

**THE COMPLEX NARRATIVES OF CONNUBIALITY IN WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE'S *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE* AND *THE TRAGEDY
OF OTHELLO THE MOOR OF VENICE***

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Abstract: *The complexity of connubiality in the two plays can be interwoven by many factors. The discussion of the connubiality or marriage in the plays may not be easily separated from issues of racial sentiments and prejudice since both plays are not free from such issues. Therefore, this article highlights the complexity within three aspects: the purpose or the motive of the marriage, the matrimonial ceremony, and the racial prejudice overshadowing it. Making use of narrative study and documentary analysis, this article closely studies the existence and inter-relation of those three aspects in order to better comprehend the plays. The results show that the aspects of motive and as well as racial sentiments and prejudice are present in both plays while aspect of matrimonial ceremony is not clearly present. It is because of this amalgam that makes the plays more aesthetic from narrative standpoint.*

Keywords: *narratives, connubiality, racial sentiments, prejudice*

Sokol and Sokol (2003) stated that Shakespeare and other dramatists of his time were very much keen and fascinated by many social aspects of the age. Some of them were about law and marriage. Those playwrights all focused a great deal of attention on complex issues of legal and connubial matters (p.1). Therefore, the subject of the present study – the complex narratives of connubiality in *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tragedy of Othello* – is relevant to the statement above. The complexity of connubiality in the two plays may be interwoven by many factors.

This article intends to explicate the complexity within three aspects that may or may not exist in the plays. They are the purpose or the motive, the way it is conducted or the matrimonial ceremony, and the racial prejudice overshadowing it. These elements are important to be discussed because the two plays are the most well known works of Shakespeare that bring forward racial sentiments and prejudice. Therefore, the discussion of connubiality or marriage in the plays may not be easily separated from such overarching issues.

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Before turning to matters having specific bearing on that subject, it is necessary to outline the narrative structures of the two plays that may yield the complexity of the connubiality within them. The very reason is because a comprehension of the plays narratives is *a sine qua non* of understanding the proposed issue. Therefore, the structure of the article comprises five parts: the narrative structure of *The Merchant of Venice*, the narrative structure of *The Tragedy of Othello The Moor of Venice*, the complexity of connubiality in *The Merchant of Venice*, the complexity of connubiality in *The Tragedy of Othello The Moor of Venice*, and conclusion.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a descriptive one that intends to explicate the complexity within three aspects that may or may not exist in the plays. They are the purpose or the motive, the way it is conducted or the matrimonial ceremony, and the racial prejudice overshadowing it. The source of data are William Shakespeare's plays "*The Merchant of Venice*", and "*The Tragedy of Othello The Moor of Venice*".

DISCUSSION

The Narrative Structure of *The Merchant of Venice*

The first aspect to discuss is plot. E.M. Forster made a distinction between story and plot that is described as follows.

A story is a narrative of events in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. A story arouses only curiosity; a plot demands some intelligence and memory. Thus plotting is the process of converting story into plot, of changing chronological arrangement of incidents into a causal and inevitable arrangement. This functioning of some kind of intelligence overview of action, which establishes principles of selection and relationship among episodes, makes a plot. (as cited in Holman & Harmon, 1992, p.361)

With regard to the concept of plot above, there are two plots in *The Merchant of Venice*, main plot and sub-plot. The main plot is concerned with the complex relationship between Antonio and Shylock that arouses conflicts between them, and conflicts between Shylock and other characters such as Portia, Antonio's associates, the Duke and Jessica. The sub-plot deals with the complexities of Bassanio's mission to woo Portia, the heiress of Belmont, which engages other characters such as some of Antonio's associates, Jessica, Lancelot, and Portia's party.

In the complexities of Antonio and Shylock, the reader is initially informed by the fact of Antonio's unclear anxiety which invites his associates to cheer him up but they fails. Antonio's anxiety may be a portent that he will be dealing with some serious matters soon. In his anxiety, his best friend Bassanio is introduced along with his wish and problem. It is impossible for Antonio not to help him but due to his financial problem, he urges Bassanio to borrow money on

his credit. Shylock, as the plot moves on, appears to be the only usurer introduced in this play which may indicate his fame or reputation of being a usurer in Venice. Afterward, the reader is presented by the interactions between Bassanio and Shylock. Bassanio wants to borrow 3,000 ducats for three months and Antonio is the guarantor. Here the description of who Antonio; how famous and wealthy he is, is conveyed. Yet, these facts do not seem to assure Shylock because he considers that Antonio's sea-faring business is full of risks providing more uncertainty. Here the reader is invited to follow Shylock's rationalisation and to question the 'merely' fame of Antonio as the guarantee of Bassanio's loan. They have not come to an agreement yet by the time Antonio comes.

The plot increasingly develops as Antonio and Shylock meet. Here the reader is presented by conflicts between them. How Antonio demands Shylock not to take interest on the loan, which is rather absurd as they come to a usurer who lends money on the basis of taking interest to benefit him. The basis of Antonio's demand for rejecting usury is on theological Christianity in practical level while Shylock's defence is on Jewish and biblical tolerance of usury in doctrinal level. Their conflicts reveal all potential stereotyping and enmity between them. Antonio then confirms that if Shylock is reluctant to lend the money without interest, he can lend it as to an enemy, which conditions a penalty if Antonio breaks it. As a result, it is the only deal they can attain that is by a bond specifying the sacrifice of Antonio's flesh if he fails to repay the money on agreed time and place. Yet, they perceive the bond differently. Shylock sees it as the chance to avenge all indignities laid upon him whereas Antonio sees it as a crusade of good-Christianity over evil-Judaism.

To celebrate the deal, Antonio and his associates invite Shylock for a dinner, and Shylock agrees. It is a contradictory thing what he does as in the previous scene Shylock prefers not to eat together with any Christian. This is the moment when Jessica's elopement is executed. Having known her elopement along with his jewel and money, Shylock is furious. He is in more rage as he hears the wreck of Antonio's ship which means that he cannot repay his debt. Because he basically wants to take revenge on Antonio, this seems to be his moment to undertake it by charging Antonio and seeking his right through the court.

Ironically, what Shylock gets in the court is on the contrary. Coming with revenge and certainty of getting a pound of Antonio's flesh, Shylock finds out his own doom. At this moment the reader is introduced by the involvement of Portia in the main plot. She is the legal advisor of the state for Shylock-Antonio's case. If it is observed, her access in the trial is because of Bassanio and of her relations with Bellario the lawyer. The Duke prefers to save Antonio by persuading Shylock to be merciful. Graziano and Bassanio are ready to sacrifice what they have, even their wives for Antonio's freedom. Thus, what Shylock encounters there is the enormous coalition of all parties. It is finally proven that from charging Antonio for being unable to pay the money and for pursuing his right entitled on the bond, Shylock becomes the accused for conspiring to seek Antonio's death. Portia eloquently abuses the law by literally interpreting words of the bond which brings Shylock down. Should it be seen from the words, the

bond does not specify shedding blood. Yet, to a certain degree it means that Portia disregards the rationality underlying the bond. Thus, what happens next is the half-hearted subjection of Shylock upon the decisions he has to bear; the State punishes him to pay the reduction; he has to convert to Christianity; Antonio seizes half of his possession, and will return it to Lorenzo; and when he dies, he should bequeath all the remaining possession he has to Lorenzo. That is the end of the main plot.

