



The Ambiguity of Iago's Fabricated Dream of Cassio in *Othello*

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ABSTRACT

Shakespeare, influenced by the Medieval dream sequence seen in Chaucer, uses dreams as “a dramatic device” in his history plays, tragedies, romances and even comedies. In *Richard III*, Clarence's dream foreshadows his death by being stabbed and drowned in the butt of Malmsey wine and has a prophetic quality, and also in *Julius Caesar* Calphurnia's dream before Caesar's assassination at the Capitol in Rome by the conspirators possesses the same tendency. Hermia's dream in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* reflects her fear of loss of virginity as well as the betrayal of Lysander. In Shakespeare's romance, *Pericles* at the last act Pericles hears the music of the spheres and falls asleep. In his dream, Diana asks him to come to her temple in Ephesus which will later bring out the reunion of his family. In *Othello*, Iago's fabricated dream of Cassio has the purpose to provoke the anger and to intensify the jealousy of Othello but this invented dream also sheds light upon the inner psyche and the subconscious mind of Iago. Coleridge mentions Iago's passionless character and points to his evil nature without any target at all. Both Wangh and Adelman regard Iago as suffering from repressed homosexuality. This article will deal with the ambiguity of Iago's fabricated dream of Cassio and explore the hidden reality in Iago's subconscious mind concerning his sexuality while examining the symbols and use of language in psychoanalytical terms and taking into account Jacques Derrida's concept of language as “pharmakon” having both the power of cure and poison.

KEYWORDS

Othello, dreams, subconscious, pharmakon, latent homosexuality.

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Introduction

‘To sleep, perchance to dream’

Hamlet, Shakespeare

Shakespeare makes use of dreams as a “dramatic device” to reveal prophecies foreshadowing the future events or murders, and to convey symbols and images flowing in the subconscious mind of his characters, reflecting their desires or fears and also juxtaposing the confusion between illusion and reality of life in his plays. Dreams possess an extended metaphorical meaning and function as a transformative power in the Shakespearean canon. Marjorie Garber states that dream in Shakespeare’s early plays as a device of plot seen in Clarence’s and Mercutio’s dreams gains a new dimension and begins to enter the subconscious mind of the dreamer in the later tragedies (Garber, 46). Garber mentions that the crucial boundary between dreams as Freudian wish-fulfillments and the actual facts concerning the working of the guilty conscience are dissolved in *Macbeth* (Garber, 109). Shakespeare becomes more interested in the inner depths of the human psyche and the workings of the subconscious mind as well as the damage caused by the gnawing of conscience in the imagination of his characters. Dreams in Shakespeare are related to the imaginative faculty of the mind where human imagination transfers the concerns of the real world into images to the dream world, creating ambiguity between illusion and reality. Dreams during sleep or invented dreams as in the case of Iago in the tragedy *Othello* could originate within the individual consciousness while revealing what was hidden in the subconscious mind. Samuel Taylor Coleridge indicates “the passionless character” of Iago, possessing “motive-hunting of motiveless malignity” (Coleridge, 44), whereas Martin Wanh in his article entitled “*Othello*: The Tragedy of Iago” points to “the paranoiac personality” in Iago’s character suffering from “repressed homosexuality” (Wanh, 205). Gordon Ross Smith develops Wanh’s approach and explains the symbols and gestures expressed in Iago’s ‘fabricated’ dream’ in psychoanalytical terms. Janet Adelman underlines the difference of race and the importance of whiteness in *Othello* (Adelman, 129-130) and indicates the evaluation of Melanie Klein on Iago’s imagination of his interior world which is projected to the entire landscape of the play (qtd. in Adelman, 140). Adelman regards Iago as ‘an alter ego’ of Othello, considering Othello and Iago to be doubles and points to the fact that Iago’s devotion to the Moor is the outcome of unconscious lust for Othello. My paper will deal with Iago’s invented dream of Cassio in *Othello* and explore the hidden reality in Iago’s subconscious mind concerning the sexual conflict and examine the symbols and use of language in psychoanalytical terms. In this analysis, I also take into account Jacques Derrida’s concept of language as “*pharmakon*” having both the power of cure and poison.

