

Characters:

Othello

Othello, as the play's protagonist and tragic hero is a general in the army of Venice. He is a Moor, who has risen to high military prestige in Venice, after defeating the Turks and other enemies in battle. He is a respected general, but less respected as a person, because of his dark skin and foreign roots. He falls in love with, and marries, the delicate Desdemona, though he is middle-aged, and she is still young. Othello is bold, a good warrior, and a decent person overall; however, he is undone by jealousy and pride, his two main failings. Although Othello is very eloquent, he believes his manners and words are both rough. He falls victim to Iago's chicanery, becomes insanely jealous of Cassio and Desdemona's supposed relationship, and ultimately smothers his wife to death.

Othello is a romantic character who has a lot good qualities and virtues, but in many cases his virtues are "double-edged". One of these is his open and trusting nature. Othello believes that others are honest and sincere until he has proof that they're not. But it also leaves him susceptible to Iago's scheming.

Othello is also naive, particularly about women. Having spent most of his life in army camps, Othello knows little of women and love. This naivete has charm in the first act, where the strong and powerful general admits to being a shy and cautious lover. In the third act, however, Othello's inexperience allows Iago to convince him that he doesn't understand Venetian women, that they are known for cheating on their husband. The last of these "double-edged" virtues is Othello's powerful poetic imagination. The stories he weaves for Desdemona are rich and impressive. Yet this rich imagination has a handicap: it makes Othello vulnerable to Iago's stories of Desdemona's infidelities. Othello's imagination runs wild with Iago's invented details and "proofs".

In Venice he is seen as a professional soldier, a fine and courageous one, but still a hired general. By placing him closer to the common man, Shakespeare makes Othello easier to identify with, more sympathetic. His story could be our story, and his faults our faults.

The most common view of Othello's "tragic flaw" is that he's a jealous person who allows jealousy to prevail over good sense. He is in such pain over what he has done that he kills himself, dying as a true tragic hero.

At the end, always remember that Othello is a stranger. Despite his strength and pride, he is never completely at home, and is constantly aware that others consider him a foreigner.

Desdemona

She's Othello's wife, a young Venetian woman of high birth and good breeding. Desdemona is almost overly virtuous, which causes her to feel that she must defend Cassio, and speak in a public sphere when necessary. She is stronger than Othello believes her to be, and is not the private, withdrawn, meek woman he would ideally like her to be. Her portrait is that of a lovely, courageous, gentle woman, deeply in love with her husband. Desdemona is the innocent victim in Iago's plan of destruction. Desdemona always loved Othello, remained faithful, and died loyal to her true love.

If Iago represents evil in the world, Desdemona may represent the good that evil often destroys. She is guilty only of loving her husband too much. She has no defense against his terrible accusations because she is young and inexperienced. There's been no room in her cloistered world for the kind of thoughts Othello thinks she is hiding. She doesn't even believe that there are women who are unfaithful to their husbands!

If you look at what other characters say about Desdemona, you'll find that everyone praises her innocence, her goodness, her generosity. She risks her husband's anger because she promised Cassio she would help him. Desdemona inspires such devotion in Emilia that she is prepared to die for her. Even on her deathbed, she won't betray her husband. Rather than have him accused of the murder, she takes responsibility for it.

Shakespeare is careful to give her a few minor flaws, her treatment of Brabantio, her stubborn persistence about Cassio, her lie about the handkerchief, to make her realistic. But our overall impression of her is highly favorable; it's her very innocence that makes her a victim of circumstance.

Iago

The villain of the play, Iago is Othello's sword-bearer. He has been passed over for the position of Lieutenant, and this draws out his evil nature. Iago's ego, wounded by the denial of promotion, demands satisfaction, and his schemes and manipulations allow him to reestablish his sense of power and dominance over others. Iago orchestrates Othello's downfall out of malice and revenge, and it is worse because Iago coats his poisonous words in the appearance of truth. Iago is only concerned about himself and his position, and will sacrifice anyone to save himself and his interests. This is shown when he kills his own wife when it is discovered that he has been treacherous. Iago is left alive, yet injured, as the play concludes, for death is too easy an exit for such a cruel man.

Iago is a fascinating, complex character who can't be analyzed in simple terms. Like many people you meet, he can be mysterious and baffling. Just when you think you understand him he does or says something completely mystifying. Shakespeare was obviously fascinated by the man; he gave Iago more lines than any other character in his work, more than Hamlet, King Lear, or Othello.

Some possibilities that might explain Iago's behavior are as follows: he might be an evil character of Elizabethan drama, so he simply loves to see people suffer. He is also motivated by jealousy. In the play he expresses openly his jealousy of Cassio and Othello. He is jealous of Cassio's job and of Othello's success as a soldier and with Desdemona. He is seeking revenge. The rumors that Othello has slept with Emilia and the possibility that Cassio has also slept with her hurt Iago's pride and make him want to see both men ruined. The reasons he offers throughout the play are often contradictory, but his motives may overlap. He snatches at whatever excuse he can to justify his horrible behavior.

Iago does have qualities on which everyone can agree, for instance he is a wonderful actor. For years, he has fooled everyone into thinking he's honest. He is as amoral as possible even when Desdemona becomes a victim of the plot, Iago has no pangs of conscience, and he goes to his death without a word of regret! He is highly intelligent. Iago plots his actions knowing how everyone will respond. His insight into the behavior of others is practically perfect. He is an egotist. His opinion of everyone except himself is very low. He laugh at Othello's trusting nature, thinks Roderigo is a gullible fool, treats Emilia as a shrew, and scorns Cassio's honest virtues. The only person he respect is himself, and everything he does in the play is for the satisfaction of his own ego. He is a cynic. He shows contempt for all conventional standards of decency. He is extremely proud. Othello's appointment of Cassio makes him furious. Iago sees anything that threatens his self-esteem as personal insult and must be avenged. He isn't angered by the thought of Othello in bed with Emilia because he loves her, but because another man has gotten the best of him!

Villains in literature are always a source of scary fun. Shakespeare, fortunately, has created in Iago more than just a villain. Iago is complex character who combines enormous intelligence with an impulse to see others suffer. We may get a vicarious thrill as we watch him operate, but fell a great sense of relief when justice is finally served.

Cassio

Cassio is Othello's new lieutenant, thus the object of Iago's hatred. He has little field experience and is an attractive, likeable young man. It can be said that he's the opposite of Othello in many respects, which is why Othello admires him. Othello is led to believe that he has had an affair with Desdemona, though Cassio has only honorable intentions toward Desdemona.

