



Silence, Speech and Gender in Shakespeare's *Othello*: A Presentist, Palestinian Perspective

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Received: 26-07-2015

Accepted: 29-08- 2015

Published: 31-10- 2015

doi:10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.3n.4p.1

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.3n.4p.1>

Abstract

This paper follows the critical lines of feminism and psychoanalysis to argue that *Othello* is a conflict between female characters' moral voices and male figures' treacherous voices. Drawing on the concepts of Jungian and Freudian psychoanalysis, I argue that the association of female speech and silence with sexuality is a projection of misogynist and racist discourses. I read Iago's projection of his evil onto Othello as a verbal intercourse of homosexuality. The cause of tragedy emanates from the fact that Othello weds his shadow, Iago and ignores his anima, Desdemona. While the verbal marriage between Othello and Iago results in Othello's accusation of Desdemona of being a whore, I argue that Desdemona escapes this category because a boy actor impersonates her physically and vocally. I argue that *Othello* stages for audiences in contemporary Palestine male figures' deafness to feminist views. While Othello's marriage to Desdemona symbolizes his integration into Venetian society, his murder of Desdemona signals the loss of his heroic identity and the dissolution of his link to Venice. In contrast, killing the supposedly aggressive female figures in Palestine marks the public respect of the killer. Furthermore, I use the romance of Antar (525-608) as a Palestinian literary intertext to scrutinize the significance of female figures in constructing male figures' heroic identity and the racial discourse that the Romance of Antar and *Othello* embodies.

Key words: Racism, Misogyny, Projection, Honour Killing, Gender Difference, Boy Actor

1. Introduction

Revolt! I want you to revolt,
Revolt against an Orient of slaves, convents and incense
Revolt against history, and vanquish the great illusion. Fear no one.
The sun is the cemetery of eagles.
Revolt against an Orient that sees in you a feast in the bed.ⁱ

Nizzar Qabbani (1923-1998) constantly berates the exploitation of women in the Arab World through his poetry. The above lines show Qabbani inciting women to undermine the repressive patriarchal order and revolt against an Orient that sees them as 'feast[s] in the bed'. He encourages women to resist customs and traditions that impose so many restrictions on them while licensing men to do whatever they desire. However, Qabbani's voice, a scripture for feminine liberation, falls on deaf ears, for his deconstruction of gender roles is considered immoral by traditional Arab societies. Palestinian male readers often see Qabbani as feminised because he writes about women and their liberation from the confines of men. While gender and nationalism is inextricably connected in the Palestinian context, Qabbani's poems do not receive response and recognition from many Palestinians because he writes against Arab traditions that oppress women instead of putting his pen to the service of national narrative that negates the Israeli claim on Palestine. Qabbani's poems were, therefore, censored and excluded from school and university curricula.ⁱⁱ

I use Qabbani's words as a provocation which inspires me to undertake a feminist approach in my analysis of Shakespeare's *Othello* (1604).ⁱⁱⁱ I argue that Shakespeare's *Othello* interrogated the masculine construction of gender difference, created complex female characters that transcend the stereotypes upon which masculine ideology is based and subjected the binary opposites of speech and silence to contradictions for both male and female characters. In their analysis of Shakespeare's tragedies, Lenz, Greene and Neely (1980) state that 'powerful women are always threatening and often, in fact, destructive' to male figures' voices and authority^{iv} while Woodbridge (1984) notes that 'the first decade of the 17th century had witnessed unprecedented misogyny in the drama'.^v She argues that early Jacobean drama 'produced a body of plays' in which 'women had joined other character types as scapegoats for the ills of society'.^{vi} These early feminist readings are parts of the historicist turn, for feminist criticism has moved on since these studies were published. The eclectic range of critics I am using in this study opens up gender-based readings in the teaching context of An-Najah University where I teach. While Shakespeare's *Othello* does not seek revolution and call to action on the part of women as Qabbani's text suggests, it represents female characters whose silences and voices oppose male figures' voices and reveal the destructiveness of the dominant ideology of gender difference exemplified by the binary opposition of speech and silence and male figures' deafness to female characters' voices. *Othello* grants Emilia a heroic

agency similar to that which Qabbanni encourages women to obtain, for her speech reveals the truth of Desdemona's innocence and destroys Iago's plot.

2. Methodology

Othello is a domestic tragedy of speaking and hearing. Following the critical lines of feminism and psychoanalysis, I argue that *Othello* is a conflict between female figures' moral and honest voices and male figures' villainous, treacherous and murderous voices. Othello is destroyed by his deafness to female figures' moral voices and by listening to Iago's lies. Drawing on the concepts of Jungian and Freudian psychoanalysis, I argue that Othello's deafness to the female voice is a defensive strategy in that he punishes Desdemona for the passions he strives to deny in himself. The association of female speech and silence with sexuality is a projection of misogynist and racist discourses. I read Iago's projection of his evil onto Othello as a verbal intercourse of homosexuality. I argue that the cause of tragedy emanates from the fact that Othello weds his shadow, Iago and ignores his anima, Desdemona. As Shakespeare yokes together the otherness of gender and race, Othello's loss of trust in Desdemona is a result of his inability to trust his racial identity. While the verbal marriage between Othello and Iago results in Othello's accusation of Desdemona of being a whore, I argue that Desdemona escapes this category because a boy actor impersonates her physically and vocally. Silencing Desdemona and the boy actor impersonating her speech elicits Othello's self-condemnation rather than affirming his perception of Desdemona as a whore. I argue that Othello does not recognise that patriarchal deafness to female voices is self-destructive. Furthermore, I use the romance of *Antar* (525-608) as a Palestinian literary intertext that would offer Palestinian readers – teachers and students – a combination of western and local approaches to *Othello*. I use the Romance of *Antar*, familiar to Palestinian students and I from the school curriculum, to scrutinize the significance of female figures in constructing male figures' heroic identity. The racial discourse that the Romance of *Antar* embodies enables me to scrutinize this discourse in *Othello*. While *Antar* reiterates his otherness without self-contempt, I argue that Othello's internalization of the racial discourse leads to his self-degradation which he projects onto Desdemona.

3. Othello's and Desdemona's Verbal Marriage

Othello's and Desdemona's love is founded on sympathy and admiration. *Othello* suggests that the conventional association between woman's speech and sexuality is presented as a perverse projection of the evil male imagination. Karen Newman proposes that 'Desdemona is presented in the play as a sexual subject who hears and desires, and that desire is punished because the nonspecular, or nonphallic, sexuality it displays is frightening and dangerous'.^{vii} The love and marriage of Othello and Desdemona show the triumphant power of language. Othello wins Desdemona by telling his life story:

This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline
[...]
and with a greedy ear
Devour up my tale (1.3.146-47, 150-51).

As the words 'greedy' and 'devour' imply, listening to Othello's stories persuades Desdemona to revolt against the norms of her 'country, credit, everything' (1.3.98). Othello's story gives Desdemona 'a world of sighs' (1.3.160) to communicate her amorous pains (1.3.161-62, 67) and to compensate him for his suffering. The Duke of Venice's assertion, 'I think this tale would win my daughter too' (1.3.172), implicitly approves of their marriage.

