

Othello - english exam

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



Discuss the way Shakespeare develops the character of Iago in Act 1 Scene 3 and Act 3 Scene 3. What dramatic impact do the soliloquies have on the play? Othello is a tragedy written by Shakespeare in 1602. The main character, Othello is a popular general in the town of Venice. He falls for the young Desdemona and all goes well for a while, until Othello promotes Cassio instead of Iago. This causes Iago to become jealous and he plots a malicious plan to make Othello unhappy. He manipulates different people into getting them to do what they want; Emilia who is Iago's wife steals a handkerchief for him. The handkerchief plays an important part in the play as Othello gave it to Desdemona as a token of his love. Desdemona treasures the handkerchief but mistakenly leaves it behind one day; this is when Emilia steals it. Once Iago has the handkerchief his entire plan falls into place. He puts the idea that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio in Othello's head, and then places the handkerchief on Cassio. At first Othello is so in love with Desdemona that he thinks nothing of it, but once he sees that Cassio had the token of love he gave to her, he thinks differently... After being left heartbroken, he confronts Desdemona and eventually suffocates her to death. The innocent Emilia comes in to find her mistress murdered, she then reveals the truth that Iago was behind all the lies which is when Iago comes in and kills her. Othello then kills himself out of guilt. A soliloquy is like a monologue as it is a paragraph spoken on stage alone; however it is just a short speech. A Soliloquy is about what a character is doing or thinking or it could just be about what is happening in the play at that time. In 'Othello' Iago is the character that says most of the soliloquies, he talks about his plans to undermine Othello and how he can predict everyone's reactions.

Directly before Iago's first soliloquy, Roderigo and Iago talk about going to war in Cyprus and Iago manipulates Roderigo into doing what he wants by persuading him that Desdemona will tire of Othello eventually and she will then fall in love with Roderigo. He does this because he knows that Roderigo is in love with Desdemona; however he knows that Othello and Desdemona are happily in love and would never tire of each other. In Act 1, Scene 3, Iago's first soliloquy is about what he plans to do, he explains that by telling Othello lies he will get exactly what he wants. This is for Othello to be unhappy. He also explains that by doing this he will get Cassio's job therefore he will be killing two birds with one stone. In this soliloquy he mentions a rumor, 'twixt my sheets, /he's done my office.' by this he means that he thinks Othello has slept with Emilia but he doesn't know if it's true or not. This is the only line in the play that suggests a reason behind Iago's plans and why he hates Othello so much. However by using the word 'office' to refer to his wife, Emilia Shakespeare gives the audience the impression he doesn't care for her much. I also know this as he uses her later in the play to make his plans against Othello work out; he also kills her at the end of the play. Iago then goes onto say, 'I know not if't be true/yet I, for mere suspicion in that kind, / will do as if for surety.' Iago is saying, even though he doesn't know if it's true or not, he's going to get back at Othello anyway. Therefore he could just be using this as an excuse for his plans, as this would make the audience see him not as evil but as unhappy and wanting revenge which would make them sympathetic for him. However, as this seems like a cover for his for his evil plan, again it is clear that he doesn't really care about Emilia. Shakespeare gives Iago the line, 'He holds me well, the better shall

my purpose work upon him.' I think that Shakespeare does this to show that because Iago thinks very highly of himself Othello will too, and never suspect that he is telling him lies, and that he will always trust him. He also uses the word; 'purpose' which seems like he is trying to tell the audience, this is what he has to do, like it is his purpose to bring Othello down. Shakespeare also shows that Iago hates Othello by undermining him, for example Iago says, 'I hate the Moor.' By using the term, 'moor' this is being racist, however a Shakespearean audience would not have seen this as racism as it was not widely recognized in those times. However Iago knew that by saying this it would be an insult to Othello. He then goes on to say, 'Will be as tenderly led by the nose as asses are...' when he says this he is referring to Othello as a dumb animal, this is called Animal Imagery, by doing this a Shakespearean audience would see him as more of an animal and therefore this would lessen their respect for him. Iago is saying that because Othello is so dumb and trustworthy of Iago, he will do exactly what Iago wants him to. He will be easily tricked into thinking that Desdemona is having an affair. The last two lines of the soliloquy are, 'I have't. It is engendered. Hell and night / must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.' These two sentences stand out because they are a rhyming couplet unlike the rest of the soliloquy. The rhyming couplet, 'Night' and 'Light' could make you think of a number of different things, for example opposites, comparing the good characters to the bad characters. It could also be a representation of Othello and Desdemona referring to their skin color, emphasizing how different they are. All these things would make the audience think more deeply into how different some of the characters in the play are, for example Iago and