With regard to the sub-plot, Bassanio's mission is the prime motive. Thus, the first description is about Belmont. Here the reader is introduced by the facts of who Portia is; her thoughts and attitudes towards her suitors. Then it moves back to Venice where Bassanio wants to borrow money from Shylock. The development of this plot is more obvious after he has got the money. Bassanio will soon undertake the mission. Here the reader is presented by the complexities of incidents related to his preparation. He agrees to receive Lorenzo as one of his pages; he allows Graziano to accompany him; and he accepts Lorenzo and Jessica on board in their elopement. The romance of Lorenzo and Jessica is elaborated in this sub-plot. In Belmont, Bassanio can finally choose the right casket meaning that he has the right to marry Portia. Yet, this sub-plot is intercepted by Solanio and Salerino informing Bassanio of Shylock-Antonio's conflict. This is the moment when the sub-plot is absent and key figures such as Bassanio and Portia are totally involved in the conflict of the main plot. Portia, particularly, because of her position can be seen as the character that links the sub-plot and the main plot. The sub-plot continues by the time the trial ends and leaves a comical part of Bassanio and Graziano hand over their marriage rings to the disguised Portia and Nerissa before they return to Belmont. The romance of Lorenzo and Jessica with their own complexities takes an important role in Belmont. When the sub-plot moves back to Belmont, the reader is presented by some minor conflicts resulting from Portia and Nerissa's disguise. Antonio intercedes on Bassanio's behalf to subdue angry Portia and Nerissa. The exposure of their trick and the announcement of Lorenzo's endowment complete this comedy. The play finally ends with the happiness for the couples, and yet leaves Antonio unmarried.

In relation to the structure of the plot, *The Merchant of Venice* contains all the elements required for a dramatic structure. It has its exposition, its rising action, its climax, its falling action, and its denouement (Holman & Harmon, 1992, p.153). The exposition of the play occurs from the first scene up to the moment when Shylock bids farewell to Jessica to dine out with Antonio. Here the reader is given an introduction leading to the real problem of the play. It contains some information of some important characters at the outset; who they are, what they do, and how they interact to one another. For instance, with regard to the main plot, the reader is well informed by the facts of which Antonio is; how his relationships with his associates go on; and how his attitude towards Shylock is conveyed. In addition, the information of Shylock is also presented; who he is; what he does; how his relationships with Antonio and his associates, with Lancelot, and with his own daughter Jessica go on. All of these are introduced in order to give to the reader prior descriptions of the complexities they set up.

Starting with the moment when Lorenzo takes Jessica from Shylock's house to the moment when Portia urges Shylock to cut Antonio's flesh off his breast as the law and the court allows it (4.1, 296-299), is the rising action. What is offered to the reader at this moment is the starting point of the main problem and its development. Here the tension of the play is built up to involve the reader. How Lorenzo as instructed by Jessica in her letter fetches her; how Jessica has brought her father's treasure in the elopement; Shylock who is shock of the elopement, the theft of his jewels, and of the news of Antonio's ships wreck are nicely interwoven. With regard to the sub-plot is how Bassanio finally succeeds in choosing the right casket and therefore has the right to marry Portia. It is also introduced how initially Portia gets involved in Shylock-Antonio's problem. The moments in the court are described engrossingly and become the 'battle ground' of all parties involved in it.

Yet, what happens next is rather baffling. The climax or the turning point of the play is marked by Portia's firm statement that it is only the flesh of Antonio to which Shylock is entitled, and not the blood. She further explains that if any single drop of Antonio is shed, then all of Shylock's properties will be confiscated by the state (4.1, 300-307). This is actually the 'anti-climax' to Shylock who has sought 'justice'. Here the reader is presented by the most significant moments of the main plot and of whole the play. Having been made in tense, the reader is then encountered by the culmination of the charge, the arguments, and the persuasions, that is abusing, manipulative, and prejudicial practices of laws by Portia and the Duke. It is followed by Antonio's arbitrariness towards Shylock to complete his misery.

Subsequently, from that point up to Bassanio and Gratian's bewilderment about the rings produced by Portia and Nerissa (5.1, 253-264), can be considered as the falling action. In this part, the reader is presented by the minor 'conflicts' of the sub-plot that are between Jessica-Lorenzo and Lancelot, between Bassanio and Portia, and between Graziano and Nerissa. Finally, the rest of the last scene is the denouement. The play ends with happiness for everyone though it leaves Antonio unmarried, which can be seen, rather melancholic. Hence, it can be said that *The Merchant of Venice* develops according to the conventional five-part dramatic structure.

In dealing with the characterisation, *The Merchant of Venice* seems to fit three methods of characterisation. There are methods of explicit presentation of the characters by the author, of presentation of the characters in actions, and of presentation of the characters from within the characters themselves (Holman & Harmon, 1992, p. 80). They are represented in the list of characters, in the stage directions, and in dialogues. Accordingly, these are, of course, the main features of presenting characters in a play or in a drama whose goal it is to present a story performed on the stage as being lifelike.

Despite the real numbers of the individuals involved in the performance, *The Merchant of Venice* requires twelve castings ranging from the protagonist to the least important. There are two main characters in the play: Antonio and Shylock. The protagonist of the play is Antonio, and the antagonist is Shylock.

Antonio is the protagonist for he is positioned and described as the one who encounters the problem. The problem of the play is that there is a Venetian, a Christian and a merchant who cannot pay his debt and thus is threatened for sacrificing his pound of flesh. Hence, the problem of dealing with the sacrifice of the penalty that significantly matters in the play. Shylock is the opposite as he is described as a Jewish Venetian and a usurer, and is also subject to the Venetian Laws but he is unjustly treated not as other white-Christian Venetians. He is 'simply' represented as the negative character whereas Antonio is the positive one.

In relation to whether they are static or dynamic, it can be said that both Antonio and Shylock fit the former rather than the latter. In other words, there is no single obvious evidence indicating any changes in either character. The characteristics of Antonio, his disposition, his perspectives and attitudes remain the same from the beginning to the end. He is cynical and prejudiced to Shylock, but loyal and kind to his fellows. Shylock does not undergo any changes either in his disposition or characteristics. This can be indicated in one of the incidents during the trial quoted as follows.

SHYLOCK Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that.

You take my house when you do take the prop

That doth sustain my house; you take my life

When you do take the means whereby I live.

PORTIA What mercy can you render him Antonio?

GRAZIANO A halter, gratis. Nothing else, for God's sake.

ANTONIO So please my lord the Duke and all the court.

To quit the fine for one half of his goods,

I am content so he will let me have

The other half in use, to render it

Upon his death unto the gentleman

That lately stole his daughter.

Two things provided more: that for this favour

He presently become a Christian;

The other, that he do record a gift

Here in the court of all he dies possessed

Unto his son, Lorenzo, and his daughter.

DUKE He shall do this, or else I do recant

The pardon that I late pronounced here.

