

## Othello's Conflict: As a Collision of Love and Honour

---

**Mansour Mohammed Ali Faraj**, Assistant professor of English Literature, Department of English, Faculty of Education- Al Mahweet, Sana'a University, Yemen.

**Article Received:**01/5/2022,

**Article Accepted:** 02/06/2022,

**Published online:** 03/06/2022,

**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2022.4.6.01

---

### Abstract

The current study is a new investigation of *The Tragedy of Othello* as an honor-killing tragedy that deals with the issues of love and honor under the context of the patriarchal institution of marriage. However, its primary concern is the hero's internal conflict that sets on the collision of love and honor under the influence of the external factor played by Iago, whose role is necessary to bring these two passions into collision and, accordingly, leads to the tragic end. The significance of this study is apparent. It is new. Unlike other various studies, it analyses the issue of love in terms of the (neo) platonic theory of love for the first time. The second place offers new valuable insights into Othello's tragic flaws. It proves the play is a tragedy of character and the hero's ruin is due to neither jealousy nor racism. His drawback is his upholding the absoluteness of these two passions. As a husband, he has failed to prey to his absolute adherence to the patriarchal attitude concerning honor and was unable to recognize the validity of his absolute love for his wife and her innocence.

**Key Words:** *Othello*, Collision, Honour-killing, conflict, patriarchy, marriage, spiritual love

### 1. Introduction

*The Tragedy of Othello* is one of the masterpiece tragedies written by William Shakespeare. It is a recreation of an Italian writer Giraldi Cinthio entitled '*Un Capitano Moro*,' which appeared in his *Gli Hecatommithi* (Wikipedia: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Othello>). Though Shakespeare bases his play on Cinthio's story, *Othello* is seen as nothing but a testimony to William Shakespeare's ingenuity and creativity by adding considerable changes and modifications to the original text.

As a famous play, *Othello* has gained its popularity through many interpretations, studies, and research papers and through the movies and performances it has been made into. It has been widely recreated and used as a basis for many stories written worldwide, but it has also been translated into various languages. Moreover, it has been analyzed in different ways

by different approaches, for it deals with a lot of universal themes that are still crucial issues in the contemporary era. Moreover, it has been a focal concern for critics and scholars to debate, study, and analyze, and more interpretations and critical analyses continue to appear

Despite the large store of literature on *Othello*, there are still some gaps to fill in. The most crucial aspect that has not been well-overlooked is the hero's identity as a lover and husband. Accordingly, the tragedy can be interpreted as a domestic play concerning the hero's passions of love and honor embodied in his marital relationship with his wife Desdemona, which are significant in understanding the hero's central conflict. Therefore, the current study attempts to reexamine Othello's conflict from an objective angle. It aims to analyze *Othello* as a domestic play dealing with the marital relationship between Othello and Desdemona under the influence of the patriarchal institution of marriage through which Othello's central conflict can be interpreted as a collision of love and honor, and the intrigues adapted and arranged by Iago bring these two passions into collision.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. William Shakespeare As a Timeless Genius**

William Shakespeare is an English dramatist and poet widely considered the utmost writer England offers the globe. However, it is unfair to label him as an English writer but as a global one; if he nationally belongs to England, he intellectually belongs to the world. His greatness extends far beyond the geographical borders of his native country. It spread worldwide to the extent that he has been referred to as "the world's greatest dramatist" (Wikipedia: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Shakespeare](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare)). Simon Callow, as quoted in Wikipedia, describes him with these lovely words:

This master, this titan, this genius, so profoundly British and so effortlessly universal, each different culture-German, Italian, Russian- was obliged to respond to the Shakespearean example..... He is that unique writer: he has something for everyone (Ibid).

Shakespeare is a remarkable writer who gains immortality neither through statues nor memorials but through his intellectual accomplishments and brilliant works, which have been/ are/ will be performed, translated, studied, and reinterpreted, sold, and read more than those of any other writer anywhere and anytime. Guinness Book of World Records labels him as "the world's best-selling playwright, with sales of his plays and poetry believed to have achieved more than four billion copies since his death" (Ibid). He is also "the third most translated author in history" (Ibid).

Shakespeare has also been the agent of inspiration and influence for other dramatists, novelists, poets, musicians, and painters. For instance, according to critic George Steiner, all English verse dramas from Coleridge to Tennyson are "feeble variations of Shakespearean themes" (Ibid). Moreover, about twenty thousand musical pieces have been linked to his

works. Among the novelists whom he influenced are Thomas Hardy, William Faulkner, Charles Dickens, etc. In addition, in tracing the adaptation of his plays in the postmodern era, many writers have depended on his plays in creating their novels and films (Ibid).

Shakespeare's greatness and immortality are that his plays depict what is "central, timeless, and universal in human experience" (Habib, 2005, p. 274). "What creates a universal, lasting, and profound dramatic effect," Hegel states, "is what is substantive in action -i.e., morality as specific subject matter, and greatness of spirit and character as form. And here too Shakespeare is supreme" (Hegel, 1975, p.1173). His plays attract a larger and larger public because they deal with human nature, concerning all that is commonly shared by humankind regardless of time, place, or culture. Samuel Johnson portrays them as "just representations of general nature" and classifies him as "a poet of nature" who "holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and life" (Johnson). In characterization, Shakespeare creates his characters to be "the genuine progeny of common humanity" (Ibid) who are never shaped by:

the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world;  
by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but  
upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or  
temporary opinions. (Ibid)

Shakespeare's characters are not individuals but, according to Johnson, "commonly a species" who act and speak not only "by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated" but also as "the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion" (Ibid).

Moreover, despite his lacking formal education, Shakespeare's accomplishments were the product of his genius" as he obtained "an exact knowledge of many modes of life" gathered "by contemplating things as they exist" (Ibid). According to Habib, Neander points out that Shakespeare was "naturally learned," not through books but the reading of nature and all her image (Habib, 2005, p. 288). Moreover, this is why only in Shakespeare's works can every reader find what they want. This proves Ben Jonson's famous saying that Shakespeare's art is "not of an age, but for all time" (Wikipedia: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Shakespeare](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare)). George Santayana also considers Shakespeare the only one who portrays "so many-sided an expression to human nature" and "rendered so many passions and moods with such an appropriate variety of style, sentiment, and accent." According to him, it is the works of Shakespeare that should be chosen as a "monument of human civilization that should survive to some future age, or be transported to another planet to bear witness to the inhabitants there of what we have been upon the earth" (1900, p. 147).

*The Tragedy of Othello*, for example, is a universal play that depicts a general moral issue that applies to “the concerns of human life” and that which “comes directly home to the bosoms and business of men” (Hazlitt, 1817, p. 28-29). Everett Barbara describes it as the only Shakespeare tragedy set entirely in the present in time, space, and occurrence (Barbara, 1989, p. 40). Bradley calls it "a drama of modern life." It is the story of everyday life, and "the characters come close to us, and the application of the drama to ourselves is more immediate than it can be in Hamlet or Lear" (cited in Smith, 1998).

## **2.2. Othello As a Tragedy**

*Othello* is considered a significant type of an expertly created tragedy with all characteristics and elements that make it Shakespeare's most significant tragic piece. One of these features is the character of the tragic hero. Othello is portrayed as a hero capable of the supreme merits of nobility, practicality, heroism, leadership, and dignity. Accordingly, it is these merits that promote him to a unique position in criticism and literature, "and in proportion to the greatness of his position, his character, and his influence is," according to D.J. Donovan, "the greatness of the tragedy" (cited in Sen,2007, p. 297).