Pre-Freudian dream analysis

The pre-Freudian dream analysis in *Oneirocritica* by Artemidorus of Daldis who lived in Ephesus in the second century A.D. during the Roman empire was the most popular book translated in the age of Shakespeare. As an interpreter of dreams, Artemidorus concentrated upon the ambiguity of the symbols in dreams. Artemidorus regards dreams as personal and unique to the individual and tries to interpret the images which the dreamer remembers in his account. He classifies dreams as “personal dreams” which relate to the dreamer (Artemidorus, 8) and as “predictive dreams” (*oneiroi*) which foretell what will happen in the future (Artemidorus, 10). Concerning these dreams, Michel Foucault points to the distinction Artemidorus draws between these nocturnal visions, calling them as the *enypnia*, the dreams expressing the present affects of the individual and as the *oneiroi*, the dream experiences which tell what will be real in the unfolding of time (Foucault, 10). Foucault regards *enypnion* and *oneiros* as two terms being in opposition with each other as the first one concerns the individual and the states of the body and the mind, while the second one relates to the events in the world concentrating upon the unwinding of the events in the temporal chain (Foucault, 10). In Book 4 of *Oneirocritica* Artemidorus gives the example of the dream of Alexander of Macedonia during the besiege of the city of Tyre. Great Alexander saw in his dream that a satyr (satyros) was playing about upon his shield. Aristander interpreted his dream as ‘sa Tyros’ which means ‘Tyre is yours’ (Artemidorus, 183). This evaluation of Aristander encouraged Alexander and brought his victory upon Tyre. Freud regarded Alexander’s satyr dream as the most beautiful dream of antiquity which reflects the concealed wish fulfillment of the emperor. In his decipherment of these dreams Artemidorus uses the analogies and the juxtaposition of similarities. As Garber states, Artemidorus based his method of dream interpretation upon the principle of association which is the basic principle in Freud’s dream analysis (Garber, 6). Artemidorus also mentions “anxiety-dreams” which “people have about what worries them or arises from some state of irrational impulse or desire” (Artemidorus, 172). He indicates “solicited-dreams” when “people ask a god for some dream-vision relevant for their immediate concerns” (Artemidorus, 172). In his interpretation of dreams Artemidorus takes into consideration dreams in which parts of the human body are involved, dreams depending upon human activities, such as bathing or fighting and sexual affairs, and cosmic dreams where visions of gods or goddesses appear by dividing the interference of deities as the celestial, the terrestrial, the marine, the fluvial and the chthonic deities that are related to death. The sexual dreams Artemidorus analyses in his interpretations take into account two basic features; the dreamer is either present in his own dream or the dreamer appears as a spectator in his dream. In his approach, Foucault points to Artemidorus’ treatment of sexual acts and pleasures, stating that Artemidorus almost always has them figure on

the side of the “signifiers,” but almost never on the side of the “signified” (Foucault, 26).

The tragedy of Othello and its background

Shakespeare’s *Othello, The Moor of Venice* written between 1602 and 1604 deals with the political situation in the Mediterranean at the time concerning the conquest of Cyprus by the Ottoman empire in 1571 from its former sovereign, the Republic of Venice. Shakespeare moves his play from Venice to Cyprus where there is the political anxiety concerning the possibility of the siege of the Ottomans on the island of Cyprus. Cyprus at the time was an important military base as well as a trading center at the Mediterranean. It was also the island where the Western and the Eastern cultures and religions met and the empires clashed for power. In Greek mythology, Cyprus was the birthplace of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, harmony and beauty. She was associated with the foams of the sea as her name indicated. Shakespeare’s source for the play is taken from the tales written by the Italian novella writer Giraldo Cinthio in *Hecatommithi* in which Othello, the Moor falls in love with Desdemona and marries her but suspects that his wife loves Cassio and out of jealousy murders his beloved wife and then commits suicide. In Cinthio’s tale Iago is Cinthio’s villain but Shakespeare rejected the simple motivation of Cinthio’s villain and made Iago direct his hatred not against Desdemona, but against the Moor. Stanley Edgar Hyman in his article states that it is indeed Iago “who unconsciously loves both Othello and Cassio, and that love is repressed and, by the defense mechanism called ‘reaction formation,’ turned into hate” (Hyman, 369). Hyman points to certain “ingredients in Iago’s strong latent homosexuality” which are reflected in his use of language with bestial imagery and his deep contempt for woman shown in his treatment of Emilia and his provocative descriptions of sexual love into the ears of Othello in order to influence Othello’s imaginative mind by transferring Iago’s own suspicious and paranoaic mind (Hyman, 370). Iago regards life with suspicious eyes and mind, he even suspects that his wife Emilia might have slept with Othello.

