

Othello college essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Jealousy is an overwhelming, intense and all consuming emotion which can sometimes be irrational.

It can lead to the manipulation of the person, and take the form of an obsession and can be very powerful. In Shakespeare's Othello, jealousy and manipulation can be presented in various forms which seem to be having devastating effects on the individual as a whole. It can also be portrayed as something that is uncontrollable and inevitable. In Othello it is evident that the Elizabethan tragedy displays the fall of the ' noble leader' who has been deeply affected and consumed by the effects of jealousy, destruction and manipulation. At the beginning of Act 3 Scene 3, Iago and Othello enter with Cassio, Emilia and Desdemona discussing Cassio's poor behaviour the night before, with Desdemona reassuring that she will make sure Othello will reinstate his position as lieutenant.

Iago enters and quickly remarks ' Ha! I like that not' (Act III Scene III line 34) . This language presented by Iago represents the start of his manipulation of Othello, as he suggests he doesn't like what he is seeing. This then shows the first step of Othello's questionable state, with repetition of Othello asking ' Was that not Cassio parted from my wife? ' (Act III Scene III line 37). This suggests Othello's growing doubts of Cassio.

The next stage displays Desdemona's pleading to Othello, to talk about Cassio's situation and for him to be given another chance ' Why, then, tomorrow night, or Tuesday morn, on Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn...In faith, he's penitent' (Act III Scene III line 60-64) Desdemona unawareness that her pleading will fall back on her as Iago will use this as a

hint of her love affair with Cassio. Her on-going appeal starts to annoy Othello.

When Desdemona leaves the stage, Othello comments on how much Desdemona means to him ' But I do love thee; and when I love thee not, Chaos is come again' such language implies he needs to reassure himself to acknowledge his love for Desdemona. Once Iago is alone with Othello, Iago begins his suggestions of an affair between Cassio and Desdemona, by reminding him about Cassio knowing of their love. This triggers a response of uncertainty in Othello. ' Why dost thou ask? But for a satisfaction of my thought; No further harm. Why of thy thought, Iago? '(Act III Scene III line 95-98) Such language implies that Othello knows Iago is withholding information and it isn't simply a ' just wondering' thought, there's more to it.

Othello becomes slight irritated by having to repeat questions to Iago. Othello then asks Iago whether he believes Cassio is honest, and Iago is cunningly reluctant to answer. This plants suspicious doubts in Othello's mind thoughts of adultery, cuckoldry and two-facedness. Othello then orders Iago to speak his mind, as he clearly has something to say but isn't.

' Think, my lord! By heaven, he echoes me, As if there were some monster in his thought too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something. I heard thee say even now thou like'st not that' (Act III Scene III line 107-110). Shakespeare's language creates intense dramatic irony as this is the true description of Iago.

The metaphor ' monster' ironically describes Iago and what he is planning to do to Othello. Othello begins to become very impatient and orders Iago to

speaking the truth of what he knows, as something is up. Iago makes a very ironic statement about men ' Men should be what they seem; or those that be not, would they might seem none! '(Act III Scene III line 127-128) there is an ironic reference to Act I Scene I where Iago bitterly comments ' I am not what I am' (Act I scene I line 66). Iago makes a lot of ironic comments which portray his untruthful and dishonest character. The structure of Act 3 Scene 3 is a very important part of the play as it marks a turning point and the decline of Othello, which is very controlled by Iago.

Iago admits he is naturally a jealous person ' As I confess it is my nature's plague to spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy shapes faults that are not' He is jealous of Othello's power, which changes as Iago degrades Othello and gets power over him - this represents a role reversal between the two. At this stage the play is occurring at a fast pace as Othello demands answers and it keeps the audience on their feet. Iago warns Othello of becoming jealous and uses the famous saying ' it is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on' the imagery created makes jealousy look like a destructive and terrifying emotion. There is a strong sense of devouring in these images, which fit in with Iago's description of Othello as being ' eaten up with passion'. These lines suggest the exact quality of Othello's enormous jealousy; as he has become convinced his wife is unfaithful.

The metaphor ' green-eyed monster' explores what jealousy is and that is literally uncontrollable to the person experiencing it. It also emphasises the effects it has on the person; almost making fun of its victim. The audience soon become aware of Othello's cracks; he is starting to become very doubtful. ' Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy, to follow still the changes

of the moon with fresh suspicions? ' (Act III Scene III line 179-181) Othello's state of mind is starting to decline, Iago's manipulation is working. Othello then seems to have to remind himself of how Desdemona chose him ' for she had eyes and chose me' Othello reminds himself of how sweet Desdemona was when she chose him out of everyone else she could have had. Iago then suggests that Othello observe his wife closely when she is with Cassio.

' I speak not yet of proof. Look at your wife, observe her well with Cassio; wear your eyes thus: not jealous, nor secure' (Act III Scene III line 198-200) Iago reveals he's plan. He's saying that Desdemona is capable of deception. However Iago cleverly reminds Othello not to be jealous but also not secure either. This is impossible for anyone to do, as he will be eager for something to happen between them both.

Othello's mind and state has started to deteriorate and the audience can see that this is not the original Othello. Othello continues to become uneasy as Iago keeps on with his constant manipulation. Iago makes Othello think about Desdemona's faithfulness as he mentions ' she did deceive her father, marrying you' suggesting that if she can deceive her father, then she can you. This makes Othello almost certain that Desdemona is having a love affair. The jealousy Othello feels, makes the hero act monstrously, and different image to we originally had of Othello.

Iago further manipulates Othello's jealousy with ' I see this hath a little dashed your spirits' (Act III Scene III line 216) Iago rubs in the fact that his tricks have worked on Othello, by making it sound like it's no big deal, but he knows that Othello has been deeply affected by these accusations of

Desdemona who is the love of his life. Later on in the play, Iago advises Othello to watch how Desdemona pleads for Cassio's reinstatement. 'note if your lady strain his entertainment with any strong or vehement importunity - much will be seen in that' (Act III Scene III line 252-254) This pleading will be very innocent of Desdemona but Othello will now see this as pleading for her lover. In Othello's soliloquy, we see him in a very fragile state. The first line 'this fellow's of exceeding honesty' is ironic as Iago is manipulating him and being two faced just like the two-faced Janus. He doubts aspects of his appearance and age which could be a reason why Desdemona would stray; he even curses marriage as a bad thing 'O curse of marriage' which implies his disbelief in his marriage now.

He says some powerful lines which reflect his state of mind 'I had rather be a toad and live upon the vapour of a dungeon than keep a corner in the thing I love for other's uses' These lines explore that he would rather be a 'toad' than to love someone that is not fully his. In conclusion, Iago has thoroughly thought out his manipulation of Othello. He cleverly tricks him into thinking Desdemona is having an affair. He sets Othello into different kind of emotions including uncertainty, insecurity and the most destructive one is jealousy. Othello seems to crack and become exceedingly jealous as Iago deliberately messes with his head and causes him to become doubtful of Desdemona's faithfulness. The play follows the traditional five act Shakespearian play, and each builds up in the decline of Othello.

Overall, Othello is a completely different man at the end of Act 3, as Iago has torn him apart and making him a much more jealous and suspicious character, which is ironic as Iago was originally the jealously one, now the

role reversal between them both shows how tricks on the mind can dominate a person.