sex lore, as his reading of various type of women's character to Desdemona in the very presence of his wife amelia. Iago learnt by experience. Observation and Reflection that to control the natural human was in fact a herculean task. Iago's intellect and sex formed an essential constituent blend which is the true morning force of the tragedy. He has no use for men and women in women the physical sex has risen to The Spiritual level through sublimation. Iago leaves Bianca rigorously alone when he come to know that the front of her love for Casio who was very imperious. Iago abuses her as a result of his habitual disbelief. in any one's sexual integrity.

That dotes oh Cassio; as 'tis the strunpet's plague To beguile many and be beguiled by one (Act 4, Scene I, Lines 95-96).

Iago is too shrewd and even leaves Emilia, Strictly out of all his intrigues. He does not directly ask for her corporation. The reasons is quite clear. First, as a woman, Iago knows that she is naturally incapabke of keeping a secret and second that her reason is not clouded by any great love for himself and he even goes to the Grotesque extent of suspicion of illicit love for "the lusty Moor", she cannot of course be trusted. It is curious that Iago ever despises sex, It is curious that Iago ever despises sex, whereas Emilia admires it. The sense of mystery and fear deepens as in the very first act, sxene one, Brabantio, A Senator and father of Desdenona is awakened with "dire yell" in the hight by Iago and Roderigo amd he is informed that his daughter has cloped with Othello. With perverse animal imageries.

Such as:

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram Is tuppng your white awe (Act I, Scene I, Lines 35-36).

Here Iago describe sweet Hai wild animal imagery that a male sheep is copulating with a female sheep meaning at this very moment Desdemona and Othello are enjoying the joys at their newly married life. He adds to this grotesque imagery another perverse imagery that of Desdemona and the Hoor making the beast with two backs. It means that Iagos's imagination is pervaded with sexual pleasures of the married life. Instead of taking it natural and easy Iago's mind always remain damned in bodily desires and perverse



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sexual imageries.

Throughout the play is given many attribute is to racial discrimination by Iago. Iago calls him a black Ram a black horse which is barbaric in nature and even unimaginable attribute of "Sooty bosom" Here Othello's blackness affirms that he was black but a critic Ridely calle Othello a "veritable negro" meaning who would evidently appear "sub-human" to European eyes. Rymer, Cobridge, and other critics state the fact that Othello's individual blackness varises more in relationship to Desdemona's fair purity. Cobridge calles it "monstrous". Even the Duke says to Brobantio that " your son-in-law is far more fair than black" Desdemona is described as a "fair devil" as a "fair paper" and a "Goodly books" across thr ehitr pages ofbwhicj Othelli fears is written "whore". The meaning of black even before the sixteenth century, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, Included "Deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul, having dark or deadly purposes, horrible, wicked ect. In Othello, the emphasis an Desdemona's fairness and purity and the idealization of fair female beauty implies to the entire apparatus of petrarchaanism. Until the late sixteenth century the couse of blackness depended on classical sources other than experience or observation. In the myth of Phacton, African's blackness was explained by their proximity to the sun. Thus during the Elizabethan and Jacobean period people of England believed that there is a strong link between the blackness of a person and the evil force of the devil. the myth of black sexuality and the problem of black subjection to authority was given more importance.

In the later part of the play Iago's mind is slowly disposed in Othello and with perverse animal imagery of toads in a pond is revealed whicj is again a grotesque picture with perverse thought of physical natural forces of sex. In the psychoanalytic term, the handkerchief Othello inherits from his mother and then gives to Desdemona has been given the substitution for the mother's missing phallus. Thus, the handkerchief is the fetish that endows, "women as sexual object". The Handkerchief associated with the mother, witchcraft and the marvelous representation the link between feminity and the monstrous. The handkerchief has a significant and also historical indicator of clads or transgressions. Psychologically it even signifies male fears of duplicity, consummation and politically describing because it has become a feminine tribal.

Thus, Othello's tragic action is structured not around a heroic act or object of war; but around a trifle, a feminine toy. Shakespeare was certainly subject to the racist, sexist and colonialist discourses of his time, by making the black Othello a hero and making Desdemona's love only for him and her transgressions of her society's norms for women in choosing Othello as a husband. Othello's doubt in his sex-attitude to Desdemona, led to his loving "not wisely, but too well" lies in the fact that he had caught her soul on its



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emotional bounce, in a start of indecision, as to her choice between himself and Cassio.

Conclusion:

Othello and Iago were inseparable in order to understand Othello we have to go through the personality of Iago. If Iago is an emotional evanch, as Theodore they formed one well balanced personality. In the end there is the truth wrining on the side of Desdemona. If Othello had acted on the intellectual grounds of reasoning than he would have lived even a more happier life with Desdemona. Othello started well as a good single soldier, but ended ill, as a civilian married to a woman of alien culture:

"O thou Othello! that wert once so good". (Act 5, Scene 2, Lines 290).

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