Moreover, Othello is represented as a man endowed with all elements of a tragic hero. He is a noble general with an excellent position assorted by respect and admiration held for him by all Venetian noble leaders. He also shows freedom of choice; he is a man of action, swift in making decisions, and quick in doing what he has decided. A. C. Bradley states, "hesitation {to Othello} is almost impossible. He is extremely self-reliant, and decides and acts instantaneously" (cited in Smith, 1998). Moreover, this is why he regards the play as a tragedy of character, not of intrigue, as he argues:

We must not call the play a tragedy of intrigue as distinguished from a tragedy of character. Iago's plot is Iago's character in action, and it is built on his knowledge of Othello's character, and he could not otherwise have succeeded. Still, it remains true that an elaborate plot was necessary to elicit the catastrophe (cited in Sen, 2007, p. 195).

Bradley never denies the importance of Iago's intrigues in bringing about the tragedy. However, like other critics, he sees the actual cause of Othello's tragic end lies in his character and actions that entangle him in the tragic conflict. Like Cassius in *Julius Caesar*, the witches and lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, and the ghost in *Hamlet*, Iago's intrigues are seen as the external factor that plays an additional part in the tragedy. Iago adapts his intrigues according to his knowledge of Othello's character, in which he finds some flaws without which his intrigues cannot possibly succeed (Ibid, p. 44-45).

To serve the purpose of the current study, Othello can be read as a domestic play concerning love and marriage about the patriarchal social norms of a society. Such a marital

relationship is, according to Hegel, "the ideal ethical relationship because the secret moment of desire, the moment of physical passion, is transformed into self-conscious love through marriage" (Mills, 1986). Apart from his military life, Othello crowns his domestic life with the glory of love that fills his heart with tenderness and happiness under the context of marriage. As a lover, he is "one of the greatest lovers in the literature of the world, the greatest lover in Shakespeare" (Wikipedia: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Othello>). Love is absolute; it "must be the heaven where he must live or bear no life" (Bradley 136).

Moreover, "the treatment of love is inseparable from both that heroism out of which love arose, and that sense of honor that Othello brings with him from the military world" (Epstein, 1998). His sense of honor is strong. He views both marital and professional honor as something absolute. Honor to him is everything he possesses; if he loses it, he will lose everything.

Drawing the reader's attention to the impact of the autocracy of patriarchal society in the play, Charney describes *Othello* as the only Shakespearean domestic tragedy that deals with an ordinary person and starts "from the traditionally comic base of the cuckolded husband, or the husband who imagines himself a cuckold" (2000, p. 97). The hero's ruin is due to his adherence to patriarchy (Loomba, 1989, Scheman, 1987). According to Gayle Greene, *Othello* stems from "men's misunderstandings of women and women's inability to protect themselves from society's conception of them" (Das, 2012).

Based on these comments, it is evident that Shakespeare focuses on the absolute significance of the patriarchal system of marriage that plays a significant role in the play's dramatic action. Accordingly, it is the patriarchy that dominates the dramatic actions of Othello. For Othello, being betrayed by his wife means the loss of his identity. Moreover, therefore, "the tradition of honor-killing in his culture becomes prominent" (Fonseke, 2018) in the process of murdering her as a married woman who "violates honor norms and is supposed to die in order to restore the honor, for such contextual shameful behavior cannot be tolerated at any cost" (Bangash, 2017).

### **2.3. The Patriarchy**

#### **2.3.1. The Patriarchal Marriage**

England in the Elizabethan era was a male-centered society where a man with great authority dominated all its aspects. In terms of the patriarchy, a woman was granted an inferior social position, living at the margins of society, being excluded socially, economically, and politically to the extent that she became a part of a man's property. She was molded into the form of the dutiful wife and mother, who was expected to be silent, chaste, and obedient. She lived a life full of inferiority, misery, oppression, and lack of freedom and equality, relying on her father or husband for protection and a living.

The construction of marriage was a male-centered institution under which marriage was considered a holy relationship based on a more excellent order and authority that the female had to endure. The patriarchal principles of marriage were extensively depicted and supported by the religious institution and the State. For instance, Saint Paul, in the New Testament, confirmed the wife's duty through his teachings, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection," he instructed her, "but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." He also argued submission: "wives submit yourselves to your husbands (Bodner, 2013, p. 76). A woman's disobedience to her husband was, thus, not regarded just as a personal offense but as a violation of divine order. Moreover, the husband's authority over his wife was enshrined by King James when he said, "Ye are the head, she is your body; it is your office to commend, and hers to obey; but yet with such a sweet harmony, as she should be as ready to obey, as ye to commend" (Luckyj, 2022, p. 51).

Shakespeare also sheds light on these norms in his plays. For example, a wife's submission to her husband's authority is portrayed in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act 5, Scene 2, when Kate teaches women their wifely duties: "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, thy head, thy sovereign,... And craves no other tribute at thy hands But love, fair looks, and true obedience".(Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*).

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare also depicts the patriarchal attitude regarding the woman's lack of freedom to marry the man of her own choice through the Duke's words to Hermia: To you, your father should be as a god,/ One that composed your beauties, yea, and one/ To whom you are but as a form in wax,/ By him imprinted and within his power/ To leave the figure or disfigure it (1.1.47–51) (Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Similarly, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, a wife is depicted as a husband's property. Petruchio claims to Kate with these only words: "She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house, My household stuff, my field, my bam, My horse, my ox, my ass, my everything (Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*).

However, the most crucial patriarchal principle is that a wife should be chaste and faithful to her husband. Her chastity measures her value in society and her husband's eyes, for a husband's honor depends on her fidelity. Thus, while chastity is the standard by which a woman's value is measured, honor is the single standard by which a man's value is measured. For this reason, Renaissance men were anxious about the ageless fear of wearing the horns of the cuckold; a husband, therefore, had to dominate and control his wife's sexuality to avoid cuckoldry, which was seen as a mockery of his virility (Kahn, 1981, p. 122).

### **2.3.2.The Concept of Honour and Honour-Killing**

'honor' indicates an individual's praiseworthiness, respectability, prestige, esteem, and dignity in society. It can be defined as "a personality feature of an asset associated with veracity and good moral character" (Sharma, 2018, p. 22). What makes a man honorable is not his social or financial status but his honor acknowledged by the community. As a result,

the person has to protect his honor to avoid disgrace and shame, even if it demands death for anyone who may violate honor codes

In a patriarchal society, the worth of the honor is always correlated with the behavior of the women in a sense that "women are considered the upholders of the honor of the family, and it is their behavior which becomes the mark of family honor" (Shipway, 2004, p. 47). Therefore, great importance is attached to the value of her chastity and the necessity of its protection as it is believed that her "virginity belongs to her family" (Sharma, 2018, p. 51). Yasmeen Maxamuud, in her novel *Nomad Diaries: Life, War, And America* (2009), considers it "the veracity of honor" on which family honor is based as she points out, "Keep your purity and your honor your family" ( p. 65). Consequently, a female's chastity is continuously "pronounced, brutally inspected, cursed and seen as dishonor that [can] befall the family" (Ibid, p. 241). Women, especially young girls, are thus "instructed to shield purity" (Ibid, p. 65).

