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MASTER THESIS

“I AM NOT WHAT I AM”
IAGO AS A DIABOLICAL MANIPULATOR IN OTHELLO

MOHAMMED HAMEED MAJED

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Submitted by : Mohammed Hameed Majed

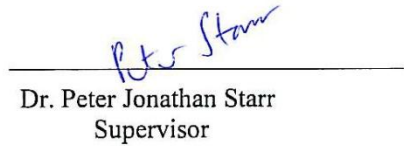
Approval of Graduate School of Social Sciences, Cankaya University


Prof. Dr. Taner ALTUNOK
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of
the Master of Arts.


Prof. Dr. Aysu Aryel Erden
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully
adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.


Dr. Peter Jonathan Starr
Supervisor

Examination Date : 7. 12. 2012

Examination Committee members

Dr. Peter Jonathan Starr (Cankaya Univ)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul Koç (Cankaya Univ)

Assist. Prof. Dr. Sıla Şenlen (Ankara Univ)



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Name, Last name : Mohammed Hameed Majed

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ABSTRACT

“I AM NOT WHAT I AM”

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Mohammed Majed

M.A., Department of English Literature and Cultural studies

Supervisor: Dr. Peter Jonathan Starr

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This thesis is arranged as an argument to show Iago's close connections with the devil or Satan. There is consideration of the play as a whole, Iago, and his role in the play. The discussion is set against a background of Elizabethan notions of evil, and the personality and methods of the devil. According to these, a human may enter into a pact with the devil, even to the extent of becoming identified with the devil, and presenting us with a “devil incarnate”. The focus of this work, however, is on a detailed presentation of Iago's character, which is evident as much – or more – in his words and imagery as in his actions. In a play about marital grief, there is discussion of our villain's sexuality, and the fact that this may provide clues to Iago's motivations. Ultimately, these motivations are left unclear. In conclusion, the connection of Iago with the devil goes a long way to explain the symbolic and dramatic power of Othello. Especially in view of Shakespeare's proven interest in the spirit world, it is argued that the model dominating his creation of Iago was the devil.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Othello, Iago's character, the devil, Shakespeare's imagery

ÖZ

“BEN ASLINDA BEN DEĞİLİM”:

OTHELLO'DA ŞEYTANI BİR AYARTICI OLARAK IAGO KARAKTERİ

Mohammed Majed

YÜKSEK LİSANS, İNGİLİZ EDEBİYATI VE KÜLTÜR İNCELEMELERİ BÖLÜMÜ

Danışman: Dr. Peter Jonathan Starr

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Bu tez Iago'nun şeytani yönlerini karakteri şeytanla alakalandırarak tartışmaktadır. Shakespeare'in eserinin bütününe bakıldığında, Iago ve oynadığı rol daha bir vurguludur. Kraliçe Elizabeth döneminin “şeytan” algısından yola çıkarak ve şeytanın kişilik tahlili yapılarak, tezde bu tartışma oluşturulmuştur. Dönemin algısına göre; bir insane şeytanla anlaşma yapabilir, hatta şeytan, insanda vücut bulmuş olarak da ortaya çıkabilir. Bu tezin vurgusu da, detaylı bir Iago betimlemesi yoluyla—ve dahası—Iago'nun sarfettiği sözler ve davranışlardan yola çıkarak, şeytani karakterin kişiliği üzerinedir. Mutsuz evlilik temasının işlendiği eserde “alçak” diye nitelenebilecek karakterin cinselliğinin, karakterinin amaçlarıyla alakalı ipuçları vereceği de bir gerçektir. Gerçekte, Iago'nun neyi amaçladığı eserde bir bilinmez olarak kalır. Sonuçta, Iago'nun şeytani yönlerinin eserdeki tahlili, *Othello*'nun sembolik ve etkileyici bir eser olmasını da beraberinde getirmiştir. Shakespeare'in “manadünya”ya olan ilgisi dikkate alındığında, aslında Iago karakterini yöneten gücün de şeytan olduğu söylenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Shakespeare, Othello, Iago Karakteri, Şeytan, Shakespeare'in İmgelemi

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INTRODUCTION

When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now..." (II. iii. 351-353)

No less that twenty-seven passages in Shakespeare's play *Othello* clearly connect the villain Iago with the devil, or the world of demons. As indicated in the extract above, Iago repeatedly speaks of himself as a devil, or triumphs in the inspiration he gets from evil.

Othello, too late of course, and others make the same connection. At the end of the play, the Moor asks in despair "Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil / Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body? (V. ii. 300-302) He looks down to see if Iago has cloven feet:

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable. (V. ii. 286)

This thesis will argue that there is more to these diabolical references than mere imagery. Almost all Elizabethans, but particularly Shakespeare, believed in, and had a lively sense of the character of, the devil (Satan), major devils, and their servants, the demons or evil spirits. This is an aspect which is often missed by the modern reader and critic, who may be surprised to learn that no less than twenty names for demons occur in Shakespeare's plays. The playwright's strong belief in the paranormal is evident in his plays, which may feature characters like Puck, the witches, the ghost of Hamlet's father, and those troubling the sleep of Richard III, the spirit Ariel, and others. Research also confirms that Shakespeare was well aware of contemporary controversies about the world of the spirits, to the extent that he used them in his writing.¹

As the spectator or reader interprets Iago's words, and ultimately his character as it emerged from Shakespeare's imagination, he or she needs to respond as the audience would have done in 1603/4, when horror was based on actual belief. For example, when Iago says:

¹ For example, in "Samuel Harsnett and King Lear" Prof. Kenneth Muir pointed out that Shakespeare takes information about devils from a 1603 book attacking Catholic beliefs in the irrational by the chaplain of the Bishop of London.

I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and
night Must bring this monstrous
birth to the world's light.
(I. iii.403-404)

The words “engender'd” and “monstrous birth” immediately suggest the ritual birth feared as a part of witchcraft, with Satan finding women to bear his sons in an inversion of the birth of Christ he fears (Revelation 12: 4). Secondly, people thought that the birth of handicapped babies was an evil sign, as these lines from *The Midsummer Night's Dream* illustrate this, illustrate:

Oberon:
Never mole, hair-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be... (V, i, 410–414)

An awareness of Elizabethan beliefs and superstitions allows a better, and more sinister, understanding of Iago's image. In the same way, this thesis will show that when Shakespeare created the character of Iago he used as his model the devil, whose evil character was much discussed in those days.

The basic aim of Iago is like that of Satan. He rejects good thoughts and beliefs. Like the devil, he recognizes beauty, truth, and goodness in an objective way, but he despises, resents and wishes to corrupt them. He assures us of this in his soliloquies. as in the one that follows says:

So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all. (II. iii. 360-362)

Here the spectator or reader is reminded of the many devils with nets in medieval paintings, or literature (including Dante's *Inferno*). There is also the characteristic of exploits good traits for evil.

Alongside the familiar devil who was part of the imaginative world of all Elizabethans, Bishop Samuel Harsnett and others argued for a more rationalist and impersonal

understandings of the force of evil². These too find their way into Iago's character. Satan is presented as the spirit of non-being, in contrast to God's being and creation of being. Satan is negative in contrast to God's positive. In an 1987 article, Kenneth Palmer focuses on Iago's frequent use of questions and negative statements.³ On one level, Shakespeare makes Iago into a "spirit of denial" (Wilson Knight quoted by Bloom, 1992, p. 116). The clearest example of this is in Othello's final speech, when the Moor asks why the ensign tricked him – and damned his soul – and Iago replies "Demand me nothing; What you know, you know / From this time forth I never will speak word." (V. ii. 316-317)

In this sense, *Othello* can be seen in simple and elemental terms. This thesis will return later to this aspect of the play with a comparison with morality plays, and the temptation and the fall of Adam and Eve.

The marriage of the Moor and Desdemona is passionate and attractive. In contrast, Wilson Knight points out Iago's emotional emptiness:

... on the plane of personification, we see that Othello and Desdemona are concrete, moulded of flesh and blood, warm. Iago contrasts with them metaphysically as well as morally: he is unlimited, formless villainy. He is the spirit of denial, wholly negative. He never has visual reality... (he) is undefined, devisualized, inhuman.⁴

Iago does not build, he destroys. He has no positive emotion, and certainly no affection, but only sees his wife, or Desdemona, or Cassio, as tools in his single task of revenge and power-seeking.

In *Othello* and the other tragedies written around 1600-1606 there is a consistent emphasis on character as the prime source of action. Hamlet's mind, mainly his doubts, determine what happens in his play, in *Macbeth* the driving force is individual ambition, etc. To put more clearly, Iago does what he does because he is what he is. In at least one passage of the play Iago is set up against God, as a kind of opposite of God. Here Iago's words are "I am not what I am," which have as their primary meaning "I am not what I seem." However, the words also recall a quotation from the Bible which Shakespeare would have known well.

² Frank w. B. *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham*. London: Macmillan. 1993, p. 99.

³ "Iago's Questionable Shapes." "Fanned and Winnowed Opinions": *Shakespeare Essays Presented to Harold Jenkins*, Mahon, J. and Pendleton, T. (eds), p. 184-201.

⁴ Harold, Bloom. *Major Literary Characters: "Iago"*. New York, Chelsea House Publisher. 1992, p.116.

In Exodus, God calls Moses, and the prophet asks His name. God replies: “I am who I am” (Exodus. 3, 14).⁵ Iago is entirely the reverse of God, and he becomes the epitome of evil he uses the same tactics as Satan to get what he wants.

The first known performance of *Othello* took place on November 1, 1604, performed by the King’s Men (Shakespeare’s company, formerly the Lord Chamberlain’s Men) at the court of King James. It is likely that the play was written in 1603/4. This places it in the phase when Shakespeare wrote the other “great tragedies” (Bradley, 1905, p. 3); *Hamlet* (1600/1), *King Lear* (1603-1606, and later revised), and *Macbeth* (1603-7), with which *Othello* is linked in style and content. They all show an interest in the human character tested to the extremes, and in destruction brought by ambition and betrayal.

The physical settings of the plays vary greatly. With reference to our thesis, it is important that *Othello* is set in Venice and Venetian Cyprus. Catholic countries, which revered relics and miracle-working images, were regarded as more at risk from spiritual forces. The Puritan James Calphill expresses this clearly: “...these wicked spirits do lurk in shrines, in roods, in images, and first of all pervert the priests.”⁶ As places where good religion was mixed with superstition, for Elizabethans and Jacobean (as later for writers of Gothic fiction) Catholic lands were more likely to witness violent and irrational forces.

The devil in general meaning refers to a supernatural power, who is the enemy of God and humankind. Also known by the personal name, ‘Satan’, the word ‘devil’ comes from the Greek ‘diabolos’, meaning ‘accuser’ or ‘blamer’. *Othello* draws upon discussions of evil which referred to Satan in personal terms in homilies and plays going back to medieval times. He is assisted by a crowd of lesser devils of two classes. The greater demons, seen as princes and army chiefs under Satan’s command, are given such names Belial and Beelzebub. The lesser devils include the opponents of guardian angels.⁷

These considerations support the idea that Iago is consumed by Satan’s thoughts, and identified with him or his servants. Some critics have come to similar conclusions to those which are presented here. According to Stanley Hyman, Iago “is motivated by the fact that he

⁵ Compare the almost blasphemous similarity between Iago’s “My lord, you know I love you” (III. iii. 121) with Saint Peter’s words to Christ, “Lord, thou knowest that I love thee” (John 21:17).

⁶ *Answer to the Treatise of the Crosse*, 1565, republ. 1846, Parker Society, p. 317.

⁷ Thomas Alfred Spalding, *Elizabethan Demonology* (London, 1880; republished on the internet), para. 36.

is Satan or a figuration of Satan, eternally fixed in a posture of hatred of God and envy of man.”⁸ Green and Sheridan write “Iago is everything of the devil, a spirit of evil, but this means that Othello is nothing, little more than a puppet.”⁹ The progress of the play, from the very opening, suggests that hell and the devil are consistently in Iago’s mouth.