Cassio has many youthful faults: he's rash, impatient, and not very serious about his relationship with Bianca. He also can't handle his liquor. Yet the offenses Iago suspects him of, sleeping with Emilia, having an affair with Desdemona, are all in Iago's mind.

The innocent Cassio almost becomes a victim of Iago's treachery. At the end of the play, however, he is awarded control of Cyprus, and we believe that the island is in good hand his survival tells us that order and decency will survive, despite the price that has been paid.

Themes:

Destructive nature of jealousy

All the way through the play various forms of jealousy are displayed by different characters. Othello's suspicions regarding Desdemona's fidelity provoke him to rage and violence, and the collapse of his pride and nobility is swift. In fact, jealousy is the tool that Iago uses to arouse Othello's passions.

Shakespeare's analysis of the nature of jealousy is not limited only to the character of Othello, however. Both Roderigo and Bianca are torn by jealousy: he desires Desdemona and she yearns for Cassio. More importantly, Iago displays numerous symptoms of jealousy. His bitterness at being passed over for promotion and his suspicions that his wife has had an affair with Othello prompt his desire for revenge and give rise to his malicious schemes that all derive from jealousy. Only Desdemona and Cassio, the true innocents of the story, seem beyond its clutches. Shakespeare used the theme in other plays, but nowhere else is it portrayed as quite the "green-eyed" monster it is in this play.

After all it can be said that the predominant impression created by the play is that of the terrible destructiveness of jealousy.

Love versus military business

One of the main themes of the play is to say that there are incompatibilities between love and military heroism. Before and above all else, Othello is a soldier. From the earliest moments in the play, his career affects his married life. Soon after getting married, Othello is ordered to Cyprus and his wife, Desdemona, accompanies him. She is, indeed, Othello's "fair warrior", and he is happiest when he has her by his side in the midst of military conflict or business. That is to say, Othello is to reconcile love part of his life with military business. In one hand, the military business and heroism provide Othello with a means to gain acceptance in Venetian society. On the other hand, the Venetians are generally fearful of the prospect of Othello's social entrance into white society through his marriage to Desdemona, all Venetians respect and honor him as a soldier not as Desdemona's headband. It means that there are marked differences between love and military business.

Othello predicates his success in love on his success as a soldier, wooing Desdemona with tales of his military travels and battles. Once the Turks are drowned, Othello is left without anything to do. No longer having a means of proving his manhood or honor in a public setting such as the court or the battlefield, Othello begins to feel uneasy with his footing in a private setting, the bedroom. Iago capitalizes on this uneasiness. Iago also takes care to mention that Cassio, whom Othello believes to be his competitor, saw him in his emasculating trance.

Desperate to cling to the security of his former identity as a soldier while his current identity as a lover crumbles, Othello begins to confuse the one with the other. Such confusion destroys them eventually.

Appearance versus reality

It's difficult to distinguish good from evil by judging only the appearance. Many of Shakespeare's most evil characters were thought by others in the play to be sincere and truthful. In Othello, this theme has its most potent and dramatic realization in the character of Iago.

Iago fools everyone in the play into believing he's honest so that he is called "honest" by almost everyone. No one even suspects him of treachery, until the final act when Roderigo first realizes how badly he's been fooled. In short, Iago proves that evil intentions can be masked behind a façade of honesty.

The theme emerges in other characters: Brabantio is deceived by Desdemona's reaction to Othello, assuming she fears him when she truly loves the Moor. Othello suspects that Desdemona is unfaithful, despite her innocent looks. Othello also feels he's being deceived by Cassio, whom he trusts and who appears loyal. Emilia's exterior suggests salty indifference, but she turns against her husband and dies in defence of Desdemona. Even Bianca, who is suspected of dishonesty, is ultimately seen as a sincere and caring woman. And Othello, considered a barbarian by many in the play, is gentle and noble until driven to near-madness by the cruel manipulations of his most trusted "friend".

The inability to judge true from false is a human dilemma that we have all faced. In Othello's case, the dilemma proves fatal. Shakespeare dramatizes the problem by showing the consequences of trusting someone whose mask of honesty is perfect, almost to the very last.

Society's treatment of the outsider

Throughout this play, all the characters, Othello most of all, are acutely aware that Othello is an outsider. This is manifested, of course, in his dark skin, but it runs far deeper. Everyone has known the feelings of being alienated from a group, whether it's as the new kid at school, as a member of an ethnic or religious minority, or as someone who holds an unpopular opinion.

Shakespeare points this problem in Othello by making his hero an outsider, one who doesn't quite belong in the society in which he lives. From the very beginning, when he's held in suspicion by a man who accuses him of seducing his daughter with mysterious charms, Othello stands apart from everyone else.

As a man of another race and from another country, much of the conflict he faces is due to the reigning opinion that he doesn't quite belong.

Othello's sensitivity to the issue becomes clear when Iago uses it as proof that Desdemona couldn't be faithful to a man so foreign, such a match is "unnatural," he says. Othello's self-confidence, once so strong, is easily eroded by Iago's ability to convince him that he's inferior to the men of Venice.

Shakespeare dramatizes through Othello the tragedy of a man whose insecurities about his background, fed by public opinion, weakens his defenses and allows his worst instincts to take over.

The danger of isolation

The action of Othello moves from the metropolis of Venice to the island of Cyprus. Protected by military fortifications as well as by the forces of nature, Cyprus faces little threat from external forces. Once Othello, Iago, Desdemona, Emilia, and Roderigo have come to Cyprus, they have nothing to do but prey upon one another. Isolation enables many of the play's most important effects: Iago frequently speaks in soliloquies; Othello stands apart while Iago talks with Cassio in Act IV, scene i, and is left alone onstage with the bodies of Emilia and Desdemona for a few moments in Act V, scene ii; Roderigo seems attached to no one in the play except Iago. And, most prominently, Othello is visibly isolated from the other characters by his physical stature and the color of his skin. Iago is an expert at manipulating the distance between characters, isolating his victims so that they fall prey to their own obsessions. At the same time, Iago, of necessity always standing apart, falls prey to his own obsession with revenge. The characters cannot be islands, the play seems to say: self-isolation as an act of self-preservation leads ultimately to self-destruction. Such self-isolation leads to the deaths of Roderigo, Iago, Othello, and even Emilia.