Desdemona boldly voices her sexual desires. She is portrayed as 'half the wooer' (1.3.176), asserting that she has married Othello of her own will (1.3.146-70). Although she asks the Duke to 'lend [his] prosperous ear' (1.3.244-47) and his authoritative voice to support her, she is not afraid to 'trumpet to the world' (1.3.251) her love for Othello. Carol Thomas Neely comments that 'Desdemona's energy, assertiveness, and power are made possible by Othello's loving response to her'.^{viii} Othello has responded to Desdemona's assertive voice with joyful pleasure (1.3.161-67), asserting that to be 'free of speech,' to sing, play or dance in public is a mark of virtue: '[w]here virtue is, these are more virtuous' (3.3.188-89).

Confident of her relationship with Othello, Desdemona announces that she will play the shrew (3.3.23-26) and attack Othello verbally until he takes Cassio back into his service. Some spectators in 1604 would probably have read her as a shrew (3.4.151) whose speaking position competes with Othello's. Emily Bartels argues that '[s]he (and Shakespeare) make clear from the outset that, while the agenda is Cassio's, at issue is her will and her right to voice it'.^{ix} Othello's response underlines that Desdemona oversteps the bounds of female speech. Although he insists 'I will deny thee nothing' (3.3.76, 83) and asks to be left 'but a little to myself' (3.3.85), his acquiescence serves to silence her speech. However, in Jordan's words, Desdemona 'reaffirm[s] the value of her duties as her husband's subordinate' to justify her speech.^x In placing her speech within appropriate wifely behaviour (3.3.76-82), Desdemona challenges the traditional view that insistent female speech is subversive to male authority.

4. Male Figures' Oral Construction of the Female

Men's oral adulation of women as goddesses or reviling them as whores suggests the misconceived association of woman's speech with sexuality, for this construction leaves no room between oppressive silence and debasing speech. While Brabantio says that Desdemona's true nature is obedience and chastity, Iago perceives her as deceitful and lascivious (1.3.350-52, 2.1.224-28). Brabantio perceives Desdemona as a 'jewel' (1.3.196), 'gentle mistress' (1.3.178),

and '[a] maiden, never bold' (1.3.95), supposing that her sexual transgression is caused by Othello's magic charms (1.3.62). However, Desdemona undermines the passivity wished on her by Brabantio's voice (1.1.122, 1.2.62), for she has eloped of her own free will to be with Othello. Once she moves from the role of possession and becomes a dangerously desiring subject, she is accused of rebellion and wantonness. As Roderigo says, her elopement is a 'gross revolt' (1.1.132), and Brabantio states that it is 'treason of the blood' (1.1.167). Once Brabantio recognizes that Desdemona is won by Othello's stories and her 'heart was pierced through the ear' (1.3.220) confirmed by her oral defense of her love, he reacts to her marriage with a sense of disobedience and warning: 'Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds (1.1.168). Brabantio disowns her (1.3.59-60, 196), asserting that she will prove unfaithful to Othello (1.3.293-94) – a view that Iago's slanderous tongue reiterates (3.3.200) to destroy Othello's faith in Desdemona.

Cassio's voice is destructive to women, whom he divides into goddesses and whores. For him, Desdemona is 'divine' (2.1.73), 'most exquisite', 'indeed perfection' (2.3.18, 25). However, Desdemona's speech in voicing and defending her love, mediating for him and joining Iago's discourse of misogyny challenges Cassio's idealization of her. Both divisions of women into goddesses or whores collapse into each other in the discourse of misogyny which suggests that women are simultaneously 'seeming' to be virgins and 'being' whores (1.3.335-36, 2.1.72, 105-06, 109-12), as Wayne argues.^x Significantly, while Cassio ennobles Desdemona, he shares Iago's misogyny, saying to Desdemona in response to Iago's misogynist discourse that 'he speaks home' (2.1.165). To topple a goddess into a whore is a turn in context which Iago's speech and silence accomplish. As Maud Bodkin observes, '[i]f a man is wedded to his fantasy of a woman [...] he grows frantic and blind with passion at the thought of the actual woman [...] as a creature of natural varying impulses'.^{xii}

5. Desdemona's Handkerchief

The handkerchief, a stage prop, is a symbolic extension of female silence (3.4.71). Women were associated with the needle and staff – Desdemona is idealised as 'so delicate with her needle' (4.1.185) – while men were associated with the pen and sword. Desdemona's loss of the handkerchief, like her speech with Cassio, is a proof of her infidelity, for both speech and the handkerchief mediate between the public and private and blur the distinction between the classical and the grotesque body.^{xiii} The handkerchief is a mobile object, a fetish that 'enters into a diverse array of actor networks'.^{xiv} Desdemona's handkerchief was woven by an old Sibyl using silk from sacred 'worms' and dye from the hearts of mummified 'maidens' hearts' (3.4.72-77). Othello associates the loss of the handkerchief with male inconstancy (3.4.62, 64-65). Furthermore, the handkerchief is a symbol of the male control and love that Desdemona has betrayed (5.2.212-15), hence 'she must die, else she'll betray more men' (5.2.6). The handkerchief is a fetishist object that is riddled with sexual connotations as Freud says about objects: 'Freudian interpretation is popularly thought to be a matter of attributing sexual connotation to objects, so that towers and ladders, for instance, are seen as phallic symbols'.^{xv} Jungian critics such as Alex Aronson and Katherine S. Stockholder have analysed Othello's problem using an archetypal approach which focuses on projection. For Aronson, Othello is a 'victim of the archetype' when he relies on the handkerchief as "ocular proof", allowing anima and shadow (Iago) to overcome his ego.^{xvi} Stockholder points out that Othello 'confuse[s] the handkerchief [...] with the human love it represents',^{xvii} projecting his psychic content on the handkerchief and blurring the lines between the subject and the object.

Desdemona's lie deconstructs the conventional association between woman's verbal dishonesty and her sexual infidelity. Desdemona lies about the handkerchief to conquer Othello's inscrutable rage (3.3.287-88, 3.4.48): '[i]t is not lost [...]. I say, it is not lost' (3.4.85, 87). For Othello, Desdemona's lie is a proof of her sexual infidelity (5.2.62, 127-28). As Neely has suggested, Desdemona's lie 'signals the loss of her maiden's power and innocence; it confirms—Othello believes—his notions about female depravity'.^{xviii} However, the handkerchief is lost, but Desdemona's chastity, which the handkerchief is taken to symbolise, remains intact. In serving as a sign of Desdemona's adultery through the manner in which Iago constructs its loss (3.3.306), 'it remains also a symbol for the woman's text – for the work that women do, since in the play they do not write books but serve as bodies to be written upon'.^{xix} Therefore, I argue that Othello inscribes the word "whore" on Desdemona's body, projecting onto her Iago's insinuations.

