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***Othello*: A Comedy of Characters, Situation and Dialogues**

Shweta Chaudhary

Abstract:

This paper discusses a very surprising fact about Shakespearean tragedy '*Othello*'. A close examination and investigation of *Othello* may discover comedy of situation, character and dialogue flowing imperceptibly underneath the edifice of play. How Cinthio's story mixed proportionately with *Commedia dell' arte* leads to a passionate tragedy of love, is the master piece of Shakespeare. Kinky sense of humour in Iago, his conscious, purposeful and savage delight in immorality, the way he stuffs the same kind of filthy stuff in mouth of other characters is not tragic but ludicrous and petty. All facetiae of Iago expose his shallowness as a Villain and bring him close to *Zanni* of *Commedia dell' arte*. Progression in paper will divulge the aspect how a tragedy comes out of a petty affair provoked by intrigue of a *Zanni* (servant, over-smart) unaware of the magnitude and serious implications of his malevolent intentions.

Surprise, kinky humour, intrigue and slavish instinct to earn things by flattery not by virtue are the features of Iago in *Othello* hinting at comedy along with the tragedy.

Keywords:

- 1) Zanni Brighella – A type of servant in *Commedia dell' arte*
- 2) Venetian – Inhabitant of Venice
- 3) Barbarian – rustic, unpolished people
- 4) lè sé majesté – treason
- 5) meneur-de-jeu: ring leader out of play (game planner)
- 6) Petti fogger – A person who uses unscrupulous means

Introduction:

In writing the tragedy of *Othello*, Shakespeare uses, with extraordinary mastery, an out-of-routine but greatly effective theatrical idiom with great insight in human psyche and acumen for dramatic as well as theatrical techniques. *Othello* has resemblance with Cinthio's story but to convert melodrama into a well-defined tragedy arousing pity and fear, the dramatist has introduced one *Zanni-Brighella* from *Commedia dell' arte* who propels the plot with his intrigue and smartly concocted stories. What is interesting and comic about the plot that nobody tries to cross check the script of the other, all are driven like fools or asses. Profane and cheap language of *Zanni-Iago* helps precipitate cheap humour and the same filth he thrusts in mouth of other characters. Iago like *Zanni-Brighella* (an Italian servant) tries to malign reputation of *Othello*, his master, by projecting his wife having liaison with other people.

Generally, in *Commedia dell' arte* such servants are caught in their own web and end up with sound thrashing but in *Othello* this comic and indecent situation diverges into a dangerous direction, with unrealistic appraisal of temper and morality of the 'prey'

by *Zanni*, culminating into tragedy for trivial matter and ‘unreasonable jealousy’; moreover, Shakespeare, maintaining a universal appeal, unfurls various interpretation in his works, may hint that a misplaced comedy of situation fuelled by intrigue and petty gain can lead to disastrous circumstances leaving no body unhurt.

H.B. Charlton’s *Shakeshperean Tragedy* concludes with two important causes of tragedy of *Othello*:

- (1) The incompatible marriage of ‘super subtle Venetian and an erring barbarian’ – a marriage of two people from entirely different backgrounds in terms of colour, country, taste, interest and family status.
- (2) Othello is not victimized by Iago rather he himself, was responsible for cold blooded murder of Desdemona and the ultimate tragedy of himself in matter & spirit. All dramatic and theatrical devices portray a similar picture of tragedy, theatrical language; staging and acting also endorse the same fact about tragedy of *Othello*. (Qtd in B.Mendonca 92)

All works of Shakespeare have a universal appeal and meant for a widely varied audience. Thus, it is a very obvious that his plays have a multitude of layers of deeper significance, open to all readers and viewers depending upon their understanding and tendency to react imaginatively to all, offered in terms of dialogues, characters and plot.

It also means that Shakespeare reaches out his audience through visuals – very prominent, eminently stage worthy elements which were cut out when tailored to accommodate the needs of time and fashion.

Taking into consideration the geographical constraints for average Elizabethan, for access to Venetian society and culture, Shakespeare prefers *Commedia dell’ arte*, a popular theatre device not only Italian but also Venetian. Shakespeare as well as Elizabethan audience being well-familiar with *Commedia dell’ arte* “(as recorded in Sir Edmind Chamber, *The Elizabethan Stage*) have developed the ability not only to comprehend or identify but also criticizing Venetian aura that time.”(Qtd in B.Mendonca 92)

Elizabethan didn’t hold Venetians beauties morally upright as Iago persistently box in ears of Othello, as play progresses. So this convention was introduced, later on, in play & initially *Othello*, as the play opened, was put under scanner of doubt.

