

2nd essay

In William Shakespeare's "Othello", who is the most complex or psychologically interesting character?

"Divinity of hell! When devils will the blackest sins put on, they do suggest at first heavenly shows as I do now." This is an utterance of the most complex or psychologically character in the Tragedy Othello; Iago.

A complex character is a character who is multi-faceted, layered, who change or grow according to the situation and has conflicting traits and motivations. Thus, their psychological composition is interesting, as their actions are unpredictable.

Iago, the machiavellian antagonist of the drama Othello is the most complex or psychologically interesting character, due to ~~the~~ ^{his} ineffably villainous actions. This analysis offers an invitation to seek this aspect of Iago.

Before illustrating examples to prove Iago's ~~dict~~ dichotomy, it is required to justify this selection. Othello is a gullible character, who committed uxoricide according to the schemes of Iago, Desdemona had eyes of an angel that prevented her from seeing the devil in others, Cassio was only provoked to gain the lieutenantship of he lost in order to serve Othello, Roderigo is a debauchery character who wanted to "purchase" love and Emilia, though she went against Desdemona by saying she had no clear idea on where the handkerchief, was the character who finally unveiled the villainy of Iago, her husband. Thus, it is evident that Iago is the most complex or psychologically interesting character for he is a man with too many faces but who wears one, according to the situation. The ensuing paragraphs elucidate this nature of Iago.

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The complexity of Iago's character is seen from the very first scene of the first Act of the drama. When he was conversing with Iago Rodenigo, he let the audience know his hypocrisy - "I am not what I am" - this is a biblical allusion to Exodus, which states that God is analogous to "I am what I am". Hence, Iago places himself on the side of Satan! This reveals the hypocrisy and villainy inculcated in Iago, which is again reinforced through "I will wear my heart upon my sleeve", that is also mentioned in the same Act. Thus, Iago can be portrayed as the most complex or the psychologically interesting character in the play.

Moreover, Iago displayed spurious faithfulness to Iago while brewing up the recipe of revenge. He himself planted the idea of "rousing Brabantio" and states "that he only displays 'flags of service'". He proves this in Act I scene 2 by saying "I hold it very stuff of the conscience to do no contrived murder" referring to the "angst" he felt when Rodenigo reprimanded Othello. This portrays the multi-faceted nature of Iago who is filled with contradictory actions and speech, proving that he is the most complex and psychologically interesting character in the drama.

In addition, it was Iago who devised the plan of stripping the lieutenantship of Cassio - "If I can fasten but one cup upon him, he will be full of quarrel and offence". He identified the weakness of Cassio and used it against him, fulfilling his dream while uttering "I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth than it should do offence to Michael Cassio" when Othello inquired about what happened. It is apparent that Iago has multiple layers out of which the top most exerts benevolence to others while all the other hidden layers are aimed at retrograding the lives of the others.

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Iago is a master of psychological despotism, for he was able to make the love Othello had towards Desdemona, evaporate. Iago "pours pestilence to his ear" and reveals the caveat - "beware my lord of jealousy, it is the green-eyed monster." Iago warns Othello about pathological jealousy, which is what Iago himself ignited in Othello. The change in Othello's love towards Desdemona (the conversion to hate) is seen when Othello exclaims "my relief is to hate her." Hence, Iago is the most complex or psychologically interesting character because he himself is a master of psychological manipulation.

Furthermore, Iago formerly pleads Othello to spare the life of Desdemona, after Othello is convinced of Desdemona's infidelity - "my friend (Cassio) is dead... but let her live" However, in Act 4 scene 1, it was he who suggested the "proper" way to murder Desdemona - "do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even in the bed she hath contaminated." The contradiction, the malevolence conflated portrays that the character of Iago is the most complex and psychologically interesting.

The list of all Iago's evil plots stretch over a mile! The other instances that he justified that he is the most complex character is seen when he undermines reputation in front of Cassio and bestows limitless value to it in front of Othello, when he consoles Desdemona knowing that his actions are the cause of her tears and ultimate death, using Roderigo for his purposes and murdering him in the end, gifting admonitions to Cassio so that he could gain the lieutenantship while enraging Othello against Cassio, making the per Othello a dastard person which is seen when Othello hides and listens to Cassio's "confession", implanting the handkerchief of Desdemona in Cassio's lodging and painting a different

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picture of it to Othello so that he would be engulfed in rage and sexual jealousy. Also, at the end of the drama, Iago's complexity heightens as he says "I told him what I thought and told no more than what he found himself." He justifies his actions, so that no blame attaches to himself, though, for once, he failed. Because of this character, four other characters were murdered, two were maimed and one was falsely arrested and also, the audience was appalled! Thus, it can be asserted that Iago is the most complex and psychologically interesting character in the tragedy "Othello".

In conclusion, William Shakespeare has crafted Iago as the most complex and psychologically interesting character of the tragedy of Othello.