On the other hand, this view has been resisted by writers like Marvin Rosenberg, who oppose the identification with the devil:

The theoretical difficulty is this: If Iago is the Prince of Darkness, why does he seek, in his soliloquies, human motives for his evil? Why does he not sail straight ahead, passionless, doing his worst? The only answer, if there is one, is that he is making up his humanity, hunting about for motives.¹⁰

This approach underestimates the immediacy and familiarity of Shakespeare’s experience of angels, spirits and devils. The distinction between the spiritual world and physical world was not as absolute as it is to the modern mind. Some earlier critics entirely failed to see significances and complexities this thesis points out. G. B. Shaw, while providing a useful reminder not to read too much into the text, tends to overlook the naturalistic persuasiveness of Iago. He ascribes the shifting appearances we have discussed to careless writing:

Shakespeare, as usual, starts with a rough general notion of a certain type of individual, and then throws it over at the first temptation. Iago begins as a coarse blackguard whose jovial bluntness passes as “honesty” and who is professionally a routine subaltern incapable of understanding why a mathematician gets promoted over his head. But the moment a stage effect can be made, he expresses himself eloquently... [he] becomes a godsend to students of the “problems” presented by our divine William’s sham characters.¹¹

Such an approach may be refreshing, in that it warns the spectator not to read too much into the text. However, to Iago’s character and motives as the result of a rough and inconsistent sketch is quite absurd; Iago never was the simple subaltern Shaw describes. In the modern debate, the approaches are paralleled by Clifford Leech in his severe criticism of the critic Rymer, who had similar views to Shaw’s:

⁸ S. E. Hyman. *Iago: Some Approaches to the Illusion of his Motivation*. New York Atheneum.1970, pp. 29

⁹ A. Green & A. Sheridan. *The Tragic Effect (The Oedipus Complex in Tragedy)*. Cambridge U. P.1979, pp. 117.

¹⁰ Marvin, Rosenberg, “In Defense of Iago,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1955, p. 145-158.

¹¹ J. Lutz. *Pitchman’s Melody: G.B Shaw about Shakespeare*. Cranbury, New Jersey, Associated U. P.1974, pp. 24. (quoted in Lutz, Jerry)

It is easy to make fun of Thomas Rymer. He was a learned, pugnacious and foolhardy man who gave the quasi-immortality of publication to critical judgments that he knew would not be popular. Iago, he is sure, is a badly drawn character; soldiers have everywhere the reputation of being, open hearted, frank, plain dealing, and Shakespeare was wrong to present him otherwise.¹²

Far from being the result of ‘*rough*’, superficial writing, the character of the ensign absorbed Shakespeare and drew from him some great psychological insights.

Iago’s actions are built on a compulsion to do evil, and in this he finds a super-human power. He has a visceral insight into human weaknesses, which gives him a great ability to manipulate people. Othello, Roderigo and Cassio are helpless against him. He is one we could call a “*driven*” man, with evil as his driving force. Humiliated at being a servant, he must find a way to dominate his master.

As already mentioned, Shakespeare’s beliefs ensured that his plays present a wide range of ideas about the devil. Iago shares his main method, deception, with the devil. This characteristic is stated in the first quotation given in Chapter One, and was also on Hamlet’s mind when he said: “The devil hath power / To assume a pleasing shape...” (II. ii. 636-637) As with most Medieval and Elizabethan popular beliefs about spirits, the main reference point is the Bible. Iago and Hamlet’s words derive from the Apostle Paul: “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” (II Corinthians II: 13-14). Satan’s disguises and the images associated with him include a “dragon” (Revelation 12:3), an “angel” (11 Corinthians 11:13-14), a lion (1 Peter 5:8), and a wolf in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7: 15). These disguises and images show his many forms.

The devil or his servants may be man’s familiar or friend, as in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, where Mephistopheles converses on intimate terms with Faustus. This accords with the unseen and confidential character of temptations, when the devil (in the Biblical phrase) silently “puts [temptations] into the heart”. The oldest image of the devil is that of the hissing

¹² C, Leech. *Shakespeare’s Tragedies and Other Studies in Seventeenth Century Drama*. London: Chatto and Windus.1961, pp. 87.

snake, repeatedly pressing Eve to disobey.¹³ This is the characteristic of the devil closest to what we find in our villain. When Iago has convinced the others, especially Othello, of his honesty, they are easily led to his evil plots because of the trust granted to him. His mixture of envy, pride, a sense of superiority, a desire for the power, and scorn, as well as self-pity, a sense of inferiority, and even despair, all mirror what Satan feels when he is expelled from heaven.

Much Elizabethan and Jacobean demonology, also evident in Milton, derived from the New Testament, especially the letter of Jude and the Revelation. Here, for example, Satan caused a third of heaven to fall with by influencing other angelic beings to make a war against God:

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. (Revelation 12: 4)

Here we have the origin of the tail, the sulphurous smell, and other literally-held beliefs. In the Old Testament also, the Fiend may use what is good to deceive, as when he tempts Eve in the garden. He uses the appearance of the fruit to deceive her:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband... Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:6-13)

Satan and Iago both have an expert way of seizing upon appearances to create false impressions. This comparison shows how close the story of *Othello* comes to the medieval tradition of biblical plays, still known in Shakespeare's day.¹⁴

Iago rejoices in evil, just as the devil triumphs (temporarily) over Christ in such plays. The evil pleasure of witches is evoked in such lines as "work on, / my medicine, work on" (VI. i. 44-45). Responding to this image, Coleridge states that Iago is "a being next to devil,

¹³ Genesis 2. The devil's ability to whisper (waswasa) is emphasized in Islam.

¹⁴ Shakespeare refers to religious plays, for example when Hamlet says an actor "out-Heroded Herod" (III. ii. 14), a word taken from nativity plays.

and only not quite devil.”¹⁵ The speech is designed to reflect the conjurations of witches. Iago comes close to the concept of the devil as a confidential whisperer of temptations in the first soliloquy when he says:

Cassio’s a proper man...

... — How, how? Let’s see: —
After some time, to abuse Othello’s ear
That he is too familiar with his wife... (I. iii. 392-395)

This speech recalls Claudius pouring poison into his brother’s ear in *Hamlet*. It is often said that this is the point at which Iago realizes that he has the power to triumph over his master, as can be seen from accounts of famous productions:

[I]t is a lesson... to see Mr. Macready’s change of countenance at the lines “I have’t- it is engendered”... [in Fechter’s production]... at “ I have’t “he walks forward triumphantly... ¹⁶

When all the others have left, Iago stays alone on the stage, and at this point begins to arrange his plan, as Iago turns his attention to the bigger game.

Satan manipulates others behind the scenes, creating confusion as the wrong people get the blame. Iago is able to stand back while others act for him, ensuring that his disguise as an honest servant is not endangered. He uses Roderigo, then his wife Emilia as tools. Most crucially, Iago asks Emilia to steal Desdemona’s handkerchief, which she obeys. Even though she is his wife, she is unsure of his aims:

Iago: A good wench! Give it me.
Emilia: What will you do with’t, that you have been so earnest
To have me filch it?
Iago: why, what’s that to you? [snatching it]. (III. iii.315-319)

Roderigo is also manipulated, and also confused about Iago’s opinion of him. In return, the master of evil has nothing but scorn for these puppets:

... I my own gained knowledge would profane
If I would time expend with such a snipe,

¹⁵ L, Scragg. “Iago: Vice or Devil?” *Shakespeare Survey*. Cambridge U. P. Coleridge, quoted in Scragg, L. 1968, p. 61.

¹⁶ H, Julie. *Othello. Shakespeare in Production*. Cambridge, Cambridge U. P, second edition 2005, p.152.

But for my sport and profit. (I. iii. 385-387)

The technique of manipulation explains his interest in Roderigo, a young Venetian who feels that the Moor has deprived him of his love. As a result Othello has more than one enemy, and Iago is able to hide more securely behind his persona of the moral servant by causing others to act in his place. Roderigo would have been recognized by Shakespeare's audience as the typical "gull" or "fool" stock character.

The devil leaves his victims in confusion, blaming each other, as Adam and Eve do when confronted by God in the garden. Iago's success comes from creating the appearance of honesty, so that he is never doubted. The word "honest" is used fourteen times of Iago, often in the phrase "honest Iago". It is supplied first by Iago himself. Tragically the same word "honesty" is repeatedly alleged to be lacking in Cassio, and above all Desdemona. For example, Othello says:

I think my wife be honest, and think she is not.
She may be honest... (III. iii. 384-385)

It would be out of character for Othello to suspect anything other than faithfulness in his ensign. As Iago says, "The Moor is of a free and open nature... / And will as tenderly be led by the nose / As asses are." (I. iii. 398-400) The situation is well expressed in the classic essay of Bradley:

This confidence was misplaced, and we happen to know it; but it was no sign of stupidity in Othello. For his opinion of Iago was the opinion of practically everyone who knew him: and that opinion was that Iago was before all things 'honest' his very faults being those of excess in honesty.¹⁷

While Othello is not stupid, he is certainly blinded by his grand vision of himself and the world. This vision has much that is good and attractive, and it is characteristic of evil to make use of naive goodness. Much of the tragic emotions of pity and fear in *Othello* derive from the audience's awareness that the underlying dishonesty can "lead by the nose" believers in romance and nobility.

¹⁷ A. C. Bradley. *Shakespearean Tragedy (Lecture on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth)*. Macmillan St Martin's Press. First Edition (1904). Reprinted in Pocket Papermacs. 1966, pp. 156.

Iago's motives are unclear and shifting, and that this makes him uniquely troubling among Shakespearean villains. Several reasons for resentment are indicated, including a profound sexual frustration, social alienation and failure to be recognized. None of the explanations Iago provides carry conviction, leading Coleridge to identify a 'motive-hunting of motiveless malignity'. The phrase catches well the sense that Iago does all these deeds for no explicable reason, the evil is part of his psyche, as if he is or has a devil. The phrase is part of a commentary on in Act I, scene III, in which Iago takes leave of Roderigo, saying "go to, farewell. Put money enough in your purse." This is a key speech in which he addresses the question of his motives:

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse...
... for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor:
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if't be true
... let me see now:
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery — How, how? Let's see. (I. iii. 383-395)

He asserts and alters alleged motives in rapid succession. He seeks amusement, and financial gain. Then he says that he is motivated by revenge on Othello for alleged actions he himself does not truly credit. Finally, Iago mentions the words which explain him best: "to plume up my will." Coleridge's famous note on this speech is:

The triumph! again, put money after the effect has been fully produced.--The last Speech, the motive-hunting of motiveless Malignity--how awful! In itself fiendish--while yet he was allowed to bear the divine image, too fiendish for his own steady View.--A being next to Devil--only not quite Devil--and this Shakespeare has attempted-- executed--without disgust, without Scandal!¹⁸

Coleridge identifies the devil with motiveless evil, and sees this as the clearest link between Iago and Satan.

The ensign expresses motives which show him to be both humanly, sensuously bad, and evil in the abstract. Materially, is evident from Iago's first complaints that he feels robbed and insulted. Iago's offended sense of his own merits is a reason for blaming Othello, who knows of his ensign's experience in battle "... At Rhodes, at Cyprus and on other grounds / Christian and heathen... (I. i. 29-30). In Shakespeare's England the army was often the best

¹⁸ T, Postlewait. *Othello and Interpretive Traditions*. University of Iowa Press. Coleridge, quoted in Postlewaite, T. 1999, p. 58.

means for social advancement for those not nobly born, like Iago. He has been ‘non-suited’, although he is convinced of his superiority over Cassio, and has tried to use his influence with great ones of the city. He says to Roderigo:

Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Off-capp’d to him: and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place (I. i. 83-86)

It is interesting to note the colloquial tone of “off-capp’d” which so precisely expresses Iago’s sense of irony that someone so deserving has been reduced to petitioning, and his worldly-wise familiarity with the realities of obtaining promotion.