Accordingly, fathers and husbands have the right to control and dominate their females to protect their sexuality, for their "masculinity is reflected in its control of female sexuality" (Cohen-Mor, p. 33). This domination and control over women is a part of a traditionally patriarchal culture that grants them the right to tame and keep an eye on their daughters and wives for the sake of "preserving honor" (National Inquiry report on Factors and causes of Rape and Honor Killing in Afghanistan, 1392, p. 88)

When a woman loses her chastity, she loses her honor, but she also violates the essential cultural code that is the basis of her family's honor. She becomes the cause of shame and disgrace in the family. Therefore, she should be attacked physically and murdered in honor- of killing. "If a woman," Michael Kurkiala states:

refused to comply with the rules set by her cultural community, her immoral behavior" contaminated the whole family. If other strategies to make the women comply failed, the only remedy was for her male relatives to kill her to protect the family honor. Thus, the murders were culturally sanctioned and designed to uphold a specific moral order (2003, p. 6).

According to Human Rights Watch (2001), the crucial cause that elicits a woman to be attacked by her family is infidelity lost through extramarital affairs or premarital affairs. Other cases include rape, rebellion against her father's authority when she rejects the marriage arranged by him, and marrying or eloping with a partner belonging to a different social class

As a patriarchal concept, Honor-killing emerged as a product of patriarchal solid social structures that entangle the family's honor with the female's sexuality and any immoral

behavior of hers that "poses a threat to the patriarchal set up" (Sharma, 2018, p. 9). It is a global exercise practiced throughout history all over the world. Abdul Hadi states: "the historical account of the 'honor' related crimes confirms that the killing in the name of 'honor' with legislative backing is neither a new phenomenon nor limited to any specific part of the world" (p. 30). The husband's right to murder both his adulterous wife and adulterer was, according to Goldstein (2002), one of Hammurabi, Nesilim, and Assura's codes. It was also legalized in ancient Rome and the Germanic tribes of Western Europe, the Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian cultures (Daly & Wilson, 2017).

According to The United Nations Population Fund, about 5000 women have been killed in the name of 'honor' worldwide (cited in Hadi, 2020, p. 30). The report submitted by the Special Rapporteur at the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly (2002) reveals that honor-killing had been practiced in "Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Turkey, and other Mediterranean and Persian Gulf countries" (Ibid, p. 30) and in countries such as Bangladesh, Great Britain, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Pakistan, Morocco, Sweden, Turkey, and Uganda. It has also been reported in the US and Canada (Ibid, p. 30).

#### **2.4. Shakespeare's Concept of Love**

Love is the strongest human emotion with an incredible power that binds lives of togetherness. Its importance lies in its power within one's soul that provides one with great joy and safety to heal the wounds of life, ease the anguish and lessen one's strife, and ends one's alienation from others. However, it can also be the driving force of life that drives him to do insane things entirely out of his character or plunges him into the darkest despair. Due to its impact on human life, love has become a hot universal issue for philosophers, literary men, and scholars; all attempt to capture it and its nature.

Plato is the first philosopher who examines love (Eros) in *Symposium*. He idealizes love as a purely spiritual being that is assumed to be originated from God to the soul. He divides Eros (love) into Vulgar Eros (later known as: 'earthly love,' 'physical or sensual love,' romantic or 'common love') and Divine Eros, identified under the term 'Platonic love' (later known as: 'spiritual love,' or 'heavenly love'). While the former is "nothing but mere material attraction towards a beautiful body for physical pleasure and reproduction" (Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platonic\\_love](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platonic_love) ), the latter is defined as a "pure, spiritual affection, subsisting between persons of the opposite sex, unmixed with carnal desires, and regarding the mind and its excellences a species of love for which Plato was a warm advocate" (Porter, 1913). In this sense, a platonic lover desires more than mere physical beauty in the object of his devotion. He:

seeks for the intangible qualities of virtue, truth, wisdom; and "when, along with this beauty of person, there is found the additional charm of a susceptible, generous, intelligent mind--- the bodily



sympathy(becomes) spiritualized and absorbed by the mental (Grote, 1888).

However, these two types of love "are both considered connected, and part of the same continuous process of pursuing perfection of one's being" (Benardate, 1986). Platonic love undergoes a process of development, indicated by the lover's bodily desire, and, finally, reaches spirituality as Plato states that it "concerns rising through levels of closeness to wisdom and true beauty, from carnal attraction to individual bodies to attraction to soul, and eventually, union with the truth" (Mish, 1993). It begins "the journey from physical attraction but transcending gradually to love for supreme beauty, placed on a similar level to the divine" (Wikipedia: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platonic\\_love](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platonic_love) ).

Marsilio Ficino revived the Platonic concept of love in his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium* in terms of Christianity. Since God created all the creatures and the universe, love, according to him, is "the motive force of the whole universe" and "all the earthly goods." Accordingly, man "should love any earthly good and beauty derived from the universal good, created by God" (p.130). Mutual love is, according to him, the ideal type of love through which a lover can reach divine love by climbing up the ladder of love. Through mutual love, the two lovers can melt into one another. As he quotes Plato, a lover is "a soul dead in its body and living in that of another." The lovers live in each other after they die to themselves or lose themselves as he explains:

Whenever two people are brought together in mutual affection, one lives in the other and the other in him. In this way, they mutually exchange identities; each gives himself to the other. In such a way, each receives the other in return.....each has himself and has the other..... A has himself, but B has himself, but in A (p.144-145).

In the Renaissance period, love was examined and depicted in terms of the courtly love that emerged as equivalent to spiritual love. It is "a heterosexual relationship" where sexual intercourse is indefinitely postponed (Cuddon, 1977, p. 165). Capellanus describes it as "the pure love which binds together the hearts of two lovers with every feeling of delight. This kind consists in the contemplation of the mind and the affection of the heart" (p. 122). The English Renaissance poets such as Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, and John Donne were influenced by the Platonic theory of love as their love poems reflect the principles of Neoplatonic love under which:

women are idealized; the lover, stricken by both the spiritual and personal beauty of his lady, owes her obedience and submission; the love the lover pursues has the power to purify his soul and ennoble him; and the lover longs for union with his lady in order to attain moral excellence (Ma, 2014).

They did not repudiate the sensual love. However, they preferred spiritual love. Like Ficino, they believed that "through mutual love, two lovers achieve that perfect fusion of souls that make them one- neither he nor she, but both he and she in one spiritual union" (Cirillo, 1969, p. 81). Therefore, spiritual love is a process of development, marked by the growing intensity of a lover's desire and the quickening of his response to spiritual realities

William Shakespeare, like his contemporaries, celebrates and appreciates the value of spiritual love that is based on the communication of minds. It is "the show and seal of nature's truth" (Wilson, 1968, p. 17). Shakespeare's lover, like Platonic, seeks truth and beauty in love: Both truth and beauty on my love depends,/ So dost thou (Muse) too, and there undignified" (Manis, 1999-2013, Sonnet 101). He desires not the outward beauty but the inward: I did but strived to prove/ The constancy, and virtue of your love" (Ibid, Sonnet 117). In Sonnet 69, he emphasizes the importance of the mind and associates the beauty with the goodness that provides him with the soul's perfection: They look into the beauty of thy mind,/ And that in guess, they measure by thy deeds./ Then, churls, their thoughts, although their eyes were kind/ Then, churls, their thoughts, although their eyes were kind" (Ibid). Shakespeare's declaration of true love is, furthermore, presented in Sonnet 116. According to him, the true love is unchangeable; it is not the kind of passion "which alters when it alteration finds." It is "an everfixed mark/That looks on tempests and is never shaken." It is ideal perfect love that is influenced neither by circumstances nor by age; it is eternal till the edge of doom (Ibid)

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Shakespeare appreciates the purity and sacredness of spiritual love through the word 'soul': O, Heaven be judge how I love Valentine,/ Whose life is as tender to me as my soul! (Wilson, 1955, p. 71). Shakespeare also reveals his understanding of love as communication of minds in Helena's bitter monologue: Love can transpose to form and dignity:/ Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind; (Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*).

