
Othello: Revealing Of Jealousy Destruction

Jealousy is feeling or showing envy of someone or their achievements and advantages. Everyone has been jealous sometime in their life. Jealousy is a relevant theme that comes up in William Shakespeare's play, Othello. Othello is a very interesting play that represents the continuous Ruin of a general as he easily trusts the wrong people and gets the consequences of his gullibility. The play is essentially charged by the unrelenting nature of the Antagonist, Iago, as he tries to get revenge on Othello for not promoting him as the lieutenant and instead giving it to another man that has no experience in physical battle. Iago is angry because Othello promoted Cassio to the lieutenant position, instead of him. Brabantio is jealous because Othello married his daughter, Desdemona. Othello gets jealous when he suspects that Desdemona is cheating on him with Cassio. While Iago is seen as an honest man by Othello, his jealousy leads to the downfall of everyone. Jealousy is a destructive trait that leads to bad situations.

Prior to the start of the play, Othello had given the lieutenant position to Cassio instead of Iago, and that fuelled the hate and jealousy that Iago has towards Othello and Cassio. Other than this, there's little more to explain why Iago hates Othello, and why he decides to cause harm to everyone else in the play. Iago has made it clear that he is angry at Othello for promoting Cassio to lieutenant, instead of him. Iago also has a suspicion that Othello has been sleeping with his wife, and he later says:

And it is thought abroad that twixt my sheets

He's done my office. I know not if't be true;

But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,

Will do as if for surety. (1,3,371-374)

This suspicion leaves Iago more angry and jealous although he is not certain that Othello and his wife, Emilia, are having an affair. Iago also believes he will be a better lieutenant solely on the fact that he has more experience with battle. Iago has more experience fighting, but Cassio is more knowledgeable of the position given to him. But Iago sees his experience as more valuable, which is why he thinks Cassio is not worthy enough for that role. Iago's jealousy is shown when he is talking to his friend Roderigo about Othello. He says:

If I do not. Three great ones of the city

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant

Off-capped to him, and by the faith of man

I know my price, I am worth no worse a place. (1,1,9-12)

Poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge describes Iago's reasons for revenge as "the motive-hunting of motiveless Malignity", meaning that Iago has no real reasons for causing all this harm, and that

he is just evil. He also describes Iago as “a being next to Devil, only not quite Devil”. Iago’s ability to cause havoc without any form of remorse makes him more horrifying, and it shows just how evil and self centered he is. Iago’s jealousy causes him to do so much evil, without him thinking of anything he hopes to achieve when it's all over.

Desdemona and Othello appear to have a good and romantic relationship in the play. At the start of the play, they are loving and trusting, and they stood by each other the whole time before Iago got involved in their lives. Iago puts doubt and insecurity in the mind of Othello, and it changes the way that Othello sees Desdemona. Othello gets jealous when Iago suggests that Desdemona has been cheating on him with his lieutenant Cassio, and his jealousy grows bigger when he is unable to find out the truth. The trust that he has for Desdemona diminishes, and he starts trusting Iago over his wife. Othello’s jealousy drives him to ask for proof that Desdemona is cheating on him. Othello says to Iago:

I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;

And on the proof, there is no more but this

Away at once with love or jealousy. (3,3,204-206)

Othello claims that he won't get jealous if there is no proof that his wife is cheating on him, but he continues to think about it and the jealousy takes over him. Iago keeps planting negative thoughts in Othello’s head and that leaves him frustrated and wanting an answer even more. Iago manipulates Othello even more by telling him to be careful about jealousy, Iago says:

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy.

It is a green-eyed monster which doth mock

The meat it feeds on. (3,3,178-180)

This statement plants jealousy even more into Othello’s mind, specifically because it is coming from a man that he considers to be honest. Iago uses his reputation as an honest man as a tool to control the mind of Othello and the people around him. Foster insinuates that Iago uses the beliefs of other people about him to turn them against themselves, he tells them what he wishes them to know about, and then he creates a false circumstance that will turn his victims against each other. Othello eventually confronts Desdemona about cheating on him with Cassio. She tells him so many times that she has done nothing to deserve such accusation, but Othello still does not believe her and instead believes in Iago. Othello gets really angry at what he believes are lies coming from Desdemona, and his jealousy takes over him because he thinks she has been unfaithful to him, that he smothers her in their bed. His jealousy overtakes him and leads him to make the worst decision of the entire play.

Iago’s jealousy goes on until the final moments of the play, he convinces his friend Roderigo to kill Cassio and gives him reasons to do it, but what Roderigo doesn't know is that Iago has been using him for his own benefit all this while and because Roderigo is a gullible man, Iago is able to tell him anything and have him believe it. Iago still sees Cassio as a threat to him and his jealousy for Cassio comes out even more when he says:

If Cassio do remain,

He hath a daily beauty in his life

That makes me Ugly; and besides, the Moor

May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril. (5,1,18-21)

This statement shows that Iago's jealousy did not just come from Cassio being promoted to lieutenant, but that he is also jealous of Cassio's beauty. Iago says that Cassio is better looking than him and that that gives him more reason to want him dead. Iago also wants Cassio dead because he doesn't want him to find out all the lies that he told about him. He sees Cassio as a threat moving forward and wants the jealousy leads him to ordering Roderigo to kill him.

Jealousy is a destructive trait that leads to bad situations. Jealousy is used as a weapon for Iago to achieve what he wants. But it is ruined when his Emilia speaks the truth. By the end of the play all of Iago's lies fall apart and his plot to is visible to everyone. Iago's plans backfire and lead to the death of Roderigo, Desdemona, Emilia, and Othello, it also leads to his own punishment as Cassio is promoted to the governor of Venice.