Bradley warns us against accepting Iago’s explanations of his motives, and he stresses the importance of figuring out how Iago’s mind works:

One must constantly remember not to believe a syllable Iago utters on any subject, including himself, until one has tested his statement by comparing it with known facts and with other statements of his own or other people, and by considering whether he had in the particular circumstances any reason for telling a lie or telling the truth.¹⁹

The concrete motives are undermined by more abstract statements. Iago is more convincing when he speaks simply of a compulsion to ‘plume up my will’, and this indistinct and insatiable search to satisfy the will can only end in death. Here Iago touches on a deep current in Western thought about sin and the devil. Shakespeare was well aware, as were all who lived among the religious controversies of the sixteenth century, of the will. The will is seen as something torn between sensuous pleasure (desire) and faith.²⁰

What follows in this thesis is arranged as an argument on the theme of Iago’s connections with the devil and demons. This requires a consideration of the play as a whole, and Iago and his role in the play. It will be set against a background of Elizabethan notions of evil, and the personality and methods of the devil. The focus, however, must be on a detailed presentation of Iago’s character, evident as much – or more – in his words and imagery as his actions.

¹⁹ A. C. Bradley, 1904, p. 83.

²⁰ The emphasis on the will, especially at the time of the Reformation, is usually traced to Saint Augustine, who states in *Confessions* (Book III, chapter iv) that the human will is the center of the devil’s activity.

CHAPTER II

THE CREATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S VILLAIN: IAGO AND THE PORTE-ENSIGN IN THE HECATOMMITHI

The following chapter will compare *Othello* with its source, found in the *Hecatommithi* (One Hundred Tales) by Giraldi Cinthio, and analyze what Shakespeare chose to omit or add in the case of Iago (simply called “the ensign” by Cinthio), it will be possible to understand how the playwright saw he could mold the character, and why. Secondly, a villain who has been created around the same time as Iago, Edmund in *King Lear*. It will be argued that his character is by far the closest to Iago among Shakespeare’s villains. Comparing and contrasting the two offers insights into what is distinctive about our play, and Iago in particular.

In discussions of the sources of Shakespeare’s plays, scholars point out that Shakespeare ultimately takes the plot of *Othello* from the seventh “novel” of the third decade of the *Hecatommithi*. As was his custom, Shakespeare drew upon existing material by other writers for the plot of his play. “The Story of Disdemona (sic) of Venice and the Moorish Captain”²¹ was published in Italian in 1565. We do not know whether Shakespeare read this in the original Italian or not, but he made some significant changes in adapting the story for his play. This chapter will refer mainly to the French translation of the work by Gabriel Chappuys. Shakespeare did not know Italian, whereas he frequently used French sources, probably indirectly through friends more familiar with the language.²² Some critics have made the mistake of failing to notice that Shakespeare was using not the Italian version but a French translation, and there may have been some intermediary (perhaps John Florio himself) providing help orally or in written form.

²¹ See for the edition Kernan, 1986, pp. 171

²² Ned Allen comments that “it is surprising that the Italian version alone has been reprinted for English and American readers, and it has been used as the basis for all translations of the story into English. Allen, N. “The Source of Othello”, in *Delware Note*, vol.21 (1948), pp. 71-96. University of Delaware Library. Allen writes that it is likely that Shakespeare had a copy of the French version in front of him: “In the first place, Shakespeare does not elsewhere indicate that he could read Italian, while he does reveal a knowledge of French...” (Allen, 1948, p.71)

The story has an interesting origin which goes back further than Giraldi Cinthio. Cinthio takes it from a well-known Byzantine epic poem from the time of the Latin hegemony in the East:

[Prof. A. H.] Krapp comes to the conclusion that the play is not derived from Giraldi Cinthio's *Ecatommithi*, III, 7, but from an unknown tale descending parallel to Girald's from Byzantine epic of *Digenis Akritas*.²³

However this may be, when Shakespeare adapted the story for his play *Othello* from the *Hecatommithi*, he made a number of significant changes, so when we read the original story and compare his version we can recognize the changes in emphasis which the playwright introduced. These show what elements attracted him to the text, just as it is interesting to see the details of the original story which remain.

Perhaps more striking is the fact that the anonymous *Porte-enseigne* of the *Hecatommithi* begins with his plan of destruction when he falls in love with Disdemona, while in *Othello* Iago's determination to act begins at some unspecified time, and is triggered by Othello choosing Cassio as his lieutenant instead of Iago. The *porte-enseigne* thus has a clear motive in the *Hecatommithi* in that he is infatuated with Disdemona, and thus the Moor's rival in love.

The *porte-enseigne*, moreover, is moved to his wickedness by anger at Disdemona's refusal to encourage his amorous advances, while the chief cause of Iago's villain [according to Iago] is the fact that Cassio has been promoted above him.²⁴

The playwright has deliberately taken away any element of romance from Iago. The emotionless and empty character was the result of a deliberate decision of Shakespeare.

Whereas in Cinthio there are clear motivations for revenge, Shakespeare's Iago is unclear about his reasons for acting as he does. As we have seen, one more than one occasion he mentions Cassio's promotion, but then accuses Othello and Emilia of adultery, elsewhere speaking bitterly of being a servant, or showing racist hatred of the black man. These

²³ W, Bllock. "Modern Language Notes", The Johns Hopkins U. P. Vol. 40, No. 4 (Apr, 1925) p. 226. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2914286>)

²⁴ N, Allen. "The Source of Othello", in *Delaware Note*, vol.21 (1948), pp. 73. University of Delaware Library. <http://dspace.udel.edu:8080/dspace/bitstream/handle/19716/4587/article5.pdf?sequence=1>

confusions are not the result of sloppy writing (Shaw, see note 10), and were designed to create what Coleridge famously described as ‘motiveless malignity’.

In a similar way, the Ensigne has a little daughter, a three-year-old child. Desdemona (Desdemona) is also fond of her, taking her and pressing her to her bosom. Shakespeare has removed the element of affection from his villain, as Iago and Emilia are apparently childless.

More dramatically, the Porte-enseigne also has a part in the murder of Desdemona, he even himself kills Desdemona after arranging the plan for the Moor and explaining how to kill her without leaving any trace. He explains to the Moor that his house is old, and he should commit the murder in a way that makes it appear that she was killed by a beam from the ceiling collapsing.

A plan comes to my mind, which will give you satisfaction and raise cause for no suspicion. It is this: the house in which you live is very old, and the ceiling of your chamber has many cracks; I purpose we take a stocking, filled with sand, and beat Desdemona with till she dies.²⁵

The “Porte-enseigne” of Chappuys does most of the wicked actions and deeds himself, both the murder and the stealing of the handkerchief. By contrast in *Othello*, as has been shown, the villain’s cunning is underlined by the fact that he manipulates others, and avoids direct involvement in violent or brutal acts. Iago persuades the others to take the risk themselves. He does not take risks, remaining on the more uncertain level of words. He is the source of the plot to kill Cassio, but persuades Roderigo to perform the (botched) attack. In the stealing of the handkerchief, it is his wife Emilia who brings it to him.²⁶ From the beginning, he causes Roderigo to wake Brabantio, and it is Brabantio who accuses Othello in the senate. In the same way, in the climactic murder of Desdemona, Iago comes up with the plan for Othello to kill Desdemona, which is that he strangles her in bed. But he does not do it. Iago says:

Do it not with poison. Strangle her in bed,
Even the bed she hath contaminated (IV. i. 156-157)

²⁵ S. L. Parker, “Othello, the Source of Shakespeare’s Othello.” Fort Wayne, Ind. (2003) 21:39:30 PST <http://opera.stanford.edu/Verdi/Otello/source.html>. web.21 March 2012. P. 130.

²⁶ This is more fully described by Parker, S. L. “Othello, the Source of Shakespeare’s Othello.” Fort Wayne, Ind. 2003. 21:39:30 PST <http://opera.stanford.edu/Verdi/Otello/source.html>. web.21 March 2012.

It is a brilliant touch, in this play about sexual fears, that Othello kills his wife with a pillow. There is an agonizing irony in the play when Othello enters proclaiming that he acts in the cause of justice. He allows Desdemona to pray, no doubt further exciting the sympathy of the audience, and expresses at length his sorrows. The story has much less of the dramatic irony of the man who is deceived into destroying himself in blind conviction of truth. Shakespeare knew that there is nothing more tragic than a misguided martyr.

Fourthly, in the original story in the *Hecatommithi*, Cinthios's / Chappuy's villain does not have a name; he is just called "le porte ensigne". Othello is similarly the 'Capitano Moro' (Capitaine More) throughout the story. The only character who just actually has a name is Disdemona, which Shakespeare adapted to Desdemona for his play.²⁷ Shakespeare gives the name Othello to the Moor when he adapted from the source, he tries to make a connection between the Ottoman Empire and the Moor. By naming his Moor "Othello." he draws quite clearly a connection between the Ottoman Empire and the Moor.²⁸

As Bhattacharyya points out, another thing that Shakespeare did was "to raise the stature of his hero."²⁹ Just like Othello, the Moor in the *Hecatommithi* has a noble and glorious nature, as he is handsome, extremely gallant and highly thought of by the Venetian people, which is affirmed by the Duke's respect and support for him.

The bravery and dignity of Othello, so clearly shown at the beginning of the play, are to be found in the tale, where the Moor is called 'fort vaillant' and where there is reference to his 'vivacited'e sprit' and to his having won the respect of the Venetian Senate through his 'actesvertueux'. The seriousness and depth of Othello's love for Desdemona are also described in the source.³⁰

The Moor of the *Hecatommithi*, however, appears rather colorless beside the general whom Shakespeare created. Othello is a tremendously romantic character, fighting his way through a fairy-tale past among pirates and cannibals to become the savoir of Venice, and the poetry of his speeches makes a great impression.

²⁷ C. Merklein. *Shakespeare's Othello and Antony and Cleopatra and the Dramatic Transformation of their Main Source Gil Hecatommithi by Batista GiraldiCinthio and Plutarch's The Life of Marcus Antonius*. Munich, GRIN Verlag. 2004, pp. 4.

²⁸ C. M. Johnson. *Proceedings of the Linguistic Circle*. University of Manitoba. 1997, pp. 15.

²⁹ J, Bhattacharyya. *William Shakespeare's Othello*. Atlantic Publishers and Distributors (p) Ltd. 2006, pp. 82.

³⁰ Allen, N. "The Source of Othello", in *Delware Note*, vol.21 (1948), pp. 74. University of Delaware Library. <http://dspace.udel.edu:8080/dspace/bitstream/handle/19716/4587/article5.pdf?sequence=1>

There are less obvious but also significant changes to the plot. In Shakespeare's play, Othello goes to Cyprus alone and Desdemona follows him in another ship with Iago. In the original story the Moor and his wife Desdemona go to Cyprus together in the same ship.³¹ Here Shakespeare the dramatist is at work, seeking to create the emotional climate in the play of the scene in which Othello is gloriously and joyfully reunited with Desdemona.

In Cinthio's story the Porte-enseigne's wife has knowledge about the plot against Desdemona, but she did not care to reveal it. Emilia in *Othello* is ignorant of Iago's plot, and soon when she realizes the truth she sacrifices her life for the love of her lady by revealing the truth in the presence of her husband, Othello and others. As a result, she has a more positive character in the play. No doubt this makes Iago more isolated in his villainy and more a force of evil. It also allows Shakespeare to suggest deep marital problems and further motivations for Iago.

On the surface, Othello's great confidence in Iago is like the confidence of Chappuy's / Cinthio's Moor in the *Porte-enseigne*, and some details of this relationship closely follow the source story. Othello's struggles, which take place between his love for Desdemona and his trust in Iago, lead him to threaten Iago with punishment until he brings him the evidence of his wife's infidelity, a detail which is very close to the prose story.