The onset of action in *Othello* against this Venetian *Commedia dell’ arte* background, as it common with Shakespearean plays, in the very opening scene, confers the propensities that misplaced situation, misgivings given and received by clowns will lead to tragedy. It may be a strange fact but tragedy becomes exceptionally cruel because situation, grudges are trivial in initial dramatic situation. If we consider it a ‘tragedy of intrigue’, triggered by an ‘allegory of Evil’, ‘Iago’, a plot of tricking the hero and stirring up lethal jealousy against heroine, we also cannot ignore Dr. Johnson’s lines in ‘Preface to Shakespeare’(1765), that all evil designs of Iago “The petty cavils of petty minds.” Mastery of Shakespeare lies in the fact that he makes tragedy erupt out of Cinthio’s plot

maintaining the tone and tenor. The influence of *Commedia dell' arte* on *Othello* can be elaborated in context of structure, situation, dialogues, characters and also conflict. The plot of trick is, basically, a plot, bearing characteristic of comedy with main position assigned to Iago as *meneur-de-jeu* as *Zanni*, a servant who works for his increment in status, this idea is more Shakespearian, absent in Cinthio, and forms an important aspect of *Zanni*.

The opening scene of *Othello* flings open very surprising conclusions. The arrangement of a house with window above and door below, is a particular scenic disposition as described by Emilio Del Carro in his “*Nel Regno Delle Maschere* as typical of *commedia dell' arte* where windows and doors made the fixed setting more flexible.”(93 Qtd in B.Mendonca)

See the chronology of events and inherent humour in opening scene:

Iago presents himself at scene, indignant he is, (fails to be promoted to position of lieutenant) a lèse-majesté crime in terms of *Zanni*'s ego; his claim about ‘Three great ones of the city had ‘offcapped’ to the general on his behalf is also a lie, as he fails to quote the names of them. Iago, where arouses Brabantio of his slumber relating his daughter’s elopement, pushes forward Roderigo, hiding himself to be unidentified, not to be the overt bearer of the news, Iago not only makes jokes (Thou art a Villain/You are a Senator) but uses obscene language with which Brighella told Pantalone that his daughter has eloped, that too, on false pretext of thieves breaking in the house.

Iago : What ho, Brabantio! thief, thieves! your daughter, you bags.(Act 1(i)78 *Othello*)

Iago crosses limits of decency like Brighella.

Iago : an old black ram is tupping your white ewe
.(Act 1(i)86 *Othello*)

Roderigo lacking both in wit & courage also utters words suitable for comedy.

Roderigo : Full fortune does the thick-lips owe.(Act 1(i)63 *Othello*)

Most ludicrous antics come in the way when Desdemona’s lost handkerchief, a fortuitous embellishment is served as ‘ocular proof’ before a person of high judgment and sharp acumen, Othello; classic comic situation bursts out when Iago and Cassio talk about Bianca, but create false impression before Othello as if they talk about Desdemona (two men talking like women, gestures leave audience in guffaws.) “*Richard Flatter* in ‘*The Moor of Venice*’ compares Iago with a *commedia dell' arte* character as he focuses on one person with one action and improves according to situation.”(94 Qtd in B.Mendonca) Inventiveness of Iago to concoct stories has inexhaustible ability for scheming and fabling a different story for different people as well as zest, villainy and cunningness with which he keeps all puppets of him away from checking their notes and foil his play– this facet resembles typical *Zanni*.

“Bernard Spivack in his *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* hails Iago as a direct descendant of the vice of medieval moralities”(94 Qtd in B.Mendonca) but in theatrical terms this vice much relates itself to *Zanni* – Brighella of commedia dell’ arte as it is more flexible but less allegorical, bearing pure reflection of Elizabethan stage.