Iago’s use of language

At the very beginning of the play, Iago while hiding himself below the window in the darkness of the night, and not revealing his identity, shouts at Brabantio, Desdemona’s father, announcing Desdemona’s elopement with Othello, telling him that “an old black ram/ Is tugging your white ewe” (*Othello*, I, i, 89- 90) and later adding that his “daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs”. (*Othello*, I, i, 116-118). Iago employs certain words, such as ram and ewe, which create a kind of vulgarity when he describes the love relation between the Moor and Desdemona. At the beginning of the play, Iago also uses animal words such as ram, ass, beast, and Barbary horse for Othello. In Act I scene iii, Iago in his soliloquy expresses his

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hate for Othello and says that he suspects that Othello has slept with his wife Emilia: “I hate the Moor, / And it is thought abroad that ‘twixt my sheets/ He’s done my office.” (*Othello*, I, iii, 380 - 382) In the First Folio, it writes “She’s done my office.” If ever Emilia has done her office between the sheets, the question comes whether in Iago’s subconscious mind Iago was mentioning that Emilia in his “office” meaning in his place, in Iago’s place, was making love to Othello. If it is so, it also points to the repressed desire of Iago’s latent homosexuality, his repressed desire for the Moor. Iago’s hatred for Othello appears to be just a pretext to conceal his attraction for the Moor who is appreciated and respected by the Senators of the Republic of Venice because of his bravery, integrity and honesty, who is loved and adored by Desdemona because of his sincerity in his deep love towards her. Most probably the physical appearance of Othello which might be quite attractive, handsome and strong when compared with Iago’s simple and unattractive physical appearance causes Iago to feel himself uneasy and inferior. As a defence mechanism Iago despises and looks down on him. He also recognizes his weakness when he is with Cassio who is a handsome and elegant Florentine. Iago’s despise of women can be seen in his remarks to Desdemona about female gender on their arrival to Cyprus before Othello’s arrival. Iago says: “You are pictures out of doors, bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens, saints in your injuries, devils being offended, players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds” (*Othello*, II, i, 108- 111).

In Iago there is also a kind of uneasiness concerning his physical appearance which is indicated in Act V. He says that “If Cassio do remain/ He hath a daily beauty in his life/ That makes me ugly:” (*Othello*, V, i, 18-20). Cassio is a handsome Florentine who acts with courtesy and gentleness, and he takes the attention of the people’s gaze whenever he enters a society. But as opposed to Cassio, Iago’s physical appearance and manners as well as his use of language never show a high quality of presence. I also think the same concerning the Moor; Othello by his physical appearance is most remarkable in his bodily stature and goodness of character which was also a reason for Desdemona to fall in love with him. When Othello describes at the Senate of Venice their marriage and mutual love, there is a physical attraction as well as the union of souls in their innocent love. Othello says: “ She loved me for the dangers I had passed,/ And I loved her, that she did pity them./ This only is the witchcraft I have used.” (*Othello*, I, iii, 66-68). The Venetian Senate shows great respect and trust in Othello’s qualities. Desdemona defends her love for the Moor saying:

That I did love the Moor to live with him,

...

... My heart’s subdued

Even to the very quality of my lord.
 I saw Othello's visage in his mind
 And to his honours and his valiant parts
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
 (*Othello*, I, iii, 245-251).