In conclusion, the comparison between the play and its source has served to emphasize Shakespeare's interest in psychological depth and dramatic effect. He shows that a sense of deep personal grievance can isolate and corrupt the subject. Dwelling on these issues can lead to the extreme in illusion and manipulation we find in Iago. At the same time, the playwright never loses sight of the need to portray these ideas with sufficient clarity and visual effect that they command the stage.³² The most important change is the deepening of Iago's personality to create a more extreme portrait of coldness and sin. The playwright has deliberately made him a master of illusion, no doubt based on Shakespeare's own ideas of how evil characters behave. In this process Elizabethan notions of evil would be complemented by Shakespeare's own observations.

³¹ J, Bhattacharyya. 2006, pp. 85.

³² As noted above, this was why he chooses to present once more the initial harmony of Othello and Desdemona, introducing a parting and scene of reunion not present in the *Hecatommithi*.

Another way of gaining a view of the development of the character of Iago is to examine him in relation to Shakespeare's other villains. *Othello* (1603-4) is one of Shakespeare's four great tragedies, with *Hamlet* (1600-1), *King Lear* (1603-1606), and *Macbeth* (1603-7), plays which are together considered by Bradley³³ to be the height of his dramatic art. Among the plays which were on Shakespeare's mind at the same time as *Othello*, it is only *King Lear* which contains a villain who seems to have similar characteristics to some that we are considering.

Before comparing Edmund with Iago, it is useful to mention some considerations about this group of tragedies, and Shakespeare's villains, in a general way. *Othello* is in many ways unique: It is set in a special world and focuses on the passion and personal lives of its major figures. Othello's swift descent into jealousy and rage, and Iago's admirable display of hatred and deception take us straight to the painful and private world of marital tension and sexual insecurity. It is no accident that this play was written shortly after *Troilus and Cressida* (1602), and *Measure for Measure* (1603-1604). By contrast, *King Lear* and *Hamlet* have many scenes set in the open air, with generally more characters and twists of plot, and they concern whole kingdoms.

For Coleridge, Shakespeare's villains are above all intelligent. "To know is to resemble" says Coleridge, and Shakespeare resembles his villains not in their lack of moral sentiment, but in their power of mind. "They are all cast in the mould of Shakespeare's own gigantic intellect; and this is the open attraction of his Iago, Edmund, Richard."³⁴ Richard III (1591/2) comes from the world of Shakespeare's early plays, and owes much to Marlowe. As with Tamberlaine, Richard's ambition for power is his main characteristic. As his power expands in increasingly open acts of violence, he dominates all around him. He is an image of the inverse of what a king should be, and little is said of his motives beyond a resentment at his deformity.

Edmund, in *King Lear*, and Iago, in *Othello*, are malcontents who conceive evil plans of revenge. Both characters see themselves as outsiders in society. Such characteristics as an inability to tolerate the good fortune of the "virtuous", and indications of impotence, sexual

³³ A. C. Bradley, 1904, p.160.

³⁴ S. Barnet. "Coleridge on Shakespeare's Villain", George Washington University. Vol. 7, No 1 (Winter, 1956), pp. 20 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2866107>. Web 23/03/2012 (Barnet quotes from Coleridge).

and emotional, provide a background for their desires for revenge, greed, and envy. Like Iago, Edmund soliloquizes about his motives:

. . . Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word,--legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards! (I. ii. 16-23)

Shakespeare's worst villains may seem incomprehensible to the other characters, but they confide in the audience by explaining themselves through in soliloquies. They are highly self-aware, in the sense that they have a sense of difference and individualism. The other characters, as a rule know nothing of these intrigues, which however, are rendered perfectly plain to the audience by means of soliloquies introduced at various stages of the action. Edmund and Iago are immeasurably more dangerous to the whole community because their real motives and plans are hidden. They triumph by making their victims believe that they are the only ones that can be trusted.

The most important similarity is in the reductivist and pessimistic view of goodness that Shakespeare gives to both villains. They resent all talk of heroism and honor, and seek to reduce virtue to something meaningless, trivial, and unimportant. Iago says:

Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up tyme, supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. (I. ii. 319-326)

There is a closeness in imagery and ideas to the pronouncements of Edmund, who rejects the action of the stars (which Shakespeare believed in) and destiny. In this speech Edmund is rejecting inherited wisdom in a way no less shocking to the Elizabethan audience:

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that,
when we are sick in fortune,--often the surfeit

of our own behavior,--we make guilty of our
disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as
if we were villains by necessity...
... an admirable evasion
of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish
disposition to the charge of a star! (I. ii. 58-69)

Both are scornful of noble values, and put their faith in cunning. Edmund's words recall Iago's awareness that virtues can be a source of weakness:

... a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honesty
My practises ride easy! I see the business.
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit (I. ii. 151-155)

Both of the villains have no feeling of love towards anyone except themselves. As has been shown, Shakespeare deliberately removed the love-interest of the Porte-ensigne. Instead, they treat the women close to them as worthless, using them as a means to build up their own evil plans, yet Edmund behaves in a way to attract the evil sisters, and he sees the jealousies of the sisters as the trump to complete his plan.

To him, for example, love was only a flattery of senses, and, in seducing Regan and Goneril, he saw in them with their wild passions and fierce jealousies, only pawns in the game of his own ambition.³⁵

It seems Edmund has no feeling of love for either sister, but in his playing this game, love seems to him something trivial, but for the sisters it is important. Indeed, in his coldness, Edmund seems blind to the dangers of the sisters' emotional attachment to him. Iago expresses his contempt of love to Roderigo in a brief and powerful condemnation:

It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of
the will. (I. iii. 334-335)

Another of Iago's powerful statements of reductivist pessimism is found a little earlier in Act II. He persuades Roderigo that it is impossible for Desdemona to love Othello because of his race, and affirms that she is secretly meeting with Cassio. To gain Desdemona all her lover

³⁵ T. R. Price. "King Lear: A Study of Shakespeare's Dramatic Method", Vol. 9, No 2 (1894), p. 173, see <http://www.jstor.org/stable/456361> . web 23/03/2012.

has to do is to eliminate this obstacle. In another speech he concedes that she loves her husband, but assumes that any love for a black man is mere lust and immorality:

Roderigo: I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blessed condition.

Iago: Blessed fig's-end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? Didst not mark that? (II. i. 249-255)

As can be seen, Iago uses racism among a range of tactics against the person whose skills, ability, and success make him appear invulnerable at first. What Iago's true view on race remains, as always, unknown and hidden behind his compulsion to destroy. Edmund has no family feeling, and is happy to think of benefiting from his father's destruction: "The younger rises when the old doth fall." (III. iii. 18-22) Indeed, the main sin in the play seems to be that of rejecting family ties. Iago's statements are stronger, but it is clear that both of these villains see love as mere enjoyment of physical pleasure. It is no different to animal behavior.

Their attitude to timing and luck are also the same. Edmund and Iago are unquiet, troubled spirits. They have no trust that order will be restored. Rather, they feel strongly that destiny is made by men. They must therefore use every opportunity that comes. Whilst Edmund says:

.....for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. (V. i. 74-75)

Iago's equivalent line is:

This is the night
That either makes me or fordoes me quite. (V. i. 128-129)

Both of them are the men of the moment, relying on their instincts to manipulate risky situations, and opportunistic in their methods. There is the same sense of urgency, and need to take risks on the spur of the moment. They live by the thrill of power and danger.

To say the same in more detail, Iago's use of timing and opportunism is expressed in his repetition of the word "now" in the opening scene. In this he deliberately makes the news

sound urgent, stressing the word “now”, and filling Brabantio’s mind with lewd images of violence and devilry. The old man, as Iago intended, rushes to conclusions, and accuses Othello of using sorcery to seduce Desdemona:

Judge me the world, if ‘tis not gross in sense
That thou hast practised on her with foul charms... (I. ii. 72-73)

The incitement of Brabantio is Iago’s opening move in shaping events, made at a time when Othello is still strong in the plot as a whole it is a minor incident, but it gives us the chance to observe the relationship of the villain and his ‘gull’. At this stage Iago is frustrated, without a plan, and he can only “plague [Othello] with flies”. Brabantio is to lead the first, wholly unsuccessful, assault. As the plot begins to succeed, Iago’s pace quickens. He needs to be spontaneous and versatile and shows an extraordinary ability to deal notably well with unforeseen circumstances. Opportunities for deceit come, and luck is on his side. He has an uncanny way of recognizing his chances. There is a compulsion with undermining others, and an obsession which has given him an expertise which is often ascribed to the devil.

The lack of emotions, especially of love, has already been noted in both Iago and Edmund. Both abuse women, and in both cases it is women who cause their final downfall. More obviously than Edmund, Iago has no true relationship with women, and shows neither love nor sympathy for his wife. His murder of Emilia is an easy and natural result. Iago has much to say on the subject:

Desdemona: Oh, fie upon you, slanderer
Iago: Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk.
You rise to play and go to bed to work. (II. i. 113-115)

It is a particularly Shakespearean theme to give moral importance to women, and to make bad relations with women a sign of villainy. Both villains would have succeeded in their evil aims, at least their immediate aims, if they had thought more carefully about the women around them. Iago’s plan fails because of his wife Emilia. In Act V scene ii, when Emilia discovers her husband’s intrigue, she decides to reveal the truth, in spite of Iago’s attempt to keep her silent: “Be wise and get you home” (V. ii. 223). Emilia answers “I will not” (V. ii. 223) and proceeds to denounce her husband with a defiance born of years of marital abuse. Edmund’s intrigue has been revealed by his brother Edgar when he finds a false love letter of the sisters, and gives it to the Duke of Albany.

The methods of trickery used by Edmund and Iago are the same. To raise a suspicion against his brother, Edmund uses a letter which he pretends to wish to hide. Edmund's letter forges the hand of his brother Edgar, and tells of a plot against his Father. When Gloucester demands the letter from him, he makes feigned attempts to excuse his brother on the ground that he has written the letter to test Edmund's fidelity. The famous handkerchief in *Othello* is the equivalent of the letter. The apparent hesitancy Edmund is employed with consummate skill by Iago.³⁶ When Iago says that he thinks Cassio is honest, he damns the lieutenant with faint praise. When Iago tells his master Othello to be wary of his wife Desdemona, after he has set suspicions in his heart, he gives Othello advice against the very jealousy which he, Iago, has created.

On the other hand, Edmund and Iago differ in important ways. On the important issue of the motives for their revenge, Edmund can be said to be much more consistent, with deeper reasons to be aggrieved. He has a strong wish to possess his father's estate and land, but this resentment is born of the fact that his illegitimacy would tend to exclude him. Family resentments cut deep, and are a major theme.

. . . Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word,--legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards! (I. ii. 16-23)

Edmund is emerging after years in the shadow of his brother Edgar. Family injustices are the abiding theme of *King Lear*, and deep enough to explain the desire for revenge. Gloucester is coarse and unfeeling on the question of bastardy. When he is speaking with his friend Kent in Edmund's presence he says:

Gloucester: His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. I have
so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am Brazened.
Kent: I cannot conceive you.
Gloucester: Sir, this young fellow's mother could: whereupon

³⁶ J. A. Shepherd. "The Self Revelations of Shakespeare's Villains", *The John Hopkins U. P.* Vol. 10, 3 (Jul, 1902), pp. 347 <http://www.Jstor.org/stable/27530502>. Web 22/03/2012

she grew round-wombed, and had, indeed, sir, a son
for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed.
Do you smell a fault? (I. i. 9-16)

Hawkes notes that Edmund has a clear reason for resentment of society “Edmund is illegitimate. Worse, his mother was a prostitute and he is a ‘whoreson’.”³⁷ While there are no suggestions that Iago has inherited problems from his family, whereas Edmund is a bastard, his mother was a whore, and we can see throughout that Gloucester, Edmund’s father, is aware of Edmund’s inferiority.