PORTIA Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

SHYLOCK I am content

PORTIA [to NERISSA] Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

SHYLOCK I pray you give me leave to go from hence.

I am not well. Send the deed after me,

And I will sign it. (4.1, 369-392)

What can be concluded from this incident is twofold. Firstly, Antonio's demand for converting Shylock implies his fervent cynicism to Jews. Secondly, all Shylock's responses to the court contain and represent his 'silent protest'. He disagrees with the final decisions of the case that legally confiscate all his possessions and oblige him to convert to Christianity. His first response reflects his deep disappointment; his second response expresses his reluctant obedience, and the last one describes his unbearable suffering from being treated unjustly. About this unjust treatment in the play, Adam Meyer (2013) in his article entitled "Victim and Villain: Shylock in the African American Imagination" mentions that "Shylock is as a model victim of unwarranted prejudice and, consequently, unwarranted suffering" (p.4). Thus, all these indicators can be interpreted in terms of his unchanging characteristics and attitudes, which are calculating and full of hatred to Christianity from the beginning to the end.

Other characters in general function as minor or supporting characters. Nevertheless, some of them may differ from others in accordance with the degree which they contribute to the main conflict between Shylock and Antonio. There are three characters that are significant in the Shylock-Antonio's conflict. They are Bassanio, Portia, and the Duke. Bassanio, for instance, plays a different role from the rest of Antonio's associates such as Graziano, Salerio, Solanio, and Lorenzo. He is described as the closest friend of Antonio who is a little bit sentimental but honest and loyal. Seemingly, such qualities of Bassanio may be presented in order to represent his very intention in wooing Portia, to get Antonio's and other's assistance for conducting his mission, and to show his gratitude to anyone who has supported him. Bassanio is also a static character because he is not susceptible to change. His significance lies in the fact that he is the one who initially brings about the idea of pursuing Portia, and who makes Antonio urge him to borrow money from Shylock on Antonio's credit.

Unlike Bassanio, Portia is described as the character that is, to some extent, bossy, arrogant, manipulative, and cunning. Yet, she is also kind and generous to those who serve her. There is no change in Portia which makes her another static character. With regard to the main problem, her significance lies in the fact that she has manipulated the law and the trial that make Shylock lose everything he has possessed or he is entitled to have. It also proves that to certain degree she is the key figure who brings down Shylock and who links between the sub-plot and the main plot.

Another important character is the Duke. He is described primarily as the head of the state of Venice who is ambiguous, doubtful, but at the same time capable of showing his preference to Antonio. His important role is being the judge in the case of Shylock versus Antonio. He has authoritatively threatens Shylock to dismiss the case in order to save Antonio. The Duke is very much embedded with the image of power, authority, and yet at the same time is mockingly and tactically merciful. He is a static character too.

Graziano, Lorenzo, Salerio, and Solanio are minor characters who have something in common. They are all arrogant, cynical, and prejudiced to Jews, but loyal and helpful to their fellows. They are all typically static characters. There are

two minor female characters, namely Jessica and Nerrisa. Jessica is the daughter of Shylock but she is described as rebellious. She is physically lovely and that beauty has attracted Lorenzo. What is interesting in Jessica is that, although she is a Jew, from the very beginning of her appearance she has already been positioned to 'betray' her own race till the end of the play. It means that although the fact may be intriguing, she is still considered a static character. Nerissa functions as Portia's waiting-woman. She plays her part merely in conjunction with Portia's. She is primarily described as a loyal servant, and a woman who has attracted Graziano to marry her.

Other less significant minor characters are the Prince of Morocco, the Prince of Aragon, Lancelot, Tubal, Gobbo, Leonardo, Stefano, and Balthasar. Both Morocco and Aragon are described as suitors of Portia. Yet, as characters they remain flat but are generally associated with noblemen's behaviour. They show their pride, origin, and respect for the agreement they have made when they fail to choose the right casket. Lancelot is a character who is to some degree prejudiced to Jews, and is involved in some important events in the play. Yet, as his function demands, he remains static. Gobbo is Lancelot's blind father who plays a very minor part in the play. Seemingly, he is an old and generous man but easily 'deviated' by Lancelot to serve his own purpose. Both Lancelot and Gobbo do play the comical parts in this comedy. Leonardo, Stefano, and Balthasar all function as servants. Leonardo serves Bassanio whereas Stefano and Balthasar serve Portia. What they have in common is only their loyalty to their master and mistress.

The next point to discuss is the setting of the play, time and place. What can be observed is that the play is set in daylight and in the evening. Most of the scenes happen in the daylight. Yet, some scenes occur in the evening: firstly, when Shylock bids farewell to Jessica to dine out with Antonio (2.5); secondly, when Lorenzo goes to Shylock's house to take Jessica away (2.6); and thirdly, when Lorenzo and Jessica are wooing each other and listening to music by the moonlight (5.1). With regard to the fact that it is a comedy, the use of such times can be seen as a technique which is meant to evoke associations on an incident. For instance, Jessica's elopement can evoke a question why it occurs in the evening instead of daylight. One of the possible answers is that such an activity is always related to secrecy, and evening is identical with darkness. It is widely admitted that secrecy is allegorical to darkness; a time when anybody hardly knows what is going on. Yet, at the same time it can also be interpreted as a portent for Shylock that his bleak, gloomy, and dull journey is about to begin. He is about to lose his daughter and also to face an unjustly trial. In this case, the setting of time becomes an instrument of symbol.

The play takes place in two locations, Venice and Belmont. In Venice, some scenes take place in the street, in Shylock's house, outside Shylock's house, or in Venice Court. In Belmont, they take place mostly in Portia's house and in the garden. The use of Venice as its setting of place in *The Merchant of Venice* to some degree cannot be separated from the influence of the general perspectives of English towards Italy in the sixteenth century. Andrew Hadfield (2001) describes the position of Italy as follows.

In the reign of Henry VIII a number of intellectuals were sent to northern Italy, alongside Spain probably the country which fascinated Englishmen and women most in the sixteenth century. They brought back ideas of Italian statecraft and politics, as well as learning from the sophisticated court culture and the obvious excellence in the visual and literary arts. Problems resulted, of course, after the Reformation obliged a separation between the two countries, but links were preserved through the reign of the staunchly Protestant Edward VI. Italy was still the most popular destination of English travellers at the end of the century, when more people travelled of their own accord, and particular admiration for Venice is evident. (p. 258)

This historical account indicates that Italy at that time was highly regarded. English, especially the travellers, were full of admiration for the sophisticated Venetian Republic. They were fascinated with the involvement of all responsible citizens within the political process, and even with how Venetian rotated key offices to avoid corruption and tyranny (Hadfield, 2001, p. 260). Apart from the facts that Shakespeare might have or might not have read William Thomas's *A History of Italy* (1549), and might have or might not have been to Italy, it is obvious that Venice has already become the attraction for Shakespeare to create such a play.