6. Iago's Poisonous Tongue

Iago's speech, not Desdemona's, is the real poison in the play (3.3.452-53, 4.2.15-16). Othello's 'manly language' becomes rude and abusive under Iago's influence.^{xx} Greenblatt has identified storytelling as Othello's mode of 'self-fashioning', and he argues that Othello's ability to make others submit to his narrative is reflected by Iago, who constructs the illusive narrative of Desdemona's adultery to which Othello submits.^{xxi} Othello submits to Iago's narrative as '[t]o Othello, Iago's is the absolute by which others' honesty is measured'.^{xxii} Shakespeare shows that 'honesty' is attached to an absolute villain and liar (2.3.330, 3.1.40-41, 3.3.262) to prove that words can lose reliability. Iago's pretended honesty is conveyed through his speech (3.3.215-16) and facial expressions (2.3.173). Furthermore, while the narrative of Desdemona's infidelity is based on lying (4.1.35, 5.2.176-77), Othello believes Iago because he is 'the voice of society' and his lies represent the ideology of gender difference, as Leggatt notes.^{xxiii} Because Iago's voice is representative of the society's construction of gender roles that Othello internalises, the superego, in Freudian term, is acting as an alienating force in the psyche of Othello's character. Iago is an outsider whose location has a bearing on his speech and silence. Iago's construction of Othello as a lascivious Moor is undermined in the court setting where Othello appears a regal, eloquent and accomplished general. It is significant to note that Iago stands silent when Othello defends himself against Brabantio's charges. His silence in the court suggests that his racial prejudice is unspeakable at court and that he is, unlike Othello, relegated to the margins of power. Iago, who remains in a subjugated position in Venice,

poisons Othello with his speech in Cyprus where there is no higher authority to mediate the conflict. His vow that he 'will [...] turn her virtue into pitch' (2.3.355) gives way to his use of two overlapping discourses –misogyny and racism – that create poisonous magic in the web of language to enmesh and destroy them all. As Carol Chillington Rutter asserts, 'Iago is the originator of discourse, then its wrecking; the first inventor of misogyny and racism'.^{xxiv}

7. Iago's Discourse of Misogyny

Iago's speech is associated with the Renaissance discourse of misogyny (2.1.109-12), articulating women's deception and sexual lasciviousness (4.1.67-69). His misogyny is illuminated through his conversation with Desdemona in Act 2, Scene 1, where she sets her voice within the conventional style of misogynist discourse. Like Lavinia's insults to Tamora, her style has disturbed critics. Ridley, for example, notes that 'it is distasteful to watch her engaged in a long piece of cheap backchat with Iago, and so adept at it that one wonders how much time on the voyage was spent in the same way'.^{xxv} Yet, Iago's misogynist discourse and his condemnation of female speech and silence (2.1.100-07) and women's response to it serve as the backdrop of the verbal and physical violence that follows.

8. Othello and Antar: Resistance to and Internalisation of the Racist Discourse

I think that there are striking parallels between Othello's racial insecurities and the story of Antar (525-608), the illegitimate son of Shadad, a well-respected member of the Arabian tribe of Bani Abss, and his mistress Zabeedah, an African female slave. Antar won the heart of Abla by entertaining her with wondrous poems and narratives, as did Othello with Desdemona. The romance of Antar, which is part of the Palestinian school curriculum, enables me to explore Iago's use of the racial discourse to entrap Othello in the logic that Desdemona's marriage to him is a sign of deceit and sexual looseness. In both texts, male eloquence and heroism are the instruments of wooing the female figures. While Desdemona and Abla consolidate Othello's and Antar's assimilations to the Venetian society and the tribe of Bani Abss, Antar, unlike Othello, does not internalise the racist discourse. Thus, I argue that with Othello's loss of his trust in Desdemona, he loses his heroic identity. 'Abla was deeply moved by Antar's distress, for she loved him both for his courage and his eloquence'.^{xxvi} She overlooked Antar's blackness in favour of his heroic deeds and poems, as did Desdemona with regards to Othello. While Abla (like Desdemona) was sought after by many, she wished to be his wife the same way that Desdemona wished to be Othello's.^{xxvii} While Othello's marriage was opposed by male figures in Venice, Antar's declaration of his love to Abla was challenged by the tribe of Bani Abss because he was a son of a slave.^{xxviii} However, Antar's heroic deeds and poetry triumphed over the stigma of birth, class and racial prejudice and compelled his father to acknowledge him as his son and allow him to marry Abla.^{xxix} Both Antar and Othello identify themselves with their beloveds as the basis of their heroic identities.^{xxx} Desdemona is 'Othello's "fair warrior"' (2.1.179), and '[t]he fountain from the which my current runs' (4.2.60), as well as a shield from 'chaos' (3.3.91-92). Calbi notes that:

To Othello, Desdemona unmistakably stands for a body that matters. It matters especially because it consolidates, or is supposed to consolidate, Othello's transformation – what the play ambiguously calls 'redemption' (1.3.138) – from the monstrous black and Islamic 'other' to the valiant noble white Moor of Venice.^{xxxi}

Othello's and Antar's identification with the female heroines undoes the phallogocentric scenario, for both Abla and Desdemona are father surrogates or mother surrogates symbolising the heroes' adoption by the mother country. This comparative reading which suggests that Othello's and Antar's relation to Venice and tribe of Bani Abss depend on possessing female figures will offer Palestinian students a different interpretation from that of An-Najah's instructors who claim that female figures (such as Desdemona) are threats to male figures' identities. Unlike Antar who does not listen to the racial discourse and keeps his love to Abla, Othello's loss of his Venetian identity is caused by his deafness to Desdemona's voice and his listening to Iago's racist and misogynist voice.

Both Othello and Antar were victims of the surrounding men who hurled racist abuse against them to reduce them from persons to objects. Most characters address Othello with racial epithets, such as 'the thicklips' (1.1.66), 'an old black ram' (1.1.87), or 'a lascivious Moor' (1.1.124). Iago uses the rhetoric of racism to undermine Othello's security and problematise his marriage to Desdemona, 'producing Othello's abduction of Desdemona as an act of racial adulteration'.^{xxxii} Iago's diabolic rhetoric convinces Othello that Desdemona is unfaithful to him because of his race (3.3.209). Iago has verbally castrated Othello, who admits that with Desdemona's infidelity he has lost his identity as a heroic soldier (3.3.351-53). Antar (unlike Othello) did not internalise others' racist discourse. He said, '[m]y complexion is no injury to me, nor the name of Zabeedah, when I exercise my courage amongst the foe'. He proceeded, 'I will work wonders and marvels; and I will protect myself from the tongues of the wicked'.^{xxxiii} Othello's murder of Desdemona thwarts his desire to secure a place in discourse after death: '[w]hen you shall these unlucky deeds relate, / Speak of me as I am' (5.2.339-40). In these lines, Othello declares that he is 'the base Indian', 'a malignant and a turbanned Turk' and 'the circumcised dog' (5.2.345, 351, 353). Commenting on these lines, T. S. Eliot asserts that 'I have never read a more terrible exposure of human weakness—of universal human weakness—than the last great speech of Othello'.^{xxxiv} Othello's speech is terrible because it expresses his self-alienation and his internalization of the Venetian discourse of racial otherness. His perception of himself as both a Venetian hero and a treacherous Turk, who is killed by Othello the Venetian, denies him an authentic self. I, therefore, agree with T. S. Eliot's assertion that Othello's defensiveness and his need that others speak of him suggest that he is '*cheering himself up*' (original emphasis). Othello's speech is self-centered because 'he has ceased to think about Desdemona, and is thinking about himself'.^{xxxv}

