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## Critical Analysis of the Characters Othello and Iago in the Play “Othello” by William Shakespeare

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### ABSTRACT:

*The basic purpose of the study is the character analysis of Othello and Iago in the play Othello by William Shakespeare. Although Othello has regularly been praised as William Shakespeare's most cohesive tragedy, many critics have discovered the primary person, Othello, to be the most unheroic of Shakespeare's heroes. More so than in every other Shakespeare's play, one individual, Iago, is the stage supervisor of the entire action of the play. Once he decided to destroy Othello, he proceeds by plotting and through inference to gain his goal. He tells others just what he desires them to understand, sets one character against any other, and develops an elaborate web of circumstantial to target Othello. The researchers have tried their level best to show readers that, either Iago is responsible for this tragedy or Othello himself has some tragic flaws. The methodology used in this research was qualitative. Both the characters, Othello and Iago, are universal characters with some fatal flaw, fate or external forces driving them. This play tried to investigate that how particular choices made by the men lead to their tragic end.*

**Keywords:** Analysis, Character, Othello, Iago, Tragedy, William Shakespeare

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Considered one of Shakespeare's maximum famous tragedies, Othello is concerned with the subject matters of jealousy and possessiveness, gullibility and blind trust, and the dangers that could get up from a failure to look past the floor appearances. Contrasting Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth, which deal with the political beliefs and which echo with the common human concerns, Othello is about non-public global and makes a specialty of the passions and personal lives of its central figures, Othello and Desdemona. The plot of the play has been designed in a better manner. Iago has been considered accountable for Cassio's humiliation, and at the same time, Iago's spouse acts to assist her husband unintentionally forming the complexity of the plot and also acts to solve the conspiracy eventually. Shakespeare's intellect can be fairly valued after critical evaluation of reformulation of the intensity and easy flow of movements. Othello is a play, which has regularly been defined as a "tragedy of person." The plot of the play Othello is one among Shakespeare's most beautiful focused, tightly constructed tragedies, without a subplot and no humor to relieve the tension. Shakespeare has tested with exquisite mental complexity and depth the powerful emotions of affection and hatred, jealousy and revenge. The depth of the drama is heightened because all of the minor characters and their activities are designed to show the protagonists and their actions. The play is so spellbinding because of the contradictions and tensions it carries: a black soldier marries the daughter of a white nobleman, an evil ensign

corrupts the soldier, and the passionate love became overpowered by the jealousy. The play offers equal recognition to the two most famous characters, Othello and Iago, in one of this way that it will become nearly painful for students and critics to determine who's often responsible for this extraordinary tragedy.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To investigate that how Othello is different from other Shakespeare's heroes.
2. To explore whether Othello is Innocence or prone to evil?
3. To find out whether Iago is alone responsible for this tragedy or Othello give him stances to create it.

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How Othello gets jealous?
2. How is Iago succeeded to accomplish his evil design?
3. Does Othello repent on what he has done?

## 4. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Haim Omer and Marcello Da Verona in their article "Doctor Iago's treatment of Othello" say about Iago's manipulation "when he and Roderigo confront Brabantio about his daughter. Brabantio does not believe what the two say about Desdemona, calling it absurd, and he becomes angry because he has been woken up in the middle of the night".

Haim Omer and Marcello Da Verona recognize that "Roderigo immediately starts to explain and justify his accusations, which only angers Brabantio even more. Iago, on the other hand, responds by actually complimenting Brabantio (1). Brabantio yells, "Thou art a villain" to which Iago responds, "You are a senator" (I. i. 115-116). The father is taken aback by this surprising comment, and it causes him to step back and re-examine the situation, which eases his anger and causes him to believe the two storytellers, especially when he finds Desdemona missing from her bed chamber".

