

Assessment of Human Behavior from the perspective of Shakespeare's Othello

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Abstract

One can find variety of spices in humans and their relationships. Why I am calling it spices because as all spices are required to cook a good food, the same way humans have variability in their emotions like happiness, fear, anger, disgust and sadness. The same way if we explore little more we find that besides all these emotions are a few more like love and feeling of hate for some. Then there is feeling of disgust against a particular race, color, or ethnicity. So humans have an ocean of expression to make. This feeling is not constant even, and it keeps on changing as the time changes or the relationship changes. By and large, it is observed that humans are selfish and self-centered creature. It takes steps to satisfy their own needs, works for acquiring comforts and luxury, and even can conspire and attack its own friends, relatives and dear ones to meet all these requirements. Perhaps, writers, playwrights and creative experts understand all these human emotions that is why they are able to create such a great characters in their creative works that even the dust of time cannot fade those great works. Indeed, those works become immortals in the minds of people and inspire generations to come. From those great writers, my research concentrates on one of those great writers and it is Shakespeare and his work, Othello. Shakespeare is famous for presenting human behavior through his characters. He carved all those innumerable characters in his plays and novels that readers start connecting with them. This research studies the conspiracy, hate, love and enmity in this play. People cannot get rid of these emotions even if they want to.

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William Shakespeare is remembered even after decades and centuries of his time. This is only because he has created such epics that there would be hardly any international, national or regional language in which either his novels, plays or other creative works not translated or played. He is in fact now regarded as a cultural and national heritage. Shakespeare was born in England but collection of his plays, novels, poems and other works are available worldwide. Mostly, he is famous for his plays he has created like Macbeth, Othello, and Hamlet etc. These plays truly represent the hate, jealousy, love and conspiracy. This play also presents game for power and lust. One can feel the jealousy in every character. Even, the main character, Othello cannot be spared from this emotion of jealousy. Initially, Othello seems to represent a positive and heroic character but as the story progresses, slowly it reflects that Othello is a normal human being too. His emotions and decisions are affected by his jealousy and driven by this jealousy, he takes those actions which are morally incorrect. Moreover, if his emotions are not provoked by jealousy then some of his decisions would have been different. Actions of human being is consciously or subconsciously chauffeured by hate, envy, lust, greed and desire.

One thing is notable that even at those times 500 years ago from this era, there were differences in the educated societies too. These differences prevailed on the basis of skin color, wealthy and poor class and on the basis of their business they do. The reality of this evility is that though it is a part of every society but it comes from within. Santanu Pandey, a research scholar, studies the evil, corruption and abuse of power in his research published in IJELLH as "Evil, Corruption, Manipulation and Abuse of Power in Shakespeare's Macbeth."

Santanu explored the evils flourishing in the minds of humans. He even goes one more step ahead to prove this point that this evility is not only found in men but women's minds are also are clouded with this evil behavior. The lady Macbeth takes decision which are affected by their greed. He states that lady Macbeth wants to make her blood thick, so that kindness or pity cannot flow and reach the heart. This evilness can be found everywhere and each character. Here each character somewhere represents the minds of people around.

Actually Macbeth eagerly manipulates the facts so that Lady Macbeth can get time to plan the murder of Duncan because Duncan is coming to Macbeth's castle for a night and Lady Macbeth also comments that Macbeth's kindness is like milk. As milk nourishes our body similarly kindness nurtures Macbeth's mind. This kindness will prevent Macbeth to commit crime. The instinct of evil is not only in Macbeth but also in Lady Macbeth. She invokes evil in her life so that her castle becomes a battlefield. Similarly, she desires that the fetal entrance of Duncan should be welcomed by an ominous bird and its harsh cry. She also desires 'make thick my blood'. Actually Lady Macbeth wants to make thick her blood so that pity cannot flow and reach the heart. Lady Macbeth comments that the spontaneous and natural feelings can intervene between her desire to murder the King and actual murder. If her pity is stopped flowing her purpose and the result will never be united in inaction. Apparently Lady Macbeth means the witches can cause trouble in nature. But Lady Macbeth also implies the unnatural mind that will prepare her mind to murder the King. Evil is everywhere in the main characters of the drama and they are going to apply it for their personal benefit. Lady Macbeth also implies the theory of manipulation. Lady Macbeth comments on the coming of King Duncan 'He that's coming must be provided with death'. This is a verbal irony. Apparently Lady Macbeth suggests that they will provide hospitality for Duncan like a 'hermit' but she also implies that Duncan will be provided with death. If Macbeth is presented as a man of imagination, Lady Macbeth is presented as a woman of strong words. She has the ability to motivate Macbeth for great business. She rebukes Macbeth for his explicit emotions. Macbeth's face is like a book where everybody can read his mind. (p.4)