Othello or Desdemona and Emilia. The word 'engendered' means created and when Iago says this he is talking about his sneaky plan to bring Othello down. By saying this, the audience will think he has just thought of his plan at this point, however he had actually already come up with his plan. He also says the line, 'monstrous birth to the world's night.' first of all by using the word, monstrous it stands out because this is quite an angry word however he says this in a calm manner, however because of the type of word he uses it could lead the audience to think about how each of the characters that Iago is betraying may feel after Iago's plan has taken place. In Act 3, Scene 3 the most important part of the play takes part, and that is when Iago receives the handkerchief from Emilia who has stolen it from Desdemona. Without this Iago's plan would not work as Othello seeing the Handkerchief that he gave to Desdemona as a token of their love in Cassio's hand is what leads him to believe that she has been unfaithful. Iago's soliloquy from Act 3, Scene 3 is about what he plans to do now he has the handkerchief; he also mentions how important it is and that without it his malicious plan would not work. This particular soliloquy is also written as a poem, I know this because the beginning of each line has a capital letter, ' And Let Him find it.'

Shakespeare does this because it makes the soliloquy stand out from the rest of the play. This is probably one of the most important and effective soliloquy from the play as it tells you a lot about Iago's character. Iago's first line of the soliloquy is, 'I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin, / and let him find it.' In other words Iago is saying he is going to slyly place the handkerchief in Cassio's room so he will find it yet never know that it was Iago who placed it there. This is a vital part of Iago's plan because by

planting the handkerchief on Cassio, Othello will see that he has it and automatically think that Desdemona gave it to him, if he didn't do this then Othello would never believe that Desdemona has been having an affair. This wouldn't have a dramatic effect on the audience as they would already expect Iago to say this from the first soliloquy in Act, 1 Scene 3. Iago then goes on to say, 'Trifles light as air/ are to the jealous confirmations strong' which basically means that even though the handkerchief is a small insignificant object that would - normally - make no difference what so ever, if Iago is careful and he uses it at the right time. Everything will fall into place and his plan will work out perfectly. By, 'Jealous confirmations strong' he means that because Othello is slightly jealous to begin with, once he sees the handkerchief in Cassio's hand and is tricked in to think they're having an affair, he will be even more jealous. The next line of the soliloquy is, 'As proofs of holy writ:' Iago is saying that he is certain that the handkerchief will definitely do something, and he is using religion to back himself up. Shakespeare does this on purpose as a Shakespearean audience would immediately believe Iago, religion was an important thing in those days there for if Iago uses this to back up his plan, and they would also think it is important too. Shakespeare ends the soliloquy with the line, 'Burn Like mines of sulfur. I did say so.' this is simile, it is used to describe exactly how Othello will react to the constant lies he is being fed without realizing, he will start to believe everything Iago tells him. The way he says, 'I did say so.' makes him sound like he has a very high opinion of himself, almost like he is describing himself as god-like. I think he is also referring to what he said before, when he says that he hates Othello. Through out 'Othello'

Shakespeare wrote Iago's soliloquies about his devious plans to undermine Othello, to do this he used religious imagery which is when you say something about religion to symbolize something else. In Othello religious imagery is used when Iago talks about creating his plan, 'Hell and night' by saying hell he could be referring to the devil which makes me think of Iago as he is evil and devious. He also says in Act 3 Scene 3, 'I did say so' by saying this it is almost as if he is describing himself as god-like. Shakespeare used religious imagery because it has the potential to change a Shakespearean audience's mind about the story. It would attract them more than it would a modern audience. All through the play, soliloquies are used to let you know what is going on inside the character's mind. Iago's soliloquies help the audience understand Iago's character; it also helps them realize his motives for everything he does during the play. There are a few different reasons behind Iago's devious plans. We see this through the two soliloquies from Act 1 Scene 3 and Act 3 scene 1. Shakespeare uses a lot of dramatic irony in his plays through all the soliloquies which are spoken. The strongest piece of dramatic irony used in the play is that the audience know exactly what is happening, for example Desdemona is innocent and that it is Iago who is twisting things and telling lies. Whereas Othello has no idea, he thinks that Iago is trustworthy and that Desdemona is guilty of having an affair. Dramatic irony is exciting and it makes the audience feel like part of the story. Throughout the play, Shakespeare uses irony to add humor, suspense and tension. Overall soliloquies have a drastic impact on the play as not only do they explain what characters - mainly Iago - are thinking, but they also create an atmosphere in the audience. Soliloquies make the

audience guess what is going to happen next in the play, and because there are so many of them it also gets their attention. Another reason why soliloquies have a good impact on the play is because it makes it more interesting having just one person on stage talking to themselves or the audience instead of having two or more people having a conversation between themselves.