Karl Zender in his article "The Humiliation of Iago" says "Anger at Desdemona vies with anger and Cassio and Othello as Iago's primary motive in the remainder of Othello; and this anger...decides Desdemona's fate,"

"One of the most common ways of overlooking the "Literariness" of a play or novel is to treat its characters as though they were actual people. In one sense, to be sure, this is almost impossible to avoid".

"The problem of character presented by Othello's collapse before Iago's machination in 3.3 is handled in three main ways. According to one view, the problem is insoluble: Othello believes Iago only "by virtue of the convention of the calumniator credited. "Among the analysts of characters the old tradition is that Othello is the victim of Iago and remains pretty much the "

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noble Moor" throughout, he is guilty only of being too innocent or foolish or simple or trusting or of losing his usual self- control."

"The characters of Iago belongs to a class of characters common to Shakespeare, and at the same time peculiar to him, namely, that of high intellectual activity, accompanied with a total want of moral principle, and therefore displaying itself at the constant expense of others, and seeking to confound the practical distinctions of right and wrong, by referring them to some overstrained standard of speculative refinement. Some persons, more nice than wise, have thought the whole of the character of Iago unnatural, Shakespeare, who was quite as good a philosopher as he was a poet, thought otherwise..."

"Eurocentric views that African men are barbaric, illiterate; promiscuous, Studs (good enough only to be used in servitude as the white man's property) have been perpetuated through time and space. In the play Othello, Shakespeare presents an African man who negates such stereotypical views in shocking his audience with this deviation from the norm, Shakespeare presents a reality that African men are indeed civil, literate, faithful husbands. Othello's tragedy transcends race and is based on a natural human weakness. His lack of self-esteem makes him an easy prey for the white devil, Iago."

"Mention that the elements of comedy help to create a difference in kind is an idea implicit in what M.R.Ridley says in the Arden edition "In none of them [Lear, Macbeth, and Antony and Cleopatra] is there that implication followed by explication which Aristotle thought one of the features of great tragedy, and of which incidentally, Shakespeare himself a master in another kind of play. The Merchant of Venice, Much Ado, and Measure for Measure have theatrically effective plots. But Shakespeare used this form only once in high tragedy, and this is where Othello differs in structure and in effect from the others".

"Is the Othello of modern critics Shakespeare's Othello? Here are three representative opinions. To Sir Edmund Chambers, Othello is "the simple open-hearted soldier", "a gracious and doomed creature" who is an "easy victim" for Kitteridge he is "a heroic and simple nature, putting full trust in two friends, both of whom betray him, the one in angry malice, the other by weakness and self-seeking". Still sees him as a very dramatic puppet who evinces no psychological consistency in his passage from love to sudden jealousy and who must fall because of the dramatic device that everyone trusts the villain: Iago is Othello's nemesis."

## **5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The research methodology used in this research is qualitative; further, it is descriptive. It is analytical and critical in nature. The researchers have used dialogues to explain the factors and root causes of catastrophe in the play.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

For new researchers there is much more to study. They can analyze fate in Othello, Othello's own behavior, Iago's good luck, Iago's satanic schemes, marriages in Othello etc.

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## 7. Data Analysis/Findings:

### 7.1. Act 1 Scene 1:

*“Others there are/ who, trimm’d in forms and visages of duty,/ keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,/ And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,/ Do well thrive by them and when they have lined their coats/ Do themselves homage;”*

In the main demonstration, we came to know Iago as a villain. Here Iago is advising Roderick that why he needs to offer him some assistance with getting Desdemona; give its actual nature. The audience came to know that he needs to take revenge against Othello. He is incredibly smart, and of sharp personality that he knows exceptionally well that what he needs to fulfill because of this revengeful intention audience do not like him, he is genuinely called as a self-serving parasite.

### 7.2. Act 2 Scene 2:

*Nay, but he parted, / And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms/ Against your honor/ That, with the little godliness I have, / I did full hard for bear him;*

Presently Iago is assuming two-fold parts. First, he recounts the narratives of Desdemona's elopement to her father. Brabantio then he goes to Othello to caution him against Brabantio's outrage. It is evident that how astutely he plots another plot and succeeds in it and it is likewise vital to note individuals are not what they appear.