Of all incarnations or mask of *Zanni*, Iago closely resembles morose, ill-tempered and sadistic Brighella. In “*Thelma-Niklaus*’, *Harlequin Phoenix*, we find description of Brighella : ... his mask, of a dingy yellowish green, trickster & hired bully ... interloper, braggart, eavesdropper, stealthy and sinister ready to sell his honour and his master.”(94 Qtd in B.Mendonca) Brighella’s villainy was conscious and purposeful; a close scrutiny, find Iago well fitted in this frame. The two basic themes of Italian comedy are: first deception, second cuckolding of a husband. These two themes imperceptibly flow underneath the plot of *Othello*. In Elizabethan theatre, for inexplicable reasons, ‘cuckold’ has been a source of unquenchable laughter; moreover Iago’s intentions, tactics and manoeuvres in this whole intrigue, just to malign Othello’s reputation with such a serious and delicate charge are also ridiculous and out of frame. Iago could use, as a shrewd villain, some other intrigue to depose Othello as a general, thus pettiness of affair traces in *Othello*, shades of comedy.

A comparison of other tragedies with *Othello* reveals that there, the villain has extreme purpose of extermination with blood-spilling desires, for instance, Claudius plans death for his own Kin, Hamlet in cold blood & vice-versa; Macbeth pierces knife in his own cousin and king. Duncan; Goneril and Regan bestow lunacy on their own father, Edmund blinds his own illegitimate father, earl of Gloucester, above all, all good souls are killed and slaughtered by villain, they don’t commit suicide as Othello stabs himself except Gloucester. All Evils plan extreme rather irreversible action against good, working upon the instinct to survive.

Iago is like a pettifogger who shields himself behind Roderigo & comes up with unusual idea that he can settle score with Othello, making him cuckold, for not promoting him to be lieutenant. Undoubtedly, this intention of him entails venomous touch of revenge sprouted from jealousy but this revenge is based on a petty and comic level. His intention is to demoralize him, reducing him to a laughing stock; he, himself is not aware of the magnitude or colossal mass of tragedy at its core erupting from his inchoate idea of vindictiveness.

Our *Zanni*, Iago fails to take into account the collateral effect of his malevolent intention, which arouses a very terrible and deadly reaction from ‘erring barbarian’ to his petty provocation. Out of this uncalculated, unapprehended disproportion erupts tragedy. Iago, fails to speculate that his target is a soldier who speaks through his sword only, especially about whom he trust as he utters about Desdimona:

‘My life upon her faith’. (I iii 291 *Othello*)

When this faith dwindles for him Othello takes life of both partners.

Shakespeare's use of characters from *commedia dell' arte* in his dramatic personae is selective and according to the situation & condition of plot.

All characters are set in compliance with Iago and are driven the way of his choice; speak dialogues, he desires because chronology of misunderstandings and misgivings leads to ultimate tragedy which takes everybody unaware. Iago, in his role of *meneur-de-jeu* earns notoriety as allegory of evil, but apart from being a showman of mechanical development of intrigue, has many kind of analogies with *Zanni-Brighella* : First, the theme of promotion, absent in *Giralde Cinthio*, very much fundamental to both Shakespeare and Italian comedy servants. In Italian comedy's *Zanni* incarnations, the very desire of servants is promotion in terms of food, clothing or rank, they adopt even low means of backbiting, false evidence & witness but end up getting beating or punishment instead of advancement. The striking similarity between Iago and *Zanni – Brighella* lies in the fact that at no point until the very end of tragedy Iago harbour any intention of murder or tragic downfall of Othello. Like *Zanni-Brighella* his sinister purpose is to demoralize his master, his own promotion and gain a token of thanks for being a 'protector' of Othello's household secrets.

At the end of Act V(i) Iago, with blindness concerning the far-reaching consequence of his over action, still hopes :

This is the night that either makes me or for does me quite". (V (i), (127-128) Othello)

This false hope like fools and servants along with his sadistic pleasure in loss of others morality, his vulgarity and pleasure to search for or imagine rottenness in all pure and chaste make him closely resemble Italian servants of *commedia dell' arte*. The finishing touch to the picture of *Zanni-Brighella* in picture of Iago is consummated when this presumed and dislikable 'villain' is proclaimed as 'honest Iago'.

In *commedia dell' arte*, the intrigue is seated on the fulcrum of fact that a wily but witty servant earns trust of master for all important tasks; success of the intrigue is assured by superficial mask of honesty which when pulled off or drops down ensure proportionate punishment for him for taking advantage of a privileged position and proximity of master knowing his all hopes and weak spots. Most ludicrous here, are the clown like antics of Iago who has a story for everyone and all are driven like assess or puppets – pulled by strings. Iago like Italian servant, maintains proximity with people, spy on people secretly with that knowledge he makes people believe his incredible stories; this over-believing that emerges out of flattery delivers tragedy at the end under this influence of *posteriori* knowledge, as in world of comedy, *Zanni* is believed for the same reasons that Iago is believed.

