

Hero, Desdemona, Imogen . . . and Brett Kavanaugh?:

Reading a Supreme Court Hearing through a Shakespearean Lens

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In Fall 2018, as I was teaching Introduction to Shakespeare and students were reading a trio of plays that all deal with accusations of sexual impropriety (Othello,



Much Ado about Nothing, and Cymbeline), the Supreme Court confirmation hearings of Brett Kavanaugh were unfolding. The echoes between Shakespeare's dramatic worlds and the daily news reports were impossible to ignore. The "plots" of both the plays and the hearing circulate around questions of acceptable and unacceptable sexual behavior, of reputation and credit, of public and private actions and reactions. Reading the

confirmation hearing through a non-partisan Shakespearean lens allows us to consider how such issues — highly gendered and sexualized — continue to haunt us over 400 years later.