

How does iago
manage to corrupt
othello



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Othello is one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, involving the manipulating Iago and the virtuous Desdemona. Iago, who is a central figure in this play, uses different techniques to corrupt the protagonist of the play, Othello. While it is clear that Iago corrupts Othello's virtue and says that he will 'turn the virtue into pitch and out of her goodness make the net that that will enmesh them all.' the matter of Othello and Iago, it cannot fairly be maintained that Iago was the sole cause of the calamities that befell Othello.

In general it must be said that there is no Shakespearean tragedy in which the responsibility for the deed of the hero and the subsequent tragedy can be shifted from him to another person of the play. The first technique that Iago uses to corrupt Othello is by manipulating Othello's virtue. The characters in Othello are extremely credulous, other than Iago who even though he is given the epithet 'Honest Iago' is far from honest. This relates back to the idea of a tragic hero. Aristotle believed that a tragedy is a story that inspires pity and fortune.

The tragic hero must not be perfect or vicious, but 'the man in between these extremes'. In Shakespeare's tragedies there is a characteristic in each hero that precipitates his disaster- something the hero cannot control, so that the steps toward tragedy seem inevitable in his character. In Othello, it is made evident that Othello's susceptibility to suggestion and his strong trust in people that are his tragic weaknesses. His credulousness is an unfortunate side effect; even Iago remarks that Othello is 'easily led by the nose'. Othello's credulousness is also a quality of trust in other people; Iago manipulated his good characteristic by taking advantage of it and making it negative. Othello is not used to deceit; he is incredibly receptive to

everything iago tells him. He trusts him so much this his character slowly begins to change and he ' forgets' his love for Desdemona. Loses his articulation , eloquence, frankness ; becomes erratic, confused jealous ; previously said that jealousy and love cannot co-exist.

Shows how iago has used his VIRTUE against them ; he is entangled in the net that iago has subtly spun. Feeds on the images and ideas that iago plants in his mind subconsciously. Lets iago get to him because he is so open to other people. Similar to Macbeth because Lady Macbeth says that he is ' too full of the milk of human kindness...' -after she says this we see an emotional change in Macbeth ; his good characteristic became his flaw. He is more aware of it than Othello ; he says ' O errr, vaulting ambition. He lets the witches prophesies fester in his head and take control of him.

Suggestions from the witches become reality and he goes crazy...

REPPRESSED FEELING IS MANIFESTED IN a distorted way. In that scene, it becomes apparent how iago is able to use other people's thoughts and suspicions against themselves. iago takes advantage of other people's trust, especially the trust Othello assigns him with. This irony is simply being overlooked or ignored by other characters because of iago's good reputation.

iago would be transparent if his reputation was different. It's not so much his behaviour which leads characters into wrong directions, it has a lot to do with what others want to see or believe. iago is smart enough to use other people's actual weaknesses and to let them draw wrong conclusions themselves. For the knowing audience, iago sometimes seems to be brazenly honest with others while his utterances are simply being

misunderstood because of his good reputation, that is again other people's views on him.

In his soliloquies that take the audience into confidence, Iago reveals himself as being absolutely self-reflective without regret, sometimes cynical, and maybe even nihilistic. It might be a hint of a fundamental disappointment in the past, maybe in the sense of love. Thus, his own wife Emilia is the one who eventually exposes him as what he really is. Focussing on jealousy as a key element of the play Othello, Iago seems to be the only one who does not get lost (anymore?) in emotional rage, but who is able to intellectually control the petty jealousy of others.