By contrast, Iago’s wickedness has roots in motives which are never completely clear. He gives reasons which may be contradictory or unconvincing. Coleridge explains Edmund’s wickedness as caused by shame:

Coleridge argues, [the anger] is the product of shame at his bastardy, at its public knowledge and the ‘most degrading and licentious levity’ with which Gloucester speaks of it; he has been denied all the kindly counteractions to the mischievous feeling of shame.³⁸

Gloucester refers to Edmund in the most humiliating ways, and this first motivates the son against his family.

Iago can be regarded as the dynamo of the play. He is the one character who moves the events in the play. As activity is absorbed by the intrigue, Othello becomes unable to act. *King Lear* is far more wide-ranging and varied in its themes, and Edmund never dominates the play in the same way.

The most important contrast between the respective villains emerges at the end of the plays, when their plans fall apart about them. Iago does not repent for his deeds but remains silent, telling Othello to “Demand me nothing: what you know, you know.” (V. ii. 316) Edmund, however, shows regret. Deep down, it emerges that Edmund longs to be honorable, and he shows courage in a final duel with Edgar.

³⁷ T, Hawkes. *William Shakespeare King Lear*. North cote House Publishers. 1995, pp. 19.

³⁸ G. F, Parker. *Johnson’s Shakespeare*. Oxford. C. P. 1989, pp. 187. (Parker quote from Coleridge)

While in the end Edmund repents of his crimes, he dies of wounds received in the duel with his brother Edgar. At this tragic period in Shakespeare's career he felt that even the repentant villain must not go unpunished.³⁹

Edmund and his late discovery of valor stands against his brother Edgar and fights him without fear.

Iago remains furtive and dishonorable. Just as when he prompted Rodrigo to kill Cassio, or Emilia to bring him the handkerchief, his last acts are to stab his wife and to refuse to explain himself. Edmund, in complete contrast to Iago, repents and tries to save the life of Cordelia and Lear. It was an unexpected change, and A. C. Bradley identified dramatic defects in *King Lear*. There seems to be no reason for Edmund's unexplained delay in trying to save Lear and Cordelia, apart from as a crude method of creating a pathetic scene of Lear and the corpse. The belated attempt brings about a tragic catastrophe that did not seem at all inevitable.⁴⁰

In many ways Iago is a more convincing and consistent villain than Edmund. The impression is given that the two come from the same mold, but that Iago receives greater refinement because he is the one focus of action in his play. The comparison of the two puts *Othello* in context and provides insights which help pinpoint to uniqueness of Iago. The themes which contributed to the development of his psychology were consciously worked over by Shakespeare around the years 1603-1604. Both plays are pessimistic about man's ability to withstand true evil, and do not bring up the themes of forgiveness, education and affection which off-set the villainy found in later plays.

³⁹ J. A. Shepherd. "The Self Revelations of Shakespeare's Villains", *The John Hopkins U. P.* Vol. 10, 3 (Jul, 1902), pp. 349 <http://www.Jstor.org/stable/27530502>. Web 22/03/2012

⁴⁰ Bradley's views are summarized and answered by McNeir, W. F. "The Role of Edmund in King Lear", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 8, No. 2, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* (Spring, 1968), pp.187. Rice University. 2009. 20 May. 2009. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/449655>.

CHAPTER III

INTERPRETING THE IMAGERY OF AND ABOUT IAGO

The main case for asserting that Shakespeare allows Iago to be identified with the extremes of evil is found in the “running image” of devilry with which the playwright provides another level of commentary on his character. The function of the imagery in the great tragedies is to aid characterization and define meaning in the play. There is a ‘running image’ of earth and dust in *Hamlet*, or of broken families in *King Lear*.

The imagery in our play similarly bold. The whole play can be summarized as a confrontation of heroic metaphors of romance and heroism with images of animals and pornography. The tragedy is that the latter comes to dominate early on, as Othello’s formerly high-flown rhetoric becomes corrupt and, from the turning point in Act III, scene iii, he begins to make outburst about ‘goats’ and ‘monkeys’. Othello’s exotic poetry and long sentences are transformed, not into Iago’s style, but into overblown and incoherent expressions of rage.

The “I am not what I am” speech exemplifies Iago’s cryptic and elliptical manner of speaking. From the opening scene the audience is alerted to the bestial, misogynist, and racist nature of the standards which the ensign thinks all mankind should acknowledge. The effectiveness and violence of his language, and the simplicity of his message, create the most enduring affect of the play.

At an obvious level, the consideration of ‘Moors’, and the focus on Iago’s racist imagery, is a comment on black and white morals. In the play there are eleven references to blackness, and characters frequently use the term about each other. However, the irony is that, although Emilia says of her mistress and Othello “the more angel she, / And you the blacker devil!” (V. ii. 130-131), and Othello says that Desdemona is “begrimed and black / As mine own face” (III. iii. 387-388), the wrong people are being accused. The contrast of black and white suggests the simple good / evil polarity of a medieval morality play.

The definition of racism is the belief that differences in human character and ability are accounted for mainly by race, and that particular races are superior to others, leading to discrimination or prejudice.⁴¹ Racism based on color is often cruder and more emphatic, simply because it is easier to distinguish the groups.

Shakespeare is unlikely to have met many black people. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, about twenty “blackamoors” are listed on the parish records of St. Bololph’s, Aldgate (Shakespeare’s parish). They were probably slaves from intercepted Spanish ships, previously taken in raids on North Africa, where they were equally slaves. Elizabeth I decreed that “Negroes and black Moors” were to be arrested and expelled from the country. Neither Shakespeare nor Elizabethans recognized a difference between Moors and black Africans:

Shakespeare’s designation of his character as a Moor provides no simple solution to the problem, for it appears that neither he nor other Elizabethans made careful distinctions between Moors and Negroes.⁴²

Spanish Moors were recent history in the period, their last villages having been destroyed by Philip II. However, critics suggest that Shakespeare develops the character of Othello as an African. Jones considers that the character is:

A blend of characteristics popularly attributed to North African Moors with the color known to be more common in West Africa, and called no more erroneously than now, black.⁴³

The element of Islam is surely an important but unstated element of Othello’s character. Elizabethans were aware of the emphasis on pride and honor, including and especially family honor, in the religion. In another Shakespeare play, *The Merchant of Venice*, we find another Moor, the Prince of Morocco, who is similarly blinded to human realities by notions of honor.

⁴¹ The literary roots of racism are deep, and ideas of racial characteristics and superiority are found in influential works like Aristotle’s *Politics*, where he describes Egyptians (lazy and luxurious), Thracians (warlike) and Greeks (rational).

⁴² P, Butcher. “Othello’s Racial Identity”. Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Vol.3, No. 3 (Jul, 1952). pp. 241 Accessed 16/05/ 2012 06:11 <http://www.jstore.org/stable/2866304>

⁴³ P, Braxton. “Othello: The Moor and the metaphor”. *South Atlantic Modern Language Association*. Vol.55, NO. 4 (NOV, 1990), p. 5. Accessed 16/07/2011 13:23.<http://www.jstore.org/stable/3200442> . (Braxton quoted in Johns)

In *Othello* it can be seen the significant of the fact that the Moor has a dark skin throughout the description of many characters like Roderigo, who calls him a thick-lips at the beginning of the play.

If we turn to the play itself we find many references to Othello's color and appearance. Most of these are indecisive for the word 'black' was of course used then where we should speak of 'dark' complexion now; and even the nickname 'thick-lips', appealed to as proof that Othello was Negro, might have been applied by an enemy, to what we call a Moor.⁴⁴

In Bradley's explanation of Ethiopian people being of high rank, educated, and from the royal blood, we find the contrary applies to Moors (North Africans), who are not educated and are like 'Barbary horses': "The arguments cannot be met by pointing out that Othello was not of royal blood, is not called a Ethiopian, is called a Barbary horse, and is said to be going to Mauritania."⁴⁵ 'Ethiope' has positive connotations in much of Elizabethan literature.

Sixteen-century writers called any dark North-African a Moor, or a black Moor, or a blackamoor. Sir Thomas Elyot, according to Hunter, calls Ethiopians Moors; and the following are the first two illustrations of 'Blackamoor'. When Shakespeare imagined Othello, he may have known that a Mauritanian is not a Negro nor black, but we cannot assume that he did.⁴⁶

From the Bible it was known that Ethiopians were early converts to Christianity, and the horn of Africa was associated with the Queen of Sheba. In medieval times the legend of Prester John related to Ethiopia. However, it seems that the writer in the sixteenth-century called dark people with negative connotation Moors. So Shakespeare uses the Moor in order to refer to Othello as having black skin to indicate generally that he is from what the Europeans at the time knew of as Africa.

Othello himself is highly sensitive to questions of race. Confident of his importance at the beginning of the play, as he begins to doubt his wife he brings up the issue and recognizes how he is different from the rest of society when he was mad with rage in Act III. He begins alluding to his color as he tries to understand the possible reason for Desdemona's infidelity. References to his color are most clear in the following lines:

⁴⁴ A. C, Bradley, 1904, pp. 162.

⁴⁵ A. C, Bradley, 1904, pp. 162.

⁴⁶ A. C, Bradley, 1904, pp. 163.

Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have... (III. iii. 263-265)

From the passage it is understood that Othello becomes alarmed by the fact he is a stranger of Venetian society as a result of Iago's insinuations.

Iago combines comments about Othello's mixed marriage with a pornographic tone, confiding his views both to his male friends and in the audience, and luring them into a similarly sensuous view on life. In Act II scene i, when Desdemona asks Iago's opinion on women, he says:

If she be black, and thereto have a wit
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit. (II. i. 132-133)

Although never explicitly, the play strongly suggests that Iago is decrying love and virtue because these are things he cannot hope to attain.

Race in the play, like devilry, is a central issue of the imagery. The two are related, as black is frequently used to denote immorality. As we have seen, at the beginning Iago uses racist slurs during his first attempts against Othello's position and reputation. Roderigo is also expert in using a racist insults in referring to Othello. He calls him:

What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe
If he can carry't thus! (I. i. 66-67)

As for Brabantio, it is clear that he was friendly towards Othello, inviting him to his house in the past, but still refuses his daughter's marriage to the Moor. At the time, Venetian societies strictly do not allow its citizens to marry those of different race:

A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself; and she, in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, everything,
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!
It is a judgment maim'd and most imperfect
That will confess perfection so could err
A gainst all rules of nature... (I. iii. 94-97)

Brabantio had not dreamt that the black Moor could be attractive, and refuses to believe that his daughter could have married him of her own free will.

Brabantio therefore alleges that his daughter was stolen by the Moor. He begins to accuse the Moor in using witchcraft in convincing Desdemona to marry him:

She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not. (I. iii. 60-64)

As Butcher points out:

The Elizabethan idea that Moors were adept at witchcraft is reflected in Brabantio's conviction that Othello used charms to secure Desdemona's love.⁴⁷

The connection with magic is significant, as the superstition and witchcraft reinforces the imagery of devilry in the play. The aspect of Othello's color is never far from the thoughts of the audience.⁴⁸

A second theme of the imagery of the play draws attention to Iago's alleged equation of men with animals. He attacks Othello's character in his animalistic imagery such as the ram, or horse images used by Iago to indicate his lustful, sexual nature. Many other animals are mentioned in the text.

Most memorably, at the beginning of the play, when Roderigo and Iago go to Brabantio's in order to provoke him against Othello, Iago tries his best to incite and humiliate Brabantio, and uses animalistic images to refer to Othello. Iago says:

'Zounds, sir, you're robb'd; for shame, put on your gown;
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise...
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you:
Arise, I say... (I. i. 86-92)

⁴⁷ P, Butcher. "Othello's Racial Identity". Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University. Vol.3, No. 3 (Jul, 1952). pp. 244 Accessed 16/05/ 2012 06:11 <http://www.jstore.org/stable/2866304>

⁴⁸ It is interesting to note Coleridge's allegation that Shakespeare lacks realism in the depiction of a marriage between a Desdemona and Othello. He sees Shakespeare's conversion of a "barbarous negro" into a respected soldier and equal of noblemen as build on ignorance: "It would be something monstrous to conceive this beautiful Venetian girl falling in love with a veritable negro. It would argue disproportionateness, a want of balance, in Desdemona, which Shakespeare does not appear to have in the least contemplated." Buhler, 2002, p. 12.