Another classic *commedia dell' art* mask which appears in *Othello* is Pantalone bearing close resemblance with Brabantio.

K.M. Lea ponders over Brabantio-Pantalone relationship : "The description of Brabantio as a "magnifico" in *Othello* is appropriate without any thought of Italian

comedy but his position as a frantic father is so like that of Pantalone that we can hardly avoid the double allusion.”(95-96 Qtd in B.Mendonca)

In conventional presentation of the role of old fool, Brabantio’s daughter marries against his wishes; laughter ensues with foolish surprise, that takes over Brabantio about his daughter’s absence from house at midnight, frolickly narrated by disreputable characters shouting, standing beneath his window cautioning him about theft in house.

Roderigo creates another comic situation when offers money to Iago, master mind of intrigue to obtain favours from the heroine. By his deeds, he proves himself not only fool but a corrupt fool and also reducing *Zanni*-Iago to the worst aspects of a pander. Desdemona also identifies with ‘amorosa’ or ‘innamorata’ of professional comedy, with all her sweetness, charm, true to her lover, defying paternal authority, making incompatible choice in absence of mother; it is also true that Shakespeare assigns to his heroine a much richer moral texture despite these similarities.

Bianca, as a courtesan with dramatic function to complicate intrigue, makes herself undeniable part of world of *commedia dell’ arte*. Emilia also does not fall outside the range of comedy as she plays peripheral role, with her foolish innocence, in upcoming tragedy.

Shakespeare’s plays with their universal appeal only find reference to other work; uniqueness of dramatist lies not in narrating Cinthio story, not in making play a facsimile copy of *Commedia dell’ arte* but as Samuel Johnson suggests in ‘Preface to Shakespeare’ holding mirror to human nature, shows how trivial incidents, stationed proof and make believe intrigue, though in humourous or ludicrous vein lead to unforeseen repercussions. Shakespeare intention is not to follow Cinthio’s melodrama, his tragic hero Othello gives impressive speech and displays honesty. His character is well projected in words of Duke:

Your son-in-law is far more fair than black. (I iii, 286 *Othello*)

Deeper probe reveal that Iago arouses in Othello not jealousy but his implacable sense of justice, Othello acts according to his exacting sense of justice both towards his love and himself.

At no point, Othello is demonstrated as gauche or socially backward rather he is majestic, well-reputed and respected. The fundamental conflict originates itself from incompatibility especially, on moral grounds; impassioned and fiery moral convictions of Othello could not afford super-subtle Venetian openness granting some attitude and gesture of liberal love and intimacy a social behavior ; that too, in a stressful situation – exploited by Iago and demonstrated as being the outward show of supposed moral flaws.

For instance, Othello’s dialogue with Iago,

Othello : An unauthorised Kiss!(Act4 (i) 5) *Othello*)

‘Unbookish jealousy’ misplaces ridicule with tragedy.

For petty handkerchief, moral conviction of Othello is shaken as he yells out:

O Curse of marriage!(III iii 270 *Othello*)

His own complex of being black, not able to be well versed in love and his declining age make him more insecure and vulnerable to intrigue of Iago.

A kind of behaviour (Kissing while meeting) perfectly natural & normal in Venetian society is given a compromising dimensions and interpretation by Iago.

Villainy of Iago hinges upon the fact whether bridal sheets were stained or not.

Isn't it comic that thickness of a membrane only, decides loyalty, love and fidelity? Tragedy, here evolves out of Othello's disproportionately violent reaction to Iago's provocation; the seed of adultery was sown in his mind by Desdemona's father, manured by her Venetian background, sprouts from ground when Iago's villainy provides it suitable environment.

Othello's own moral sensitivity, strong moral sense of purity are wounded by just the idea of Desdemona's adultery, both in honour & emotion; Iago who suspects his own wife having liaison with general, confesses it in his soliloquies (not to impress others) does not take a violent note of it. He, in his wildest dreams even, could not imagine that his mischievous design may culminate into murderous tragedy.

The fury of passion unleashed by his intrigue was beyond his calculation & understanding. Iago hails to a world with no absolute purity and morals compromised even for promotion. So for him, adultery is weighed against shame and demotion, on the contrary, Othello belongs to a world of pure absolutes with strictly, no moral compromise. Othello cannot conceive the idea that a Christian, having no moral rectitude can use a subject – so sensitive, grave & delicate for just a promotion in rank by defiling the character of general's wife and making him an object of ridicule.