### **3. Othello's Conflict: As a Collision of Love and Honour**

*Othello* is a domestic tragedy in which Shakespeare examines the issues of love and honor under the context of the patriarchal institution of marriage. The opening scene is of great significance to get the essence of the play. It sets the play's background, but it also exposes the external factor whose role is necessary for causing the end catastrophe. While in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, the external factors are the ghost and the witches in perspective, in *Othello*, it is represented by the character of Iago, who shows hatred for the hero

Iago's hatred for Othello is motivated by his "revenge: revenge against the military general who did not promote him, against the captain who, lacking his qualifications, got his place" (Fitzpatrick & Reynolds, 2003, p. 213). Othello has made him his ensign and given the

office of lieutenant to Cassio. For this reason, he intends to destroy him. When Iago knows that Desdemona's eloped with Othello and married him secretly, he decides to "poison his delight" (1.1.68) (Sen, 2007) by infuriating Desdemona's father's wrath against them. Relying on the issue of race and the patriarchal system, he first attempts to portray Othello with "pejorative racial descriptions" and "bestial traits" (Salahat, 2017, p. 2-3), such as a "black ram" (1.1.88) (Sen, 2007), a "Barbary horse" (1.1.111) (Ibid) and describe his sexual intercourse with Desdemona as inhuman, barbarous, and disgusting: . . . ., your daughter,/ and the Moor, are now making the beast with two/ backs (1.1.115-117) (Ibid). He also succeeds in planting the idea of the loss of honor into Brabantio's mind as he cautions him, "Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul" (1.1.87) (Ibid).

Brabantio conceives his daughter's elopement with Othello as something unnatural and, therefore, accuses Othello of having "practiced on her with foul charms,/Abus'd her delicate youth, with drugs or minerals" (1.2.73-74) (Ibid) to trick her into marriage. In such a miserable situation, he has nothing to do but go to the Duke and tell him that his daughter has been 'abused,' 'stolen,' and 'corrupted' by Othello. Here, it is to note that Brabantio's reference to 'the property' and the act of robbery with words like "O thou foul thief" (I.2.62) (Ibid) 'stolen' indicates the status of a woman under which she is seen as a property, a concept applicable to "the Petrarchan conventions, for she is something that should be locked in the house and kept with money and other precious items of property and prosperity" (Copas, 2006, p.25) till she gets married in term of the patriarchal principle of marriage; it is the male's authority and responsibility to choose a husband for her and arrange the marriage.

In the trial, both Othello and Desdemona have appeared in front of the Duke, Brabantio, and other Senators not to defend their marriage but to declare their love for each other. Hearing their declaration of love, Brabantio accepts the marriage. However, the more his adherence to the patriarchy, the more he distances himself from his daughter; he never forgives her and accepts her as a daughter as he remarks, "I had rather adopt a child than get it" (1.3.196) (Sen, 2007).

Through Brabantio's approval of their marital relationship, Shakespeare emphasizes that race is not the central conflict in the play. If Desdemona had eloped and married any white man, it would have been just as aggressive to her father and never affected the outcome of the play. What upsets him is not Othello's race but Desdemona's elopement and marriage to a man of her own choice. It is, according to him, an act of rebellion, treachery, and disobedience against his authority as he remarks: O heaven, how got she out? O treason of the blood!/ Fathers from hence, trust not your daughters' minds/ By what you see them act" (1.1.169-171) (Ibid). It is a deviation from the patriarchal principles of marriage, a sin almost unforgivable in society. He has, accordingly, lost honor, happiness, prestige, and power. By her loss, he lost his reputation as a senator and as a father who failed to control his daughter's sexuality and raise her to be a typical woman. It is, therefore, unbearable for him to be a

cuckolded father and live a life full of shame and bitterness as he acclaims: And what is to come of my despisèd time, / Is naught but bitterness?" (1.1.161-162) (Ibid).

Moreover, Brabantio's reference to Othello as 'the sooty bosom' may convey the idea of the dark color of the skin compared to the white. According to E.A.J. Honigmann, the various uses of the word 'black' in the play are insufficient evidence of race. It could simply mean 'swarthy' to Elizabethans and 'darker than snow white' to French, British, and Italian people. The words 'dark' and 'black' were inter-changeable to many Europeans. So regarding the Moor Othello, the term 'black' would not be conclusive proof necessary for a Sub-Saharan typical 'black' look for him in Shakespeare's mind (Wikipedia: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Othello>). Barbara Everett also holds the same view that Othello's black color should not be seen as an indication of his racial identity "since the identification of Othello as black was not seen until after the Romantic period" (p.106). She further argues, "the Moor is neither an African nor a Spaniard, but an actor on stage portraying the experiences of any colored Everyman (p.107).

Like Everett, Eldred Jones confirms that Shakespeare moved away "from the stereotypes so that in the end Othello emerges not as another manifestation of a type, but as a distinct individual who, typified by his fall, not the weaknesses of Moors, but the weaknesses of human nature (p.87).

In addition, it is monstrous to consider Shakespeare, a racist. He never celebrates racism in any of his plays. Only the "faithfully represents human nature in his plays" (Khan, 2015, p.22). The characters he creates are "the genuine progeny of common humanity" and "the faithful representations of humanity.....His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men" (Johnson). In this view, it can be argued that the interpretations of Iago as a representative of England as a racist society should be considered invalid, for they are first "complicated by his identity as a Spaniard" (Hamlin, 2018, p. 30). He represents any man who deviates from the usual path and becomes the agent of evil for nothing but to achieve his motivations. Racism, for him, is but a means he exploits to ruin Othello.

Furthermore, according to Marcus (2004), Fredrickson argues that England was not a racist since "racism exists only when differences that 'might otherwise be considered ethnocultural are viewed as innate, indelible, and unchangeable and are combined with efforts at exerting control over the stigmatized group" (p. 29). In this sense, Othello is never "marked by ethnocultural differences from the Venetians, but appears to be accepted by them because he has adopted the religion and ethos of the dominant group" (p. 29). In addition, Othello proves success in his enjoyment of society's recognition and rewards for his leadership and character. From the beginning to the end of the play, he is represented socially and politically as a well-respected and admirable nobleman in society. Through Othello's first appearance on

the stage, Shakespeare defeats Iago's racial dialogue he constructs about the hero. "This is no," Hunter states:

lascivious Moor,' but a great Christian gentleman, against whom Iago's insinuations break like water against granite. Not only is Othello a Christian; moreover, he is the leader of Christendom in the last and highest sense in which Christendom existed as a viable entity, crusading against the 'black pagans' (Hunter, 1961).