The Narrative Structure of *The Tragedy of Othello the Moor of Venice*

The plot of *Othello* is different from those of *The Merchant of Venice* in that it only comprises one main plot. The plot of the play is concerned with the complex efforts of Iago to avenge Othello resulting in a tragedy. This idea is the guiding line which unites and underlines most major incidents in it. From the beginning of the play the reader is already introduced by the embodiment of the idea, when Iago reveals his rage since Othello has promoted Cassio as his lieutenant instead of him. Here the description of which Iago is his ambition, vengeance and scheme are presented. To undertake his first scheme, Roderigo is presented as his pawn. He knows exactly that Roderigo despairs of possessing Desdemona so Iago uses his weakness to ease his mission. The first target to be disturbed is the old Brabantio. Roderigo is urged by Iago to disturb Brabantio from his sleep by calling him out and telling him that Desdemona has been corrupted by the Moor Othello. What Iago wants to induce is to make Brabantio feel betrayed, to make him worry that his pure noble white-Christian family is stained, and to provoke his anger and hatred against the Moor. This strategy in fact works. The old man's wrath brings him and his attendants to Othello's lodging when Othello is about to go to the Venetian Court for the Duke and the Council have summoned him. Brabantio accuses the Moor to have seduced his daughter by sorcery. Replying that he is expected by the Duke for urgent matters,

they all depart to the court. Up to this moment the reader is presented by the fact of the absence of Desdemona which may arouse curiosity of her existence.

In the court the reader is presented by the complexity of how personal and public affairs are resolved. The Duke learns of the danger of a hostile Turkish fleet bound for Cyprus as they can threaten the integrity of Venice. Therefore the Moor should be immediately sent to fight the Turkish fleet when Othello, Brabantio, and his attendants arrive. Interrupting the state's matter, Brabantio makes his accusation against Othello before the Duke and the Council. To argue the accusation, Othello asks Desdemona to be sent for as a witness. Here the reader is presented by the 'history' of their romance and Desdemona's conviction which attracts the Duke to decide that their marriage is in favour, and Othello has to go to defend Cyprus. This definitely does not please Brabantio but the old man cannot further deny the decision. The only thing he does is to reject the Duke's consolation, and then goes home with heartbroken. What can be concluded from these incidents is that Othello is highly regarded so long as he serves Venetian's interest.

Subsequently, the main complexity takes place in Cyprus. Here the conflicts are elaborated, forced, and resolved in cause and effect sequences. In this part, Iago's vengeance is schematically applied to Roderigo, Cassio, Emilia, Desdemona, and Othello. All of what he does is schismatic. Firstly, the reader is presented by Iago's planning to provoke Cassio through Roderigo when he is in charge of the night watch of the citadel. The reader knows how Iago and Roderigo create a brawl to inflict suspicion that is caused by the drunken Cassio. The reader also knows that Iago's conviction leads Othello to replace Cassio from his lieutenantcy. Iago's purpose is to gain Othello's attention back to him. Secondly, Iago creates an issue of an affair between Desdemona and Cassio which is meant to provoke Othello's jealousy. The reader knows how Iago patiently plans, halts, and works on every possible moment to bring down Othello. He suggests Cassio to approach Desdemona for being reinstated but he also confirms Othello of their possible affair. He asks his wife to get a token of Desdemona which makes Emilia lie to have seen the handkerchief when Desdemona asks her about it. He leaves the handkerchief in Cassio's lodging, and manipulates his meeting with Cassio in order to give impression to Othello that the affair exists. All of these are carefully planned and efficiently conducted. As a result, Othello is deeply and convincingly under Iago's control. This is the moment Iago dreams of; the moment when he can collect the falling fruits of the tree. Yet, the failing of killing Cassio by Roderigo, the arrival of the Venetian envoy, and the profession of Emilia about the handkerchief ruin his nearly fulfilled revenge. All of which lead him to his own death.

Like *The Merchant of Venice*, the plot of *The Tragedy of Othello* comprises a five-part dramatic structure. The exposition of the play includes events ranging from the first act up to the moment when Cassio departs from the citadel's garden after consulting Desdemona for the first time about his reinstatement (3.3, 31). That span of time provides all the information the reader needs to know about the initial problems, the positions, and the relations among the characters. The rising action begins from the moment Iago warns Othello of

the danger of jealousy of the possibility of an affair between Cassio and Desdemona (3.3, 169). It is the very moment Iago directly and firstly poisons Othello's mind with the thought of his wife's infidelity. From that moment onward, the tension of the play increases rapidly. It culminates in the moment when Othello realises for the first time that he has been set up by Iago (5.2, 242-243). That is the climax of the play. From that moment onward is the falling action. Here the reader is presented by Othello lamenting the death of Desdemona. The catastrophe of the play is when Othello reveals his last words and stabs himself (5.2, 347-366).

In dealing with the characterisation, the same techniques will be applied as in *The Merchant of Venice*. Yet, of course the difference is that of the characters presented. There are twenty-one characters in the list of characters. There are four main characters, namely Othello, Iago, Desdemona, and Cassio. Othello is the protagonist while Iago is the antagonist. There are two main reasons why Othello is the protagonist. Firstly, the title suggests that he is the central character of the play. Secondly, it is, in fact, Othello whose character undergoes important changes. The central problem of the play lies in jealousy. It is jealousy that drives Othello to strangle his own wife in their marriage bed. In Iago's case, it is envy that drives him to project his disappointment into hatred and revenge, and that makes him the antagonist. Of the five main characters, it is Othello who experiences changes within himself. He is the dynamic character. From a loving husband to a jealous one, and finally to an enlightened-lamenting man are the phases he has to go through, as indicated in the following quotation:

OTHELLO Soft you, a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down ought in malice. Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well,
Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one who subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this,
And say besides that in Allepo once,
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
And smote him thus. (5.2, 347-365)

Iago, the antagonist, does not undergo changes. In other words, he is presented as a static character. At the end of the play he remains silent. He does not show any regret, any repentance about his schemes and actions. He even challenges all those present cynically to find out the real truth or reason why he acted the way he did: "Demand me nothing. What you know, you know. / From this time forth I never will speak word" (5.2, 309-310). This implies his prolonged protest against them why they do not want to understand him; why they only think of Othello and Cassio; and why they do not talk of rewarding him for his services to the State of Venice.

Of the twenty-one parts, there are only three roles meant for women; Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca. Desdemona, for instance, is described as a beautiful, loving, faithful and innocent wife. She is typically qualified for the idealised role of the Petrarchan mistress. Her fairness has already been pictured at the very beginning as having attracted other characters such as Roderigo. Apart from her physical beauty, what can be learnt of Desdemona is that she does not experience any changes. She remains faithful and loyal to her husband from the beginning to the end. She is indeed a static character though she is also considered one of the main characters. Her main part is to be the victim of either Othello's jealousy or Iago's envious and revengeful schemes. Unlike Desdemona, Emilia is pictured as a woman who is loyal to Desdemona on the one hand. On the other hand she is easily influenced by her husband Iago. This to some degree suggests subjection but not faithfulness. Although she denies to have been unfaithful to Iago, she explicitly suggests or indicates that if a husband can be proven unfaithful, his wife can also be unfaithful as an act of revenge (5.1, 82-101). Thus, the impression that is made by Desdemona's faithfulness and Emilia's is completely different. The third female role in this play is that of Bianca. Her description is in accordance with her function in the play as the mistress of Cassio. A picture of Bianca is provided by Iago that describes her as "A hussy that by selling her desires / Buy herself bread and cloth" (4.1, 92-93). Both Emilia and Bianca are static characters.