Lodovico's and Gratiano's responses to Othello's speech (5.2.354-55) suggest that Othello's suicide signifies destruction without catharsis. I agree with Neill, who observes 'the absence of any witness sympathetic enough to tell the hero's story'.^{xxxvi} Unlike Othello whose last speech does not receive sympathetic audition from characters onstage, Antar's speech outlived his silencing. As Antar says, 'I am the well-known Antar, the chief of his tribe, and I shall die; but when I am gone, history shall tell of me'.^{xxxvii} When Antar is stabbed from behind during battle, an old man addresses his corpse and glorifies his heroic deeds.^{xxxviii} I think that this comparative reading can enable Palestinian students to recognize that Antar keeps his subjectivity because he shows deafness to the discourse of racism while Othello transforms from being a hero into a villain because of his aural openness to Iago's racist and misogynist discourses. In my teaching of *Othello* alongside the Romance of Antar, the latter hero appeals to students while the former does not receive sympathy from them. Students recognize that Othello is like many Palestinian men who listen to the voices of gossip and kill female figures unjustly, pondering that 'Othello is a badge of shame for us'.

9. Iago's Diabolic Silence

Shakespeare suggests that Iago's silence and verbal withdrawal invade and torment Othello's mind. Iago constructs feigned asides that he equates with nothing (3.3.34, 93, 36, 112-13) to push Othello into the whirlpool of jealousy and suspicion. When Othello chooses to explore Iago's nagging thoughts, 'what dost thou think?' (3.3.107), Iago hides his hypocritical answer beneath the veil of a question, '[t]hink, my lord?' (3.3.108). Iago, then, introduces Othello to a 'new discourse of interiority', a discourse that seeks for hidden/hideous meanings, as Neill suggests.^{xxxix} Othello interprets Iago's procrastination as a manifestation of a 'monster [...] / Too hideous to be shown' (3.3.110-11). Othello is seduced by the assumption that Iago's silence suggests that '[t]his honest creature doubtless / sees and knows more – much more — than he unfolds' (3.3.246-47). As Calderwood has noted, 'meaning resides now in the unspoken aspects', for 'with Iago, the unspoken always says more than the said'.^{xl} Iago's last words are silence: '[f]rom this time forth [he] never will speak word' (5.2.301). Iago's withdrawal behind the wall of defiant silence is a refusal of self-incrimination. His silent refusal to articulate his diabolic reasons has made his motives impenetrable.^{xli} Iago, therefore, exploits silence as a seductive technique with which to arouse the hunger of Othello's ears, to poison them and to challenge Venetian authority.

10. Verbal Homosexuality

Othello and Iago's verbal exchange is a parody of the vocal marriage between Desdemona and Othello. Desdemona's adultery is conceived by verbal intercourse between Othello and Iago, whose tongue ravishes Othello's ears and inseminates them with adulterous 'noises, ears and lips' (4.1.41-43) to implant suspicion of Desdemona's adultery. As John Wall notes:

Othello's ear and Iago's tongue become displaced organs of generation, and Iago is revealed as the Moor's aural-sexual partner. Iago's words thus become the seed which impregnates Othello's mind through his ear so that it will produce the 'monstrous birth' of jealousy, the 'green-eyed monster'.^{xlii}

Othello shows aural openness to Iago's insinuations, urging Iago not to make Othello's 'ear / A stranger to thy thoughts' (3.3.146-47). Iago exploits the openness of Othello's ignorant ear, resolving 'to abuse Othello's ear' (1.3.394) and 'pour this pestilence into his ear' (2.3.351). Wall notes that 'Iago's private language [...] confronts and subverts the power of official, public language to create a true marriage between Othello and Desdemona'. As Iago abuses Othello's ear 'in daylight', this is, as Wall argues, 'an inversion of Othello's wedding night'.^{xliii}

Iago's speech uses homoerotic rhetoric to ravish Othello's ears. Iago's account of his dream is replete with sexual overtones of homoeroticism and masturbation: the punning references to 'hand' (masturbation) (3.3.165), 'hard' (tumescence), 'pluck' (coitus) and 'root' (the phallus) (3.3.424-25) underscore a discourse of sodomy, as Mark Burnett notes.^{xliiv} The real reason for Iago's malevolence, according to Rogers, is that 'he is a paranoid personality suffering from repressed homosexuality who unknowingly regards Desdemona as a rival for the love of Othello'.^{xliiv} This reading explains why Iago has usurped Desdemona's place (3.3.481-82), joining Othello in 'exchanging the vow that blasphemously mocks marriage in perverted "service"' and in the ritual kneeling that guarantees his pledge (3.3.463-78), the fruit of which is Othello's conception of Desdemona's and Cassio's deaths (3.3.480, 5.1.28, 31-33).^{xliiv} Using the Jungian approach to Othello, Desdemona is to anima as Iago is to shadow and Othello's ego attempts to mediate between these psychological imperatives. Othello's tragedy emanates from the fact that his nonintegration of the shadow dooms his attempt to embrace the anima. Gregg Andrew Hurwitz notes that 'Rather than integrating his shadow and wedding his anima, Othello weds his shadow and neglects his anima'.^{xliiv} The oath is a powerful language that Iago uses to convince Othello of the honesty of his words.^{xliiv} John Hartley writes, '[t]he oath was the boldest approach a [...] person had to defend a claim to innocence [...]. [A]n oath raised a person's [...] claim to evidence accepted as proof'.^{xlix} Othello, therefore, turns against Desdemona by engaging his ears to Iago's tongue which speaks of adultery.

While the play is constructed as a sequence of speaking, listening and responding to what one hears and sees, Shakespeare shows that the means of communication are unreliable in *Othello*, which dramatises an epistemological crisis. While Iago's diabolic silence and speech fuel Othello's desire for verbal and visual knowledge, Iago's schemes fling Othello to fatal ignorance and erroneous assumptions. In response to Othello's demand of 'ocular proof' (3.3.363), Iago stages a conversation with Cassio, translating the visual into the verbal (4.1.24-25).^l As Cassio embraces Iago in imitation of Bianca (4.1.135), he acts out Iago's narrative of Cassio's alleged dream of Desdemona (3.3.416-28).

Othello's ear is an agent of illusion in that what his ears receive is not consistent with the reality known to the spectators.^{li} While Cassio's taunting performance of Bianca's love is not the site of Desdemona's transgression (4.1.145), Othello's language becomes abusive, reducing Desdemona to a 'whore'. Othello's question about the handkerchief (and, implicitly, Desdemona herself), '[w]as that mine?' (4.1.171) shows that he depends on Iago's words rather than perceives the truth, and that he is only a puppet under the control of Iago's rhetoric.