Thus, race or racism is not the hero's tragic flaw that leads to his downfall. His black skin can only be interpreted as "a liability, but not a marker of 'innate difference' that demands subordination in a 'permanent group hierarchy" (Marcus, 2004, p. 30). Hence, the couple's secret marriage cannot be interpreted as evidence of Othello's alienation and desire to assimilate into the Venetian society by marrying a white girl. However, it can foreshadow what comes next since Shakespeare intends the play to be a domestic tragedy. Desdemona is, from the early beginning, introduced as a deceiver to her father, who, accordingly, devalues her in front of Othello when he remarks: She has deceived her father, and may thee" (1.3.293) (Sen, 2007). Moreover, this prediction is the first foundation of the play's tragic end as being exploited by Iago.

Challenging all patriarchal conventions held by the society on love and marriage and being not motivated by any worldly motivation, Othello and Desdemona have eloped and married each other under the persuasion of love because the bond of marriage for them is the ideal consummation of their love. Marriage is the ideal ethical relationship under which the "spiritual bond of marriage is above the contingency of desire" (Mills, 1986). Here, Shakespeare celebrates the power of love in terms of (neo) spiritual principles of love. Like other marital relationships depicted in Shakespeare's plays, Othello and Desdemona's relationship never depends on the bodies to prove their love, for the power assures it of their spiritual love that can perfect all things and sustains all things even to the edge of doom, for it is an intellectual contemplation of minds.

Othello and Desdemona are depicted as true lovers who have won love neither by lies and deception, magic and witchcraft nor by attending the opera and reading Pushkin. It is won through the intimate understanding of the minds. There is no other magic in their love relationship than that of honesty, spirituality, warmth, and admiration of virtues. Othello has never seduced Desdemona for love. It is she who was first attracted by his heroic excellence conveyed in the tales he used to tell her. She is the pursuer who has revealed the passion of love and, accordingly, their love relationship began as he states: She lov'd me for the dangers I had passed, / And I lov'd her that she did pity them" (1.3.167-168) (Sen, 2007). Indeed, these two lines indicate Othello's idealizing of Desdemona's intelligence to realize his real character embodied in his intellectual virtues conveyed in his tales.

The love they experience is not activated by the physical beauty of body and senses, social status, or age but by the communication of minds. Desdemona idealizes it in her declaration of her love for Othello: I saw Othello's visage in his mind,/ And to his honors, and his valiant parts / Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate (1.3.252-254) (Ibid). Here, the word 'visage' indicates the 'real character.' In her eyes, Othello is indeed just such a man she wants to marry. She cares nothing about his appearance. Her heart is tamed and turned into perfect harmony with their heroic manhood of his. It is also so much subjugated by the inward qualities manifested by him. She loves him for his mind and excellence, conveying his real character. Moreover, the word 'consecrate' adds more spirituality to her love; it indicates that she "has conjoined her' soul and fortunes' with Othello's [honorable qualities and heroic abilities] in their marriage and {...} devoted herself to him" (DiSanto, 2001, 371).

Like Desdemona, Othello neither focuses on describing her physical beauty nor presenting her as beautiful in the "romantic descriptions of fair hair, grey eyes, or ruby lips" (Copas, 2006). His love for her is heavenly and sacred, devoid of carnal desires. His willingness to go to Cyprus, leaving his newly-married wife behind, is, in fact, an eternal significance of their platonic love that physical attractions have not activated. In addition, requesting the Duke to allow Desdemona to go with him to Cyprus is evidence: Your voices, Lords; beseech you, let her will/ Have a freeway; I, therefore, beg it not/ To please the palate of my appetite, /No to comply with heat (1.3.260-263) (Sen, 2007). He is not requesting him to do so with any desire to please his physical desires. Sexuality is not a crucial aspect of their relationship. However, it is for Othello secondary and should be fulfilled after the consummation of the marriage to get its profit which is a child as he says: "The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue; / That profit is yet to come 'twixt me and you" (2.3.9-10) (Ibid). For them, having a child is, according to Hegel, "an externalization of the unity of their love" (Mills, 1986).

Shakespeare also idealizes love by connecting it to divinity. Desdemona, for instance, idealizes Othello with religious words such as 'gracious,' 'lord,' 'prosperous,' and so on. They are all connected with heaven and used to show how strong her love is for him. Similarly, Othello idealizes his love for her with heaven statements such as "And heaven defend your good souls" and "When light-winged toys of feathered Cupid" (1.3.268-269) (Sen, 2007). He also portrays her as an ideal figure of virtue, raising her to divinity. For instance, he refers to her not only as a virginal idol but also as Diana, the goddess of chastity and of the moon, when describing her: Her name that was as fresh / As Dian's visage (3.3.392-393) (Ibid). Moreover, he describes her "whiter skin than snow" as "smooth as monumental an alabaster" (5.2.4-5) (Ibid) and links her to "the pure white stone statue of a Goddess." In addition, he compares her to the God Prometheus when he refers to her as "excelling nature" (5.2.11-12) (Ibid).

In the light of the way they idealize each other, it is apparent that both Othello and Desdemona have melted into each other and exchanged their identities through the sacrament of marriage. According to Cavell, Othello needs her "to complete himself, to affirm the integrity of his self" (DiSanto, 2001, 364). Similarly, for Desdemona, Othello becomes "not only her dearest friend but also an extension of her being; thus, she commits herself to her husband and submerges her identity in his" (Deats 244).

Moreover, Othello's idealization of his beloved confirms his intense love for her. Warwick describes his love as having "all the traits of a deep and noble passion save one-insight into the soul of the woman he loves" (Sen, 2007, 490). In reuniting with Desdemona in Cyprus, he, according to Herford, "expresses the spiritual exaltation of love with an intensity nowhere surpassed in literature" (Ibid, p. 393). He is pleased to see the joy of his soul as he addresses her, 'O, the joy of my soul.' He feels that his soul now is filled with such perfect joy and happiness that another such cannot be awaiting him in the unknown and uncertain future (2.1.191-193) (Ibid). Here, the phrase 'content so absolute' indicates the greatness of the spiritual satisfaction and joy he feels to the extent that he "cannot speak enough of this content, It stops me here, it is too much of joy" (2.1.197-98) (Ibid).

Indeed, his love for her is absolute; to love or not to love and nothing withered in between. He loves her with all his soul and passion: But I love you! Moreover, when I love thee not / Chaos comes again" (3.3.92-93) (Ibid). His life will, thus, become meaningless and unworthy without her, and if her love does not sustain it, it will be thrown into Chaos. He loved her with great intensity and eagerness, and the anguished feelings of his heart at the visible proof of her infidelity show how profound and intense is his love for her: There, where I have garner'd up my heart,/ Where either I must live or bear no life,/(4.2.57-58) (Ibid). Marriage to him is a heaven where he can live a life full of intense joy, perfect satisfaction, and great peace of mind. His life with her has been complete and perfect since he has no life, but Desdemona is his angel and counterpart. He has also embedded his career, livelihood, and existence into his relationship with her.