The above statement sheds light on the fact that people do manipulate things to get the result they want or to fulfill selfish reasons. Macbeth is no exception in this case. He manipulatively uses Lady Macbeth and plans to murder Duncan. In this conspiring event, one can easily make out that evil instinct is not uncommon. People always try to turn things in their favor no matter what the consequences would be.

There are many incidents in the play if we study either the nature of the characters or the situation they are in. In the play, the characters are also shown hating on the basis of color. Othello's insecurity is clearly visible because his complexion is dark. Moreover, Desdemona, his wife, also makes a statement that she regrets her decision of marrying Othello. The insecurity of Othello got stronger after knowing the views of Desdemona about him. These incidents evidently reflect feeling of superiority and inferiority and that people also judge the superiority on the basis of White and Black. Though, Othello enjoys a status in the society and his accomplishments; however, he still feels that people around him hate him.

There is one more scene mentioned in the play where Rodrigo seemed to express his superiority feelings over Othello where he says that as compared to Othello, his looks are better. Even also says that Desdemona only likes him because she wants to satisfy her sexual needs. She does not love Othello. This superiority feeling comes to his mind because his skin color is white.

Dr. Rachelle, visiting profession, states in her research published in IJOHMN that skin color is without a doubt impacting of Othello's enduring prominence of interloper status in Othello (Bloom, 1987). Implementing the problematic race aspect in the text illustrates the complicated nature of communal racism during the Shakespearean era. Michael Bristol further recognizes the nature of racism in the Shakespearean era by noting that racism in Shakespeare's time was on a different plane when compared to the present; however, he also notes that racism most certainly was evident in the broad range in the contexts of frame of mind and outlook (1996). The fact that Othello is so focused on race matters is either telling of Shakespeare's personal beliefs or of his personal experiences in the society in which he resided. In many of his plays, Shakespeare's art is reflective of societal beliefs or critical of the current culture. Given this aspect of predominance in his art, one ventures to say that he employs Othello as a catalyst to lay out the current perspectives of the day regarding race matters. (p.3)

It is a heartbreaking truth that color of the skin is given so much importance in the society. Black or dark-colored people were always disrespected and seen with inferiority. In the play, Brabantio could not accept the fact that Desdemona loves Othello so feels that Othello must have performed some kind of black magic on Desdemona and she fell in love with Othello. This statement comes from Brabantio to the fact that Othello is black in color and it is not possible that beautiful woman like Desdemona could love a Black man. Brabantio is the father of Desdemona and he does not like Othello. Because of his skin color, Brabantio sees a devilish character in Othello. This shows his biasness towards skin color. If a person is White he is pure hearted but if a person is Black, he finds something devilish in him.

Conclusion: It is said that human behavior is a response of its counter emotion. Human nature and behavior is affected by many direct or indirect factors. The behavior of human beings are provocative action influenced by thoughts, external response, environment and a few other factors. Sometimes these actions are influenced by selfish reasons, greed, power and money. Everybody wants to have a name in the society and for everyone it is just next to impossible. To acquire name, fame, and money people go to any extent. They conspire against their friends or relatives to fulfill their devilish aspirations. Shakespeare seem to understand the human nature and the environment around that is why he was able to write plays which are now famous across the world. His dark and tragic ends attracts the people from creative community. These creative people explore Shakespeare and his writing to find out the colors of human nature in it. Shakespeare wrote novels, plays and poems way back in sixteenth century but even after almost 5 centuries, those plays are being performed on stages in the different parts of the world. The grey shade of human nature seem to have some kind of enticement which writers and other intellectuals get attracted to. Most of the Shakespeare's work reflect the tragic end of the protagonist and its love. His work also exposes the evils prevailed in our society. This bitter truth is reflected in all his works where racial discrimination and social injustice towards common people are common and normal. In the educated society like English people, there is discrimination on the basis of color of the people. White people are always seen as superior to Black and they are respected more. Blacks are only seen as slave or being a performer of devilish power. This discrimination will never end even after centuries and centuries. White color always is seen as a color of peace and positive things and black color is seen as a negative power like black magic.

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