

Desdemona: A Liberated Woman

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According to general hierarchy when Shakespeare wrote his plays, men were seemed to be more able than women. Instead in Othello, Shakespeare emphasizes the strength of Desdemona despite the stereotypical views about women. She is beautiful heroine of the play, is very embodiment of virtue, purity, gentleness, sympathy and kind heartedness. She is indeed far from perfect and is not without faults, but she wins the profound administration and deep sympathy. Her character represents woman of the 17th century who surpassed the norms of sexual morality set for Venetian women of that time.

In Othello she proves to be very strong and liberated since the beginning of the play. Desdemona portrayed to be strong and independent. She makes her own decision to leave the house of her father Brabantio to wed the Moor, Othello. It was the first step in redefining her role as a woman. It seems as though she was breaking away from the strictness by her father and she never wants her father to intervene in her decisions. Here she shows her maturity when she speaks to her father not as a child but like a lawyer addressing her reasons by stating that:

“Here’s my husband and so much duty as my mother showed to you;

Preferring you before her father.

so much I challenge that I may profess,
Due to the moor my lord.” (1.3,

184-187)

At that time patriarchal societies in which the power was placed in the hand of men, to be based on father identities schemes. Desdemona’s rebelliousness is because of Brabantio had such immense power over her. She may have wanted to gain this kind

of power. Thus she decided to take her relationship into her hands and ignored the tradition of receiving her father’s approval. She was striving to play an equal role with the men in Venetian society.

Desdemona is quite liberated woman for her time and shows the sign of resisting her husband’s wishes. Her love for Othello is deep and profound. Her devotion to her husband knows no bounds. This marriage seems to bring up the thoughts that it most likely will not last beyond a year or so. Between her outspoken, independent behavior and his physically powerful figure and history as a soldier, their life together as man and wife could prove to be interesting but short-lived, struggle. Her husband humiliated her many times but still by her extraordinary effort of the will, she pulls herself together for a normal banquet. Her lovely nature has the ardor and the innocence, the daring and the weakness, at once, of those who knows no evil. She wants to please her husband and this desire of her attributed to her intelligence and liberation.

Even in her death she proved her liberation by showing that she controlled her own desires. As the self-sufficient woman, she relies on herself to create her own situation and govern her life as opposed to living as a puppet of the man. Throughout Act II, she shows that she can thrive in social and intellectual situations without the presence of her beloved Othello. She actively speaks with Cassio and Iago when the two are in the room awaiting word of the arrival of Othello’s naval ship. Through the ability to survive and even thrive without the presence of her husband.

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