

Gender Normalities Theory in The Book of the City of Ladies as Applied in Shakespeare's Othello

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Emilia in *Othello* confronts gender roles when she exploits the method introduced by Christine de Pizan in *The Book of the City of Ladies*. Christine's realization of women's oppression in her journey with the Ladies allows her to view life with a new perspective. Likewise, Emilia demonstrates the same ideals from *The Book of the City of Ladies* with her opinionated mindset and deviation from the women's social norms of the time. Furthermore, Emilia develops in a similar progression as Christine, especially in the deconstruction of the men's manipulation. Even though they go against [gender](#) stereotypes, complete equality is one battle avoided by Christine and Emilia. In Shakespeare's [Othello](#), Emilia defies gender norms when she employs a speculative mindset introduced by the character Christine in *The Book of the City of Ladies*. Christine realizes a new perspective on women's oppression after her journey with the Ladies of Reason, Rectitude and Justice. In *The Book of the City of Ladies*, she becomes more outspoken about female priorities as the text progresses. "In short, all you women, whether high, middle or low social rank, should be especially alert and on your guard against those who seek to attack your honour and your virtue" (de Pizan 239). Christine's quote explicitly puts females as a top priority, which was never done before. Because of

the Ladies' many explanations to Christine of women's importance to humanity, she finally speaks out to her peers, saying to put themselves first by being alert to protect their honour and virtue. Not only does Christine tell women to put themselves first, she also urges them to avoid men's love. "O my ladies, fly, fly from the passionate love with which they try so tempt you!" (de Pizan 239...

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...eristics of feminism but did not fully grasp them. They act as a perfect representation of women in the Middle Ages to Scholasticism period that went through social suppression by enlightening readers of the men's misconduct against them. These two women started a movement that changed the course of history for humankind, even for being fictional and nonfictional pieces.

Works Cited de Pizan, Christine. "The Book of the City of Ladies". The Norton Anthology: World Literature. Volume B. 3rd Edition. Ed. Rosalind Brown-Grant trans. New York City: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012. 781-807. Print. de Pizan, Christine. The Book of the City of Ladies. Rosalind Brown-Grant trans. London: Penguin, 1999. Print. Shakespeare, William. (1564-1616 C.E.). The Tragedy of Othello the Moor of Venice. Folger Shakespeare Library Edition. New York: Washington Square Press, 2004. Print.

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