Cassio Roderigo Barbantio And There Functions Essay, Research Paper

From Shakespeare’s play Othello, this paper will be discussing the roles

of Cassio, Roderigo and Brabantio, and their functions.

First, Cassio. Cassio is an honourable lieutenant and a soldier, who is

very loyal and caring towards his commanding officer, Othello, as shown

in one of many places, act two scene one line 45-48 when he is concerned

about Othello’s well being because he has been lost at sea and says:

Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle, That so approve the Moor! O,

let the heavens Give him the defense against the elements, For I have lost

him on a dangerous sea

In the beginning of the play Cassio is appointed to the position of

lieutenant by Othello, so Cassio at first has his highest respect, until

later in the play where Othello believes he is having an affair with

Desdemona. Cassio’s role in the play is not one of the extremely

important ones. His main function is to be a figure who’s actions are

partially responsible for Othello believing that his wife is cheating on

him. For example, Cassio asking for Desdemona’s help leads to the two of

them being seen together, which is in act three scene three line 35. In

the end of the play, Cassio becomes the governor in Cyprus after the

former Governor, Othello, commits suicide, in act five scene two from

line 366-378, which shows another of his functions, to act as one of the

means which ties up the loose ends at the end of the play.

Now, Roderigo. Roderigo is a foolish, cheated, gulled, dimwit.

Basically, his function in the play is to act as a lackey towards Iago.

His obedience towards Iago can be compared to that of Lennie Small

towards George Milton in the book Of Mice and Men, By John Steinbeck.

He does whatever Iago tells him to do, consistently in the hope of

obtaining Desdemona’s love. He never realizes that his chances for ever

getting anywhere with her are just about non-existent. He frequently

gives valuables to Iago to give to Desdemona, which Roderigo tells of

for the first time in the second line of the play, but Iago keeps

everything for himself. Near the end of the play Roderigo is killed by

Iago after he tries to ambush Cassio on Iago’s instructions. This

occurs in act five scene one, in line 62. He only functions as a means

for Iago to carry out his hateful plans.

Finally, Brabantio. Brabantio’s role is that he is the father of

Desdemona. He is one of the lesser developed characters in the play, as

well as being the main figure in the initial conflict in the play, in

which he is opposed to Othello and Desdemona’s marriage, as initially

shown in act one scene one line 144 when he reacts angrily after being

told of the elopement by Iago and Roderigo. He says:

Strike on the tinder, ho! Give me a taper! Call up all my people! This

accident is not unlike my dream. Belief of it oppresses me already. Light,

I say, light!

This sparks the audience’s interest at the beginning of the play, and

sets the stage for Iago to start fully carrying out his plans and the

real difficulties for Othello and Desdemona to begin. The three

characters we have talked about all are not the most major characters in

the play, but they provide a great deal of variety to the storyline with

their various character twists. Roderigo, for instance, is somewhat of a

foil, that is, a contrast to the character of Cassio. While Roderigo is

easily fooled and manipulated by Iago, Cassio takes a lot more

manoeuvring. For an illustration of this, refer to act two scene three

up to line 113 where Iago has to continuously persist in trying to get

Cassio to continue drinking. Also, Cassio is more of a romancer with

women, as shown in act two scene one line 63-67 where Cassio “pours his

language on a little thick” in an attempt to impress those of the female

gender nearby. Meanwhile, Roderigo is a coward and is afraid to approach

the woman he loves, instead he attempts to get Iago to do it for him.

As well, the characters are appealing to different types of audiences

with their various characteristics. The character of Brabantio could quite

possibly have been put in the play by Shakespeare so the older generation

of people in the time period in which the play was written, Elizabethan

times, could sympathize with him, as Brabantio does not approve of the fact

that Desdemona and Othello eloped, just as many older people of that time

did not.

As for Cassio, he might be there to appeal to the women of that time

with his fictional charm and courteousness for women, as demonstrated in

a previous line reference.

In conclusion, we can say that these three personae are not the most

primary in the story, but their roles provide important factors in

keeping the audience’s interest as well as making the play more

interesting on the whole for the current and the Elizabethan time

period’s people, with Cassio’s, Roderigo’s, and Brabantio’s myriad of

captivating characteristics.