Here we find both the themes of light and dark, white and black, and animals. According to Iago, there is something bestial and animalistic in particular about Othello an 'old black ram'. He is base and like an animal known for its sexuality, somehow he has greater appetites than everyone else in Venice because of his North African heritage. The horse symbol in particular conveys meanings of power which are widespread through most cultures and it is linked as an emblem of the life-force. But here in the play Iago refers to Othello as a Barbary horse, the horse of the Berbers, and it means that Othello is a lesser animal of mere lust, no breeding, and Brabantio's nobly-bred daughter will be ruined by this animal.

Brabantio and Iago see in the marriage of Othello and Desdemona a collision of opposites: black and white, Venetian and alien, age and youth. What Othello sees is a complementary partnership of opposites.⁴⁹

Iago mentions the "black ram" and the "white ewe", which complement the oppositions of light and dark, innocence and evil, purity and corruption that resonate throughout the text.

The animal imagery is also something that Iago has in common with other villains in Shakespeare. Both Iago and Edmund in *King Lear* refer to women as animals. For Edmund, poisonous snakes represent the quarrel of the sisters Regan and Goneril:

To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. (V, i, 61-63)

Iago presents Desdemona as a 'guinea-hen', and he tells Roderigo that he should not be such a fool as to take his life for a mere female. He says:

... Ere I would say, I
would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I
would change my humanity with a baboon. (I. iii. 314-316)

As mentioned above, he sees all women as sexually active creatures, and untrustworthy in their relationship with their husbands.

Women in *Othello* are presented in a tension between the extremes of saint and whore. The abiding impression of womanhood in the play is determined by Iago's all-too-memorable

⁴⁹ A. Leggatt. *Shakespeare's Tragedies (Violation and Identity)*. Cambridge U.P. 2005, p. 117.

images. Women were often accused of moral weakness, and discussion of these ideas would be familiar to the Elizabethan audience, familiar with the dominant masculine values in the society of the time. A chapter considering the imagery of *Othello* cannot avoid the verbal attack on women, generally from Iago as he seeks to undermine his master's confidence in his wife.

Talk of prostitution and whores is prompted by Iago, and taken up by Othello, with women being called many terms such as 'hobby-horse', 'minx', and 'minion'. Desdemona, Emilia and Bianca are all equally at the mercy of their passions according to Iago. They are dispensable, and all but one woman, Bianca, dies by the end of the play:

The most striking thing about Iago's imagery is its repulsive quality. He is particularly fond of referring to animals of a low order, e.g. asses, cats, spiders, flies, dogs, goats, monkeys, wolves; creatures which he generally represents as engaged in activity obscene, cruel, or otherwise ugly and repellent.⁵⁰

For Iago in particular, women should be treated as objects by their male counterparts.

Both violent discourses, on race and animals, contrast with lyrical and naive tone of Desdemona, whose name sounds like "unfortunate" in Greek. She is clearly on a different level than that of the constant accusatory language about women, and may be discussed in this context. In a sense, she represents the reverse of Iago's negative view of the sex, and a living disproof of his view of morality and selflessness. Such a man is bound to try to kill what he refuses to understand. There are many other indications in the play that he cannot relate to women. He has a strong fear that Emilia has cuckolded him, mentioned above. The fact that Emilia fears his anger, and is dominated by him, indicates that there is no affection in their marriage.

Misogyny is initially set against the unique love and feelings shared between Othello and Desdemona, illustrated by images of 'fairness' (beauty), the reunion of the couple in Cyprus, their kissing (ironically paired with the kiss Othello gives his sleeping wife before her murder), and the heavens, ocean and water imagery. At the start of Act II Othello greets Desdemona as "My fair warrior" (II. i.180). The calm brought to Othello by his wife is expressed in images of storms and calm:

⁵⁰ J. D. Wilson. *Othello (the Cambridge Dover Wilson Shakespeare)*, Cambridge U.P. 2009, pp. 41.

The opening of Act II, when those in Cyprus are anxiously awaiting the arrival of Desdemona and of Othello, is full of sea pictures and personifications, the ruffian wind upon the sea, the 'chidden billow' and the 'wind-shaked' surge.⁵¹

When his views start to change, when Iago's 'poison' has started to take effect, Othello refers to Desdemona as "The fair devil" (III. iv. 475). The central irony of the play, and the chief means by which Shakespeare evokes tragic pity, is that she is clearly the opposite of all that is said and believed about her.

Desdemona is a more complex woman than the paternalistic society of Venice would have her be. She is characterized as innocent and a victim in the play, but for Shakespeare a heroine must also be a free agent. We can compare Desdemona with so many of his independent-minded women. Juliet rejects her parents' choice, Prospero arranges a controlled rebellion for his daughter, Miranda. The closest comparison is with Cordelia, who is also the focus of tragic pity.

Emilia: O, who hath done this deed?

Desdemona: Nobody; I myself. Farewell

Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell! (Dies) (V. ii. 123-125)

Critics debate whether Desdemona is a strong character or not. From the beginning of the play until the end, she remains loyal to her husband and even after Othello attempts to kill her, she is still loyal, and with her last words announces that she is responsible for her death, defending Othello from blame. She is innocent, naive and submissive. In Act III, Scene iv, when Othello reprimands her for the losing her handkerchief, she protests her innocence to Othello.

On the other hand, she never asks why Othello is so angry with her. She judges herself that she is wrong and harsh to Othello, and she says:

Something, sure, of state,

Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practice...

Hath puddled his clear spirit...

Nay, we must think men are not gods...

Beshrew me much, Emilia,

I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,

⁵¹ E, Spurgeon. (*Leading Motives in the Imagery of Shakespeare's Tragedies*). Hazell, Watson and Viney.1985, pp. 31.

Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,
And he's indicted falsely. (III. iv. 140-143, 148-154)

This description is explained by Hazlitt with the term “innocent victim” as he compares her to Othello’s meaningless jealousy: “The character of Desdemona herself is inimitable both in itself, and as it contrasts with Othello’s groundless jealousy.”⁵² Desdemona says “we must think men are not gods.” It is surely a sign of strength that she is willing to make allowances for human failings in a way her husband, swept away by his grand and unrealistic vision of the world, is not.

In Act IV Scene ii we see her first comes to terms with Othello’s accusation, and begin to ask Iago and Emilia if they agree with Othello. There is clear naivety in the fact that she turns to Iago for reassurance:

Iago: What is the matter, lady?
Emilia: Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her.
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.
Desdemona: Am I that name, Iago? (IV. ii. 114-118)

In this speech we can see the first cracks of doubt appear. The dramatic irony invites our pity. Furthermore, the idea that she could not say the word “whore” strongly emphasizes the fact that she is too innocent to understand or combat the plots taking place around her.

The focus of our pity is Act IV, Scene iii, in which she sings the “willow song” and talks with Emilia. Desdemona finds it impossible to believe that any women would be unfaithful to her husband for all the world. Emilia, more worldly-wise, but lacking the beauty and virtue of her lady, says:

The world's a huge thing: it is a great price
For a small vice. (IV. iii. 69-70)

Shakespeare highlights Desdemona’s purity by contrasting it with Emilia’s more cynical view of human behavior. Bradley describes her as follows: “Innocence, gentleness, sweetness, lovingness were the salient and, in a sense, the principal traits in Desdemona’s character.”⁵³

⁵² W, Hazlitt. *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. Boston: Published by Wells and Lilly. 1818, pp. 68.

⁵³ A. C, Bradley, 1904, pp. 166.

The traditional interpretation of the play shows Desdemona as a character who is a naive and loyal wife is surely correct.

Something of the strong and independent Desdemona returns in her last scene. She argues with him and begs for “but half an hour” (V. ii. 82), denies her guilt and puts forward a strong argument as she had in Act I Scene iii when she defended her right to marry with Othello in front of the councilors. Unfortunately, in appealing to Othello to ask Cassio for an explanation, she does not seem to realize that even the name of Cassio will enrage her husband further.

Wilson Knight reverses the usual view of Desdemona and argues that she is in part responsible for her own death. A lack of wisdom caused her to enter “the unknown seas of marriage with the mystery of man.”⁵⁴ He argues that her marriage to Othello, whom she does not know well, is part of her downfall. She is attracted by the mystery of Othello and makes a commitment to something she is not sure of. Othello himself says that “she loved me for the dangers I had pass’d” (I. iii. 167). From passage it is understood that Desdemona married Othello because of his adventures, and in marrying him she acting out a romantic dream rather than showing true love.

As elsewhere in Shakespeare, womanhood has very positive values, and is near the moral center of the play. However, Iago has caught the women characters in a verbal tension between saintliness and prostitution. Desdemona, who is the living disproof of Iago’s constant slanders, is hopelessly weak against them.

In conclusion, the messages which emerge from imagery of *Othello* appear grim and pessimistic. The characters are polarized according to black and whitemoral outlooks. Those who lack morality are clear-sighted and quick to profit from weakness, and the good are never near understanding them. Very early, the poetic and romantic language of Othello gives way to the short, condemnatory attacks of the ensign. The language he creates is stronger than the reality, which is that Desdemona is innocent.

⁵⁴ W, Knight. *The Wheel of Fire*. Oxford U. P. 1930, pp. 123.

Iago's whole enterprise is based on words, and he conjures a tragic defeat of virtue against the true state of things. It has been suggested that Shakespeare experienced a personal crisis around the time he wrote the great tragedies, which caused him to write about death and the power of slander. This play would have us accept that the evil can gain an uncanny advantage over the good through lies.

As is well known from the story of Dr. Faustus, Elizabethans believed in the possibility of entering into a pact with the devil. The person usually does so for reasons of ambition, and must become a devil-worshipper in return. They are wholly committed, as is shown in Iago's lines: "This is the night / that either makes me or fordoes me quite." (V. i. 128-129) The audience realize that it is not only Othello and Desdemona whose lives are at stake, but that Iago has also embarked on a mortally dangerous enterprise. As a result of this pact, the villain has identified himself with the devil's cause and imitates the devil's methods and character.

CHAPTER IV

IAGO AS A MASTER MANIPULATOR

Of the two leading characters, Iago and Othello, it is the villain who is more unusual in drama, and more compelling. Rudanko has noted that our attention is primarily on Iago:

Any consideration of the *Tragedy of Othello* must be primarily occupied, not with its official hero but with its villain. I cannot think of any other play in which only one character performs personal actions; all the deeds are Iago's and all the others without exception only exhibit behavior.⁵⁵

Iago is the only character in the play who is continually active, and who precipitates each of the developments of the plot. In this chapter his interventions will be analyzed, and it will be shown that, as with the imagery, the comparison of Iago with the devil is central.

The opening scene presents us with Iago's first sub-plot, in which Brabantio, Desdemona's father, is all too easily manipulated against Othello. Roderigo and Iago appear at night in a Venice street, and tell Brabantio that his daughter has been stolen from him: "The devil will make a grandsire of you" (I. i. 91). In this scene Othello is not named, but is simply "the Moor". The furious action and references to vice and devilry are in dramatic contrast with Othello's calm and controlled first appearance in scene two.

The audience knows immediately that Iago is consumed with envy and resentment. Iago's claim is that he hates Othello because the general prefers Cassio and has promoted him. However, as his plotting and expressions of resentment do not come to an end on his becoming lieutenant, it is clear that his compulsions go beyond the advancement of his career. In seeking ways to disturb his general's tranquility, Iago first tries to incite Brabantio, while

⁵⁵ J, Rudanko. *Pragmatic Approaches to Shakespeare*. America U.P. 1993, pp. 35.

acknowledging that this is merely “to plague him flies” (I. i. 72) in a rather helpless way. Iago has not yet developed a line of attack.