- c. Brabantio and Roderigo, d. Brabantio and Othello
- 12- The repeated use of "honest" as a description of Iago is an example of
- a. A pathetic fallacy, b. irony,
c. poetic license, d. paradox
- 13- Iago predicated to Roderigo that Desdemona would leave Othello because
- a. Venetian women could not be trusted
b. she would want a younger man
c. of pressure from her father
d. all of the above
- 14- In his soliloquies, Iago stated that his wife, Emilia, had committed adultery with
- a. Cassio, b. Othello, c. Cassio and Othello, d. Roderigo
- 15- The Iago motif of villainy is seen in the following line:
- a. "In following him, I follow but myself."
b. "Traitors ensteep'd to to clog the guiltless keel."
c. "Knavery's plain face is never seen till us'd"
d. "This accident is not unlike my dream"
- 16- "The forked plague" is a reference to
- a. Iago's paranoia, b. cuckoldry,
c. Othello's gullibility, d. Savagery
- 17- What song does Desdemona sing on the night she dies?
- a. "Willow, willow" b. "Silent Night"
c. "Greensleeves" d. a church hymn
- 18- Who becomes leader of the Venetians in Cyprus at the end of the play?
- a. Montano, b. Cassio, c. Lodovico, d. Gratiano
- 19- How does Othello kill Desdemona?
- a. smothers her, b. poisons her, c. drowns her, d. stabs her
- 20- Which of the following animal epithets is not applied to Othello during the play?
- a. Ram, b. Horse, c. Serpent, d. Ass
- 21- What is "the bease with two backs"?
- a. A mutant horse, b. Othello,
c. Two people having sex, d. Conjoined twins
- 22- Who made the handkerchief that Othello inherited from his mother?
- a. Barbary, b. Othello's mother,
c. Othello's former lover, d. A sibyl, or female prophet

Q. Describe the development of Othello's jealousy as it relates to the structure of the play.

Answer

Othello centers around the rising jealousy which Othello feels as the play progresses. The entire plot turns on the advances and pauses in this cancerous jealousy. In act II, a chance meeting between Cassio and Desdemona reinforces Iago's idea of developing a suspicion of the two in the mind of Othello. Throughout Act III, Iago fans the fires of Othello's incipient jealousy and the Moor becomes more and more fearful that there really is a romance between his wife and Cassio. When Iago arranges to secure the handkerchief and have Cassio's Bianca seen with it, the play reaches a major turning point. From the moment he sees the handkerchief, Othello is convinced of his wife's guilt. Othello is strengthened even further in his suspicion when (also in Act IV) news is brought – by Lodovico – that Cassio is to replace Othello as commander in Cyprus. Othello's blind jealousy leads him to kill Desdemona, only to discover her innocence too late. In the end, therefore, he kills himself the play thus moves as Othello's jealousy dictates.

Iago's motivation for provoking Othello is provided very early in the play when Cassio rather than Iago wins Othello's favor. This may be said to be the exciting action. The rising action which follows conduces to the strengthening of Othello's doubts and feelings of jealousy. The climax arrives when Othello sees the handkerchief which he had given to Desdemona now in the hands of Cassio's mistress Bianca. The falling action then follows as Othello rapidly grows more despondent, and events sweep up swiftly to his smothering of Desdemona (at Iago's suggestion) and to his own suicide upon realizing her innocence. The play, in other words, depicts the planting of the seeds of jealousy, the growing of jealous feelings, and the culmination of those feelings in the various murders in the end. There is exposition, conflict, and catastrophe, for the structure is completely dependent upon the jealousy of Othello, which in its growth and horror leads to disaster. The plot explains the logic of the developing jealousy, while the structure of the play demonstrates it.

Q. Discuss the development of Othello as a character. Does he ever become "complicated"? Does he begin and end by thinking in iron-clad "absolutes"

Answer

Othello changes but does not develop, at least not until the very end of the play, when he feels profoundly repentant over his unjustified deed and displays a sincere and tender love for his murdered wife. This is the sensitive and loving Othello whose positive side has been hidden most of the time. Let us, for a moment, consider Othello as we meet him in the opening of the play. He is a Moor, and one that Shakespeare has deliberately made a Negro as well; he is a renowned military leader, a great soldier, and one of the strong defending arms in the service of the state; he is a man who, through military training, perhaps, has learned to thinking absolutes and to make quick decisions; his survival has often depended on quick action rather than on lengthy or studied considerations; he is a lonely man in the sense that he is a black Moor among the Venetian senators; he has been the guest of Brabantio and white society and, although proud of his heritage, realizes that he is to a certain extent alone. Desdemona has fallen in love with him primarily because of his valorous deeds and for the dangers he has survived; as Othello explains to his accusers in Act I, Scene 3:

My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sight:
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:.....
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used.

Said otherwise: Othello appealed to Desdemona's imagination and to her inherent attraction to physical courage. This is our central picture of Othello: the successful warrior, more a man of action than and intellectual, more a doer than a thinker.

This picture of the soldier is strengthened when we first see Othello placed in new command of Cyprus; then in his joyful announcement that the Turks have been in a storm and will not attack. When Iago begins to make Othello jealous in the all-important third scene of the third act, we sense Othello's rapid suffering; Othello know himself well enough that once he decided Desdemona is unfaithful, then he will hold firm to that decision; at the same time, however, he will not make such a decision on little evidence:

Think'st thou I'd made a life of jealousy
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved

In other words, once he does have a real doubt, he will work to resolve that doubt immediately – no matter what this entails or what consequences may ensue.

When Othello has slapped Desdemona in the face and called her a whore, before Lodovico and the party from Venice with the announcement of Cassio's new command, Lodovico asks;

Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature
Whom passion could not shake? Whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
Could neither graze nor pierce?

Iago immediately issues an understatement, simply saying that Othello has "changed". The point is that certain latent human emotions in Othello have been brought to the surface; Othello may have "changed" as Iago suggests, but he has not "developed" in the sense of having become any more complex. He is still basically a simple character, and striking out at Desdemona is example enough that he still thinks in terms of rash physical violence and retribution.

Othello's jealousy does make him increasingly vulnerable. When he has the proof of the handkerchief, he knows that Desdemona is unfaithful, and once he knows this he also knows that he will punish her – swiftly and physically. As the play moves toward Desdemona's murder, Othello is not developing, but rather becoming increasingly jealous and increasingly hateful. He moves like a frustrated animal and a weary soldier all the way to the very end, when he is at last broken down and moved by remorse and tenderness. He has operated on a "brute," rather than a complicated, level throughout the play.

Q. To what extent may Iago be said to be a thematic character, embodying evil for evil's sake?

Answer

A valid argument can be made that Iago is purely a thematic character, the personification of the force of evil, which leads to the destruction of Othello and Desdemona. Many critics have demonstrated the futility of explaining Iago's hatred of Othello. In the source of the play, Cinthio's novel, Iago is somewhat in love with Desdemona and this becomes a major motive for working for the downfall of Desdemona's husband. But Shakespeare has quite deliberately changed this story; Iago's love for Desdemona is mentioned only once, in his soliloquy at the end of Act II, Scene 1:

The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature:
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too;
Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin.....