11. The Female Body / Book and Male Misogyny

Bianca's role suggests that *Othello* dramatises the problems of a masculine structure that gives women no voice and perceives the female body as a book the male figures read or a blank page onto which male characters write and voice misogynist discourse. Bianca (whose name means white) provides a model of the men's misconceived construction of women as whores. Bianca who is 'most fair' (3.4.170) seems to contradict her name's association with sexual purity because of her role as courtesan.^{lii} Although Bianca sews, she exchanges sexuality along with material objects (4.1.95-96), dissociating needlework from the feminine virtues of silence and chastity.^{liii} The equation of the needle and the pen is demonstrated by the fact that, as Callaghan asserts:

the handkerchief serves as a visual text which is treated like a printed book – and as we have seen is repeatedly described with the scribal term 'copy', which renders needlework as especially analogous to writing as the physical activity that produces a manuscript.^{liv}

However, Shakespeare deconstructs the dominant association between women's speech and sexuality through his sympathetic representation of Bianca (4.1.99-100). While Bianca protests against false charges and accusations, Iago scapegoats her for Cassio's wounding (5.1.116, 125) as Othello constructs evidence against Desdemona. Kay Stanton notes that 'the label of whore more properly belongs to Iago himself, as it does also to Othello'.^{lv} Emilia's castigation of Bianca (5.1.121) unleashes Bianca's voice that male figures' voices would wish to smother: 'I am no strumpet / But of life as honest as you' (5.2.122-23). As Eamon Grennan points out, Bianca's 'speech [...] brings into sharper focus the moral deficiencies of the world that would condemn her'.^{lvi} While Bianca's speech depicts her as an honest and passionate human being (3.4.173-76), Cassio denies her humanity, perceiving her as a strumpet, monkey, bauble, fitchew (4.1.97, 128, 134, 145). Cassio's and Othello's tainting of Bianca and Desdemona suggests, as Gayle Greene observes, that 'Bianca and Desdemona are analogous in that to which they are subject, and in an ability to return devotion for revilement which is simultaneously virtue and folly'.^{lvii} The analogy between Desdemona and Bianca is revealed in Othello's metaphorical transformation of Desdemona into a book where the word whore is written (4.2.72-74).

12. Projection

The white pages of Desdemona's 'goodly book' (4.2.72) are blackened when Othello projects Iago's misogynist and racist discourses onto Desdemona (3.3.109-10), 'replicating in Desdemona the contagion of projection itself'.^{lviii} Shakespeare suggests that the racial stereotype of the Moor overlaps with the gender stereotype of the woman. Othello perceives Desdemona as black because of her alleged sexual relationship with Cassio (3.3.391-393). The fact that Othello is 'light of brain' (4.1.269) and 'fall[s] into an epilepsy' (4.1.50) suggests the injustice of his association of Desdemona's speech and silence with an adulterous affair with Cassio, for his 'passion' 'collied' his 'judgement' (2.3.202). Desdemona unwittingly associates herself with the traditional representation of 'Fortune' as a whore (4.2.129). However, 'the concept of whore [is a] male-initiated inscription onto the female as scapegoat';^{lix} it is Othello who is writing the misogynist discourse onto Desdemona's body / book. As Emilia says, '[a]llas, Iago, my Lord hath so bewhored her' (4.2.117). Othello is entangled in ventriloquism; he is the lascivious author who reads what he writes. Emilia's line, '[a]llas, what does the gentleman conceive?' (4.2.97) suggests that 'the brothel has been the construction of Othello's mind'.^{lx} Desdemona's inability to utter the word whore (4.2.119-21, 163-64) shows that her adultery is a projection of the evil in Othello's mind.

13. The Otherness of Race and Gender

Shakespeare suggests in his juxtaposition of the otherness of the black race and the female gender that 'women accept the otherness of the actor in the men they love' while men project their otherness onto the female.^{lxi} While the boy actor impersonating Desdemona accepts the otherness of the actor playing Othello, Othello projects the racist and misogynist discourses onto Desdemona. As Callaghan puts it:

Desdemona is a *tabula rasa* in a most curious sense. She is pure, white, and also blank; existing and not existing, and, since blank, open to any inscription, and therefore, in a sense, undecipherable. Othello's judgement of her as whore is the inscription she must bear [...]. Condemned to silence, she is to be read and not to speak herself.^{lxii}

Desdemona is 'condemned to silence' when Iago has impregnated Othello's ears with glamorous pornographic word-pictures that make Othello perceive Desdemona as a cipher that he fills with his rank writings. However, Desdemona defeats his interpretation, for she is a *tabula rasa*, an absence and a negation of his inscription. While both Othello and Desdemona are implicated in performance, he projects his passion onto her. Desdemona's turning from outspokenness to passivity is punctuated with Othello's turning from Europeanised assimilation to Moorish self-abasement. From a psychological standpoint, Othello's internalization of the cultural association of blackness with sexual corruption and

social disgrace is a defense against the idealization of Desdemona since her fidelity is significant to him as a mirror of his idealized self image. Desdemona's alleged infidelity leads to the collapse of Othello's character because he recognizes the discrepancy between his idealized image and his true self (3.3.267-276). Othello reveals that he is the villain whose rhetoric enchants 'the gentle Desdemona' (1.2.25) into acting the part of a whore: '[t]hat married with Othello' is what Desdemona voiced and did to turn into 'that cunning whore of Venice' (4.2.91). Othello's destruction by his inability to enact the roles he desires to perform confirms Stephen Orgel's argument that public theatre 'is a world in which masculinity is always in question'.^{lxiii} Redefining Desdemona as 'that cunning whore of Venice' is associated with degrading Othello to 'he that was Othello' (5.2.281).

Desdemona's narrative of self-sacrifice is a testimony of her fidelity and Othello's faulty voice. Generations of critics have exalted Desdemona's silent submission and obedience to Othello despite his rage and violence.^{lxiv} However, Desdemona's obedience is analogous to self-assertion for while she defends Othello, she also implicates him.^{lxv} While Desdemona asserts her love and obedience to Othello (1.3.184-89, 251-52, 3.3.88-89, 4.1.248) and refrains from speaking for herself and Cassio (3.4.131-32, 4.2.116), Othello reads her subjection as a cover for adulterous impulses (4.1.255, 261). When Othello strikes her in public, she asserts that she has 'not deserved this' (4.1.240) while addressing herself to his 'will' and 'pleasure' (4.2.22, 24). She also calls on heaven that she 'shall be saved' (4.2.89) to dispute Othello's authority and voice.