Iago rapidly develops a plan to destabilize Othello’s relationship with Desdemona. This is a challenge more suitable to the scale and passionate nature of his grievance, and one where he knows he will find opportunity. In the first scenes the marriage may seem invincible, especially when Desdemona intervenes as an eloquent and confident wife in act one, scene three, immediately disposing of all the slanders made against her husband, notably about sorcery and “practises of cunning hell” (I. iii. 105), to the senate. The romance of Othello’s language and the restoration of calm is undermined in the same scene by Iago’s assurances to Roderigo. Even before he has a detailed plan of action, Iago is sure that the “frail vow” of marriage will be shattered by his “wits, and all the tribe of hell”. (I. iii. 370-373) The references are repeated in Iago’s soliloquy, for the newly-devised plot will be “engendered” in “hell and night”. (I. iii. 413) In an age when there was almost unanimous belief that the worst evils involved cooperation with devils, and possession by them, these references can be taken literally.

Iago is particularly contemptuous of the “devilish knave” (II. i. 244) Michael Cassio. There are several comments about Cassio’s youth. The Elizabethan audience would be familiar with the sanguine character type associated with the young.⁵⁶ Iago, in the role of tempter, plays on Cassio’s likely weakness when he causes him to become drunk and prompts Roderigo to fight with Cassio. Drink was associated with heat and blood, and thus linked with the sanguine.⁵⁷ The lieutenant bitterly regrets the violence into which he was trapped, saying “that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!” (II. iii. 290-291), making it clear that by enemy he means a devil:

It has pleas’d the devil drunkenness to give place
to the devil wrath... (II. iii. 296-297)

Cassio comes across as immature in blaming external causes rather than himself. However, his speeches bring us back to the talk of the devil as driving the events. Very often

⁵⁶ The classic source for this connection is Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, which describes Cassio well: “[Youths] are changeable and fickle in their desires, which are violent while they last, but quickly over... they are apt to give way to their anger... for owing to their love of honour they cannot bear being slighted... They are sanguine; nature warms their blood as though with excess of wine.” (*Rhetoric*, II, chapter 12, 1389a)

⁵⁷ *Twelfth Night* also calls drunkenness “one draught above heat...” (I. v. 129)

characters in the play misidentify the devil, and the audience has the burden of knowing who is the real evil one.

In Act III Iago's plot progresses, with the turning point being Act III. iii, which takes the form of a long dialogue between the two main characters. Even without the 'evidence' later provided, Othello is transformed in this scene from a man who trusts in his wife to one who believes so fully that she is guilty that he already says he wants her death. As Iago continues to poison Othello's mind, Othello demands the truth, or else he will make him regret it all his life:

If thou dost slander her and torture me,
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;
On horror's head horrors accumulate;
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;
For nothing canst thou to damnation add
Greater than that. (III. iii. 368-373)

It can be seen that the language of devilry is closely related to damnation, a feared prospect even among the most rationally-minded puritans. When Iago indicates to his master that he has the proof, this detail pushes Othello to breaking point, a point in the play which we can consider it to be the dramatic climax (along with Desdemona's murder scene). When Othello presses him for proof, Iago tells him that he has seen Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's hand. Othello is already completely convinced and vows his revenge. Othello says "Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow hell!" (III. iii. 445) Othello suffers a nervous collapse, but is soon revived.

Iago, while pretending to offer comfort, remorselessly continues to build up the psychological pressure. Iago causes Othello to hide in a humiliating way behind curtains and listen to his conversation with Cassio. Iago questions the dismissed lieutenant jokingly about his mistress Bianca. Othello overhears bits of the conversation, and believes Cassio to be speaking mockingly of Desdemona. Iago does not limit himself to his lying to telling Othello that his former lieutenant is speaking of Desdemona, but also gives Othello the "ocular proof" (III, iii, 361), using the handkerchief he persuades Emilia to steal for him.

From this point Othello's fall is clear to see, and the dramatic affect changes from the tension of evenly contending forces to the irony of helplessly witnessing a man blindly

destroying his own happiness. One of the bitter ironies which runs throughout the play is the mis-identification of the devil. Act IV begins with Othello trying and failing to gain confessions, from Emilia and then from Desdemona:

Othello: Come, swear it, damn thyself
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double damn'd:
Swear thou art honest.
Desdemona: Heaven doth truly know it.
Othello: Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell. (IV. ii. 36-39)

Othello has become blind to truth and love. Like the devil, Iago has been able to make evil look good while turning “virtue into pitch” (II. iii. 360).

In Act V the plot which Iago has shaped, and in which he has taken an increasingly active role, comes to its conclusion. Here the plot takes a deadly turn as he provokes Roderigo to kill Cassio, acting on the foolish persuasion that this will strengthen his chances of winning Desdemona. The attempt to murder Cassio fails, but both Roderigo and Cassio are wounded, and Iago kills Roderigo to cover up Iago’s role in the attack.

Iago seems to become caught up in the gathering momentum of his plot. Always opportunistic and dependent on the moment, he thrills in the danger of its last stages. The very frenetic activity suggests something devilish, like the ceaseless evil action of the New Testament devil, who is presented as always prowling around for victims (1 Peter 5: 8).

By Act V, scene ii, Iago only needs to give a minimum of prompting to shape events, so much is Othello now active in destroying himself. The Moor hears the voice of Iago and thinks that Iago has killed Cassio, so he is motivated in his turn to kill. In a scene designed to create Shakespearean ‘pity’ to the utmost, Othello enters the bedchamber to kill Desdemona. When she realizes what he is about to do, she begs for mercy, but he is insistent that he must follow the dictates of ‘justice’.

At this point two characters are very aware of the devil at work. One is Emilia, who is low-minded and fatalistic, and always inclined to see the devil’s work. Othello, too, seeks answers in (or perhaps reverted to) magic. Whereas he dismissed accusations of magic in Act One, when confidently talking of his wife’s love, by the time Iago uses the handkerchief as a

trap Othello recalls its magical powers, previously used by his mother. When he realizes his fault at the end of the play, his mind is immediately full of hellish punishment and devils:

Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
O Desdemon! Desdemon! dead! / O, O! (V. ii.277-282)

Only at the end of the play is he in no doubt about Iago's true nature, and addresses him as the devil, or demi-devil. The contemporary views of judgement and hell take over his imagination. Rather like the end of *Dr Faustus*, the Moor describes his horror at an inevitable, eternal damnation.

The focus on marital grief, and the depths of horror (even damnation) into which a marriage can plunge an individual, give *Othello* its power. The play has always had the power to grip audiences with this intensity of emotion, and the dramatic tension produced by the fact that the audience is continuously aware that the hero of the play is moving towards disaster:

Othello is famous in the theatre for the number of times that members of the audience have felt impelled to call out to warn the characters of dangers, to express their sympathy, horror or hatred.⁵⁸

Actors who stage *Othello* need to be able to deal with such interruptions. The grip which Iago has on the other characters can extend to enthralling the audience. For the psychodrama to work, the spectator or reader must pre-suppose beliefs in the devil and damnation.

⁵⁸ J. B. Russell. *Shakespeare in Performance*. Palgrave, Macmillan, 1973, pp. 296.

CONCLUSION

Continuing on from what has been discussed, it is possible to arrive at conclusions about the character of our villain. In all the areas that will be considered, correspondences can be found with contemporary notions of the devil and his ways.

Firstly, Iago rejects notions of virtue, and reduces all to material terms, especially to physical appetites. He is aware of the physical rather than abstract signs of affection, and immediately focuses on such details and exchanging glances and holding hands. When Cassio arrives after having been parted from Othello by a storm, Cassio gallantly greets Desdemona and takes her by the hand. Intending to make something of this, Iago says in an aside:

He takes her by the palm . . .
With as little a web as this will I
Ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. (II. i. 164-166)

This recalls the image of flies in the first act. Iago sets no store by the spiritual, but has much to say about holding hands, faces and lips. Satan was familiar to the audience, too, as a sensuous being. He was imagined, not only as using sensuous temptations to damn mankind, but as one who sought earthly power (“the prince of this world” in John 14: 30), violence, and union with women.

As part of his sensuality, Iago is portrayed as having a sexualized mind. He thinks about Othello in a sexual way with the words he uses, but whether this can be interpreted as homosexuality is not clear. Iago has unhealthy thoughts about sex often, and the sexual dimension of Othello’s marriage fascinates him. The clearest example is at the beginning of the play, when Iago goes to Barbantio to tell him about his daughters marriage to Othello. Here, he begins to use rough sexual language when he referring to Othello having sex. He says:

I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter

and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs. (I. i. 115-117)

He also says:

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise. (I. i. 86-87)

Iago frequently uses sexual images or innuendo when he speaking to Othello about Desdemona, or speaking about Othello. This use of language gives an idea that Iago's mind focuses on sex when it comes to thinking about Othello's relationship.

In Iago's conversations with Roderigo we find continual expressions of resentment focusing on Othello, many expressed in physical terms. Some critics believe that homosexuality explains Iago's situation and character in the play. Iago's strong references to sex and his conversation with Rodrigo, in which he denies his attraction to Othello, as well as when he tries to use words to hide his feelings and denials, serve it is said to make the idea of his homoerotic desire more evident. These passages, for some critics, serve to make the idea of his homoerotic desire the basis for his actions.

It is true that Iago seems to have little interest in his wife, feeling little emotion for her, and he always calls her foolish and says that she talks too much. Neither is content with each other, forcing Emilia to make wild attempts to gain her husband's attention.

Emilia is merely a tool for Iago. He uses her to get close to Othello; in addition he makes her an excuse to justify the intensity of his resentment; throughout accusing Othello of an "affair" with his wife. This might be proof of Kosofsky Sedgwick's theory, and she goes on to argue that the whole patriarchal system in which women and men take part uses women as a way for men to create relationships with one another.

Heidi Hartmann's definition of patriarchy in terms of "relationships between men" in making the power relationships between men and men, suggest that large-scale social structures are congruent with the male-male-female erotic triangles... Patriarchal heterosexuality can best be discussed in terms of one or another form of the traffic in women: it is the use of women as interchangeable,

perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men.⁵⁹

The reason for Iago's anger at Othello, according to this theory, is not because Othello has slept with his wife, or that Othello gives the position of lieutenant to Cassio, but on the contrary, Iago is upset because he wants to be closer to Othello. He is harmed by being ignored by Othello and that Othello has chosen another younger man over himself to be his lieutenant and he is jealous of Desdemona, who has become Othello's wife and the most important person in his life.

Iago judges others by his own standards. For him only appetite explains character. He compares Othello to an old black ram, a Barbary horse and ass; Cassio to a dog and a fly; Roderigo is a hunting dog and Desdemona to a white ewe. He describes the sexual relation between Othello and Desdemona as that of animals "His evil nature is reflected further in his other speeches when Iago draws easily upon the animal world in his exclamation, definition and comparison." Thus Iago's character is reductionist. Most clearly, in consoling Roderigo he calls love merely: "A lust of the blood and a permission of the will." (I. iii. 331) Similarly, he states that Desdemona will leave Othello for Roderigo when:

When she is sated with his body
She will find the error of her choice. . . (I. iii. 350-351)

Every abstract value or ideal is understood in physical and material terms. In his light hearted joke with Emilia and Desdemona, while waiting for Othello to arrive in Cyprus, we can see his attitude to women. He sees them like a machine they create just for housework and pleasing their husbands sexually. For him: "You [women] rise to play and go to bed to work." (II. i. 115) It is strongly implied that part of Iago's sense of grievance from his unsatisfactory relationship with women.

In the play there is another scene between Othello and Iago which is portrayed as a 'wedding scene' and is quoted by critics who argue that Iago is homosexual. Iago's speech plays a role in his homoerotic chase of Othello. Both on their knees, they say:

⁵⁹ E. K. Sedgwick. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia U. P. 1985, pp. 25.

