

# Examine the components of iago's villainy

Literature



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Introduction Othello is usually regarded as the greatest tragedies among Shakespeare's tragedies (Shakespeare and Honigmann<sup>1</sup>). Iago has a unique place in the drama as a dramatic character placed on a pedestal of human incarnation of evil. The first glance at Iago's character speaks of pure evil, but as he progresses into play the villain comes out as amoral rather than immoral. Iago exhibits villainy tactics deeply embedded in his characterization. Iago's soliloquies award the audience with a distinct perspective into the episodes of the plot (Shakespeare and Honigmann 31). Throughout the play, the audience is compelled to sit still and flinch while they listen to Iago's detailed plan, then watch as he executes the sinister plans. In the first soliloquy, Iago jumps from one scheme to another; first, declaring his disgust for Moor, acknowledging Othello's trust, and then directing his spotlight on Cassio and his personality. The entire scheme starts when Cassio (described by Iago as "ignorant and ill-suited") is awarded the position that he wanted. In the second soliloquy, Iago continues with his sinister scheming as plots how Cassio's flirtatious personality could be employed to get back at Othello. Iago deceives Othello, without any solid proof, to believe that Emilia is unfaithful. Othello becomes entangled in Iago's deception to the extent that he does not listen to Desdemona when she denies the allegations (Shakespeare and Honigmann 42). Iago can be credited for his diabolical prowess that allows him to confuse the minds of other characters. To make matter worse, Iago embezzles funds belonging to his own friends without the smallest amount of guilt. In the entirety of the play, Iago succeeds to capitalize and turn all his friends, who have significant trust in him, against each other by infiltrating all their deepest concerns and ensnaring them into a jealousy web of hatred. There are numerous instances

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throughout the play that highlight clearly Iago's villainy; nevertheless, the intentions for his villainy become progressively more blurred to the audience as the play advances. Iago presents several diverse motives to the audience in the entirety of the play in his diverse soliloquies, as well as when talking to Roderigo, but fails to endorse these motives, and for a large part he does not submit to them again the rest of the play. In the fifth act, Iago argues that Cassio enjoys daily beauty that renders his life ugly he also infers that Cassio and Othello might be sexually involved with his own wife. Iago's villainous character can be linked to his intelligent character capable of triggering and enraging jealousy with ease. Iago is aware of every character's weakness and knows what to do to ignite the evil, resentment that exists within other characters such as Othello (Shakespeare and Honigmann 15). Indeed, Iago accomplishes his evil plot through the evilness in other characters and only do harm directly when he killed Emilia and Roderigo. Iago: A complex Villain In the entirety of the play Othello, each character at one instance or another depicted Iago as an honest man, but the audience viewed him as a pitiless and vicious liar who betrays one character to the next and condemns them into a jealous rage. In one of the acts, Othello remarks "A man he is of honesty and trust... I know Iago thy honesty and love..." (Shakespeare, Stanley, and Gary 884). This implies that Iago was, in fact, an honest person before the plot against Cassio and Othello and was not thoroughly a villain. Iago considered that his life was not progressing as he desired and considered that he was of low rank, and devoid of a promotion from Othello he might remain stuck at low status far beyond his expectations. To make matters worse, Iago's status totally relied on Othello whom he considered having the competency of an "ass" when it comes to making effective decisions. Iago is <https://assignbuster.com/examine-the-components-of-iagos-villainy/>

bitter that Cassio and Othello lead a better life than him given that Cassio is a lieutenant while Othello enjoys high authority with a beautiful wife.

Conclusion Iago can be regarded one of the most complex and unknown to the audience character in Shakespeare's Othello. Iago is depicted by every character as a trustworthy and honest person; however, towards the end of the first act the audience is sufficiently informed that Iago is quite the opposite. There is no doubt that Iago is a two-faced character who is kind and honest on the outside, but purely wicked and malignant on the inside. Iago is depicted as an evidently evil, sadistic, and intelligent person who succeeds in generating havoc for motives of seemingly villainy. Although, Iago can be considered to have been honest in his life, the honesty does not seem to get him anything that he desires. As a result, he attempts to live the life that he desires by settling of scores with Cassio and Othello who have curtailed him. As such, Iago is a villain as he confronts the audience as embittered, ruthless, sadistically repudiating the honesty and loyalty that never got him anywhere before. Since he considers that honesty is not getting him anywhere, he turns to its opposite, evil. Works Cited

Shakespeare, William and Honigmann Ernst. Othello: Third Series. London: Thomson Learning, 1997. Print. Shakespeare, William, Stanley Wells, and Gary Taylor. The Complete Works. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005. Print.