

# The motif of jealousy in othello, a play by william shakespeare

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With time, values change. Ideas and morals that had once been standard could be reformed to fit the current time. The time period in which Othello and O took place are both significantly different. Othello takes place in the Elizabethan era and O is centred around a high school in modern time. Shakespeare's play 'Othello' and Nelsons film 'O' both explore the changes of values overtime. Similar themes are explored in both the film and the play, however they have been conveyed in different situations and settings. Shakespeare uses poetic techniques in English literature and Nelson uses film techniques to portray the themes. One of the main themes depicted by both is jealousy. In Othello, jealousy is portrayed first by Iago and his urge for revenge on Othello for his high rank despite his colour. Comparably, in the film O, Hugo who is playing Iago, is jealous of Odin for his skills in basketball and the attention he receives. Another major issue that exists in both the modern and Elizabethan society is racism. In the play, Othello is subjected to verbal abuse and is called many words based on his skin colour. In O, racism is portrayed by symbolisms such as stereotypical expressions. The setting of the play Othello and the movie O maybe different in terms of values changing overtime, but the themes jealousy and racism that was explored by Shakespeare in Othello have remained the same.

Jealousy is one of the main themes in both the play and the movie. In the play, Iago is driven by jealousy to plot against Othello. He is jealous of the fact that Othello, a person of colour was considered a high ranking person in society. Then also when Othello rewarded Cassio the lieutenant over Iago. "One Michael Cassio, A Florentine, a fellow almost damned in a fair wife, that never set a squadron in the field...But he, sir, had the election (act1 scene1,

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line 21-29),” Here Iago admits that he hates Othello for passing him up for the promotion and giving it to someone who is less experienced than Iago in the battlefield. As the play goes on, the reason Iago despises Othello so much starts to become more clear. “ I hate the moor, And it is thought abroad that twixt my sheets, ‘ has done my office. I know not if’t be true (act1 scene3 line 329-333),” here Iago is saying that he hates Othello because there were rumours that Othello has slept with Emilia, Iago’s wife. Iago doesn’t know if it is true but still adds the rumour to his growing reasons of hate and jealousy. Throughout the play, Iago gets different characters to help him with his revenge, while Iago pretends to stay loyal to Othello.

In *O by Nelson*, the movie based on *Othello* by Shakespeare jealousy is portrayed by Hugo, the character playing Iago. Hugo is part of a basketball team along with Odin. The beginning scene is of the coach, who is also Hugo’s father, awarding Odin with the MVP award. While presenting the award, the coach says to Odin in his speech that he “ loves him like his own son.” The camera cuts to Hugo’s face and while everyone is clapping and seem to be cheerful, Hugo has an emotionless and angry face while clapping. In the next scene, everyone is celebrating at a party. They are all having fun and then the camera cuts to a dark corner where Roger and Hugo are talking, they are both planning on breaking Odin and Dessie up. Hugo convinces Roger to ring the Dean, who is also Dessie’s father, and make a rumour about Odin forcing himself on Dessie saying that “ someone stole your daughter.”

The second theme that O and Othello both portray is racism. In the play, Othello is called many different names including ' Moor' which refers to dark skinned people, ' African' and ' Negro.' " Even now, now, very now, an old black ram is tugging your white ewe...or else the devil will make a grandsire of you" Iago has the impression that black men have an animalistic behaviour. In this scene Iago explains to Brabantio that Othello, an older black man has eloped with his daughter Desdemona. Iago uses words that contrast, he uses black for Othello suggesting dark, gloomy and bad and for Desdemona he uses white suggesting purity and innocence. He also refers to Othello as a devil. It seems that blackness is associated with wrongdoings and negative connotations.

In O by Nelson Odin is associated with many negative symbolisms such as when the duke accused Odin of using drugs. And then later in the movies there is a black drug dealer, suggesting that most drug dealers are black. The colour black gives us the impression that it's filthy and tainted the same image drugs give. Also the rap songs that play in some scenes use insulting words again referring back to the colour black.

The Elizabethan Era was a long time ago but comparing themes such as jealousy and racism it is clear that not much has changed and these issues are embedded into society even now. In both the play and movie jealousy causes people to act recklessly and in both their urges for seeking revenge does not work out for them and they both suffer the consequences.