There are still other characters that need to be discussed, such as Cassio, Roderigo, Brabantio, the Duke of Venice, Montano, Lodovico, and Graziano. Cassio is described as the lieutenant of Othello who is young, loyal, and honest. Together with Othello, they seem to be the rising stars of the Venetian military forces. These qualities of his have already been depicted from the beginning of the story to the end. Not only does he show these qualities to Othello and Desdemona, but also to Iago. He does not even realise that he has been set up cunningly, and scape-goated by Iago. Together with Desdemona, Cassio is the character who happens to be in the wrong time and place. There is no change in Cassio. Nevertheless, he is also one of the main characters. His important part lies in the fact that he becomes Iago's rival and counterpart. He is the pawn as well as the victim of Iago to take revenge. The character that can be described as the 'real fool' in the story is Roderigo. He is a man who is driven by his desires of Desdemona and an easy prey for Iago. Eventually, he becomes aware of his situation, but he seems to be easily persuaded by Iago. Roderigo is also a static character. Brabantio, Desdemona's father, is an old man who is characterised as

being intolerant, full of prejudices, and a typically authoritarian figure. He never agrees with his daughter's marriage till the end of his life. His attitude toward his daughter marriage remains the same, and he does not undergo any changes. To some degree he is also one of the victims of Iago's schemes. The Duke of Venice is delineated as an old man who is to some degree wise, just, and because of his position, authoritative. He represents the law; the magistrate of Venice whose law is renowned all over Italy, even Europe. He is the man whose words have to be obeyed and whose authority overcomes Brabantio's rage. The Duke is a static character. Montano, Graziano, and Lodovico are represented as merely respected and gallant gentlemen of the state of Venice. These characters are all static. Hence, there are two things that can be inferred from the characterisation of *The Tragedy of Othello*. In the first place, the techniques used in presenting the characterisation are similar to those of *The Merchant of Venice*, namely: there is explicit presentation of the characters by the author, of presentation of the characters in actions, and of presentation of the characters from within the characters themselves. These techniques are represented in the list of characters, in the stage directions, and in dialogues. In the second place, although the techniques used are similar to those of *The Merchant of Venice*, there is a difference between them. With regard to the presentation of dynamic and static characters, *The Tragedy of Othello* presents both types in comparison to *The Merchant of Venice*. Othello, the dynamic character, is presented.

From the setting, what can be observed is that *The Merchant of Venice* is set in day time and in the night. Of the fifteen scenes, most of them take place in the night. It then gives weight to the justification of the play as a tragedy since night is closely connected to darkness and death. Major events are mostly set in the night; provocation on Brabantio, the summoning by the Duke, the brawl in the citadel, and the series of deaths of Roderigo, of Desdemona, of Emilia, and of Othello. The atmosphere of envy, threats, revenge, and deaths are clearly reflected in the whole nocturnal scenes. The story starts in the middle of the night and ends in almost the same time.

The play takes place in two locations: in Venice and in Cyprus. Yet, it mainly takes place in Cyprus. In Venice, there are three locations: in the street of Venice nearby Brabantio's residence, in the street before Othello's lodging, and also in the Venetian Council court. In Cyprus, there are three main sites: at the harbour, the streets of Cyprus, and the citadel. With regard to the use of Venice as one of the locales is very interesting to observe, particularly, because the play is related with jealousy of love embodied in sexual issue. About the relation between the idea of sex and Venice, Hadfield (2001) states:

The capital of Italian sex was undoubtedly Venice. Travellers to Italy marvelled at the beauty and boldness of the famous courtesans and the freedom with which the Venetians pursued their love affairs. (p. 62)

Seemingly, Shakespeare uses this renowned Venice to elaborate his underlying idea of the play. In this case, Venice proves to be a special place for Shakespeare.

The Complexity of Connubiality in *The Merchant of Venice*

There are three couples involved in the connubial events in *The Merchant of Venice*. They are Bassanio and Portia, Graziano and Nerissa, and also Lorenzo and Jessica.

With regard to the motive, the initial purpose of Bassanio is to be able to woo and claim Portia for the fame of her wealth and beauty (1.2, 161-176). James D. Mardock (2005) in his article entitled “Of Daughters and Ducats: Our Mutual Friend and Dickens’s Anti-Shylock” comparatively describes Bassanio’s struggle for love as someone who “must go through a Jewish moneylender to whom he is in debt in order to get the woman he loves” (p.7). To Portia, the initial motive is constituted by the fact that she has to execute her late father’s will, which consequently means she is to be subjected to anyone’s claim as soon as he wins the competition. However, in relation to Bassanio, her motive quickly becomes personal because she thinks she falls in love with him instantaneously. Although in religious terms a marriage is believed to have three basic purposes: the procreation, a remedy against sin, and mutual help, (MacFarlane, 1987, p.151) Bassanio and Portia’s purpose in getting married gives the impression that it is founded on physical and personal attractions such as desire, beauty, and wealth. This to some degree gives weight to their marriage as a remedy against sin. Nevertheless, Shakespeare also seems to present Portia and Bassanio’s intention to get married in accordance with the idea of mutual help. This can be observed in the attitudes of Portia towards Bassanio and vice versa. Portia demands Bassanio to always wear the ring as a symbol of their bond:

PORTIA ... This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord’s. I give them with this ring,
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.
BASSANIO ... Where every something being blent together
Turns to a wild of nothing save of joy,
Expressed and not expressed. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence.
O, then be bold to say Bassanio’s dead. (3.2, 170-185)

From her point of view it is his duty to wear it; in exchange, she helps him to resolve Antonio’s case which she considers her duty:

PORTIA I never did repent for doing good,
... Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,

Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish cruelty. (3.4, 10-21)

This idea of mutual help or mutual comfort is a “covenantal model” which typifies the main purpose of a puritan marriage (Kaplan as cited in Callaghan, 2000, p.350). A puritan concept of marriage places such a principle in the foremost position instead of other purposes such as marriage for procreation or as a remedy against sin (MacFarlane, 1987, p.151). Such a principle also involves punishment if neither the husband nor the wife performs his or her duty. This idea of punishment is also described when Portia pretends to be angry with Bassanio for handing over the ring to the “lawyer”. This can be seen as Bassanio’s failure to perform his duty. Consequently, Portia threatens not to sleep together as husband and wife, instead of which she will sleep with the lawyer. This is ‘the punishment’ she is about to execute. Although it is all framed in a comical way, it is a representatively English (Puritan) value in an Italian setting which is embodied in the play. About this “incident”, Harry Berger Jr. (1981) in his article entitled “Marriage and Mercifixion in *The Merchant of Venice*” gives his interpretation that “The act of giving the ring to a man may have the same value as that of giving it to another woman in return for favours, since both acts indicate man’s assumption that men are superior to women...the pledge to a woman can be superseded by the debt of gratitude owed a man” (as cited in Bloom, 2010, p. 17).