However, like any Renaissance husband adherent to patriarchy and tortured by a fear of female sexuality, Othello, despite his absolute trust in her, associates his glorious hopes and dreams with his wife's fidelity and faithfulness to him as he states: "My life upon her faith" (1.3.294) (Ibid). The patriarchy links the male's sense of honor and virility with the female's faithfulness. His life does not have any value unless she is chaste and faithful. As a result, before leaving for Cyprus, he calls Desdemona to come and spend with him an hour devoted to love, worldly affairs, and instructions (1.3.298-299) (Ibid). He practices his new role as a husband to instruct and direct her on how to be a typical wife with the standards of wifely virtues. As a husband, he has to retain control of his new wife, who is responsible for guaranteeing his honor. According to him, love and honor should be in harmony with each

other to establish a stable marriage, and this is what Othello intends- he intends to live with his wife in both spheres of love and honor.

However, such marital bliss does not last for long as it has been corrupted by the hero's tragic flaws under the influence of the external factor played by Iago. He plans to use Desdemona's goodness to destroy Othello. He creates a series of intrigues to make him believe his wife's unfaithfulness and infidelity to achieve his purpose. They are all based on his belief that: The Moor is of a free and open nature too,/ That thinks men honest that but seem to be so". Therefore, he "will tenderly be led by the nose../ As asses are. (1.1. 397-99) (Ibid). Despite the intrigues in the play, Iago succeeds in tangling the hero in his net because of his knowledge of his tragic flaws, which offer suitable loopholes for him to manipulate him. These intrigues are but a part of the external factors that always play their role in the downfall of Shakespeare's heroes. Othello's main tragic flaw is upholding absoluteness; his obsession with love and honor is absolute because these two passions symbolize his power and self-esteem. Moreover, this is why Iago has schemed to ruin the hero by violating them and bringing them into a tragic collision. This collision comes to life in Act 3, Scene 3: the Temptation Scene.

To put it differently, Othello's internal conflict rests mainly on the collision of these two passions. He has been intellectually and psychologically torn between his love for his wife and his sense of honor- embodied in his adherence to the patriarchy- which her supposed unfaithfulness and infidelity have violated.

In Act 3, Scene 3, Iago sets his scheme to "abuse Othello's ear / That [Michael Cassio] is too familiar with his wife (1.3.393-94) (Ibid). To achieve his villainous plan, he succeeds in bringing Cassio into dishonor by making him drunk and involved in a fight which leads to his being fired from the position of lieutenantcy. Then, he advises and urges him to meet Desdemona and seek her intervention in getting him reinstated in the lieutenantcy, arranging the meeting and assuring him that he will draw the Moor apart. According to his plan, Desdemona agrees to act for Cassio. The way "she for him pleads strongly to the Moor; (2.3.346) (Ibid) Iago will be able to "pour this pestilence into [Othello's] ear, /That she repeals for her body's lust (2.3. 347-348) (Ibid).

When Othello and Iago notice how Cassio has left after pleading his case with Desdemona, Iago sows his first seed to poison Othello's mind with suspicion: "Ha, I like not that!" (3.3.35) (Ibid) and portrays Cassio as guilty and his leaving the place quietly and stealthily is an indication of the fact that he is guilty of secret meetings with Desdemona. He manipulates and poisons the hero's mind through the stops and breaks, the deep workings of treachery under the mask of love and honesty, the anxious watchfulness, the calm earnestness, and the PASSION of hypocrisy (Hazlitt, 1817). Of course, he does not tell him directly that his wife cheats on him with Cassio; he advises him: Look to your wife, observe



her well with Cassio (3.3.201) (Sen, 2007). Then, to reinforce Othello's doubt about Desdemona's unfaithfulness, he goes further in explaining his over generalized view of the Venetian women as whores, (3.3.206-209) (Ibid) concerning Desdemona's deception of her father in the affair of her marriage with him (3.3.210) (Ibid).

Moreover, after warning Othello against jealousy, Iago indirectly hints at the hero's current mental State by comparing two cuckold husbands. According to him, the cuckold husband who knows that his wife, whom he never loves, is unfaithful is happier than the one torn between his intense love for her and his doubts about her faithfulness to him (3,3, 171-174) (Ibid). In addition to this reference, Iago draws Othello's attention to what the cuckold husband will lose in honor and glory due to his wife's infidelity. Here, he indirectly tells Othello that he is a husband who seems anxious about losing his pedestal of glory and honor. Unlike Othello, those poor people who resigned to poverty are rich because they do not have much to lose (3,3,176-178) (Ibid). As he pretends, Iago poisons his mind through a cunning reference to Desdemona's deviation from her natural disposition in choosing Othello and rejecting those suitors from her fellow citizens. According to him, she may now fall to match you with her country forms, / And happily repent (3,3,232-242) (Ibid).

After sowing the first seeds of suspicion of Desdemona's fidelity in Othello's mind, Othello has never tasted peace of his mind. His suspicion of her faithfulness has caused incredible suffering, anguish, anxiety, and despair in his mind. However, a marital relationship with suspicions is unbearable to him, and he cannot allow his doubts to haunt his mind for long. He, therefore, wants to be resolved one way or another: I will see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove (3,3, 194) (Ibid). In his State of mental anguish, he becomes confused that he thinks her but honest, yet, wonders "how nature erring from itself..." (3.3.231) (Ibid)

Therefore, relying on his adherence to the patriarchy, Othello is torn between his absolute love for her and his absolute sense of honor. However, if she is proved untameable and false in her wifely duty, he is willing to relinquish and sacrifice his love to maintain his honor (3.2.264-266) (Ibid). His willingness is due to his fear of cuckoldry; having an unfaithful wife will make him be cuckold in the public's eyes. He is anxious about losing not only her love but also his identity as a Neoplatonic lover, as indicated by his question, "Why did I marry?" (3.3.264) (Ibid). He feels that his role as a lover is to wane. Likewise, as a husband, he is now offended and deceived due to her revolt against his love and authority: "She has gone. I am abused, and my relief/ Must be to loathe her" (3.3.271-272) (Ibid). He begins to view her as merely a creature of appetite: "O curse of marriage,/ That we can call these delicate creatures ours,/ And not their appetites!" (3.3.272-274) (Ibid). Here, these lines show Othello's patriarchal concept of women as property owned by the male. He conceives her "alleged unfaithfulness as a defacement of his private property" (Deats 246). He, therefore, feels that he has lost his authority over her.

As a result, he would rather be a toad And live in the foul vapor or dark prison cell than have a wife whose love is shared by others. He sees cuckoldry as the plague of great ones. Seeing himself as a great man, he realizes that he has an even lesser chance to escape cuckoldry than poor men. This curse of wearing the cuckold's horns is, according to him, a fate inevitable as death (3.3.274-281)(Sen,2007 )

Indeed, Othello cannot resist his constant thought of her infidelity. It has put him in a state of torture. For him, 'tis better to be much abus'd/ Than but to know't a little (3.3. 342 - 343) (Ibid). He also remarks that had he nothing known about it, he would have been happy even if her sweet body had been enjoyed by the general camp, pioneers, and everybody (3.3.351-353) (Ibid). In addition to these painfully pathetic utterances, his soliloquy displays a significant deal of mental injury and despair. He views her betrayal as a farewell to the peace and tranquility of his mind he has adored with his beloved, his big wars that have turned ambitions into virtues, his heart that has been stimulated at the sight of the troops and the sound of a drum or a trumpet, and the honor and self-respect he has been rewarded through his military occupation (3.3.353-363) (Ibid). In this sense, Othello views Desdemona's infidelity as the end of his life. It shatters his image of her as an ideal wife conforming to patriarchal standards and his whole dream of life. It also wounds his dignity and destroys all his glorious hopes raised by marriage.

