

NB All quotes and page references are taken from the 2007 RSC edition.

The following quotes all relate to the presentation of women in the play.

Analyse the language Shakespeare has used; specifically analyse what he is indicating about the place of women in Venetian society. You could look at all of these quotes, or choose a handful to discuss with a partner.

<p>A maiden never bold, Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion Blushed at herself: and she, in spite of nature, Of years, of country, credit, everything,</p> <p>(Brabantio on Desdemona. Act 1 Scene 3, lines 105-108)</p>	<p>My noble father, I do perceive here a divided duty. To you I am bound for life and education: My life and education both do learn me How to respect you. You are lord of all my duty, I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband,</p> <p>(Desdemona to Brabantio. Act 1 Scene 3, lines 196-201)</p>
<p>Sir, would she give you so much of her lips As of her tongue she oft bestows on me, You would have enough.</p> <p>(Iago on Emilia. Act 2 Scene 1, lines 111-113)</p>	<p><b>Iago:</b> Come on, come on: you are pictures out of door, bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens, saint in your injuries, devils being offended, players in your housewifery, and housewives in your bed. <b>Desdemona:</b> O, fie upon thee, slanderer! <b>Iago:</b> Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk: You rise to play and go to bed to work.</p> <p>(Act 2 Scene 1, lines 121-123)</p>
<p><b>Cassio:</b> She's a most exquisite lady. <b>Iago:</b> And, I'll warrant her, full of game. <b>Cassio:</b> Indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate creature. <b>Iago:</b> What an eye she has! Methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.</p> <p>(On Desdemona. Act 2 Scene 3, lines 17-20)</p>	<p>I know our country disposition well: In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks They dare not show their husbands: their best conscience Is not to leave't undone but kept unknown.</p> <p>(Iago to Othello. Act 3 Scene 3, lines 224-227)</p>

Women in Venetian society  
*Othello* by William Shakespeare

<p>She's gone. I am abused, and my relief          Must be to loathe her.</p> <p>(Othello on Desdemona. Act 3 Scene 3, lines 297-298)</p>	<p><b>Iago:</b> How now? What do you here alone?  <b>Emilia:</b> Do not you chide: I have a thing for you.  <b>Iago:</b> A thing for me? It is a common thing—  <b>Emilia:</b> Ha?  <b>Iago:</b> To have a foolish wife.</p> <p>(Act 3 Scene 3, lines 333-337)</p>
<p><b>Bianca:</b> Leave you? Wherefore?  <b>Cassio:</b> I do attend here on the general,          And think it no addition, nor my wish,          To have him see me womaned.  <b>Bianca:</b> Why, I pray you?  <b>Cassio:</b> Not that I love you not.  <b>Bianca:</b> But that you do not love me.</p> <p>(Act 3 Scene 4, lines 204-210)</p>	<p><b>Iago:</b> Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,          A housewife that by selling her desires          Buys herself bread and cloth: it is a creature          That dotes on Cassio – as 'tis the strumpet's plague          To beguile many and be beguiled by one.</p> <p>(Act 4 Scene 1, lines 103-107)</p>
<p><b>Iago:</b> She gives it out that you shall marry her:          Do you intend it?  <b>Cassio:</b> Ha, ha, ha!  <b>Othello:</b> Do ye triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?  <b>Cassio:</b> I marry? What? A customer? Prithee bear some charity to          my wit: do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!</p> <p>(Act 4 Scene 1, lines 127-132)</p>	<p><b>Cassio (of/to Bianca):</b> 'Tis such another fitchew! Marry, a perfumed one!—          What do you mean by this haunting of me?</p> <p>(Act 4 Scene 1, lines 150-151)</p>
<p><b>Othello:</b> O devil, devil!          If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,          Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.—          Out of my sight!</p> <p>(On Desdemona. Act 4 Scene 1, lines 243-246)</p>	<p>She says enough, yet she's a simple bawd          That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,          A closet lock and key of villainous secrets:          And yet she'll kneel and pray, I have seen her do't.</p> <p>(Othello of Emilia's defence of Desdemona. Act 4 Scene 2, lines 22-24)</p>

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<p><b>Othello:</b> Are not you a strumpet?  <b>Desdemona:</b> No, as I am a Christian:          If to preserve this vessel for my lord          From any other foul unlawful touch          Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.</p> <p>(Act 4 Scene 2, lines 88-90)</p>	<p><b>Emilia:</b> He called her whore: a beggar in his drink          Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.</p> <p>(Emilia on Othello. Act 4 Scene 2, lines 134-135)</p>
<p><b>Desdemona:</b> Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?  <b>Emilia:</b> Why, would not you?  <b>Desdemona:</b> No, by this heavenly light!  <b>Emilia:</b> Nor I neither by this heavenly light: I might do't as well          i'th'dark.  <b>Desdemona:</b> Wouldst thou do such as deed for all the world?  <b>Emilia:</b> The world's a huge thing: it is a great price          For a small vice.</p> <p>(Act 4 Scene 3, lines 68-75)</p>	<p><b>Iago:</b> This is the fruits of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,          Go know of Cassio where he supped tonight.—          What, do you shake at that?  <b>Bianca:</b> He supped at my house, but I therefore shake not.  <b>Iago:</b> O, did he so? I charge you go with me.  <b>Emilia:</b> O, fie upon thee, strumpet!  <b>Bianca:</b> I am no strumpet, but of life as honest          As you that thus abuse me.</p> <p>(Act 5 Scene 1, lines 127-134)</p>
<p><b>Othello:</b> I say thy husband: dost understand the word?          My friend, thy husband: honest, honest Iago  <b>Emilia:</b> If he say so, may his pernicious soul          Rot half a grain a day! He lies to th'heart:</p> <p>(Act 5 Scene 1, lines 178-181)</p>	<p>I think upon't, I think: I smell't: O villainy! I thought so then. I'll kill          myself for grief.          O villainy, villainy!  <b>Iago:</b> What, are you mad? I charge you get you home.  <b>Emilia:</b> Good gentlemen, give me leave to speak:          'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.          Perchance, Iago, I never will go home.</p> <p>(Act 5 Scene 2, lines 221-224)</p>
<p><b>Emilia:</b> No, I will speak as liberal as the north:          Let heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,          All, all cry shame upon me, yet I'll speak.  <b>Iago:</b> Be wise and get you home.  <b>Emilia:</b> I will not. [Iago threatens to stab Emilia]  <b>Gratiano:</b> Fie! Your sword upon a woman?</p> <p>(Act 5 Scene 2, lines 250-255)</p>	<p><b>Othello:</b> Perplexed in the extreme: of one whose hand          Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away          Richer than all his tribe:</p> <p>(Act 5 Scene 2, lines 389-391)</p>