Regarding the wedding rites, there are two important incidents that reveal the very status of their ‘marriage’. The first incident is described as follows:

PORTIA ... First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia’s side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pat the petty debt twenty times over.
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away,
For you shall hence upon your wedding day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer.
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.
BASSANIO [*reads*] ‘Sweet Bassanio,...
Notwithstanding, use your pleasure. If your
love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.’
PORTIA O, Love! Dispatch all business, and be gone.
BASSANIO Since I have your good leave to go away
I will make haste, but till I come again
No bed shall e’er be guilty of my stay

Nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain
Exeunt. (3.2, 302-324)

This dialogue indicates that on the one hand, from the ecclesiastical point of view as outlined earlier, what happens between Portia and Bassanio cannot be considered a marriage since; firstly, there is no indication of the presence of a priest in the play and, secondly, there is no one who witnesses their 'marriage'. It is true that Portia intends to formalise their bond in a church wedding but it is postponed since she lets Bassanio go to Venice to help Antonio. Thus, it is obvious that they are not 'officially' bound in a marriage, which is to say that to a certain degree their marriage does not even exist. The reader is not presented with their matrimonial ceremony ecclesiastically. On the other hand, from a secular point of view, their relationship can be considered matrimonial, since the elements of it are fulfilled: Bassanio and Portia are the couples; Portia, as the heiress of Belmont, is the representative of the law; and, there are other characters witnessing it (Stone, 1977, p.31). In relation to prejudice, their marriage is "neutral" although it results from Portia's prejudice against other suitors.

With regard to Graziano and Nerissa, the motive they have for marriage seems to be based only on the purpose of its being a remedy against sin since theirs is solely a bond determined by physical attraction. Their motivations can be described as follows:

GRAZIANO My lord Bassanio, and my gentle lady,
... , I do beseech you
Even at that time I may be married too.
BASSANIO With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.
GRAZIANO I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours.
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid.
You loved, I loved; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last – if promise last –
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.
PORTIA Is it true , Nerissa?
NERISSA Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.
BASSANIO And do you ,Graziano, mean good faith?
GRAZIANO Yes, faith, my lord. (3.2, 189-211)

From this dialogue it can be deduced that both Graziano and Nerissa have made an agreement for their own purpose prior to Bassanio's success. It is an agreement

that enables Graziano to marry her if Bassanio succeeds in wooing Portia. Yet, the only reason why they do it is because Graziano seems to be attracted by Nerissa at first sight as indicated by "My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours / You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid." It is an attraction deriving from physical stimuli though when Bassanio asks him for confirmation, Graziano says that he really loves Nerissa. This love of physical stimuli is quite common in literature of Renaissance. However, the reader is not presented by any initial information of their relationship. It indeed gives an impression that what occurs between them is fortuitous. This justifies their motivation to get married as merely a remedy against sin, which is also reflected in the bawdy words they use such as "sport and stake down" (3.2, 213-216).

About their marriage and prejudice, it seems that what happens between them is in a way similar to that of Portia and Bassanio in that their relation is not formally bound in an ecclesiastical marriage. It happens because either Graziano accompanies Bassanio back to Venice or Nerissa follows Portia in disguise to Venice. Yet, they engage in a secular ceremony which both Portia and Bassanio witness. In relation to prejudice, there is no evidence that their marriage is affected or that one of them is prejudiced against the other. In other words, their relation is free from any prejudices, and they have a purely simple physical longing for each other.

Unlike Bassanio and Portia or Graziano and Nerissa, in the nature of the marriage between Lorenzo and Jessica more things can be observed. In the beginning of their relationship, the reader is already presented with the fact that Jessica is desperately in love with Lorenzo; a fact indicating that they have 'known' each other for quite some time. Subsequently, the reader is presented with the fact that Jessica plans to elope with him. When they succeed in doing so, they go to Genoa as reported by Tubal (3.1, 90), before they return to Venice, and finally they travel with Salerio bearing Antonio's letter for Bassanio which then leads them to Belmont. There is one intriguing question, which is whether or not they are already married. It provokes curiosity because of the span of time they spend together from the night of the elopement up to their moving to Belmont.

There are two pieces of evidence indicating that they are already married. One is presented when Jessica, Lancelot, and Lorenzo argue on whether her soul will be saved or not. Here Jessica explicitly says "I shall be saved by my husband. He hath made me a / Christian" (3.5, 15-16) and "I'll tell my husband, Lancelot, what you say. Here he / comes" (3.5, 22-23). The words "husband" are reiterated and meaningfully uttered by Jessica. In addition, Lorenzo himself also confirms his married status when he says "Even such a husband / Hast thou of me as she is for a wife" (3.5, 73-74). The difference between Jessica's use of the word "my husband" and Portia-Nerissa's "our husbands" (5.1, 112) lies in the fact that Portia and Nerissa use it to create an image that they are really "being maids and widows" praying in the monastery and looking forward to having Bassanio and Graziano return from Venice. It is an image created to 'cover' their plan. Other evidence of their being married is presented when they enjoy listening to music by the moonlight in Belmont. In the play, they are the only couple who gets the time

for romance. This implies that, to a certain degree, their intimacy is more apparent indicating that sexual consummation probably has taken place between them. Sexual consummation is after all the consequential factor that justifies a marriage (Stone, 1977, p.31).

With regard to the motives and the matrimonial ceremony, there are two purposes or motives for their marriage. Firstly, it is meant to be the remedy against sin, and secondly, it is the way for Jessica to convert. The reason of the first motive lies in Jessica's attraction which is revealed by Lorenzo as her being "wise, fair, and true" (2.7, 56). This implies that he really wants to possess her. When he says "Shall she be placed in my constant soul" (2.7, 57), the impression of their love is more spiritual rather than merely physical. The second motive is reflected more by Jessica who thinks that by marrying him she becomes a Christian, his loving wife, and her soul will be saved (2.4, 20 & 3.5, 15). Considering the fact that Lorenzo is a white Christian and an Italian, a Catholic wedding ceremony is presumably conducted. However, there is no evidence indicating the nature of the religious rites in the play.

In relation to prejudice, it can be said that this couple is the most explicit one in *The Merchant of Venice* to be either submitted to or practice prejudice. They act in a biased way against Shylock especially in relation to their motivations to get married. Lorenzo, for instance, reveals his prejudice:

LORENZO I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;
And never dare misfortune cross her foot
Unless she do it under this excuse:
That she is issue of a faithless Jew. (2.4, 29-37)

This describes what Lorenzo thinks of Shylock. He has a prejudice against him in terms of religious perspective. He believes that Shylock as a faithless man will never get into heaven for being a Jew. Even if he will, it is merely because of Jessica who will be converted into a Christian. In Lorenzo's perspective, Jessica is the only guarantor for the salvation of Shylock. It is a peculiar and biased way of thinking for a man who wants to marry someone's daughter to think of his future 'father-in-law' in such a way.