Therefore, nothing can bring together the scattered fragments of his torn soul but an ocular proof. To clear his perplexity and mental State of utter Chaos, he warns Iago to prove that she is a whore. Accordingly, Iago creates his intrigues to present Desdemona's handkerchief to him as ocular proof. The significance of the handkerchief to Othello is that "To lose't or give 't away" is sufficient proof of her unfaithfulness to him. When Othello sees it in Cassio's hands, he becomes sure that his wife is unfaithful to him. Therefore, he decides to take revenge by killing Cassio and Desdemona, who is responsible for violating his honor.

In the murdering scene, despite his awakening love for her, his shedding tears, his several kisses for her, and his being caught by her beauty and balmy breath before inflicting the end of her life, Othello proceeds with his bloody act as a vindicator of honor, chastity, and justice: .....I must weep/ But they are cruel tears; this sorrow's heavenly/ It strikes where it doth love (5.2.20-23) (Ibid). He then strangles her under the influence of the culture embodied in the patriarchy and religion that justifies honor-killing: "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:10: cited in Fonseke, 2018, p. 4)). He also considers murder an act of justice. His wish is to redeem her from her alleged sins: "Yet she must die, else she will betray more men" (5.2.6) (Sen, 2007). Therefore, he "makes himself an arbiter not only of earthly but of heavenly justice. His sense of his honor causes him to seek to be master of all things; he imagines that he justly kills his wife" (Epstein, 1998, p. 23).

In the term 'justice,' Othello reaches what can be called the tragic joy. Love is still an aspect of his character. The way he kills her shows the true nature of his love as he refuses to let her experience pain when he soothes her. He aims "not to destroy but to preserve the profound beauty and integrity of the relationship" (Golden, 1984, 149). His fond love for her and her beauty should, therefore, remain, but the patriarchy demands her death to restore lost honor: Once more,/ By thus, when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,/ And love thee after (5.2.17-29) (Sen, 2007). By erasing her sins of infidelity through the murder, she may, according to Stephen Greenblatt, become a "being incapable of pleasure, so that he will, at last, be able to love her without the taint of adultery..." (cited in Epstein, 1998, p. 20). He kills her not out of hatred but out of his honor, as he proves when saying: naught did I in hate, but all in honor (5.2.296) (Sen, 2007). He then presents himself as an "honorable murderer" who sacrifices not only his love but also the object of love in the name of honor

However, when he knows that his wife has been virtuous and chaste, he views killing her not as a sacrificial ritual but as a crime. Accordingly, he becomes tortuous for murdering his innocent wife, as expressed in Act 5 Scene 2, lines 96-101. As a result, he kills himself with his dagger, only "to die upon a kiss" (5.2.360) (Ibid). Thus, in this way, he dies and leaves the stage honorably as he lived before. Moreover, as a lover, he finds rest, not in the sacred bond of marriage but in death. He climbs the platonic ladder and transcends his eternal love up to heaven, where he can find rest and peace

Despite arguments that Othello is inherently jealous by nature, jealousy is not the cause of murdering Desdemona and his downfall. He is never jealous at all. His actions and the way he deals with his wife echo no jealousy but trusting, as being confirmed by Alexander Pushkin (1826) "Othello is not jealous by nature – on the contrary, he is trusting" (cited in Fonseke, 2018, p. 4). Some critics also hold this view. For instance, Coleridge argues that "Othello does not kill Desdemona in jealousy." Bradley also asserts that Othello is a very trusting person who shows "a great openness and trustfulness of nature" (Sen, 2007, p. 44). Prof. G. Brandes holds the same view. "Othello," he states, "is no jealous nature: jealous men and women think very differently and act very differently," adding, "He is unsuspecting, confiding, ...; but jealous in the proper sense of the word, he is not" (Ibid, p. 480).

Of course, they based their view on how other characters conceive the hero. For example, Cassio describes him as a "great of heart." Desdemona also holds a great belief in her husband's character. For instance, she rejects Emilia's question if he is jealous, and she describes him: "My noble Moor/Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness/ As jealous creatures are (3.4.22-24) (Ibid) and to confirm her view she states: ".....I think the sun where he was born/ drew all such humor from him (3.4.26-27) (Ibid)

Moreover, Othello's trust in her is absolute. Instead of being jealous, he appreciates her social behavior, such as freedom of speech, entertaining guests, singing, playing, and

dancing: Where virtue is, there are more virtuous (3.3.188-190) (Ibid). In these situations, he neither doubts her faithfulness nor shows any sign of jealousy as he emphasizes: Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw/ The most little fear or doubt of her revolt (3.3.191-192) (Ibid)

Othello's ruin is the result of his patriarchal attitudes concerning honor. The more honor he adores, the more he is offended by his wife's infidelity. To him, her supposed infidelity has stained his sense of honor as he states: "I will chop her into messes! Cuckold me?" (4.1.196) (Ibid). Though he can endure all sorts of troubles and horrible afflictions such as poverty, captivity, and illness, it is too difficult for him to bear dishonor and shame embedded in cuckoldry all his life (4.2.50-54) (Ibid). For this reason, he has enacted total retaliation against her immediately as soon as he sees the handkerchief in Cassio's hands. Murdering her, to him, was the best way to purge his catastrophic loss of honor

In the light of what has been mentioned, it is evident that Othello has failed to prey to his absolute adherence to the patriarchy and, at the same time, failed to recognize the validity of his passionate love for his beloved. He is guilty because he is responsible for the tragic end. His bloody act is an act of will and freedom. As a tragic hero, he has killed his wife and himself out of his own decision. Despite the influence of the external factor played by Iago, he has been caught and held by his drawbacks. For instance, his absolute trust in Iago leads him to trust him in researching the ocular proof of his wife's infidelity instead of finding it out by himself. Moreover, when questioning Emilia about his wife, he does not trust her as a woman and, accordingly, denies her positive view of Desdemona.

Generally speaking, Othello is a military general who never makes his decision merely based on personal feelings or doubts as he acclaims: I will see before I doubt when I doubt, prove (3,3, 194) (Ibid). Moreover, when he proves that he never hesitates or is capable of calm and relaxed reflection or consideration. In this situation, there is no room for him for the element of compromise that is denied in the patriarchy. For example, in challenging Desdemona with the handkerchief, he abuses her right to defend herself as any guilty person does in a trial; he bases his decision on the handkerchief as the physical evidence of her crime and rejects her attempt to prove her true fidelity in reality through the wedding sheets. Though she pleads with him for mercy, he also rejects her pleadings. He is, according to T.S. Eliot, guilty of "self-dramatization" and deliberate "attempts to evade reality" (cited in Fonseke, 2018, p. 5).

#### **4- Conclusion**

*Othello* is a domestic tragedy that tackles an intense examination of Othello's passions for love and honor under the patriarchal institution of marriage that associates the husband's honor with his wife's fidelity. As a tragic hero distinguished by both rank and character, He undergoes an internal conflict that is resulted from the collision of these two passions under the influence of the external factor represented by the character of Iago, who succeeds in

manipulating him and poisoning his mind that his wife Desdemona is unfaithful and cheats on him with Cassio. However, his success is only due to his knowledge of the hero's trusting nature and personal defects.

