
Iago from Othello Is the Perfect Villain

Did Iago screw up? The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice. William Shakespeare. Iago manipulates Cassio to get him drunk and gets Roderigo to bring him into a fight. Iago has his revenge when Othello demotes Cassio of his rank because of his misbehavior. Iago decides to make Othello believe his wife is unfaithful to him. Three things that make Iago a perfect villain are: manipulation, he is “honest” to others, and his actions ultimately caused the death of others.

For me Iago's strongest characteristic when it comes to being the villain is manipulation. Iago set in Othello's mind that something is happening between Cassio and Desdemona. “Othello: Get me some poison, Iago, this night: I'll not expostulate with her lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again. This night, Iago. Iago: Do it not with poison. Strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated. Othello: Good, good. The justice of it pleases. Very good. (4.1.191-197)*.” This quote is when Othello decides to kill Desdemona so that she can not cheat on him or any other man. Othello wants to poison Desdemona, but Iago suggests not to kill Desdemona with poison. Othello and Iago had a conversation and Iago had mentioned that Desdemona looked like she was flirting with Cassio. Iago at that moment planted the idea that Desdemona might not be faithful to Othello.

Iago tells the truth... Sometimes. He is half honest to people around him. “Othello. What dost thou say, Iago ? Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady, Know of your love? Othello. He did, from first to last ; why dost thou ask ? Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought ; No further harm. Othello. Why of thy thought, Iago ? Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with her. Othello. O, yes ; and went between us very oft. Iago. Indeed ! Othello. Indeed! ay, indeed; discern'st thou aught in that? Is he not honest ? Iago. Honest, my lord ! Othello. Honest ! ay, honest. Iago. My lord, for aught I know. Othello. What dost thou think ? Iago. Think, my lord ! Othello. 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 lik'dst not that, When Cassio left my wife : what didst not like ? And when I told thee he was of my counsel In my whole course of wooing, thou criest ' Indeed ! ' And didst contract and purse thy brow together, (3.3.95-104)*.” Iago tells Othello that he thinks Cassio is with Desdemona, Othello questions whether it is the truth or a lie. Iago tells Othello it is the honest truth. Othello does not believe Iago and wants proof that Cassio is with Desdemona. “Iago. Nay, but be wise : yet we see nothing done ; She may be honest yet. Tell me but this, Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand ? Othello. I gave her such a one ; 't was my first gift. Iago. I know not that ; but such a handkerchief — I am sure it was your wife's — did I to-day See Cassio wipe his beard with. Othello. If it be that,— Iago. If it be that, or any that was hers, It speaks against her with the other proofs.” (3.3.420-429)

Othello does not want to believe Iago when tells Othello that Desdemona might not be faithful. Iago asks about the handkerchief that Emilia stole for him. Iago tells Othello that he saw the handkerchief in Cassio's hand. But Othello does not know how Cassio would have actually got the handkerchief, only that Desdemona could have given it to Cassio.

Iago's actions that were due to jealousy caused the ultimate death of Othello, Emilia, Roderigo and Desdemona. "Roderigo. O, help me here ! 6a Cassio. That's one of them. Iago. O murderous slave ! O villain ! [Stabs Roderigo. Roderigo. O damn'd Iago ! O inhuman dog ! Iago. Kill men i' the dark! — Where be these bloody thieves? — How silent is this town ! — Ho ! murder ! murder!— What may you be ? are you of good or evil ?, (5.1.61-67)*" This scene is when Iago kills Roderigo, so he can not tell anyone of Iago's plan to wound Cassio. "Othello. It is too late. Emilia. [Withiri] My lord, my lord ! what, ho ! my lord, my lord ! Othello. What noise is this? — Not dead? not yet quite dead ? I that am cruel am yet merciful ; I would not have thee linger in thy pain. — So, so. Emilia. [Within] What, ho ! my lord, my lord ! Othello. Who's there ? Emilia. [Within] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you ! Othello. Yes ; — 't is Emilia. — By and by. — She's dead. — 'T is like she comes to speak of Cassio's death. — The noise was here. — Ha ! no more moving? Still as the grave., (5.2.85-100)*" This is the scene where Othello kills Desdemona because he - Othello - wholeheartedly believes that Desdemona has cheated on him - Othello - with Cassio and confronts her - Desdemona - about the handkerchief that Cassio had in his hand. "Iago. Villanous whore ! Emilia. She give it Cassio ! no, alas ! I found it, And I did give 't my husband. Iago. Filth, thou liest ! 230 Emilia. By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen. O murderous coxcomb ! what should such a fool Do with so good a wife? Othello. Are there no stones in heaven But what serve for the thunder ? — Precious villain ! [He runs at Iago ; Iago, from behind, stabs Emilia, and exit. Gratiano. The woman falls ; sure, he hath kill'd his wife. Emilia. Ay, ay. O, lay me by my mistress' side.,(5.2.27-40)*" Iago stabs Emilia when she told the truth about the handkerchief, then Iago runs away. "Othello. Soft you ; a word or two before you go. I have done the state some service, and they know 't. No more of that. — I pray you, in your letters, When you shall these unlucky deeds relate, Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate, Nor set down aught in malice; then must you speak Of one that loved not wisely but too well; Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought Perplex'd 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 turban'd Turk Beat a Venetian and traduc'd the state, I took by the throat the circumcised dog. And smote him — thus. [Stabs himself. Lodovico. O bloody period ! Gratiano. All that 's spoke is marr'd. Othello. I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee ;— no way but this, Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [Falls on the bed, and dies., (5.2.38-68)*." Othello kills himself after the confrontation with Iago and guards in Desdemona's bedroom about killing Desdemona out of jealousy, love and anger. Because of Iago's actions four people are dead, one's that Iago was friends with or that he loved.

Iago, he really did screw his life up didn't he? Iago was manipulative, half honest with people and he caused the death of many people just because he was jealous. I think something myself and others can learn from this is: no matter how jealous or angry you get it does not do any good to yourself or others to dwell on your emotions or act upon your emotions, whether you think about the consequences - positive or negative - or not, because it could have disastrous results even if that is your endgame.

Work Cited

1. Othello: The Moor of Venice by William Shakespeare - Books on Google Play. Google, Google, play.google.com/store/books/details/Othello_The_Moor_of_Venice?id=Ki9XAAAAYAAJ

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