Jessica is also prejudiced against her own father. In the name of 'love' she conveys her opposition to Shylock described in the following quotation:

JESSICA Farewell, good Lancelot.
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise I shall end this strife,

Become a Christian and thy loving wife. (2.4, 14-20)

In relation to her attitude towards Shylock, this statement indicates two things: firstly, an internal conflict concerning Jessica's fear of committing a sin against her father, and secondly, the need to detach herself from Shylock. The first one implies that to a certain degree she admits that being ashamed to be his daughter is an unjust and a sinful thought. She realises that she has lost her respect for her father. This feeling is closely related to the second sentiment in which she needs to make a distinction between them. Jessica does not like his manners, which are not clearly described but presumably related to the practice of usury and his treatment of non-Jewish people. She does not want to be identified with her father on the basis of their race; that is why she justifies her elopement as an attempt to get rid of the 'identification' as well as to gain her love.

Yet, their marriage is also criticised by Lancelot. He has a prejudice against them by the time they are in Belmont, as told by Jessica to Lorenzo:

JESSICA Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo. Lancelot and I are out. He tells me flatly there is no mercy for me in heaven because I am a Jew's daughter, and he says you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians you raise the price of pork. (3.5, 26-30)

This indicates that even when they are already married, they still have to encounter a prejudicial attitude from other people. At this point of time, it is not only Jessica who is attacked but also Lorenzo. The reason for being prejudiced against Jessica stems from Lancelot's religious viewpoint that places Judaism in an inferior to Christianity. It is, of course, a viewpoint that is very subjective and questionable with regard to the theological knowledge possessed by Lancelot. It is an attack that is countered by Jessica's citing of a biblical source "The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband" (3.5). The attack against Lorenzo is based on a more cynical attitude of Lancelot who thinks that it is not appropriate for a white Christian man to marry a Jewish woman. It is a prejudice that is sarcastically uttered as if what Lorenzo does, harms all Christians.

Thus, the similarity between the three couples resides in the fact that they are not described as having had church weddings. This absence of nuptial rituals indicates Shakespeare's method not to clearly represent anything connected to Catholicism, using the word "Christian" instead of which is more neutral and acceptable during the Elizabethan times. Otherwise, Shakespeare would have got trouble from the authorities and the play would have been banned. Shakespeare seems to avoid the sacramental nuance in their marriages. Instead of performing ceremonial and liturgical rituals, the excessive use of the words "vow", "promise", or "oath" within the context of secular matrimony is introduced for the three couples. Such words are used to create an image that is more English than Italian since "any sort of promises before witnesses was regarded in law as a valid marriage" they do seems to fall under the heading "*per verba de futuro*", an oral

promise to be (Stone, 1977, p.31). In this case, for Portia and Bassanio, as well as Graziano and Nerissa, what bound together in the future (Stone, 1977, p.32). There are witnesses for them, and Portia, as the heiress of Belmont, with all her verbal power is considered the representative of the law herself. For Jessica and Lorenzo although they are married they cannot be considered as being betrothed “*per verba de praesenti*”, a confession or an exchange before witnesses (ibid.), since there is no indication of any wedding proceedings, representing either a secular or an ecclesiastical ceremony. In the case of Jessica and Lorenzo, no one witnesses their supposed marriage at the time of their elopement though it is confirmed by Antonio in the court when he demands Shylock to bequeath his possessions to Lorenzo as his son-in-law. Nevertheless, these words indirectly necessitate the state of Venice to admit and justify their marriage.

This kind of marriage to some degree denies another kind of English marriage that is a marriage for persons of property. If this kind of marriage is scrutinised, then none of the couples in *The Merchant of Venice* fits the requirements either from their social background or from the procedure required, as outlined earlier (Stone, 1977, p.31). Regarded from the social background, the only person of property is undoubtedly Portia, the heiress of Belmont. The other characters of the couples are relatively middle and lower class. In order to marry Portia, Bassanio has to borrow money from Shylock. To elope with Lorenzo, Jessica has to steal Shylock’s money and jewels. Graziano marries Nerissa who is only one of Portia’s servants though she becomes Portia’s confidante. None of these couples observes the required procedures. There is no written legal contract between their parents about financial arrangements, the only parent represented being Shylock. There are only promises to marry in the future before the witnesses. There is no public proclamation of ban and wedding in church, and a church is not presented but only a reference of Portia’s. There is no mention of any sexual consummation, except indirectly in the case of Jessica and Lorenzo.

The Complexity of Connubiality in *The Tragedy of Othello The Moor of Venice*

The first and the foremost connubial event in the play to be analysed is the marriage of Othello and Desdemona. For a discussion of the purpose of their marriage, it is interesting to observe some statements of the event when Othello reveals the very beginning of their amorous story before the council:

OTHELLO Her father loved me, oft invited me,
 Still questioned me the story of my life
 From year to year, the battle, sieges, fortunes
 That I have passed...
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke
 That my youth suffered. My story being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of kisses.
 She swore in faith ‘twas strange, ‘twas passing strange,

'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.
She wished she heard not herd it, yet she wished
That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should to teach him hoe to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake.
She love me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved her that she did pity them. (1.3, 127-167)

From this revelation, it can be deduced that their motivation to get married is their feeling for one another. Their union is constituted from the Desdemona's pity over Othello and his deep gratefulness about her pity. In other words, love is indeed present as the basis of their marriage; it is a kind of deep, profound, spiritual as well as romantic love that binds them together. Unlike the feelings of Portia's and Nerissa's in *The Merchant of Venice*, their love is more significant and meaningful. This gives the impression that their marriage is not primarily a matter of desire and lust but more importantly a matter of uniting two souls embodied in two different beings. Borrowing the terms of MacFarlane (1987) their purpose of marriage is more "godly" than "secular"(p.180). Thus, in comparison to the couples in *The Merchant of Venice*, there is an indication that the three basic purposes of a marriage are implied in the text. Regarding the idea of procreation, the existence of this purpose cannot be detached from Brabantio's fear of having a mixed-race grandchild from their marriage, especially when he says "With the Moor, sayst thou – Who would be a father?" (1.2, 165). Concerning the idea of marriage as a remedy against sin, it is understood that their marriage is a channel for their sexual consummation. As to the idea of mutual help, although it is only reflected by Desdemona, her decision to follow and to serve Othello in his campaign to Cyprus proves the embodiment of this purpose. This situation is described by Joan Ozark Holmer (2005) in her article entitled "Desdemona, Woman Warrior: "O, these men, these men!" as "a type of faithful love that constitutes true marriage" (as cited in Bloom, 2010, p. 187).

With regard to the church wedding, there is no such evidence in the play. Yet, there is evidence indicating another kind of marriage ceremony as described below:

BRABANZIO God b'wi'you, I ha'done.
Please it your grace, on to the state affairs.
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.
Come hither, Moor.
I here do give thee that with all my heart
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee. [To DESDEMONA] For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child,
For thy escape would teach me tyranny ,
To hang clogs on'em. I have done, my lord.

