

Analyze the othello essay

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William Shakespeare's play Othello, written in 1603, is set in Venice and follows the 'valiant' general Othello who is manipulated by Iago into his own downfall; being the murder of his wife then suicide. The play explores some of the deepest characteristics of human experience, including moral decay, emotional suffering and strong moral acts. This is driven by the themes of jealousy, appearance versus reality, and honour. These and other elements consolidate together presenting a play with an enduring and deep value, enabling it to remain through time as it can resonate with many.

Good morning class. Act 3 scene 3 and act 5 scene 2 demonstrate these dark human characteristics that occur mainly to Othello; the tragic hero. Othello's morals quickly deteriorate soon after Iago plants a seed of jealousy in his mind, as he becomes so enraged with emotion that he can no longer make judgements of what is right and wrong. Othello, in act 3 scene 3 has the utmost respect for his wife: 'Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul but I do love thee; and when I love thee not, chaos is come again. Othello protesting his undying love for Desdemona foreshadows chaos to come when he no longer loves her. Dramatic irony here illustrates the crucial part in the play where Iago's plans begin in motion. Othello's language and tone drastically changes from here to act 5 scene 2: 'Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to my face? ' Structurally, calling Desdemona a whore to her face then professing jealousy of Desdemona's apparent affections for Cassio in the same sentence, demonstrates the impact of jealousy on Othello's morals.

Between these scenes, Othello has lost his respect for women, which, in both the Elizabethan period and now, highlights a lack in moral standards. The metaphor 'Green eyed monster' as Iago described of jealousy, is correct as it

eats away Othello's morals. As the universal theme of jealousy here is a main reason for the character of Othello decline morally; this enables jealousy to give an enduring value to the play, because it evokes feelings and reminds persons of what jealousy can do to the deepest of human characteristics.

Iago dominates the use of appearance versus reality as he pretends to be an honest friend while veritably being perfidious. In act 3 scene 3, Othello shares his perception of Iago: 'And for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty' which, contrasted to Iago saying 'The Moor already changes with my poison' demonstrates Iago's use appearance versus reality for treachery. Iago also manipulates the appearance of Desdemona, from being innocent to dishonest: 'We see nothing done, she may be honest yet' portrays how Iago uses irony to carefully place the idea of Desdemona's unfaithfulness in Othello's mind.

This works because Iago knows due to Othello's newlywed weakness, that he will question his wife's honesty. In act 5 scene 2, after Othello has realised the unjust murder of his innocent wife due to Iago's deceiving appearance, he exclaims: 'I'll kill myself for grief. O villainy, villainy! '. This quote depicts the result of appearance versus reality, which is deep emotional suffering.

Shakespeare has created an unreliable reality for the character of Othello so that the audience responds by feeling empathy and deep passions for the characters thus providing a more engaging and lasting play. Honour is what Othello considers is most important, and in his eyes, having without would make him what the prejudice characters of the 'white' Venetian society think of him; an animal. Occupation and personal life are uneasily

distinguishable for Othello which allows work friend Iago to intervene with his marriage.

As Iago lies of Desdemona's unfaithfulness, Othello sees this as demining his honour both personally and occupationally. After learning of this he says in act 3 scene 3 over dramatically with the use of repetition: ' Farewell tranquil mind! Farewell content! Farewell the big wars that makes ambition virtue! '. Everything that Othello has worked for could now be ruined because of his wife's unfaithfulness; so he fights to protect his honour by killing Desdemona: ' For naught did I in hate, but all in honour'.

After realising that his actions have caused dishonour, and that now, he is ironically the animal he tried to defend himself from, he does the only thing he thinks will avenge his wrong; to sacrifice himself to his honour. In act 5 scene 2 his last words are: ' No way but this, killing myself I die upon a kiss. ' Suicide for honour is the final and greatest moral act Othello has ever done, and even though suicide is thought wrong both today and in the Elizabethan era, the sacrifice seems a just retribution for killing someone so innocent.

The theme of honour provides this powerful attribute to the play that is so deep and fundamental to human nature that it yields engagement from responders from every time. The universal themes of jealousy, appearance versus reality and honour, portray throughout Shakespeare's tragedy Othello; powerful and fundamental human characteristics including moral deterioration, emotional suffering and strong moral acts. These attributes provide engagement and endurableness to the play, thus allowing it to reverberate with persons across time. Thank you.