Othello: In the due reverence of a sacred vow
 I here engage my words.
 Iago: Do not rise yet. [*Kneels*]
 Witness that here Iago doth give up
 The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
 To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,
 And to obey shall be in me remorse,
 What bloody business ever. (III. iii. 461-469)

This scene of an exchange of vows between Othello and Iago reminds us of the wedding ceremony. In addition of the homosexual nature of a symbolic wedding between the two men, this scene has another interpretation for Iago's homoerotic desire for Othello when he says. "I am your own for ever" (III. iii. 482), which is similar to the Christian wedding 'I now pronounce you man and wife' "After this parody of a marriage rite, the pair rise and greet one another in terms more proper for a bride and groom."⁶⁰ John Wall explains the relationship between Othello and Iago as a perversion of the relationship between Othello and Desdemona:

In this connection, Othello's ear and Iago's tongue become displaced organs of generation, and Iago is revealed as the Moor's aural-sexual partner. Iago's words thus become the seed which impregnates Othello's mind through his ear so that it will produce the "monstrous birth" of jealousy, the "green-eyed monster."⁶¹

Many critics say that Desdemona's legitimate and socially recognized relationship with Othello has become a cause of jealousy for Iago. William Toole in his essay compares Iago's tricking Othello which is to think that Desdemona unfaithful to him with seduction when he says: "The seduction of Othello begins when Iago arouses his suspicion of Cassio's relationship to Desdemona."⁶² These passages are used to reveal the intuitive way in which Iago uses his talent for speech and exploitation to both pursue his desire for Othello and also to seek revenge for the pain it causes him.

⁶⁰ B. R. Smith. *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England*. The University of Chicago Press. 1994, pp. 63.

⁶¹ J. N. Wall. "Shakespeare's Aural Art: The Metaphor of the Ear in Othello", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, George Washington University. Vol. 30, No 3 (Summer, 1979), pp. 361. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2869471>

⁶² W. B. Toole. "Iagothello: Psychological Action and the Theme of Transformation in Othello", *South Atlantic Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (May, 1976), pp.73, Web 30/03/2012 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3198802>

Attention has been drawn by some critics to Iago's relationship with Cassio. A key passage is in act III, scene iii, when Iago informs Othello that when he lay with Cassio, and he heard Cassio in his dream confessing his love for Desdemona. He says:

I lay with Cassio lately;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:
One of this kind is Cassio:
In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves";
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry "O sweet creature!" and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots
That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then
Cried "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!" (III. iii. 413-426)

He describes the night which he has slept with Cassio in much vivid detail, and even we wonder why, when Cassio began kissing him hard he did not wake Cassio up at that moment. This scene could also be understood as Iago's substitute for a sexual interaction with Othello:

Iago's obsessive suspicion that Othello has leaped into his seat, along with his heavily eroticized account of Cassio's dream, similarly lend themselves to a classically psychoanalytic reading of Iago as repressed homosexual.⁶³

According to this approach, the auditor can realize that just as Roderigo is rejected by Desdemona, Iago is rejected by Othello when they get married. In order to cover up his feelings, Iago explains to Roderigo why he pretends to like Othello in public, he says:

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. (I. i. 61-65)

⁶³ J, Adelman. "Iago's Alter Ego: Race as Projection in Othello". *Shakespeare Quarterly*, George Washington University. Vol. 48, No. 2 (Summer. 1997), pp. 134. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871277> Web 16/05/2012 06:06

Iago feels upset, but his ache comes more from Othello's rejection of making him his lieutenant, his jealousy towards Cassio, and Desdemona's closeness to Othello. As with the devil, the sight of happiness and goodness is intolerable.

Whereas there may be some element of eroticism in Iago's behaviour to the general, it over-simplifies the play to seek all explanations of his character here. Far more passages indicate that Iago is heterosexual. He mentions a physical relationship with his wife, and at one point wants to revenge himself on the Moor by sleeping with Desdemona:

And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I am evened with him, wife for wife. (II. i. 223-224)

Iago is not homosexual, but frustrated. It is evident that the part of Iago's revenge to encourage Othello to kill Desdemona comes from one of his plan. Arthur Kirsch also says that Iago is Desdemona's healthy sexual rival "Where she luminously represents a union of affection and desire, Iago wishes to reduce love 'merely' to a lust of the blood, and permission of the will."⁶⁴ A hidden motive for jealousy of Desdemona comes from her ability to be both physically and emotionally content with her husband.

After Iago's successes in convincing Othello of Desdemona's adultery, Othello plans to kill her by using a poison, but it is Iago's suggestion that Othello go to her in bed and smother her. As we have seen, this was an innovation of Shakespeare, not found in the story he was using. Iago may take pleasure by imagining that Othello killing his previous love in a very sexual way, and as a result it clears a way for Iago to take her place both sexually and in her influence over Othello. These frustrations appear to be all-too-human in Iago, but the fact of their familiarity should not detract from the fact of Iago's possession by and identification with the devil. For the Elizabethans the stories of the Bible about the devil, whether talking in a garden, or bargaining with God over Job's virtues, or disputing the soul of Moses, had a human immediacy that would not convince today. It would be wrong to see the human failures of Iago as contradictory with the claim that his character is modelled on the devil.

The sexual struggle dominates in this Shakespeare play as in no other. Clearly a main aim of Iago is to destroy Othello's positive experience of sexuality, as Kirsch argues: "Iago

⁶⁴ A, Kirsch. "The Polarization of Erotic Love in Othello. *The Modern Language Review*. Vol. 73, No. 4 (Oct,1978), pp.734 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3727589>

nevertheless prevails with Othello . . . because Othello eventually internalizes Iago's maleficent sexual vision and sees himself with Iago's eyes, rather than Desdemona's."⁶⁵ It is the view of this thesis that the critics who interpret Iago as a homosexual, and find the source of his anger there, are over-simplifying.

Certainly, scenes like the mock marriage are important. However, it should be interpreted rather as a clear sign that Iago has now completely supplanted Desdemona in his master's trust. The failure of the trust which should have been in the marriage, and its fatal transfer to the Moor's former ensign, is what is key here. The sense of this also being an illicit physical tie adds to the unease of the audience, but it would be wrong to read the whole play in these terms.

What is more significant is that Othello is entirely in his servant's hands. The Elizabethan audience would understand the "marriage vow" as a handing over of one's soul to an evil force. Faustus and others make such vows. The effect is that the Moor is wholly taken over, and willing to perform what Iago suggests to the limit:

Now that Othello is roused by jealousy to anger and to a hungry desire for revenge that we hear. His speeches are full of threats: 'How shall I murder her, Iago' and I would have him nine years a-killing.⁶⁶

There is a sinister ambiguity in Iago, on which he depends. Talkative when lying, when the truth emerges he can only be silent. He is a confidant, but at the same time he is an enemy. He helps his master, yet he also dominates his Master. He plans his actions and secures the outcomes, yet he has no visual motive. The duplicity that he constantly shows throughout the play, assures the complications of Iago's characters that he is not simply a man seeking revenge. His diabolical qualities can be recognize from the ambiguity of motives for retaliation that he provides, but one of the main contentions of this thesis is that the link with the devil is more fundamental.

Iago's achievement is superhuman. In wondering at the transformation of the Moor (Act IV. I), Lodovico expresses a general sense that what has happened to Othello is not

⁶⁵ A, Kirsch. "The Polarization of Erotic Love in Othello. *The Modern Language Review*. Vol. 73, No. 4 (Oct,1978), pp.734-735 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3727589>

⁶⁶ L, Campbell. *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes*. London, Methuen. 1961, pp. 169.

natural. There is a sense in which the ensign could not have been so successful, and had so many lucky opportunities, through a simply human power.

In his classic study, Bradley makes much of Iago's remarkable abilities: "He is an artist. His action is a plot, the intricate plot of a drama, and in the conception and execution of it he experiences the tension and the joy of artistic creation."⁶⁷ We can consider Iago as an artist in evil. Iago is like a skilful writer he has power to decide on the lives of his characters and to create any intrigue that might make intricate his story. He is a master of all the skills and the other characters are all proper characters that put their fates in his hands to be moulded to his will; that is why Iago refuses to offer an explanation for his action. In his understanding, there is nothing to explain. As an artist, it is his job to create. His being an artist also explains his inconsistency of motives, and in these terms he needs no motives for his action.

When confronted by the truth, Iago cannot explain why he does what he does. He does not even defend himself with the motives he has offered before. As an artist, Iago's concern is only in creating his masterpiece of evil, therefore his lack of emotions and motives suits his profession. He rejoices in his work and does not have to have a motive to create his art. Iago creates "destruction" and his materials are the people around him, like an artist who creates his work from the materials around him "Iago's behavior reflects these qualities of a devil and of an artist. He becomes the symbolic representation of what the devil stands for-of destructiveness and of nothingness."⁶⁸ The real artist does his work of art for art's sake and Iago performs his evil plot, not as a response to particular insults or opposed characters, but because he rejoices in the power of evil, and because he sees the opportunity.

Iago's motives are unclear and shifting, and that this makes him uniquely troubling among Shakespearean villains. Several reasons for resentment are given by the villain, including a failure to be promoted, sexual betrayal, and a humiliating service. None of the explanations Iago provides carry conviction, leading Coleridge famously to identify a 'motive-hunting of motiveless malignity' (as we mentioned in Coleridge's famous speech in page 12) Coleridge is right in seeing Shakespeare as presenting a portrait of the devil. In this

⁶⁷ A. C, Bradley, 1904, pp. 188.

⁶⁸ M, Rosenberg. *The Masks of Othello*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: California U. P. 1961, pp. 170.

thesis we have found taken the comparison he made and shown that it can illuminate the central themes of this play.

The devil was depicted for the Elizabethans in plays which Shakespeare knew from childhood and which influenced him deeply. As well as nativity and passion plays, he was familiar with Old Testament stories from staged versions which had their ultimate origin in the liturgy of the church. A favored theme was Adam and Eve and the serpent, and there are many similarities between the story of the Fall of Man in Genesis 2-3 and that of *Othello*.

Satan in the story of the Fall uses appearances to create a deception, and this is evident when he tempts Eve in the garden. He appears to take her side against God, sows doubt in her mind about the relationship which had hitherto been unquestioned. The result, as in *Othello*, is confusion, as Adam puts the blame on his wife:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it..... Adam said "The woman whom you gave me deceived me..." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:6-13)

Here, too, woman is used to deceive Adam in to eating from the forbidden fruit. A state of paradise is lost. On one occasion the suggestion that Shakespeare has this morality tale in mind is confirmed when Iago is called a serpent. Lodovico says:

Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth. (V. ii. 285)

In its simplicity and absoluteness, to the fall of Adam "an enactment of fall... a psychomachia, with Iago as the bestial parts of man, and Othello as the higher."⁶⁹ In both stories the relationship of man and woman is put to the test in a primitive combat of black and white, the black being Iago.

A more abstract notion of the devil is also present in the fact that Iago presents us with an absence: of emotion (he has no child, or love for Desdemona, as he did in Shakespeare's

⁶⁹ K, Frank. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1974, pp. 1202.

source), of clear motive, of achievable aim. Even on the level of language, he may speak with a string of negatives, and his last words form a negativity.

In this thesis the connection of Iago with the devil is shown to be crucial to the symbolic and dramatic power of *Othello*. This has emerged from the way the playwright developed his character from the available sources, especially Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*. Both in the running image of devilry, which colors the language of the play, and in the actions through which Iago drives the plot forward, the importance of our theme is borne out. At heart *Othello* is a morality play uniting accounts of the fall and the final judgement which is its result. In view of Shakespeare's proven interest in the spirit world, there is no surprise in finding that the model dominating the creation of the villain of this play was the devil. Specifically it was the devil according to Elizabethan notions of his personality and methods, derived mainly from Genesis and the New Testament.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Majed, Mohammed

Nationality: Iraqi

Date and Place of Birth: 30 November 1985, Kirkuk

Marital Status: Single

Phone: 009 0531 987 60 28- 00964 770 752 00 93

email: muhammed.bayrakdar@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
BA	Kirkuk University College of Education	2007
High School	Alwaleed High School Kirkuk	2003

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English, Turkish, Arabic

HOBBIES

Reading, Swimming, Movies,