Shakespeare makes no further reference to any love which Iago may bear toward Desdemona, although in the erotic lie wherein Iago describes Cassio's dreaming of Desdemona to Othello, we see the evidence of what is perhaps a confined, repressed lust.

For the most part, then, Iago has very little motivation for his evil behavior; the external fact of Cassio's appointment receives very little discussion after the opening of the play. And when Iago steps forward in soliloquies and describe, gleefully, his forthcoming evil acts, we begin to suspect that he does indeed have what Coleridge termed a "motiveless malignancy." Continually we see the image of Iago as an evil spider ensnaring the innocent and helpless fly: for example, in Act II, Scene 1, upon seeing Desdemona touch Cassio's palm, Iago brags, "With as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio" (lines 169-170). Or again, in the next major scene, referring to his plan of having Desdemona argue in behalf of Cassio to Othello, Iago confides:

So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

Iago enjoys his evil acts too much for them to require motives; everything he does or says works directly toward the central conflict of the play.

Like Othello, Iago is not a developing character for he remains loyal to his ideal-or anti-ideal if you will-of malicious revenge. He is confident from the start in his ability to make Desdemona look guilty, even though he does not know how. After Emilia has found the handkerchief, she reflects that Iago has often asked her to secure it; in other words, Iago has been thinking of such a ploy all along. The use of the handkerchief is not a complete accident: it is, we

suspect, one of several possibilities imagined by Iago. Iago is a scheming, yet fascinating, character and to say that he is only a thematic character seems to divest him of certain human characteristics such as the extreme enjoyment of his evil acts, his logical development of a foundation to support Othello's aroused jealous suspicions, and his conversation with Emilia. After all, most pure-devil characters are not even married.

Shakespeare has chosen to give Iago a wife – one who is frankly realistic, as is seen in her discussion of unfaithfulness with Desdemona. Although we notice then that Iago is placed in a human position – that of husband, soldier, etc. – we still must conclude that he is primarily a character who creates evil for the sake of creating evil. When Emilia discovers that Iago is behind Othello's false doubts and thus the murder of Desdemona, she underlines Iago's essential "villainy":

Villainy, villainy, villainy!
I think upon't, I think: I smell't: O villainy!-
I though so then, I'll kill myself for grief:-
O villainy, villainy!

These references are more than enough to remind us of what we have known all along: Iago is in the play with the explicit purpose of being the villain; evil is his *raison d'être*. Evil is his very nature and thus Boas has rightly termed him "the arch-criminal of Shakespearean drama."

Q. Briefly contrast Desdemona and Emilia.

Answer

With the exception of Bianca, Cassio's mistress, who has very little to say, Desdemona and Emilia are the only two women in the play. In Desdemona and Emilia, Shakespeare had presented a striking contrast between innocence and experience, or between idealism and realism. For Desdemona is a sweet unsuspecting creature; even as she slowly seems to realize that Othello plans to kill her, she acts normally. When he enters her bedchamber to murder her, she simply and calmly asks him to come to bed-even though she has had her wedding sheets placed on the bed, hinted to Emilia that she fears some disaster ahead, and sung a song which her mother's maid sang on the eve of her own death. Desdemona, in other words, is faithful to her own love she fell in love with Othello for what many of us would consider the wrong reasons, but nevertheless she is constant in that love. Even when Othello has mercilessly slapped her, she refuses to lose her composure.

Emilia, on the other hand, as the wife of Iago, is expectedly hardened. She is a woman of the world, a wife of Bath type, who makes no pretense at innocence and even suggests openly that she would allow her appetites to lead into adultery. Emilia is able to serve Desdemona in a loyal way; in fact, she loves Desdemona very much, as is seen clearly in the last act of the play. Like any woman she wants her husband's approval-which is why she is willing to give Iago the handkerchief- and in this one emotion she has something in common with Desdemona.

Emilia is coarse and aware of her sex; however, she remains relatively quiet until the last act when she openly damns Othello for killing Desdemona and fearlessly calls the alarm. While Emilia has no understanding of Desdemona's blind faithfulness and innocence, she is able to proclaim and defend it before Othello at the end of the play. Her own husband is not satisfactory, and yet she is relatively loyal to him until she discovers his major harmful act.

All things considered, the contrast between Desdemona and Emilia is designed primarily to heighten our awareness of Desdemona's innocence and incredible loyalty to Othello. Emilia is in the play – as is Bianca – to show us that most women are, after all, coarse, fickle, lusty, and bothersome. Desdemona is the exception, of course, and in the contrast she acquires even greater illumination, becoming the bright moral light of the play. At the same time, however, Emilia is no harlot like Bianca, and she bravely goes against her husband in order to see justice done at the end of the play.

Q. Discuss Othello's estimation of Iago. Why is Othello duped so easily?

Answer

Iago has been a professional soldier for a considerable length of time and he is understandably annoyed when he sees Othello choose Cassio as his lieutenant. Why Othello chose Cassio instead of Iago is unknown and in some ways surprising, for Cassio does not have the finesse of Iago. Othello's central view of his "ancient," (that is, his underofficer) is that he is honest. In the opening of Act II, Scene 3, Othello tells Cassio to look after the men that night and keep peace; Cassio notes that Iago has been given directions, and Othello replies, "Iago is most honest." A little later, after the outbreak of violence, Othello demands of Iago what has happened. Iago pretends that he does not want to incriminate Cassio, but in so doing makes Cassio look extremely guilty. In other words, Othello is easily fooled-even controlled-by Iago. Othello replies:

I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio, Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.

Again Othello refers to Iago's honesty. Iago, on the other hand lies frequently that he loves Othello very much; for example, when noting that Cassio has just left Desdemona (in Act III, Sc. 3), Iago again pretends that he hates to tell Othello anything which might make him unhappy, but he maintains that he loves Othello too much to maintain silence: "I humbly do beseech you of your pardon/ For too much loving you." Othello's reply is, "I am bound to thee for ever," a statement which suggest the spider-fly relationship between Iago and Othello.

The entire relationship between Iago and Othello is basically static: Othello incorrectly thinks Iago is "honest," while Iago deliberately lies and deceives Othello at every turn. The reason for this is that Othello himself is honest and thus unable to think ill of Iago. It simply never occurs to him that someone who appears as honest as Iago could do him any harm. This is the same emotion experienced by Desdemona in her relationship to Othello and the parallel is an ironic one. Only when Iago has strongly suggested that Desdemona and Cassio are secret lovers does Othello's manner of addressing Iago change; "Villain, e sure thou prove my love a whore,/ Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof" (Act III, Sc. 3, lines 359-360).

