

# Appearance vs. reality

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



Appearance vs. reality Iago: The theme of appearance vs. reality is apparent in the character of Iago as he is often described as being honest and having a trusting nature when in reality he is unfaithful and manipulative. Iago's unfaithful character is established from the very first scene in Othello as he explains using a loyal tone, " I follow him to serve my turn upon him. " Iago's two-faced character is further highlighted in the scene where he is having a conversation with Brabantio using hyperboles and symbolism to express his dishonesty, " Though I do hate him as I do hell's pains, Yet, for necessity of present life, I must show out a flag and sign of love which is indeed but sign. " Shakespeare uses Iago as a character to highlight that an individual may appear to be honest while in reality they are treacherous. Iago takes advantage of each character's personality traits to increase his own level of trust. A scene that reflects this is when he is having a conversation with Cassio to calm him down, " Reputation is an idle and most false imposition, oft got without merit and lost without deserving. " Iago then manipulates Othello, contradicting his own previous description of reputation, implying that reputation is most valuable using figurative language, " But he that filches from me my good name Robs me of that not enriches him but makes me poor indeed. " Shakespeare's effective use of Dramatic irony can be seen when Iago is repeatedly referred to as ' honest Iago' and also refers to himself as ' an honest man' to further his own motive and exploit other characters' trust. Eventually he tries to show that he is oblivious to Othello anger when in reality his manipulation is the cause of Othello's frustration, " Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon when it hath blown his ranks into the air...and is he angry? Something of moment then. I will go meet him. "

Therefore, we see that Iago tries to appeal to all the characters and thus become the character that everyone relies on. Othello: The main character, Othello, although appearing to be noble and honourable, effectively conveys this main key idea throughout the play. Othello's paradoxical response to Lodovico when he how to describe yourself, highlights this key idea and raises questions on his character, " An honourable murderer, if you will; for naught did I in hate, but all in honour. " Here, Othello tries to appear a noble man to Lodovico as he justifies his actions by saying that he killed Desdemona to save his reputation. However in reality, a large part of his motive was to obtain revenge on Desdemona by making her suffer for her actions. Othello's change in personality is immediately noticed by others, particularly Desdemona as she points out, " My lord is not my lord, nor should I know him were he in favour as in humor altered. " Therefore, we see that a noble and gentle character like Othello reflects this key idea of appearance vs. reality to a certain extent. The Outsider Othello: Othello being an outsider played a major role in others perceptions of him. Othello was considered a ' Moor', one who comes from Africa, and this made it much harder for him to be accepted by the people around him. Throughout the play, Othello is often described derogatorily by many characters because of the fact that his skin is black. A scene that effectively shows this is the imagery created by Iago to warn Brabantio of her daughter and Othello, " You'll have your daughter covered by a Barbary horse. " The term ' barbary horse' is negatively used to describe Othello and accentuates his outsider status. Brabantio in response is also shocked at the fact that his daughter would run off to marry ' a black ram' and uses a rhetorical question to

express this, " She, in spite of nature of years, of country, credit, everything, to fall in love with what she feared to look on? It is a judgement maimed and most imperfect. " He then rather accuses Othello of using some kind of witchcraft and this reinforces that Othello being an outsider deeply affects others opinions of him. Shakespeare deliberately incorporates and highlights this key theme in the main character Othello to indicate how hard it is for an outsider to gain acceptance. Othello tries to get rid of the outsider's persona by gaining respect and honour but however the ridiculing name ' Moor' haunts him throughout the entire play. In fact, Othello himself declares his strong and noble character from the very first act, " My parts, my title, and my perfect soul shall manifest me rightly. " Othello is not the only one that believes this, other characters also reinforce this sentiment, even Iago, who hates him, shows his paradoxical view of Othello " The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not, is of a constant, loving and noble nature" and further describes as having " free and open nature. " Therefore, the only way in which others can disrespect him is by exploiting his outsider status. Emilia expresses her anger using metaphors reflecting his ' outsider' status when she realises that her mistress had been murdered by Othello, " O, the more angel she, and you the blacker devil! " Othello is well aware of his ' outsidersness' and we see that when he describes how he wooed Desdemona, " Rude am I in my speech, and little blessed with the soft phrase of peace. " However, Iago takes advantage of Othello's sensitivity on this issue and therefore manipulates him by addressing his insecurities, " Not to affect many propos'd matches Of her own clime, complexion, and degree, Whereto we see in all things nature tends... Foul disproportions, thoughts

unnatural. " Therefore through Othello's struggle Shakespeare emphasises the extent of difficulties faced by an outsider. Jealousy Iago: Shakespeare conveys this theme of Jealousy to emphasise the extent to which individuals are willing to go towards. Iago displays jealousy through the very beginning of the play. At first, Iago is jealous of Cassio being promoted to lieutenant and emphasises that he wasn't worthy of the position using a rhetorical question, " For ' Certes', says he, ' I have already chosen my officer.' And what was he? " However, from his soliloquy from act 1 scene 3 we see that his jealousy also gets directed at Othello as he believes that he had slept with his wife, " it is thought abroad that ' twixt my sheets He's done my office. " This sense of insecurity and feelings of jealousy urge him to commit acts of revenge. As he becomes fixed on the idea of taking revenge Iago discloses in a soliloquy that he will not be fulfilled " Till I am evened with him, wife for wife; or failing so, yet that I put the Moor at least into a jealousy so strong that judgement cannot cure. " Therefore, through Iago's reaction to jealousy, Shakespeare successfully criticises that jealousy causes an individual to commit immoral acts. Othello: Shakespeare deliberately illustrates this theme of jealousy through the main character Othello to highlight the power it can hold over an individual. Throughout the play, Jealousy is often metaphorically described as the ' green-eyed monster'. Through Iago dropping hints about Cassio and Desdemona, jealousy overtakes Othello's mind. The jealousy Othello experiences turn him insane with rage, and thus he loses his ability to reason. As Iago says without much conviction, " Why then, I think Cassio's an honest man" and Othello quickly jumps to a conclusion, " Nay, yet there's more in this. " However Othello

continually denies his jealousy, but it is apparent that he is losing his mind through the thought of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. Othello speaks to Iago in a confident tone saying, " No, Iago, I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove; and on the proof, there is no more but this: Away at once with love or jealousy! " but by the end of the scene Othello demonstrates his grief through a rhetorical question, " Why did I marry? " and through a metaphorical imagery, " I'll tear her all to pieces! " The fact that Othello has started to believe that his wife is disloyal to him with only Iago's insinuations proves that he is prone to jealousy. Othello's change in behaviour is immediately noticed by characters around him, " Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate call all-in-all sufficient? " and Desdemona also mentions, " Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind. " Othello experiences jealousy so strong that he delves into a fit of epilepsy. This epilepsy fit is proof that Othello is now consumed with jealousy and from henceforth on cannot be convinced that Desdemona is faithful. Hence, through Othello's actions, Shakespeare exemplifies that jealousy has the power to control an individual. Shakespeare explores various themes through the play Othello using various characters. The theme of appearance vs. reality is noticeable all throughout the play but mostly noticeable in the character of Iago but also in the main character Othello to a certain extent. The theme of jealousy is also another major theme as it is lurked with many characters and greatly influenced the plot.