

# In iago, shakespeare has created an engaging and complex assignment

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In brief summary Othello is the story of a high ranking soldier who falls in love and elopes with his wife. His ensign Iago sets out to destroy Othello and his recently promoted lieutenant, Cassio. How Iago brings all their lives into a pit of misery is the tragedy's theme. The complexity of such a villain lies in his unnerving calm with which he carries out his twisted duties, using a mastery of the language in order to push and persuade, rarely resorting to physical violence and when doing so, usually using a misled character to do his dirty work.

His motives that drive him are desparingly thin: his power over others captivates his audience and his curious crimes lead us by the nose, as we see are. ' In the time of Shakespeare writing this play there would have been a large host of set stock characters in order to make the plays easy to follow for the audience. Iago does not perform to this main baseline. Of what would have been labeled a Machiavelli, a practiced liar who secretly plots and schemes.

He uses cunning and duplicity to achieve his ends; delighting in his own manipulative evil. With the ability to dissemble and disguise his true identity, a theme exceedingly popular theme in the 17th century. Iago conforms brilliantly with this character. In his request soliloquies in which he forces the audience to conspire with him, he often shows us the extent of his likeness. Olin love and honest kindness. ' Iago is commenting on advice he just gave a supposed friend, assuring him of its worth, in fact the advice he just gave will lead to his entire plot to be cast underway.

It is this self assured lying and disguising of his own identity that links him to the Machiavelli, combined with the scheming and manipulation that he performs, keeping the audience informed of his dirty tricks in his soliloquies lest we should miss his ill doings. His conformation with the Machiavelli stock character meant the 17th audience would have immediately picked up his intentions and would follow closely to see how this particular evil manifested itself. His conformation to the mould of an established villain also comes with the close ties Shakespeare makes with hell.

To his audience heaven and hell were to very stark realities, and Iago's connection to the latter would have provoked a response out of the audience. Relate devil will make a grandkids out bayou' Iago is linking himself to the devil, by threatening someone with the prospect of becoming a relation f the devil to the 17th century audience would have stroked a cord amongst the crowd, being a very serious and real threat, and the evil in Iago seems to flow out in his repeated use Of devilish imagery. IEE and night must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. Iago is directly linking his plans to hell and this link to dark satanic forces would emphasize to the audience just how potently evil it is. An involving point about Iago Which elevates him above the traditional stock character is that he knows precisely what he is doing. Chat's he who says play the villain. ' Iago is being ironic and sarcastic. He knows that he is the evil in the story and that it is his plotting and scheming that will destroy them all. This shows the complexity of him as a villain as he has no illusions about what he is doing; he is perfectly comfortable with his crimes and is in complete control of the play.

His comfort in his actions brings into stark light the exact evil he is committing, there is no remorse, no hesitation, all this drawing the audience in as they try to inwardly unravel Sago's complexity. Ago is not only engaging to his audience, his fellows on stage are equally enmeshed in his lies. Duo advise me well. Cassia describes Ago as honest and obviously takes great heed on what Ago has to say, he considers his advice of the highest caliber. This illusion of friendship shows how deeply Sago's lies run, and how those around him fall into his deception.

DID am bound to thee for ever' there is irony in what the characters say as there belief that the advice from Ago is honest and true, and will aid them greatly in life, could not be further from the truth. It is in this advice Ago manipulates and twists the characters to his disposal, the words of his advice to which they 50 blindly adhere to will ultimately be their destruction. This fellows of exceeding honesty. ' Its apparent the extent to Which trust lies in Ago, the Other characters are completely deceived by his facade, they stand no chance against him if they still believe in his honesty.

Sago's use Of dramatic irony, brings in the audience into the play, as they know what Ago is about to do but they do not know how he will bring about the final transactions of his plan. Ago reveals his true intentions to the audience early on in the play 01 am not what am. ' Ago is admitting to the audience that he is not what he seems, and that they should watch this space to see how they play unfolds. They will be kept on the edge of their seats as they try to fathom what will happen next and how the other characters will take to Sago's malicious game. Allow him to serve my turn

upon him,' Iago is admitting to ordering in both of these quotes his deception of Othello, but the depth of the meaning is lost on such a simple soul, he cannot see how Iago runs circles around him, To the audience it is another piece of irony, but Iago fails to put two and two and takes what Iago says for less than it is, He doesn't realize that if Iago readily betrays the trust of his loving master, what is to stop him betraying and using

Iago, a simple minded man of Venice's middle class, who to the audience is so easily toyed with by Iago. Iago uses the dramatic irony to reel the audience in, just as he uses his many soliloquies to force the audience to almost collude with him. Iago uses the soliloquies to great effect as the audience move with him, as he decides upon the next course of action the audience is moving at his side, always knowing what he's thinking. Iago, hostile to be seen, Othello, it is engendered. Iago emerges from trying to decide what to do, in a state of inspired thought, to yelling in glee the prospect of unleashing his plan, all the time he has Iago aloud, those watching him know what he is to do. The audience follows his train of thought, as he goes through the actions of his plans those watching are already anticipating his next move. Iago keeps his clique immediately informed, lest they lose interest in Iago the villain. The soliloquies on which Shakespeare so heavily relies to draw in the audience are far more potent when considered in the context of the performance.

