

Lago is the villain of the tragedy othello but to what extent is he a tragic vill...

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Iago is the villain of the tragedy Othello but to what extent is he a tragic villain? Iago is portrayed to be an intelligent and deceptive character whom exposes his deceit within the first scene of the play. He explains to Roderigo that 'I am not what I am' which could be interpreted as though there are many different levels to him meaning he is a complex character and shows various sides of him to different characters. However it could also mean that no one knows the real him: including Iago himself.

This dialogue is juxtaposed right at the beginning of the play; this highlights the importance of Iago's complex and villainous character and his attitude towards others in different situations to achieve what he wants no matter how duplicitous he has to be. It is ironic how Iago is saying this to Roderigo who could question Iago's loyalty to him however Iago is extremely conniving and underestimates Roderigo's intelligence. This illustrates how Iago is condescending towards others throughout the play not making him seem like a tragic villain at all.

On the contrary, the audience enjoys Iago's twisted intelligence as he slowly cultivates a plan in Act 1, scene 3. Iago's soliloquy intrigues the audience as it seems as though Iago is speaking directly to the audience rather than to himself. The audience is charmed as they are drawn into Iago's plan and cannot help but be enticed as Iago slowly improvises a plan. Iago's soliloquy reflects his thoughts and yet we cannot tell what his true feelings are as what he says varies throughout.

The scene ends with a rhyming couplet 'I have't. It is engendered. Hell and night Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.' This is a powerful

statement to end the scene with as he says this evil plan of his should be brought alive which leaves the audience intrigued at the end of the scene waiting for more. Shakespeare wants the audience to enjoy the cleverness of lago which may make him seem like a tragic villain.