### 7.3. Act 2 Scene 1:

**“The Moor, now be it that I endure him not/ Is of a constant, loving, noble nature.”**

Iago put forth this expression in soliloquy towards Othello, and the whole organization arrives in Cyprus as Iago is wise he can recognize that Othello is a worthy and respectable man as opposed to his shrewd nature. However, Iago uncovers the how abhorrent he genuinely on the ground that in spite of his own trustworthiness despite everything he needs to totally crush Othello's life and reputation accordingly he exploits Othello's trust.

### 7.4. Act 2 Scene 3:

**“Now by heaven, / My blood begins my safer guides to rule/ And passion, having my best judgment collied, Assays to lead the way.”**

The quote uncovers a significant flaw in Othello's character surprisingly. Othello is not a consistent and sensible individual, when he is furious or sincerely moved, he permits himself as per his heart as opposed to his brain.

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**7.5. Act 3 Scene 2:**

**“These letters give, Iago to the pilot; / And by him do my duties to the Senate.”**

Iago charges Iago to convey a few letters to the chief of the boat that is sailing back to Venice. Despite the creating trust in the middle of Othello and Iago is still given the duty of a servant .it must be incredibly annoying for Iago to act subordinate and imagine that he is glad and perform any task assigned by a general. This shows the relationship in the middle of Ensign and general and gives the audience a thought of Iago’s inspiration driving his detestable plot.

**7.6. Act 3 Scene 3:**

**“Beware, my lord of jealousy; / It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock/ The meal it feeds on”**

Truly Iago is advising Othello not to be envious and to be careful about what desire can make a man do. However, the subtext of this announcement gives it an essence altogether different from what the words actually say. Iago is substantially more unpretentious dropping hints using slip words, this line takes the flow of calamities, by advising Othello not to be desirous, Iago figures out how to put the thought in his brain.

**7.7. Act 3 Scene 4:**

**“To lose’t or give’t away were such perdition/ As nothing else could match.”**

Othello is now changing under Iago’s negative impact he is no longer a loving husband he is now suspicious of everything around him he is intentionally making a circumstance where he can blame her for betrayal.

**7.8. Act 4 Scene 1:**

**“Iago: "Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed which she hath contaminated.”**

The quote symbolically defines the moment in Othello's advancement. Once he had been respected with the most utmost respect, love, the complete change surprises even the most audience who has been watching the plot from the very beginning. There is not even an insight of regret in his discourse; he praises Iago for thinking of a more perverted technique for executing Desdemona.

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**7.9. Act 5 Scene 1:**

**“This is the night/ That either makes me or fordoes me quite.”**

Throughout the play, Iago has been completely in control of the circumstances. He is the brain behind the greater part of the main events and controls each character easily. In soliloquies, he is constantly sure, yet surprisingly he communicates that the circumstances are now out of his control. First-time destiny betrays him.

**7.10. Act 5 Scene 2:**

**“Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate/ Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak of one that loved not too wisely but too walk, / Of one not easily jealous,**

Othello is making a final plea to the general public with an end goal to rescue his honor. His frenzy state of mind while under Iago's impact was similar to a tempting thinking. It is the error of judgment, hamartia. That forces him to commit murder, In any case, this is not real. It is he that permits his hamartia to move forward his activities.

**8. CONCLUSION:**

Othello has regularly been considered as the most painful of Shakespeare's tragedies. The fall of a proud, dignified man, the homicide of a swish, loving woman, and the unreasoning hatred of a "wanton" villain, all have evoked worry and fear in spectators. If it lacks the cosmic grandeur of Hamlet or King Lear, Othello although possesses an energy, this is possibly greater immediately and strongly felt for working on the personal, human plane.

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