At the Shakespearean theatre the stage would be surrounded by the groundings, low fee paying viewers who stood just feet away from the performing thespians. In that light Iago's lousiness would have probably

been said directly to the audience, they would be further brought into the play by being spoken to, not spoken at. They would feel part of the play as the actors would involve them in the performance, so they would be lead through the soliloquies rather than merely watching them as today's audience would.

Sago's power and majesty over the other characters stems from his use of the English language. Shakespeare has blessed Ago with the power of words, and it is Sago's language that not only provides him with power but also with a moving sense that there is more to him than meets the eye. His skill with words can be seen in the switching between blank verse and prose in order to best suit the character he is preying on.

With the lesser intelligent or more colloquial conversations Ago uses prose, a rhythm less group of text that is used to communicate on a far more colloquial level, and serve as a means of a more informal correspondence between Ago and his subject. This use of prose also serves Ago as a platform on which he can be seen as a friendly trustworthy counterpart, adding to the security Of his control. His use Of blank verse, allows him to run circles round lesser characters, and impress those of higher stature ND intelligence.

In his first conversation to Ordering he speaks in blank verse, creating a flow in his speech, Lot is as sure as you are Ordering, were the Moor, I would not be Ago. ' This rhyming in his speech creates a current lying through his verse; holding it together and making his speech seem more complicated which adds to confuse Ordering, he can't get his head round what Ago is saying in time to question what he says, and so is drawn into Sago's trap,

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The ambiguity of this quote is also apparent, he is blaming Othello for his wickedness by saying that if

Othello was a better person, such as himself, there would not be any reason for his villainy, this on another level is a very direct statement, he is saying it I was Othello than I wouldn't be Ago, This haziness in his language creates insecurity in his fellows on stage: who, lest they should seem the tool, tall in behind him. By the time they could decipher his language it is too late. This use of language by Ago demonstrates the complexity of his words, and the power such complexity entails by confusing his subjects.

Sago's use of imagery allows him to bring more power an effect to his language. Seven now, now, very now an old black ram is tipping your white yew: Ago is using imagery to bring home what he is saying to Abrogation. He describes Othello as an old, black ram. He emphasizes that Othello is older than Desman and is black; Sago's using imagery to spark off a sense of protection in Abrogation. The use of bestial imagery repulses Abrogation and the audience, making the pain in Barbarians breast sharper and Sago's words carry with greater effect.

Ago also uses a trillion, or list of three, to build up his point and work up the sense Of intensity and vigor in What he is saying. The complexity of his language is clear to see and he uses it to control Other characters. Another example would be; [lee cannot all be masters, nor all masters cannot be truly followed. ' Ago uses a triple negative to confuse Ordering, and the speed With Which Ago delivers such complex sentences confuses and

bewilders Ordering who cannot cope with what is being said and is drawn in by Ago and taken into his trap.

Ago controls the plays action, almost being the director, by telling the other characters what and where, and the duty with which they follow shows exactly how engaging Ago is. Grouse him! Make after him, poison his delight. Ago speaks in the imperative, he is issuing a command, he is directing Ordering what to do and where. Ago dutifully follows for no reason except that he's been told to. Ago must be engaging in order to establish such a solid connection with Ordering that Ordering will do exactly what he says.

Clean him by the nose like asses are. ' In his soliloquy Ago is saying what he will do: he will take hold of Othello and lead him astray. He is so sure of his power and control over others that he admits openly to his power, he makes no denial over the control and influence he commands through use of his language. If he wasn't engaging then e wouldn't have been able to create such strong bonds as he has in place in order to completely control his fellows, who trust him blindly, going with him like lambs to the slaughter.

Ago is Obviously an intriguing and complex character as he draws in everyone around him, audience and characters alike. He does this through the points made in this essay, his use Of language and imagery confuses and awes, his soliloquies entrap and enchant, his false honesty tricks and deceives, the irony he uses makes sure the audience are With him all the way till the end, his confirmation to the Machiavelli stock character allows the audience to recognize ND follow his actions. But one thing remains untold. Why?

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Throughout the whole play Iago only gives some very vague and altogether sketchy reasons for his sustained attack on his fellows. His statement 'I hate the Moor' gives us a clear show of his feelings but still no reason. He accuses Othello of sleeping with his wife; 'Domino my sheets.' It gives us a motive, but Iago himself then condemns the reality of such an occurrence 'Call it knowledge if it be true.' 'This selectiveness malignity' draws in the audience further and gives Iago even more control as they try to give reason to his crimes.

It is apparent that Shakespeare intended to create such a devilish figure, and Iago uses all his tools tooth and tongue to blanket the action of the play and controls all that is going on. The evidence for this lies entirely in the proceedings of the play, revolves around Iago as if he were a black hole, and when he loses that power of deception, at the very end, the play unravels as his spell is lifted, and those who have not killed themselves or been killed realize just how much they have been tricked, the astonishment in their own words is proof of how much Iago controlled them. (Othello's 'thy work: the object poisons sight' )