14. The Willow Song

The willow song scene invokes the relaxed atmosphere of feminine companionship set apart from the earshot of men whose vicious voices would silence female characters' tender voices. Emilia's energetic speech suggests the nature of this scene as a protected feminine enclosure and that the silence imposed upon Emilia by Iago harbours subversion to male figures' voices. Desdemona and Emilia voice their resistance to their victimisation and claim equal rights within marriage.^{lxvi} Desdemona's willow song, which reveals the beauty of her voice, allows her to create a 'sisterhood of grief' with Barbary who died of love and constitute her own story, using her own voice for her own grief.^{lxvii} She interrupts her song with '[n]ay, that's not next' (4.3.52) at the point when the song endorses female victimisation: '[l]et nobody blame him, his scorn I approve' (4.3.51). René Girard proposes that Desdemona's song suggests her preparation 'for death as she would for a night of love', since 'the tragic outcome fulfills her most secret expectation'.^{lxviii} However, the fact that Desdemona's song provokes Emilia's condemnation of conjugal injustice and her advocacy of the wives to revenge themselves for their husbands' 'peevish jealousies' (4.3.88) and verbal and physical violence suggests that the scene goes in the opposite direction from that proposed by Girard.

15. Othello's Deafness to Desdemona's Voice

Shakespeare criticises Othello's deafness to Desdemona's voice (4.2.40, 43) and his inability to voice his suspicions directly. The divorce of harmonious dialogue between Othello and Desdemona (3.4.81, 4.2.40-42) provokes Desdemona's praise that 'Lodovico is a proper man' (4.3.35) who 'speaks well' (4.3.36) – a characteristic that Iago eradicates from the landscape of Othello's mind (2.1.198-99). Othello decides to kill Desdemona to put an end to the discrepancy between words and deeds (5.2.7-9). However, Desdemona's function as a listener disrupts the authority of his voice. The power of her breath diverts him from his 'sacrifice' (5.2.16-17). Desdemona challenges Othello's accusation of her as a whore and re-defines his 'sacrifice' as 'murder' (5.2.65).^{lxix} Othello's deafness to Desdemona's voice forms a dialogue with many Palestinians' deafness to female figures' voices, revealing striking cultural assumptions on the issue of discourse and gender. Othello, who turns deaf to her voice because he doubts her verbal and sexual honesty, is like Palestinian men who hold on to the oft-repeated comparison between "talk of men", which is of courage, responsibility, honour and honesty and "women's talk", which is a symbol of deception, inconstancy and dishonesty.^{lxx} As Kenneth Muir points out, Othello 'does not give her a chance of defending herself by naming her supposed lover, her accuser, or the evidence against her'.^{lxxi} Othello silences Cassio's speech which may support Desdemona's truthful voice and unravel Iago's insinuations. Othello's assertion that Cassio's 'mouth is stopped' (5.2.71) provokes Desdemona's exclamation, '[a]las, he is betrayed, and I undone' (5.2.75), which augments Othello's conviction that she is a whore and prompts him to kill her (5.2.76-77, 83). Othello's speech, therefore, exposes his own paranoid interpretation, abusing the facts that Desdemona's moral speech will clarify.

16. The Boy Actor's Speech and Silence

The boy actor impersonating Desdemona physically and vocally evades the speaking position of a whore, declaring him/her self: 'not to be a strumpet, I am none' (4.2.87). Othello describes her tears as a 'well-painted passion' (4.1.257) and casts her in the role of a prostitute who 'can turn, and turn, and yet go on / And turn again. And she can weep, sir, weep' (4.1.253-54). Othello's misogynist line, which alludes to the boy actor's ability to grieve and cry, foregrounds Desdemona's (the boy actor's) own theatricality. Desdemona's transformation from outspokenness to silence may suggest Othello's ability to control her speech. However, this transformation is, arguably, linked to theatrical performance in that the boy actor impersonating her speaks with a voice which is about to break, about to become a male voice.

Desdemona's subversive silence is linked to the condition of performance. Silencing the boy actor who transcends his imitative role as a female reveals an uncanny agency that destabilises male figures' authority as illuminated by an early modern response to the convention of the boy actor. Henry Jackson's account of a production in 1610 suggests that Desdemona fulfils a more important dramatic function when silent and dead than when alive:

But indeed, Desdemona, killed by her husband, although she always acted the matter very well, in her death moved us still more greatly; when lying in bed she implored the pity of those watching with her countenance alone.^{lxxii}

Jackson's famous comment upon the tragic effect of Desdemona's death in performance reminds us of how good these boy actors were at impersonating women. Jackson praises the boy actor's speech and sustained eloquence in saying that 'she always acted the matter very well'. His words indicate that the illusion of the boy actor as woman could be very convincing; Jackson shows in his choice of pronouns that he thought of Desdemona as both actor and character as feminine gendered. His account challenges the view that, in death, Desdemona is victimised and subjected. Jackson's comment implies that the boy actor utilizes active silence to draw attention to the communicative abilities of his body. Jackson reveals that the boy actor playing Desdemona's dead body moves his audience and arouses passions for Desdemona by focusing on her facial expressions. Jackson sympathises with Desdemona rather than with Othello, who is identified as 'her husband'. While Othello silences Desdemona, her look – 'This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven / And fiends will snatch at it'(5.2.271) – that judges and condemns him (5.2.271-73) dissociates her speech from sexual transgression.

17. The Masculine Destructive Ideology of Gender Difference

Shakespeare shows that listening to female speech suggests a way out of the physical and verbal violence that the play enacts. For example, tragic misinterpretation could have been avoided had Emilia's observation—that jealousy is 'a monster / Begot upon itself, born on itself' (3.4.161-62)—been given the same credibility and attention as Iago's destructive voice. Emilia, who is 'dramatically and symbolically the play's fulcrum', is the spokesperson of the women's rights (3.3.333, 3.4.104-07).^{lxxiii} Palestinian readers and spectators, steeped in traditions, might perceive Emilia's argument that women's infidelity is a response to their husbands' promiscuity as subversive, along with her criticism of the double standard that allows men a freedom denied to women (3.4.104-07). From a presentist, Palestinian perspective, male figures turn deaf to the feminist views that overturn the conventions of gender roles. Thus, I think that *Othello* stages for audience in contemporary Palestine their double standard where male figures can express their sexual desires and act on them while silencing women's voices and desires. Furthermore, in both cultures, female voices are ineffective in changing the status quo because their voices fall on deaf ears. While men speak about their sexual experiences, as illuminated through Cassio's speech about Bianca to Iago, women are not allowed to talk about sexuality, as revealed in Desdemona's inability and abhorrence to utter the word 'whore'. However, Emilia's speech counters the voices of male figures who, in their idealisation and degrading of women, do not see women as human beings. Emilia's protests against men's oppression of women echoes the Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani's constant attempts to incite women to 'revolt against an Orient that sees in [them] feasts in the bed'. Qabbani is ineffective in changing the status quo due to male constructions of gender difference via the binary opposites of speech and silence and male figures' deafness to the female voice. Likewise, Iago and Othello turn deaf to Emilia's truthful speech. Iago silences her threatening speculation that '[t]he Moor's abused by some most villainous knave' (4.2.141) by invoking his authority (4.2.146). Othello turns deaf to Emilia's reflection that someone has abused his ears, for Emilia's words to Othello oppose 'honest' Iago's lascivious discourse (4.2.27-30). Kay Stanton argues that 'Shakespeare [...] "worries" the word whore in the play, and in deliberate juxtaposition with "honest"'.^{lxxiv} Othello turns deaf to Emilia's assertion that Desdemona is chaste and 'honest' (4.2.12, 17) because Emilia's 'answer does not fit his disposition to believe in the whorishness of his wife'.^{lxxv} Desdemona moves from outspokenness in Venice to silence in Cyprus and Emilia progresses from silence to outspokenness. As Emilia hears Desdemona's final words (5.2.85, 89-101, 116-22), 'Emilia's voice uncannily picked up where Desdemona's was stopped', as Rutter has observed.^{lxxvi} Othello tries to silence her (5.2.158), but she calls out the truth that '[t]he Moor hath killed my mistress' (5.2.63).