Othello is easily duped by Iago because Othello believes in appearances. This, as we shall discuss later on, is one of the main points of the play: things are not always what they seem. Unfortunately, Iago understand Othello's central weakness, for he states clearly at the end of the first act:

The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are.

Iago knows not only that Othello's is deceived easily by appearances, but also that Othello is convinced of Iago's honesty. This knowledge defines and determines the relationship between them. There is such a short amount of time between Othello's discovery of Iago's evil duplicity and the end of the play that it is senseless to discuss Othello's change or a change in the nature of the relationship.

Q. Briefly describe Roderigo's motivation and his role within the play.

Answer

Roderigo is boyish, foolish and even at times unusually stupid, yet we never feel ourselves condemning him. This is explained partly by Roderigo's motivation: he is very much in love with Desdemona and has been for some time. He is willing to do anything in order to attain her and that she is so very unattainable makes him that much more pathetic.

He hands himself over to Iago in the very beginning of the play for he knows that he himself has not the genius nor the scheming to win Desdemona; in other words, Roderigo at least has a certain amount of self-knowledge and awareness of his fundamental limitations-which from one point of view puts him above some of the other characters in the play. In any case, Roderigo's honest and recognized love for Desdemona makes him at least acceptable in our eyes, and we feel very sorry for him when he is so cruelly killed by Iago.

Roderigo is in Othello for several reasons. In the first place, it is necessary that the villain of the play have some sort of helper or agent to assist in the execution of heinous, secretive acts; Iago quite explicitly has Roderigo come to Cyprus disguised for this very reason. In the second place, Roderigo is a man who goes to great trouble because of his love for Desdemona, and in this sense he shares a motivational logic with the jealous Othello. And finally, Iago's total mastery and manipulation of Roderigo show us how Iago will also be able to master and manipulate the confused Othello. The three objects of Iago's evil deeds-Othello, Cassio, and Roderigo-serve to underline the inadequacy of all of them to resist the scheming Iago. There is a basic deference, however, in that Roderigo alone knows all along that Iago is scheming; Othello and Cassio are completely unsuspecting. In any case, Roderigo's presence in the play is vital to the development of the plot, while at the same time allowing Shakespeare to present us with another of his justly famous ignorant lover.

Q. Explain Othello's jealousy and his motivation for killing Desdemona.

Answer

It is easy enough to say that Othello murders Desdemona because he becomes excessively jealous, believing a relationship between her and Cassio. But there is more than sexual jealousy involved. True, the "beast" in Othello aroused by Iago's suggestions and his erotic relation of Cassio's supposed dream about Desdemona, but is the transformation which turns him back toward the ways of his more primitive ancestry. Othello is a savage who has been tamed through his association with the lords and senators of the republic of Venice; into a world where acts can be justified by the laws of the jungle. If this sounds too much like a way of simplifying Othello, it is nevertheless easily demonstrated as fact in the course of the play, and particularly in Act III, Scene 3, where Othello for the first time almost savagely warns Iago that he had better be telling the truth. It is the beast in Othello that slaps Desdemona before Lodovico and the party from Venice; however, in the final moments of rage, Othello is transformed back into a man who is gentle and tender. We see him in his preparation to kill Desdemona as a man disturbed, not an animal aroused. Phrased differently, Othello is reduced to a more animalistic plane when in the process of becoming more and more jealous, but our final view of him is that the desperate and unhappy husband; animals, we might note, do not marry.

Jealousy alone, furthermore, is not the sole explanation of Othello's motivation for killing Desdemona. Certainly Othello's honor is involved. We have seen several instances in the play where "reputation" has been given notice and importance. The first main statement arrives when Othello demotes Cassio from his office as lieutenant; Cassio's immediate reaction is: Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

There is a fear that the loss of reputation leaves man a mere beast – and Othello does not want this to happen to him either.

In Act III, Scene 4, Emilia asks Desdemona about Othello, "Is he not jealous?" Desdemona's reply is, "Who, he? I think the sun where he was born/Drew all such humours from him" (lines 29-31). Desdemona never thinks Othello is jealous, for she has only seen the attractive, courageous emotions displayed in his behavior. The simple truth is she does not know Othello very well and did not know him very well when they were married. Emilia asks, "Is not this man jealous? And Desdemona replies, "I ne'er saw this before./ Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief:/ I am most unhappy in the loss of it" (lines 99-102).

Desdemona has never witnessed any jealousy in Othello and thus naively believes that the magical handkerchief is responsible for the change in his behavior. Still in the same scene (Act III, Sc. 4), Emilia explains the nature of jealousy to the innocent Desdemona:

But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
They are not ever jealous for the cause,

But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster

Begot upon itself, born on itself

Desdemona's immediate comment is simply, "Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!" she does not realize her wish is being Shakespeare implies it was always there potentially – he nevertheless kills Desdemona out of pride anger, and honor. To make Othello only one underestimation of Moorish temperament.

Q. Identify the irony in the following conversation between Desdemona and the clown:

Desdemona Do you know, sirrah , where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

Clown I dare not say he lies anywhere.

Desdemona Seek him, bid him come hither. Tell
him I have moved my lord on his behalf and hope all
will be well

Clown To do this is within the compass of man's
Wit, and therefore I'll attempt the doing of it.

Answer:

This is a conversation between Desdemona and the clown. Desdemona is asking the clown about the place of Cassio but the clown doesn't say where he lodges. Desdemona is asking the clown to find Cassio and send him to her. She is sure that she has persuaded Othello to forgive him. Here is one example of dramatic irony. Othello, instead of being in a mood to forgive Cassio for his drunken folly, is ready to have him murdered for a supposed intrigue with Desdemona.

Q1. Identify the irony in the following speech of Desdemona to Emilia:

Desdemona Believe me , I had rather have lost my purse
Full of crows; and but my noble Moor
Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness
To put him to till thinking

Emilia is he not jealous?

Desdemona Who? he? I think the sun where she was born
Drew all such humors from him

Q. Identify the irony in the following conversation between Othello and Emilia:

Othello Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

Emilia But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.

Othello That's strange.

Emilia I drust , my lord , to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other,
Remove your thoughts; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For if she be not honest, chaste, and true...

Answer:

This discussion is between Othello and Emilia. Othello here is questioning Emilia about if she has seen anything unnatural between Desdemona and Cassio, but Emilia is defending Desdemona and is firm, and insists that Desdemona is honest. With a dramatic irony she abuses the wretch who has put suspicion into Othello's head, never dreaming that this wretch is her own husband. Othello would've glad to believe her, but Iago's poisonous suggestions have become too firmly implanted in his mind. He does not respect Emilia enough to believe she is speaking the truth, but suspects that she is merely shielding Desdemona.

