

# Othello notes essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Love for Des combined with insecurity, resulting from his permanent outsider status "black/As mine own face", makes him susceptible to Iago's manipulation. \* Pure, moral, loving at beginning, juxtaposing ferocity at end \* Truly in love with Des that is his downfall \* Overcome by grief when he is made aware of her innocence. Wants to die "'tis happiness to die". \* Kills himself for her, just as she died for him Iago \* Inability to comprehend love "it is merely a lust of the blood". Crude vulgarity, no respect for women "thou shalt enjoy her" (in prose to emphasise this lack of civility and high moral standard) Desdemona \* Loves Othello, her only downfall being her naivety of the 'monster' consuming her love \* Portrayed as an idealistic model of Elizabethan fidelity \* Dies for him by denying he killed her | \* Foreshadows Othello's downfall "when I love thee not/ Chaos is come again", whilst using the surrounding characters to establish his love for Desdemona.

Displayed in handkerchief, initially used by Shakespeare to represent Othello's love for Desdemona, before becoming perverted by Iago into a symbol of marital fidelity; providing the "ocular proof", in Othello's mind, of Desdemona's depravity. "Is of a constant, loving, noble nature" \* Shakespeare shows his deep emotion on being reunited with her at beginning "It gives me wonder great as my content/ To see you here before me" \* Foreshadowing "If it were now to die,/ 'Twere now to be most happy" \* "when I love thee not, / Chaos is come again"- syntax places 'chaos' on its own line to emphasise the foreshadowing \* Abbreviation and repetition emphasise affection and finality "Oh Desdemona! dead Desdemona! dead!" \* Third person emphasises his acute awareness of his changed morality at the hands of Iago's manipulation "That's he that was Othello.", "perplexed in

the extreme" \* Emphasised through juxtaposing alliteration " Kill... kiss" \*  
Speech falls into prose to represent lack of civility \* Recurring bestial  
imagery " making the beast with two backs", " an old black ram/Is tugging  
your white ewe" \* Dramatic irony emphasises the consequences of love and  
jealousy combined, " my noble Moor, made of no such baseness as jealous  
creatures are" \* Contrasting perspectives on marriage between Emilia and  
Desdemona " there be women do abuse their husbands/In such gross kind? "  
\* " Nobody- I myself. " | Jealousy | Othello \* Identifies himself as " one not  
easily jealous", Othello's epileptic fits provide physical evidence of his  
mental anguish " farewell tranquil mind". \* He can no bear the thought of  
losing his cherished wife, and allows his mind to be infiltrated with thoughts  
of her supposed reprehensible behaviour. Becomes consumed by jealousy \*  
Leads to descent into primal savagery and lack of civility \* The first instance  
that instils doubt in his mind is Brabantio's warning " She has deceived her  
father, and may thee" Iago \* Through his amoral characterisation,  
Shakespeare demonstrates the power the entanglement of love and jealousy  
hold over their victims \* Animosity towards Othello, appears to be the result  
of his suspicion that Othello " H'as done" his office, in coveting Emilia.  
His changing, unconvincing motives indicate that the true precursor for his  
actions is envy. Roderigo \* Jealousy spawns from his obsession with  
Desdemona \* Deeply jealous and spiteful of Othello for acquiring  
Desdemona's love \* Because of this obsession he allows Iago to manipulate  
him, falling victim to Iago's plot as he allows his jealousy to pervert his  
notion of morality \* This desperation eventually leads to his downfall as his  
attempt to kill Cassio ends in the loss of his own life. \* Emphasised by

Shakespeare's use of prose " I'll tear her to pieces! " to represent Othello's descent into primal savagery; juxtaposing the loving character previously established. \* Dramatic irony " Of one not easily jealous" \* Metaphor, personification of emotion " O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! / It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock/The meat it feeds on" \* Truncated irrational sentences " Handkerchief-confessions-handkerchief! and fast paced rhythm increases sense of savagery \* Foreshadowing what Othello is led to believe happens \* Characterisation allows Shakespeare to illuminate the unchanging intricacies of human nature- a timelessness allowing it to appeal to a contemporary audience \* As the play opens we are immediately introduced to Iago's hostility towards Othello " I follow him to serve my turn upon him. \* Emphasised through monosyllabic words " I hate the Moor", \* Evident in personification of the emotion as it being a " green-eyed monster" that is " begot upon itself", needing no provocation. \* " What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe/If he can carryt thus! " \* " I will incontinently drown myself. - a weak minded character to succinctly highlight the detrimental effects of jealousy entangled with lust/love| Power| Iago \* Most powerful character, achieved through his acute understanding of the human psyche and therefore his ability to manipulate the desires and fears of others \* Begins to lose control as Emilia pieces together his villainy, revealing anger and compulsive violent behaviour \* To a degree he regains his power by refusing to speak of his actions Othello \* Noble, powerful, respected general at beginning " brave Othello", loses power as he becomes ' consumed' by jealousy, it " doth mock the meat it feeds on"| \* " So will I turn her virtue into pitch,/ And out of her own goodness make the net that shall enmesh them all. " \* " Villianous whore!... filth, thou liest! " - irony \* " From this time forth I

never will speak word. - ironic as he has done all his damage with words \*

Emphasised by his speech falling into prose in times of primal savagery " I'll tear her to pieces", " Farewell tranquil mind"- epileptic fits provide physical evidenced of mental anguish| Honesty| Iago \* " As honest as I am" \* The other characters are naive to his deceit \* His blatant honesty with the audience contrasts the manipulation he provides to the other characters (although his first lie is not until he tells of Cassio speaking of D)Othello \*

Weak and naive, he believes Iago is honest yet not his beloved wife, Desdemona \* Only pure character, innocent and divine completely honest until her dying breath when she denies Othello killed her- her first lie| \*

Humour, dramatic irony \* Repetition of " Honest Iago". \* " My life upon her faith! - Honest Iago"- syntax places honest at the end of the line, dramatic irony and foreshadowing Othello's downfall \* " I am not what I am" \* " Were I the Moor, I wouldn't be Iago. " \* Through Iago, Shakespeare highlights Othello's moral weakness " The Moor is of a free and open nature/ That thinks men honest that but seem to be so" \* " Nobody- I myself. | Good Vs Evil | Iago \* Hates Othello, his reasons vary but it is mere hatred \* Iago is a Machiavellian manipulator, an enigmatic and malicious amoral character who is aware of his own villainy \* He contrasts Cassio's pure morality \* His dexterity in understanding the human mind allows him to manipulate the desires and fears of others; \* Iago poisons the hearts and minds of those around him with his wordplay and manipulation. Othello & Desdemona \*

Contrast between Othello's evil and Desdemona's divinity after he murders her| \* Emphasised through monosyllabic words " I hate the Moor. My cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason" \* " I am not what I am. " Truncated sentences raise mystery " I follow him to serve my turn upon him. \*

Continual juxtaposition of Iago's crude sexualisation of Des " she is/sport for love", with Cassio's kind devout opinion " She's a most exquisite lady. " \* Characterisation through which Shakespeare illuminates the central concerns and the unchanging intricacies of human nature- a timelessness allowing it to appeal to a contemporary audience. \* " My medicine works"- irony, ' medicine' cures illness but Iago's pestilence, his ' poison' has caused it (Othello's fits) \* This reflects his cunning plan revealed earlier in a soliloquy " I'll pour pestilence into his ear" \* Continual contrast " O, more the angel she, / And you the blacker devil! " - syntax places angel at the end of the line to further highlight and emphasise \* " O, she was heavenly true"- heaven and hell imagery|