An initial comic situation germinates into appalling and blood curdling tragedy because a warrior, violent, rough & highly moral Othello could not accept being made into a laughing stock as a cuckold; also in worlds of Harold Pinter : "The point about tragedy is that it is no longer funny."(98 Qtd in Barbara)

Iago's anxiety to kickoff his sordid campaign with incendiary remarks, against Othello, even before nuptial ties of the couple could strengthen the bond of mutual knowledge and trust between them worsens the matter, touching the most sensitive chord of Othello, digressing the issue from promotion to adultery.

Here like his prototype, the servant of Italian comedy, he possesses no capability to think beyond his own interest i.e., an idle yearning for plum post.

All *Zannies*, when found and proved guilty reveal in the end that they were blundering fools, but after tragic waste of the moral crises of *Othello* – intrigue blew out of proportion, what could be said?

If we scan dialogues of all the characters right from Othello to Emilia, all have comic undertones in their dialogues. For instance

Iago in Act1 (i) speaks like a clown; "... Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight,"(I i 66-69 *Othello*)

Proclaim him in the streets, incense her kinsmen plague him with flies'

In the same act he yells at Brabantio:

“What ho, Brabantio! Thieves, Thieves! your daughter, and your bags! Thieves, thieves!”(I i 76-79 *Othello*)

Again with uncontrollable anxiety and joyless humour, he proclaims to Brabantio : *you’re robbed*

Now, now, very now *Arise, arise!* *Arise, I say!* repetition of words and many signs of exclamation reaffirm that the dialogue sound more like from a comic clown and less from a scheming villain. His mention of ‘black ram’, ‘white ewe’, ‘Barbary horse’, ‘coursers’, ‘Jennets’, ‘Asses’, point towards unrefined comedy.

Iago to Roderigo : “.... *If thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thy self a pleasure, me a sport.*” (*In Act I (iii) 363*).

Here Iago clarifies his intention to both amuse and a shame the readers

His repeated declaration: *‘I hate the moor’*. (I (iii) 361; I(iii) 380) confirm his racial and unreasonable prejudice, and when, set in contrast with Othello’s appreciation for him as ‘honest Iago’ make readers bewildered, anxious and smile at innocence and ignorance of Othello.

Iago’s acknowledgement about his ‘double knavery’ his cautions and promptness about design : *How? How?* his over confidence to lead ‘Othello’ by the nose as ass is, terrifies mature readers, though they are engaged by his clownish antics.

Iago’s epithet to Roderigo as ‘Sir’ also reveals his unmanliness and womanish, backbiting instinct as it involve no genuine respect but applause to use him for his purpose.

He wants to diet his revenge for ‘seat’ and unravels his suspicion about his wife or like a clown justifies his misgivings :

Till I am evened with him, wife for wife (II (i) 293).

His repeated reference to ‘Knavery’ may prove him an inexplicable allegory of evil but his effect is very shallow unlike villain.

His address to Roderigo as ‘*Young mistress dog*’, ‘*sick fool*’ also bring to fore his clownish instinct. His utterance: *Virtue?A fig!*(Act1(iii)316) shows her disrespect for virtue.

Most of the dialogues of Iago are with various punctuations; he either exclaims, questions or pauses; this over emphasis in speech betrays his lack of confidence which generally villains like Claudius and ever Macbeth and Edmund possess. Unlike them he is unaware of corollary of his jealousy and mean actions.

On being questioned, he answers more like a cunning slave than a villain, e.g.

Iago : *Nothing, my Lord; or if – I know not what.* (III (iii) 36)

His adulation for Othello : *My lord, you know I love you.* (III (iii) 118).

Also reflects seamy side of his character. This is very surprising to note that a person of high wisdom, experience and acumen can trust a person who is nervous and wavering in his articulation as, e.g.:

Iago : *O grace! O heaven forgive me! Are you a man? Have you a soul? or sense? O wretched fool, (Act 3 (iii)374-375 Othello)*

This statement is made very much in presence of Othello. It is shocking, Othello trust inch by inch, word for word a person who is not sure of himself. His reflection on reputation :

Reputation is an idle and most false imposition(Act 2(iii)254 Othello)
 professes his immodesty and low morality.