18. Emilia's Heroic Death

While Othello 'kills the real woman to rescue that ideal', Emilia's speech shows that the ideal resides in Desdemona's speech.^{lxxvii} Emilia questions Iago's manliness (5.2.174) and insists on reporting the truth (5.2.180), despite Iago's order to 'charm your tongue', 'get you home' (5.2.179, 191) and his misogynistic assault on women (5.2.226, 229). 'Good gentlemen', she appeals to the congregated company, 'let me have leave to speak' (5.2.192); this request links her to Desdemona's moral voice at the beginning of the play.^{lxxviii} Emilia defies all the forces that would silence her—her husband, men, religion and the world (5.2. 192-94, 218-20). Mary Beth Rose points out, 'Emilia's declarations summon the paradoxical associations of speech throughout the play with truth and with the incipient violation of established order'.^{lxxix} Emilia binds her voice to Desdemona's, asserting Desdemona's chastity (5.2.247-48) and proclaiming the play's resolving truth 'that handkerchief thou speak'st of / I found by fortune and did give my husband' (5.2.223-24). Emilia's truthful voice leads to her silencing at the hands of Iago (5.2.249), making a final point about the destructive nature of male attempts to silence women.

19. Honour Killing and Male Figures' loss and Affirmation of their Identities

The murder of Emilia suggests that, as Neill observes, 'Shakespeare's tragedy shows us a society incapable of learning, desperate only to cover what it feels should never have been disclosed'.^{lxxx} As a 'malignant [...] Turk' (5.2.351), Othello admits his baseness and turns against himself the verbal and physical aggression he has unjustly directed against Desdemona. His fatal strike against himself (5.2.354) may mark his acceptance of responsibility for his actions and serve as his self-punishment. However, it is his otherness that Othello murders (5.2.353-54). In Freudian terms, Othello

the superego kills the id Turk that had been assailing the Venetian ego. Othello's awareness of his racial identity indicates his desire to obliterate it to save his Venetian self and annihilate himself in the process. Othello's perception of Desdemona as being 'cold' as her 'chastity' (5.2.273-74), and his comparison of his irrational murder of Desdemona to the Indian who 'threw a [lifeless and voiceless] pearl away' (5.2.345) imply no recognition of her as a speaking person; Desdemona is still a passive object of love, which is the crux of the patriarchal ideology of containing female voices. Othello's killing of his otherness and his comparison of Desdemona to a jewel set him apart from the majority of Palestinian men, who pride themselves on killing female relatives that allegedly voice or act upon their sexual desires outside the sphere of marriage. Most Palestinians show no remorse over killing the allegedly transgressive female. Any sense of guilt would debase the killer in the public sphere who would label the killer as a complacent man, or a man who accepts dishonour and shame. Both Othello and most Palestinians who perform the acts of honour killing attempt to fulfill their obligations as defenders of the state. While Othello's marriage to Desdemona symbolizes his integration into Venetian society, his murder of Desdemona signals the loss of his heroic identity and the dissolution of his link to Venice. In contrast, killing the supposedly transgressive female figures in Palestine marks the public respect of the killers.

20. Conclusion

Shakespeare's *Othello* is a critique of male figures' defensive construction of gender difference via the binary opposites of speech and silence. *Othello*, which figures a link between female speech and sexuality as a projection of the evil in men's minds, shows that male figures' deafness to female moral voices is the cause of tragedy. Following the methodology of presentism, I have argued that *Othello* introduces striking affinities with contemporary Palestine with respect to gender difference via the binary opposites of speech and silence. In teaching *Othello* as a part of Drama course, I have emphasized, as I have done here, that *Othello* stages for audiences and readers in contemporary Palestine male figures' deafness to the feminist views that overturn the conventions of gender roles.

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Notes

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- ⁱⁱ Wisam Mansour, 'Kabbani's Women: From the Sultan's Wife To The Lady Friend in Exile', *Ankra Universitesi Dilve Tarih – Cografiya Fakultesi Dergisi*, 44.1 (2004), 1-15 (p. 2)
- ⁱⁱⁱ William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. by E. A. J. Honigmann, (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1997). Subsequent references to the play are taken from this edition.
- ^{iv} Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely, 'Introduction', in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 3-16 (p. 6).
- ^v Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womanhood, 1540-1620* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 249.
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- ^{vii} Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 86.
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- ^{ix} Emily C. Bartles, 'Strategies of Submission: Desdemona, the Duchess, and the Assertion of Desire', *SEL*, 36.2 (1996), 417-33 (p. 425).
- ^x Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 13.
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- ^{xv} Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 98.
- ^{xvi} Alex Aronson, *Psyche and Symbol in Shakespeare* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 27, 110.
- ^{xvii} Katherine S. Stockholder, 'Egregiously an Ass: Chance and Accident in *Othello*', *SEL*, 13 (1973), 256-72 (p. 265)
- ^{xviii} Carol Thomas Neely, 'Women and Men in *Othello*: "What Should such a fool Do with so good a woman"', in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 211-39 (p. 231).
- ^{xix} Wayne, 'Historical Difference: Misogyny and *Othello*', p. 171.
- ^{xx} Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 214.
- ^{xxi} Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 232-47.