*Othello* is an honor-killing tragedy. Being terrified by the humiliating thought of cuckoldry, Othello kills his wife to restore his lost honor. He is caught and held on neither by the passion of jealousy nor the inferiority complex due to his race but by his idealistic upholding absoluteness of love and honor. His downfall is, thus, due to his patriarchal attitudes towards honor. He sacrifices her for the sake of honor

Moreover, accordingly, he conceives himself to be the agent of justice and honor. The bloody act to him is a part of duty rather than revenge. He wants to erase her sin of infidelity only to love her after.

However, when he learns that he has made a wrong moral decision. He executes true justice upon himself by an act of will: "Killing Me, to die upon a kiss" (V.ii.359). Consequently, he dies honorably, proving himself not an erring barbarian but a representative of a human being.

## **References**

- (1392). *National Inquiry report on Factors and causes of Rape and Honor Killing in Afghanistan*.
- Bangash, A. K. (2017). Socio-Cultural Values and its Relation with Honor Killing in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. *The Pakistan Journal of Social Issues* (Vol. VIII), pp. 85-94.
- Barbara, E. (1989). *Young Hamlet: Essays on Shakespeare's Tragedies*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Benardate, S. (1986). *Plato's Symposium*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bodner, J. P. (2013). *The House of God: A Book of Meditations on the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy for Students of the Gospel Ministry*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Bradley, A. C. (n.d.). *Shakespearean Tragedy*. (1992; Macmillan International Higher Education).
- Capellanus, A. (1964). *The Art of Courtly Love*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Charney, M. (2000). *Shakespeare on Love and Lust*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cirillo, A. R. (1969). The Fair Hermaphrodite: Love Union in the Poetry of Donne and Spenser. *SEL, Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 9 (1), pp. 81-95.
- Copas, L. (2006). *Courtship, Love, and Marriage in Othello: Shakespeare's Mockery of Courtly Love*. Masters Theses & Specialist Projects.
- Cuddon, J. A. (1977). *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Das, P. (2012). Shakespeare's Representation of Women in his Tragedies. *Prime Univesity Journal*, 6 (2), pp. 37-56.

- Deats, S. M. (n.d.). Indeed, an Obedient Lady: Desdemona, Emilia, and the Doctrine of Obedience in Othello. In P. C. Kolin (Ed.), *Othello: New Critical Essays* (pp. 233-254). Routledge, 2002.
- DiSanto, M. J. (2001). Nothing If Not Critical: Stanley Cavell's Skepticism and Shakespeare's Othello. *Dalhousie Review*, 81 (3), pp. 359-382.
- Epstein, P. (1998). The Purgation of The Hero In Shakespearean Tragedy. *Animus*.
- Everett, B. (1982). Spanish Othello: The Making of Shakespeare's Moor. In S. Wells (Ed.), *Shakespeare Survey 35* (pp. 101-112). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ficino, M. (1951). *Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's Symposium* (Vol. 1 ed.). (S. R. Jayne, Ed., & S. R. Jayne, Trans.) Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Fitzpatrick J. & Reynolds B. (2003). Venetian Ideology or Transversal Power? Iago's Motive and how Othello Falls. In P. Kolin (Ed.), *Othello: Critical Essays* (pp. 203-220). 2013; Routledge.
- Fonseke, E. A. (2018). 'Banish Her, But Kill Her Not.' A Lesson to Shakespeare's General Othello From The Bodhisattva King Chulla Padma. *American Research Journal of English and Literature*, 4 (1), pp. 1-8.
- Fund. (2000). *The State of the world's population2000: Lives Together, Worlds Apart*. United Nations Populations Fund.
- Golden, L. (1984). Othello, Hamlet, and Aristotelian Tragedy. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35 (2), pp. 142-156.
- Goldstein, M. A. (2002). The biological roots of heat-of-passion crimes and 'honor' killing. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, pp. 28-37.
- Grote, G. (1888). *Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates* (4 Vols ed.). London.
- Habib, R. (2005). *A History of Criticism: From Plato to the Present*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Hadi, A. (2020). 'Honor' Killing in Misogynistic Society: A Feminist Perspective. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 9 (3).
- Hamlin, E. A. (2018). Iago the Moor Killer: The Geo-Political Context Behind Shakespeare's Othello. *Honor Projects*, 70.
- Hazlitt, W. (1817). *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. Wiley and Putnam, 1945.
- Hegel, G. W. (1975). *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* (Vol.11). (T. M. Knox, Trans.) London: Oxford University Press.
- Hunter, G. K. (1961). *Othello and Colour Prejudice*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, S. (n.d.). Preface to Shakespeare. In D. E. Chickera (Ed.), *English Critical Texts: 16th Century to 20th Century* (pp. 131-161). London: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, E. (1965). *Othello's Countrymen*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kahn, C. (1981). *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Khan, M. E. (2015). The vividness of human nature in Shakespeare: An Introduction. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 1 (2), pp. 21-24.

- Kurkiala, M. (2003). Interpreting Honour Killing: The Story of Fadime Shindal (1975-2002) in the Swedish Press. *Anthropology Today*.
- Loomba, A. (1989). *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Luckyj, C. (2022). *The Politics of the Female Voice in Early Stuart England*. Cambridge University Press.
- M. Daly, M. (2017). *Homicide: Foundations of Human Behavior*. Routledge.
- Ma, F. (2014). The Concept of Love in Shakespeare's Sonnets. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5 (4), 918-923.
- Manis, J. (Ed.). (1999-2013). *William Shakespeare's Sonnets*. An Electronic Classics Series Publication.
- Marcus, L. S. (2004). *The Two Texts of 'Othello' and Early Modern Construction of Race*.
- Maxamuud, Y. (2009). *Nomad Diaries: Life, War, And America*. Encinitas, CA: NomadHouse.
- Mills, P. J. (1986). Hegel's Antigone. *The Owl of Minerva*, 17 (2), pp. 131-152.
- Mish, F. (1993). *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (10 ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.
- Porter, N. (Ed.). (1913). *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*. G & C Merriam Co.
- Salahat, R. A. (2017). *Analyzing Iago's Speeches in Shakespeare's Othello* (MA Thesis submitted to Hebron University ed.).
- Santayana, G. (1900). *Interpretation of Poetry and Religion*. C. Scribner's Sons.
- Scheman, N. (1987). 'Othello's Doubt/Desdemona's Death': The Engineering of Skepticism. In J. Genova (Ed.), *Power, Gender, Values*. Edmonton: Academic Printing and Publishing.
- Sen, S. (Ed.). (2007). *Othello*. New Delhi: Unique Publishers.
- Shakespeare, W. (n.d.). *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. (J. Scott, Ed.) Prestwick House Inc., 2003.
- Shakespeare, W. (n.d.). *The Taming of the Shrew*. Wordsworth Editions, 1993.
- Sharma, N. (2018). *Social Legal Study of Honour Killing in India concerning the State of Haryana*. PhD Thesis: Shodhganga.
- Shipway, L. (2004). *Domestic Violence: A Handbook For Health Professionals*. Routledge.
- Smith, P. J. (1998). 'A good soft pillow for that good white head': Othello as comedy. *Sydney Studies in English* (24), pp. 21-40.
- Wikipedia: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Othello>. (n.d.).
- Wikipedia: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Shakespeare](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare). (n.d.).
- Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courtly\\_love](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courtly_love). (n.d.).
- Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platonic\\_love](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platonic_love). (n.d.).
- Wilson, J. D. (Ed.). (1955). *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. New York: Cambridge University Press.