Iago is so casual and non-serious about impending tragedy that he shares with cassio :

Iago : *My Lord is fallen into an epilepsy (Act 4 (i)50) this is his second fit;*
 Emilia words against her husband, Iago:

He begged of me to steal it. (Handkerchief), (V(ii), 229).

Bring to light insidious, perfidious, spiteful nature of Iago. All these dialogues and conversation of him don't qualify him for the role of a villain but register him as a scheming agent. The images of beasts, Iago generally refers to, represent him as an embodiment of foolishness, lechery and loathsome vices. (II (i) 169).

His comparison of Cassio's with a *fly*, himself with a *spider*; Roderigo's with a hunting *dog*; (II (i) 316) Desdemona's with a *guniea-hen* (I (iii) 318) is irksome and discover his low and degenerated mind.

Brabantio also exhibits some clownish instinct, as proved by his dialogue. His daughter has eloped and he advises :

'Strike on the timber, Ho! call up all my people. (Act 1(i)138-139)

Such a sensitive issue is so foolishly dealt by a clown father.

He questions, a very private question, "Roderigo are they married, think you?" This dialogue of him with Roderigo elaborates about him as a careless, unconcerned and blaming father. Further words like:

"O treason of the blood!"(Act1(i)167)

He utters these even when guilt of his daughter is not proved.

His expression of surprise is also misplaced when he is sent for in council of Duke where he, himself should prefer expediency over propriety, e.g.

The Duke in Council? In this time of the night?(Act1(ii)93)

His foolish counsel to Othello:

"If thou hast eyes to see"

She hath deceived her father and may thee. (I iii 289-90)

proves him a complaining and grumbling child in guise of father.

Othello also, through his dialogues proves himself an erring ‘Barbarian and Credulous Fool’. Othello’s lack of intellectual acumen, insight and plain common sense is well reflected through his dialogues. He trusts his wife:

“*My life upon her faith.*” (Act I(iii), 293)

but offers no sensible argument to counter Iago’s presumptions. He wants ‘ocular proof’ but value of the evidence (just a handkerchief) is not considered. His dialogue, for instance :

If she be false, O! then heaven mocks itself! (III (iii) 278) showcases his immaturity and real trust for wife.

In Othello, in all his “sudden ejaculation, there is note of childish self-pity regretting his age, colour complex. He also suffers from a deep dichotomy in consciousness of himself.”(16 Gerard) This apocalyptic quality of his nihilism, despair and lack of capacity for abstraction, in truth, brings his downfall.

Except for his military expedition and honest confession before Duke, no where, he displays virtue of a general. His conversation with any of character is not impressive :

Othello : O fool, fool, fool! (V (ii) 322).

In scene III (iv) with in six lines. He iterates only two words

‘The Handkerchief’ for three times.

His mind is obsessed with the poisonous thoughts instilled in mind. “Brothel scene Act IV Sec (ii) removes all doubts how he debases his magnificent oratory by borrowing shamelessly from Iago’s lecherous vocabulary.”(17 Gerard)

Hailing his chaste and pure wife as ‘*bawd*’, ‘*subtle whore*’, ‘*procreants*’, ‘*public commoner*’, ‘*the bawdy wind that kisses all it meets*’, ‘*impudent strumpet*’, ‘*whore of Venice*’, *you, you, ay, you* bring to fore his own sham and shallow interior of mind.

“G.R Elliot finds Othello’s love for Desdemona: His affection for her though fixed and true is comparatively superficial.”(Gerard 18)This filth for her has no serious or ‘reasonable’ ground, just based on speculation or misgivings as narrated by Emilia by ‘*some base notorious knave, some most villainous knave*’.(IV ii 139-140 Othello)

It’s true that all these dialogues are not funny but ludicrous entailing cheap humor for low class audience who enjoy dishonour and disgrace for high class woman. All minor characters like Roderigo, Cassio and Emilia provide relaxation in tense situation with humour tapped out of their stupidity and foolishness. Emilia plays a very assertive role, explaining chaste nature of her mistress even at the cost of life, praises Desdemona at full length; strangely, Desdemona’s husband fails to notice such virtues in her and brutally kills her. Desdemona is the sole character who lives and dies like a tragic heroine and maintains uprightness of her characters.

There is no doubt about the fact that ‘*Othello*’ is a tragedy to fill us with horror and anger but the tragedy is propelled by a congregation of fools with one *Zanni* who led them by nose for a ‘petty gain’ without being aware of the repercussion of his design to enjoy other’s plight and step by step, falls into his own gap of being.

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