- ^{xxii} Bertrand Evans, *Shakespeare's Tragic Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 118; Empson comments that '[t]he fifty-two uses of honest and honesty in Othello are a very queer business; there is no other play in which Shakespeare worries a word like that'. W. Empson, 'Honest in *Othello*', in *Othello: A selection of Critical Essays*, ed. by John Wain (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), pp. 98-122 (p. 98).
- ^{xxiii} Leggatt, *Violation*, p. 126.
- ^{xxiv} Carol Chillington Rutter, *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 147.
- ^{xxv} William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. by M. R. Ridley (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 54.
- ^{xxvi} Anonymous, *The Romance of Antar*, trans. by Terrick Hamilton, ed. by W. A. Clouston (Gloucester: Dodo Press, 2008), p. 22.
- ^{xxvii} Anon, *Antar*, pp. 13, 32.
- ^{xxviii} Anon, *Antar*, p. 12.
- ^{xxix} Anon, *Antar*, pp. 11, 133.
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- ^{xxxii} Michael Neill, 'Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello*', *SQ*, 40 (1989), 383-412 (p. 399).
- ^{xxxiii} Anon, *Antar*, p. 11.
- ^{xxxiv} T. S. Eliot, 'Shakespeare and the stoicism of Seneca', in *Selected Essays*, 3rd edn (London: Faber, 1958), pp. 126-40 (p. 130).
- ^{xxxv} Eliot, 'Shakespeare and the stoicism of Seneca', p. 130.
- ^{xxxvi} Neill, 'Unproper Beds', p. 383.
- ^{xxxvii} Anon, *Antar*, p. 19.
- ^{xxxviii} Anon, *Antar*, p. 143.
- ^{xxxix} Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 159; Neill, 'Unproper Beds', p. 394.
- ^{xl} James L. Calderwood, 'Speech and Self in *Othello*', *SQ*, 38.3 (1987), 293-303 (p. 301).
- ^{xli} Famously inscrutable thanks to Coleridge's assertion that Iago is driven by 'motive-less Malignity'. On Coleridge's observation and the critical conversation in which it engages, see Honigmann, *Othello*, pp. 33-41.
- ^{xlii} Wall, 'Aural Art', p. 361.
- ^{xliiii} Wall, 'Aural Art', pp. 362-63.
- ^{xliv} Mark Thornton Burnett, *Constructing "Monsters" in Shakespearean Drama and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 105.
- ^{xlv} Robert Rogers, 'Endopsychic Drama in *Othello*', *SQ*, 20.2 (1969), 205-215 (p. 206).
- ^{xlvi} Rutter, *Enter*, p. 160.
- ^{xlvii} Gregg Andrew Hurwitz, "'The Fountain, from which my current runs": A Jungian Interpretation of *Othello*', *The Upstart Crow*, 20 (2000), 79-92 (80).
- ^{xlviii} Frances A. Shirley, *Swearing and Perjury in Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979), p. 25.
- ^{xlix} John E. Hartley, 'From Lament to Oath: A Study of Progression in the Speeches of Job', in *The Book of Job*, ed. by W. A. M (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), pp. 79-100 (p. 87).
- ^l Nova Myhill, "'Hark, a Word in Your Ear": Whispers, Asides, and Interpretation in *Troilus and Cressida*', in *Who Hears in Shakespeare?: Auditory Worlds on Stage and Screen*, ed. by Laury Magnus and Walter W. Cannon (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012), pp. 163-78 (pp. 164-65).
- ^{li} Wall argues that 'in Shakespeare's theatre, the ear is at once the medium of dramatic illusion, making possible the play itself, and the agent of delusion, creating in various characters visions of the truth which do not accord with the reality known to the audience', Wall, 'Aural Art', p. 359.
- ^{lii} Alison Findlay, *Women in Shakespeare: A Dictionary* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 40.
- ^{liiii} Dympna Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens: women and cultural production in *Othello* and Shakespeare's England', in *Marxist Shakespeare*, ed. by Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 53-81 (pp. 54, 64, 66).
- ^{liv} Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens', p. 72.
- ^{lv} Kay Stanton, "'Made to write 'whore' upon?": Male and Female Use of the Word "Whore" in Shakespeare's Canon', in *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by Dympna Callaghan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 80-102 (p. 97).
- ^{lvi} Eamon Grennan, 'The Women's Voices in *Othello*: speech, song, silence', *SQ*, 38 (1987), 275-92 (p. 283).
- ^{lvii} Gayle Greene, "'This That You Call Love": Sexual and Social Tragedy in *Othello*', in *Shakespeare and Gender: A History*, ed. by Deborah Barker and Ivo Kamps (London, New York: Verso, 1995), pp. 47-62 (p. 55).
- ^{lviii} Janet Adelman, 'Iago's Alter Ego: Race as Projection in *Othello*', *SQ*, 4.2 (1997), 125-44 (p. 143).
- ^{lix} Stanton, 'Whore', p. 95; on the misogynistic books, see, for example, Joseph Swetnam's *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Woman* (1615). In response to such a misogynistic pamphlet, Jane Anger argues that misogynistic writing reveals more about its male authors than its female subjects. 'I would', she writes, 'that ancient writers would as well have busied their heads about deciphering the deceits of their own sex as they have about setting down our follies'. Ja A. Gent, 'Jane Anger: Her Protection for Women' (1589), in *The Women's Sharp Revenge: Five*

Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance, ed. by Simon Shepherd (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), pp. 29-46 (p. 38).

^{lx} Stanton, 'Whore', p. 96.

^{lxi} Marianne Novy, 'Shakespeare's Female Characters as Actors and Audience', in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 256-70 (pp. 267, 264).

^{lxii} Dymrna Callaghan, *Women and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy: A Study of King Lear, Othello, The Duchess of Malfi and The White Devil* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1989), p. 78.

^{lxiii} Stephen Orgel, 'The Subtexts of *The Roaring Girl*', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 12-26 (p. 25).

^{lxiv} *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*, ed. by A. C. Bradley (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 133; Robert B. Heilman, *Magic in the Web: Action and Language in Othello* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1977), p. 214; Michael D. Bristol, 'Charivari and the Comedy of Abjection in *Othello*', in *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His age*, ed. by Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), pp. 75-97 (p. 92).

^{lxv} Harry Berger Jr., 'Impertinent Trifling: Desdemona's Handkerchief', *SQ*, 47.3 (1996), 235-50 (p. 249); Bartels, 'Strategies', p. 430.

^{lxvi} On Emilia and Desdemona's private conversation, see Carole McKewin, 'Counsels of Gall and Grace: Intimate Conversations between Women in Shakespeare's plays', in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 117-32 (pp. 118-19, 122-23, 128-29).

^{lxvii} Grennan, 'Voices', p. 279.

^{lxviii} René Girard, 'Shall We Desire to Raze the Sanctuary? Desire and Death in *Othello* and Other plays', in *A Theatre of Envy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 290-96 (p. 293).

^{lxix} Leggatt, *Violation*, p. 139.

^{lxx} See, for example, Cheryl Rubenberg, *Palestinian Women: Patriarchy and Resistance in the West Bank* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), pp. 42-43.

^{lxxi} William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 209.

^{lxxii} Quoted in Gamini Salgado, *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare: First Hand Accounts of Performances, 1590-1890* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975), p. 30.

^{lxxiii} Neely, 'Women and Men', p. 213.

^{lxxiv} Stanton, 'Whore', p. 94.

^{lxxv} Stanton, 'Whore', p. 95.

^{lxxvi} Rutter, *Enter*, p. 174.

^{lxxvii} Martha Anderson-Thom, 'Thinking About Women and Their Prosperous Art: A Reply to Juliet Dusinberre's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*', *SSt*, 11 (1987), 259-76 (p. 264).

^{lxxviii} Grennan, 'Voices', p. 291.

^{lxxix} Mary Beth Rose, *The Expense of Spirit: Love and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 154.

^{lxxx} Neill, *Issues*, p. 170; for more on the destructive resolution of the play, see Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 32; Neely, 'Women and Men', pp. 215, 234.