Q. Write about Treachery in *Othello*

Brabantio cautions Othello to watch out for Desdemona in an instance of potential treachery. "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see: She has deceived her father and may thee (Act I, Scene III)." Iago uses this later to remind Othello that his wife's own father said she might betray him.

Iago betrays his duty as Othello's ancient by teasing out Cassio's attraction to Desdemona through leading questions; he also, at every turn, seeds discord by being cloying and obsequious to Othello's face and then deriding him when he departs.

In the beginning of the play, characters refer to Iago's honesty as one of his brightest traits. In fact, he is called "honest Iago" several times by several characters. Not least of these is Othello himself, who praises Iago's honesty at least half a dozen times in Acts I and II alone.

This perception of honesty works to Iago's advantage, allowing him to put his revenge into action. His wife, Emilia, gives him the handkerchief Desdemona loses, the same one Othello gave to her, and he uses this to increase the credibility of his lie about Desdemona's infidelity to the point where Othello isn't swayed at all by her impassioned plea for life before he kills her.

Othello kills himself once Iago's plot is revealed, driven to the depths of despair by the knowledge that he murdered the innocent Desdemona because of his ancient's lies and deceit. In Iago, driven by revenge and malice, Shakespeare created an enduring villain; and in Othello he created the purest sense of the noble, tragic hero. But it's the themes — jealousy, betrayal, and revenge — that make the play shine when actors breath the lines.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

Q. Explain the symbol of ‘The Handkerchief’

The handkerchief symbolizes different things to different characters. Since the handkerchief was the first gift Desdemona received from Othello, she keeps it about her constantly as a symbol of Othello’s love. Iago manipulates the handkerchief so that Othello comes to see it as a symbol of Desdemona herself—her faith and chastity. By taking possession of it, he is able to convert it into evidence of her infidelity. But the handkerchief’s importance to Iago and Desdemona derives from its importance to Othello himself. He tells Desdemona that it was woven by a 200-year-old sibyl, or female prophet, using silk from sacred worms and dye extracted from the hearts of mummified virgins. Othello claims that his mother used it to keep his father faithful to her, so, to him, the handkerchief represents marital fidelity. The pattern of strawberries (dyed with virgins’ blood) on a white background strongly suggests the bloodstains left on the sheets on a virgin’s wedding night, so the handkerchief implicitly suggests a guarantee of virginity as well as fidelity.

Q. Explain the symbol of The Song “Willow”

As she prepares for bed in Act V, Desdemona sings a song about a woman who is betrayed by her lover. She was taught the song by her mother’s maid, Barbary, who suffered a misfortune similar to that of the woman in the song; she even died singing “Willow.” The song’s lyrics suggest that both men and women are unfaithful to one another. To Desdemona, the song seems to represent a melancholy and resigned acceptance of her alienation from Othello’s affections, and singing it leads her to question Emilia about the nature and practice of infidelity

Q. How many scenes of revenge are there in ‘Othello’? Explain them.

Answer:

There are EIGHT scenes of revenge in ‘Othello’ and they are:

Revenge 1: Iago's plot against Othello is partially motivated by revenge. He feels wronged because he was not made lieutenant. He is bitter and upset and wants to hurt Othello and avenge his name.

Revenge 2: Brabantio craves revenge for the loss of his daughter. He takes revenge by bringing Othello before the Duke to request his imprisonment.

Revenge 3: Iago develops his elaborate plot of revenge. He will implant a false sense of jealousy in Othello, there upon destroying Othello's relationship with Desdemona.

Revenge 4: Again, Iago explains his plot. He describes his plan of action as a web in which he will catch a fly. The intricate deception all comes down to revenge.

Revenge 5: Iago plans to enlist his wife, Emilia, in his plot of revenge, unbeknownst to her. The web is growing to involve more family and people of importance.

Revenge 6: Emilia and Desdemona touch upon the theme of revenge lightly in this eloquent discussion. They discuss the necessary actions to take when husbands and wives are unfaithful...perhaps revenge is the appropriate course of action.

Revenge 7: Othello ponders his decision to kill Desdemona, partially motivated by revenge. He believes himself to be cuckolded by Desdemona and must defend his honor. At the same time, he feels that he must defend mankind and all other men from a woman who would betray her husband so. He ultimately decides that he must end her life.

Revenge 8: Othello is revenged when he injures Iago and forces him to live a life of pain. Othello avenges himself by committing suicide. He must die once he realizes what he has done. Roderigo is ultimately avenged, despite his death, when his letters are read aloud. Cassio is avenged through his promotion to General.

Q. How does Othello's suicide affect us as a matter of morals, and as to the dramatic necessities of the play?

Answer:

As a matter of morals, Othello's suicide strikes us as being wrong since "the Everlasting has fixed His canon against self-slaughter": "Thou shalt not kill." And yet, looking at it from another standpoint, Othello's suicide seems but a just retribution for the death of Desdemona. The play would lose much of its interest for us were Othello to live after losing honor, love, and the pure being who had been as the inspiration of his life; and certainly our great admiration for Othello's sense of honor would be diminished. We would feel a kind of indignation, a kind of resentment, as it were, for the death of Desdemona, for there is in us an instinctive feeling or idea of justice and reparation, and Othello's death is the reparation which Fate requires at his hand for the innocent death of Desdemona. As Othello has lived like a hero, he will not forfeit his claim to that title in his death. His last two acts were perhaps the most heroic of his life. He sacrifices his wife, his love, all that makes life worth living to his sense of honor, and then finding that this very sacrifice has brought not honor but dishonor, as he is now a "murderer," he sacrifices himself to his honor, and dies by his own hand.

Q. What is the relationship between Iago and Emilia?

Answer:

There certainly is not that strong and equal tie of love which we would expect to find existing between man and wife. Iago uses Emilia as his tool; she is cared for only in so far as she is of use to him. Iago has neither the desire nor the ability to love anything or anybody.

Emilia seems to love Iago with a kind of passionate devotion. Her sole aim seems to be to do his will, as is seen by her theft of the handkerchief, and her words at the time are:

"I'll have the work ta'en out,
And give't Iago: what he will do with it
Heaven knows, not I;
I nothing but to please his fantasy."

This great love, even though its object be unworthy, is a redeeming trait in Emilia's character, which raises her morally far above Iago. Indeed, we can look back on Emilia in her girlhood, free from the tarnish, the smut, with which Iago has begrimed her. Can we not find almost a touch of sadness for this change in her words: "The ills we do, their ills (husbands') instruct us so"?

