

# Othello by william shakespeare

[Literature](#), [Character](#)



Othello Extended Response — Othello written by William Shakespeare is one of the most famous plays ever written. Shakespeare's use of language to convey deeper meanings in lines that appear to be quite superficial or simple. A deep analysis of Othello reveals the play is essentially about power. Shakespeare clearly demonstrates the concept of power through human emotion and language. As well as using language he illustrates the power of social conventions such as reputation. Shakespeare also uses different symbols to visually express power and the monstrosity associated with it. The play's story is largely based upon shifts in power that eventually leads to Othello's demise. Iago is the play's most vicious villain and this is majorly due to his power of language. Iago's language in the play is prose and to the point as well as being highly manipulative and this is shown often while he is subtly trying to convince Othello he is a cuckold. On the contrary to Othello, Iago's language includes a lot of hellish and animalistic imagery right from the start. Iago's power of language is clearly illustrated in Act 3, scene 3, in which he insinuates Desdemona having sexual relations with Cassio while still stating Cassio was his friend, and he would not want any harm to fall upon him. Through dramatic irony the audience knows Iago's intentions are to destroy Cassio, instead of help protect him and this as well as Iago's manipulative nature is clearly demonstrated when he says, "Should you do so, my lord...Cassio's my worth friend- My lord I see you're moved Act 3 Sc3 In 223-227. " " She's gone. I am abused, and my relief must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage. Act 3 Sc 3 In 269-270. " Othello states that he is unmoved by Iago's accusations but his conclusion that he is "abused" shows Iago's insinuations have started to create the "green eyed

monster" within Othello. Iago also uses repetition to help plant the seed of doubt into Othello's mind. "Think my lord? Act 3 Sc 3" The repetition clearly plants doubt in Othello and this is evident when Othello says, "By heaven, he echoes me, as if there were some monster in his thought". Iago's immense power to use language to manipulate Othello is conveyed through the rapid development from Othello having conjugal happiness to being suspicious of Desdemona's fidelity in one single scene. In act 2, scene 3 Iago's skill in being able to manipulate human frailties is also evident. When Othello questions Iago about the fight which took place, Iago feigns he is hesitant to talk about the incident and Othello sees this as Iago trying to vindicate his "friend," Cassio out of pure faithfulness. "I do not know. Friends all but now, even now. Act 2 Sc. 3 In 163." Iago gives the impression to Othello that he is true and faithful to Cassio while the audience knows through dramatic irony he set Cassio up as they have seen Iago's soliloquy in which he says "Am I to put our Cassio in some action. That may offend the isle. But here they come." At the beginning of the play, Othello is established as an important person in Venetian society. Shakespeare conveys this through Othello's elegant and impressive language. Othello's language, in the beginning of the play, is very emotive and descriptive as well as including a great deal of imagery about the seas and heaven. The audience understands that Othello as an outsider must have worked through the ranks to become general and therefore must hold high military power as well as being highly regarded and trusted by the noblemen. Unlike Iago, instead of creating evil, Othello uses his power of language to subdue situations and this is shown when the officers approach Othello. "Keep up

your bright swords, for the dew will rust them... you shall command me with years than your weapons. Act. 1 Sc. 2 ln. 58. " Othello's calm and collected nature is illustrated to the audience. His elegance in speech is also demonstrated when he captivates the duke among other men in his story of wooing Desdemona. " Her father lov'd me, oft invited me, Still question'd me the story of my life... c withcraft I have us'd. Here comes the lady: let her witness it. " The grace of the speech made by Othello is noticed by the duke who replied, " I think this tale would win my daughter too". The audience, through Othello's sophistication of speech perceives Othello as a character who possesses heroic qualities. But as the play moves forward and Iago starts gaining a greater control of the characters, the power is shifted as Othello starts succumbing to jealousy. The audience identifies Othello as a powerful figure early on because of personal qualities but as he begins losing them, he starts to lose this power. Othello loses his self-control and he is not as calm and collected as he was at the beginning of the play. Othello's language becomes less elegant and it slowly becomes much like Iago's language. This is displayed in Act 3 Scene 3, " Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell! Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne to Tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught, for ' tis aspics' tongues. " The audience can observe the contrast between Othello's language in the first act, and in this scene, in which he includes dark and grim imagery. " O, blood, blood, blood! " The huge amount of passion he has towards Desdemona is shown as he is clearly destroyed and heart — broken. If it were not for this passion, Othello's reaction may not have been this large and hence the eventual demise of Desdemona may never have happened. The shift in power is

further evident in this quote and the audience is given the feeling this is the point in which Othello has finally shifted over from hero to villain. Othello's elegant language only returns after he has killed Desdemona and realizes what he has done. His beautiful language is shown in his last words before he kills himself, " Of one that lov'd not wisely, but too well; of one not easily jealous. Act 5 Sc In 340-341" The impending doom, which Othello was to face, was dramatically foreshadowed by the storm. The storm can also be viewed as a symbol of raw power, as it destroys a whole Turkish fleet. Shakespeare also added the symbol of a Falcon, which Othello wore on his shoulder. The Falcon can be argued to be a symbol of Desdemona trying to free herself from the latches of his heart but it can also be viewed as a military symbol. Through each of these points it is possible to see that the tragedy of Othello would not have happened without several aspects of power. Iago's skill in using " Ethos" to eventually gain power over each character is largely due to his power of language. It can also be observed that Othello was also partially responsible for his own demise for letting go of his initial heroic like qualities and hence losing his power.