DUKE Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence
 Which, as a grece or step, may help these lovers
 Into your favour.
 When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
 By seeing the worst which late on hopes depended.
 To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
 Is the next way to draw a new mischief on.
 What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
 Patience her injury her mockery makes.
 The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief;
 He robs himself that spends a bootless grief. (1.3, 188-208)

Apparently, the ceremony taking place here is more ‘secular’ than ‘godly’ or ecclesiastical. Despite Brabantio’s vehement disagreement as to their marriage, the reader is presented with the fact that he officially hands over Desdemona to Othello to be his wife in front of the state represented by the Duke. In other words, it can be said that this sort of ceremony replaces the ecclesiastical one. Brabantio’s handing over his daughter can be seen as the consent of the parents; the senate and the attendants are the witnesses; and the Duke himself represents the public authority that approves of their marriage. The locality of the event is not a church, but a council court. Thus, the secularity of their marriage is underscored by the interference of the state of Venice in validating their relation.

With regard to prejudice, their marriage evokes two responses that may be classified as such. The first prejudiced response occurs when Brabantio warns Othello of the danger of Desdemona’s infidelity: “Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see./ She has deceived her father, and may thee” (1.3, 300-301). This is a prejudiced view of Desdemona in particular, and of fidelity in marriage in general. To some extent Brabantio lays a curse upon their marriage hoping that it will fail. This statement indeed stems from Brabantio’s fervent resentment and anger towards them. At this point, their marriage is still harmonious as neither Othello nor Desdemona pays any attention to Brabantio’s “curse”.

Second response of prejudice can be seen when the envious Iago introduces the issue of Desdemona’s infidelity or adultery with Cassio for the first time to the readers. Later on, it does start to affect Othello and Desdemona’s marriage:

IAGO ...Cassio’s a proper man. Let me see now,
 To get his place and to plume up my will
 In double knavery – how, how? Let’s see.
 After some time to abuse Othello’s ears
 That he is too familiar with his wife;
 He hath a person and a smooth dispose
 To be suspected, framed to make woman false.
 The Moor is of a free and open nature,
 That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
 And will as tenderly be led by th’nose

As asses are.
I ha't. It is ingendered. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. (2.1, 374-386)

This hatred remarks are systematically aimed at sowing distrust and conflict between Othello and Desdemona.

The situation gets even worse by the time the handkerchief given by Othello to Desdemona was lost. About this handkerchief loss, Ian Smith (2013) reiterates the interpretation that the loss of the handkerchief is a signal of their marriage's dissolution (p.14). It changes their relationship as a husband and wife so that gradually faith and affection have dwindled, and are replaced by jealousy, distrust, and revenge. This scheme results in incidents leading to the end of their marriage.

Another marriage in the play is that of Iago and Emilia. The nature of their marriage becomes clear in Iago's description of Emilia. The way he describes her indicates the way he treats her. As discussed earlier, Iago tends to see women merely in relation to their potential sexuality. This leads to an assumption that their marriage is nothing else but a source of sexual satisfaction. In other words, their marriage has become meaningless. In addition, there is also other evidence that justifies this assumption when Emilia takes Desdemona's handkerchief. Here, the reader is confronted with the way Emilia presents herself towards Iago. Expressions such as "wooded me" and "I nothing but to please his fantasy" point to the basis of their relation, which is a physical one. This is further confirmed by Iago when he says "a common thing"; an expression footnoted in Greenblatt referring to "a vagina" which is available to all (3.3, footnote 2). This overtly physical relation is also reflected by the way Emilia thinks of infidelity when she suggests that wives can commit adultery just like their husbands for the sake of revenge. Thus, the impression of their marriage is indeed more centred around physical love in comparison to that of Othello and Desdemona. Unlike the marriage of Othello and Desdemona which is disputable, the marriage of Iago and Emilia is already established from the very beginning of the play. Thus, it is something taken for granted that is to say there is no indication or evidence of their matrimony.

With regard to prejudice, their marriage can be said to be part of it, especially with reference to Iago. As discussed earlier, in spite of their relation as husband and wife, Iago uses his prejudice against women towards Emilia. He merely sees her as a sexual object that should be obedient and uncritical. Furthermore, Iago also shows his sentiment towards a dull, a complacent, and an ungentle housewife who can only do breast-feeding and trivial domestic chores. He also seems to project this description on Emilia that makes Desdemona warn her not to take Iago's words to heart. It is his biased description which Cassio describes as "He speaks home, madam. You may relish him more in / the soldier than in the scholar" (2.1, 166-167). When Desdemona warns Emilia, to some degree she makes a biased response against Iago's boldness and liberal views.

This means that she meddles with their relation though this is done for the sake of Emilia. Inasmuch as their marriage does not become an important subject of talk of other characters, except for Desdemona, there is no indication that other characters judge their relationship.

Hence, the information deduced is that in Othello and Desdemona's case, their matrimony is presented whereas in Iago and Emilia's is not. Although the ceremony in Othello and Desdemona is presented, it is a secular matrimony only. There is only one marriage in *The Tragedy of Othello* that is considered "*per verba de praesenti*." It occurs when Othello and Desdemona confess themselves husband and wife as witnessed by the state, and Brabantio. Moreover, they also get the consent of Brabantio, however reluctantly. In the case of Iago and Emilia, their marriage is acknowledged by other characters; thus the "*per verba de praesenti*" is not depicted in the play.

When the marriage for persons of property is applied to these two couples, none of them fits it. Regarding the social background, Othello and Desdemona appear to be the precise example of this kind of marriage. Othello is a well-known general of the Venetian military forces with power and status. Desdemona is a daughter of a powerful, rich and an influential senator in Venice so that her father's fame and the social circle classify her as belonging to the upper class. Yet, as discussed before, it is the colour of Othello's skin and his lineage that make Brabantio disregard his social background and reject their marriage before the State interferes. In the case of Iago and Emilia, it is clear that they cannot be classified as persons of property. Iago is an ordinary officer and Emilia is just a waiting-woman or maid.

CONCLUSION

Finally, what can be concluded from the analysis above is that the complex narratives of the connubiality in the two plays lay in the existence of the purpose or the motive of the three couples in *The Merchant of Venice*. All of them are primarily described as having the point of the remedy against sin. As to the matrimonial ceremony point of view, none of them is presented to have any ecclesiastical ceremony instead secular ceremonies are then delineated. About the racial sentiments and prejudice, from the three marriages, only Lorenzo and Jessica's marriage is affected by prejudice while the other two are all free from being influenced by it.

In *The Tragedy of Othello*, the motive of the marriage between Othello and Desdemona still reflects the remedy against sin. Nevertheless, it stems from romantic love that is free from any racial sentiments and prejudice. However, their marriage has evoked racial sentiments and prejudice of Brabantio and Iago. By contrast, the impression of the motivation of the marriage between Iago and Emilia is very much a sexual one. Like those of *The Merchant of Venice*, the marriages in this play are not presented as ecclesiastical matrimony but as secular ones.

Both marriages in this play are also affected by prejudice. The absence of any ecclesiastical ceremonies in a way situates the plays as non-religious ones. In

addition, secular ones are presented in order to confirm the interference of secular law, which is the product of the state working on them. Interestingly, the racial sentiments and prejudice overshadowing the two plays seem to create a representation of the Anglo-Christian's superiority over foreigners. In addition, all aspects cannot be seen as independent variable as they all exist to make the narratives of the play more engrossing to read.

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