Emilia's love for Desdemona is perhaps the purest of her feelings. The bond, then, between Iago and Emilia is the bond of evil, in the one case instinctive, in the other acquired.

Q. What change does Iago produce in the character of Roderigo which enables him to maintain his control over him up to the very end?

Answer:

"Evil communications corrupt good morals." By constantly being brought in contact with Iago, Roderigo cannot but be blackened by the soot which cleaves to him. At first we find Roderigo not evil, perhaps, though destitute of virtue; his intention then has nothing criminal in it; here is merely the disappointment of a rejected lover together with the desire, called into life by Iago, of finding and separating Desdemona and the Moor before they are married. But urged still further by Iago, he becomes so much indued with Iagoism that he follows Desdemona to Cyprus. Even here his conscience hurts him; he repents, and wants to return, but Iago's power grows too strong, and he becomes more and more like "his cause," if we may call Iago such. Finally, this evil reaches a height that is almost worthy of Iago. Iago maintains his ascendancy by assimilating Roderigo more and more to himself, by filling his mind and soul with evil.

Q. Identify and explain the following quotation:

Were I the Moor I would not be Iago.
In following him I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so for my peculiar end.
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at. I am not what I am.

Answer

In this early speech, Iago explains his tactics to Roderigo. He follows Othello not out of "love" or "duty," but because he feels he can exploit and dupe his master, thereby revenging himself upon the man he suspects of having slept with his wife. Iago finds that people who are what they seem are foolish. The day he decides to demonstrate outwardly what he feels inwardly, Iago explains, will be the day he makes himself most vulnerable: "I will wear my heart upon my sleeve / For daws to peck at." His implication, of course, is that such a day will never come.

This speech exemplifies Iago's cryptic and elliptical manner of speaking. Phrases such as "Were I the Moor I would not be Iago" and "I am not what I am" hide as much as, if not more than, they reveal. Iago is continually playing a game of deception, even with Roderigo and the audience. The paradox or riddle that the speech creates is emblematic of Iago's power throughout the play: his smallest sentences ("Think, my lord?" in III.iii.109) or gestures (beckoning Othello closer in Act IV, scene i) open up whole worlds of interpretation.

Q. Identify and explain the following quotation:

Her father loved me, oft invited me;
Still questioned me the story of my life
From year to year—the battles, sieges, fortunes
That I have passed.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To th' very moment that he bade me tell it.
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chance,
This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline;

Answer

The speaker of this quotation is Othello. He's talking to the Duke of Venice and Brabantio, Desdemona's father when he was defending himself for the accusations of Brabantio.

Othello says that Brabantio liked and loved him and made him his guest. Brabantio liked to hear my adventures and deadly stories. He liked to hear about my past and of my battles and attacks and of the good luck that has come to my way. I recited everything, from my childhood to the moment of my arrival at his house. I revealed my most dangerous risks, the events on the sea and land, and near the death experiences. I told of my capture and sale as a slave, of my rescue and my conduct during long travels. I told about Cannibals and men-eaters and of men whose heads are in their chests. Desdemona leaned attentively towards me while I recited my stories. When she had a household duties, she completed her chores and hurried back to listen again to my adventures. I noticed her interest. I spoke in private with her and learned that she wanted to hear more of my journeys that I had already described in parts.

Desdemona was distressed to hear that about me and felt sorry and loved me for those adventures and she confessed that she could love such a man. Othello told her of his love and this is the only witchcraft I've done.

Q. Identify the following quotation and give the dramatic meaning:

If I can fasten but one cup upon him
With that which he hath drunk to-night already.
He'll be as full quarrel and offense
As my young mistress dog.

Answer:

The speaker of this quotation is Iago. He's talking to himself in soliloquy. He says that if he can persuade Cassio to drink just one more cup of wine to that he has drunk before, Cassio will be so easy to be irritated and angry and quick in reaction. Iago has already taken part in a noisy drinking session with three young men from Cyprus, noble boys who are ready to stand up straight at a chance to defend the island's reputation for war. Now I will place Cassio in the rank of the three drunken men and will push Cassio to insult Cyprus. In addition, Roderigo is a lovesick idiot, is so addle-headed that he has drunk two-quart tankards to the bottom. I will make the situation suit my plans to revenge upon Cassio and remove him my way and get the rank back to. That rank of lieutenant that I deserve more than Cassio who has no battle experience.

Q. Identify and explain the following quotation:

My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty.
To you I am bound for life and education.
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you. You are the lord of my duty,
I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband,
And so much duty as my mother showed
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor my lord.

Answer:

These words, which Desdemona speaks to her father before the Venetian senate, are her first of the play. Her speech shows her thoughtfulness, as she does not insist on her loyalty to Othello at the expense of respect for her father, but rather acknowledges that her duty is “divided.” Because Desdemona is brave enough to stand up to her father and even partially rejects him in public, these words also establish for the audience her courage and her strength of conviction. Later, this same ability to separate different degrees and kinds of affection will make Desdemona seek, without hesitation, to help Cassio, thereby fueling Othello’s jealousy. Again and again, Desdemona speaks clearly and truthfully, but, tragically, Othello is poisoned by Iago’s constant manipulation of language and emotions and is therefore blind to Desdemona’s honesty.

Q. Identify the following quotation and give the dramatic meaning:

Touch me not so near.
I had rather this tongue cut from my mouth
Than it should do offense to Michael Cassio:
Yet I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him?

Answer:

The speaker here is Iago. He is talking to Othello in front of Montano, the governor of Cyprus and Cassio and others when Cassio was drunk and wounded Montano. Othello questioned Iago to tell the story of the fight, how and who began it? Iago protesting the he would have his tongue cut out than to use it to harm Cassio. Iago cunningly describes the affair to show Cassio in the worst possible light. He tells how the lieutenant burst in pursuing someone; how Montano stepped in to interfere and how he, Iago, followed this fellow to prevent his cries from alarming the town. During his brief absence Cassio and Montano had engaged in a sword-fight just as when Othello himself came and found them. Iago knows that Cassio disgrace and downfall are now sure. Iago here indulges in a false defense of the lieutenant.

Q. Identify and explain the following quotation:

That is a fault.
That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give.
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it,
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
Entirely to her love; but if she lost it
Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathly, and her spirit should haunt
After new fancies.

Answer:

The speaker here is Othello. He is talking to Desdemona when she lost the handkerchief and now he is telling her the story of this handkerchief. Othello says that it is too bad to lose this handkerchief. He says that an Egyptian Magician gave this handkerchief to his mother. The Egyptian was a magician who read people's thoughts. The Egyptian told Othello's mother that the handkerchief would make his mother lovable and would control his father with her affection. If his mother lost the handkerchief or gave it away, his father would hate her. He would look for new romances. His mother, on her deathbed, gave the handkerchief to me. She instructed me to give it to my future wife. I did as she instructed. You, Desdemona, watch out for the handkerchief. Make it precious as your eye. To lose or give up the handkerchief would cause you more doom than anything else could.

Q. Identify the following quotation and give the dramatic meaning:

I am glad I have found this napkin.
This was her first remembrance from the Moor,
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woed me to steal it, but she so loves the token—
For he conjured her she should ever keep it—
That she reserves it evermore about her
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work taken out,
And give't Iago. What he will do with it,

Heaven knows, not I.
I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

Answer:

This speech of Emilia's announces the beginning of *Othello's* "handkerchief plot," a seemingly insignificant event—the dropping of a handkerchief—that becomes the means by which Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, Roderigo, Emilia, and even Iago himself are completely undone. Before Othello lets the handkerchief fall from his brow, we have neither heard of nor seen it. The primary function of Emilia's speech is to explain the prop's importance: as the first gift Othello gave Desdemona, it represents their oldest and purest feelings for one another.

While the fact that Iago "hath a hundred times / Wooed me to steal it" immediately tips off the audience to the handkerchief's imminently prominent place in the tragic sequence of events, Emilia seems entirely unsuspecting. To her, the handkerchief is literally a trifle, "light as air," and this is perhaps why she remains silent about the handkerchief's whereabouts even when Desdemona begins to suffer for its absence. It is as though Emilia cannot, or refuses to, imagine that her husband would want the handkerchief for any devious reason. Many critics have found Emilia's silence about the handkerchief—and in fact the entire handkerchief plot—a great implausibility, and it is hard to disagree with this up to a point. At the same time, however, it serves as yet another instance in which Iago has

Q. Identify and explain the following quotation:

It is merely a lust of the blood and permission
Of the will. Come, be a man! Drown thyself?
I say put money in the purse. It
Cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her
Love for the Moor—put money in the purse—nor
He his her

Answer:

The speaker here is Iago, he is talking to Roderigo when Roderigo told him that he was going to drown himself because he lost Desdemona. Iago here works upon Roderigo. He tells him that Desdemona will soon tire of Othello. Let Roderigo put money in the purse and keep his hope to win Desdemona. Iago gave Roderigo many promises to get Desdemona for him but in vain because he was just using him as a source of money. Iago says that the Moor may change in his feelings, Desdemona may soon wish a younger lover because

such a match between a barbarian and a high civilized lady cannot last. It is too ridiculous to talk about drowning while there is much hope.

Q. Identify the following quotation and give the dramatic meaning:

Stand you awhile apart;
Confine yourself but in patient list.
Whilst you were here, o'erwhelmed with your grief-
Cassio came hither. I shifted him away
For I will make him tell the tale anew-
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
He hath, and again to copy your wife.
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience!

Answer:

Here, this quotation has been said by Iago. He is talking to Othello when Othello is totally convinced that Desdemona has a love affair with Cassio. Here, Iago advises Othello to accept the fact. Othello is not the only man whose wife is unfaithful to him. Iago advises Othello to hide himself where he can hear Cassio boasting to Iago of his conquest of Desdemona. Iago says to Othello to be away from Cassio's sight. Iago says that he will ask Cassio to tell him again about the affair with Desdemona, where they go? How, how often, how long, and when he has been with Desdemona and when they will meet again. Iago advises Othello to observe Cassio's gestures.

Q. Identify and explain the following quotation

Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well,
Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinable gum. Set you down this,
And say besides that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
And smote him thus.

Answer:

With these final words, Othello stabs himself in the chest. In this farewell speech, Othello reaffirms his position as a figure who is simultaneously a part of and excluded from Venetian society. The smooth eloquence of the speech and its references to “Arabian trees,” “Aleppo,” and a “malignant and a turbaned Turk” remind us of Othello’s long speech in Act I, scene iii, lines 127–168, and of the tales of adventure and war with which he wooed Desdemona. No longer inarticulate with grief as he was when he cried, “O fool! fool! fool!,” Othello seems to have calmed himself and regained his dignity and, consequently, our respect (V.ii.332). He reminds us once again of his martial prowess, the quality that made him famous in Venice. At the same time, however, by killing himself as he is describing the killing of a Turk, Othello identifies himself with those who pose a military—and, according to some, a psychological—threat to Venice, acknowledging in the most powerful and awful way the fact that he is and will remain very much an outsider. His suicide is a kind of martyrdom, a last act of service to the state, as he kills the only foe he has left to conquer: himself.

Q. Identify the following quotation and give the dramatic meaning:

That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence , and storm of fortune,
May trumpet to the world. My heart’s subdued
Even for the quality of my lord.
I saw Othello’s visage in his mind ,
And to his honors and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that , dear lords, if I be left behind,
A moth of peace , and he go to the war
By his dear absence. Let me go with him

Answer:

This speech has been said by Desdemona to her father, Brabantio in front of the Duke of Venice and other Senators when Brabantio accused Othello of practicing magic on his daughter, Desdemona. Here, Desdemona gives her opinion when Othello wanted to defend himself for the accusation of Brabantio, Othello requested to bring Desdemona to the Council and give her opinion about the accusations. Here, She begs the Duke of Venice to let her go to Cyprus with Othello saying that her love to husband depends on his character and profession as a soldier. If she stays at home and he goes to war, time will pass to heavily on her. So she begs the Duke to let her accompany Othello. Othello add his pleas promising that he will never neglect his duty for the sake of their love. He swears by his reputation that he will do his duties and responsibilities in a good and perfect way

Q. Identify and explain the following quotation

why then, to-morrow night, or Tuesday morn,

On Tuesday noon or night, or Wednesday morn.

I prithee name the time, but let it not

Exceed three days . I faith , he's penitent;

And yet his trespass , in our common reason...

Answer:

This speech has been said by Desdemona to Othello when Othello dismissed Cassio from his position as a lieutenant. At that time Cassio came to Desdemona to request from her to beg Othello to give him back his rank. Desdemona says that She defends Cassio because he is a good friend to Othello. He was going to her house with Othello when Othello was wooing her. Cassio used to defend Othello when she was criticizing him that's why she gave him a chance for an interview. Desdemona here is showing a certain lack of tact and persists in spite of evident unwillingness, she make a remark that gives Iago the material for further mischief. When Desdemona says this, it occurs to Iago that this circumstance may be used in his scheme.