Iago's manipulations

In the hands of Shakespeare Iago becomes an evil artist of villainy playing with Othello's naive and innocent mind and destroying his deep love for Desdemona and turning these emotions of tenderness into destructive jealousy which leads to the victimization of the innocent and chaste Desdemona. Very much like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, Iago, with his deliberate intention, manages to cause Othello smother and murder his only beloved wife. Iago is a very skillful manipulator much like a stage director, he turns everything to his own benefit whenever any profitable situation occurs. The handkerchief of Desdemona with the figure of strawberries on it, is found by Emilia who gives it to Iago. In the hands of Iago, this little handkerchief is used in order to trigger Othello's jealousy and to increase his suspicion in the scene where Cassio gives it to the prostitute Bianca. Iago also provokes Othello's jealousy by saying an invented lie that he has seen this little piece of cloth, Desdemona's handkerchief, in Cassio's hands when Cassio was wiping his beard with it. The precious object for Othello which was his first gift to Desdemona has become valueless with this act of Cassio. However, these are Iago's lies and his play with appearance and reality in order to make Othello believe in what he is shown to see as reality and what he imagines in his mind by Iago's abusive language. Splitter states that "feeding him [Othello] the lies, doubts and suspicions that will infect him with morbid jealousy as if it were an almost physical disease, Iago will 'pour this pestilence into his ear' (II, iii, 356)" (Splitter, 23). Martin Wanh in his article interpreted Iago's impulses and defenses like Ernest Jones by emphasizing Iago's aching tooth as a phallic symbol and Wanh identified the handkerchief of Desdemona with strawberries as a symbol of breast standing for innocence and purity. Whereas Gordon Ross Smith extended Wanh's interpretation to a further level, including Iago's repressed desire for Cassio and Othello, stating that the strawberries on the handkerchief of Desdemona were symbols for "the glans penis" (qtd. in Hyman, 383). This approach is too far-fetched.

As Othello insists upon a concrete proof of Desdemona's adultery with Cassio, Iago invents and produces a fabricated dream of Cassio which is Iago's quick scheming and improvisation to persuade Othello of the secret affair between Desdemona and Cassio. He describes Cassio's dream as if he has experienced and witnessed it as Cassio and Iago slept

together:

IAGO- I lay with Cassio lately
And being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleepe. There are a kinde of men,
So loose of Soule, that in their sleepes will mutter
Their affayres: one of this kinde is Cassio:
In sleepe I heard him say, 'Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our Loves',
And then, sir, would be gripe, and wring my hand:
Cry 'oh sweet Creature': then kisse me hard,
As if he pluckt up kisses by the rootes,
That grew upon my lippes- laid his Leg
Over my Thigh- and sigh'd, and kiss'd, and then
Cried 'Cursed Fate, that gave thee to the Moore!'

(*Othello*, III, iii, 417- 430)

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This fabricated dream of Cassio which was created and improvised by Iago has become a field of interest for the psychoanalysts. The non-existent dream points to a certain kind of subconscious impulse as well as repressed desire in Iago. Iago's laying down with Cassio at night, the aching of his tooth, the murmuring of Cassio in his sleep, his erotical acts such as his caressing Iago's hand, his kissing Iago's lips as if they are taken from their roots, showing the intensity of eroticism as well as putting his leg upon Iago's thigh create certain questions about Iago's own character, his sexuality, his repressed desires and the working of his own subconscious mind with the symbols used in this fabricated dream. This invented dream is a lie uttered by Iago who wants to give Othello a proof of Desdemona's adultery with Cassio but this erotic lie appears to be a proof of his innate desires which are directed towards Cassio as a man and repressed in his psyche.

Freud's psychoanalytical interpretation of dreams

Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* regarded dreams as representations of a repressed desire in a disguised fulfillment. Freud's point of departure was that the incoherence of dreams should not be dismissed as the random firing of unruly neurones. Both in classical antiquity and medieval period people evaluated dreams as prophetic, having a relation with the divine. Freud appreciated Aristotle's naturalistic approach to dreams and sleep. Aristotle regarded dreams as a

mental activity of someone who is asleep. Much like a prism, dreams reflect the nature of reality in images and symbols. Aristotle in his two works, *De Somno et vigilia* (Sleep and Sleeplessness) and *De insomniis* (On Dreams), claims that the dream is not a supernatural revelation, but is subject to the laws of human spirit. The dream is defined as the psychic activity of the dreamer. As Freud argues, Aristotle knew that a dream converts the slight sensations perceived in sleep into intense sensations (Freud, 6). But Freud who considered hysterical symptoms as a body-language or a somatic metaphor which reflected an underlying conflict, or a product of suppressed emotion and inhibited desire, saw dreams as symptom-equivalents susceptible to the same mode of deconstruction (Wilson, ix). Wilson in his introduction stated that “Freud reasoned that any pattern it [the dream] revealed must be a reflection of the unconscious mind” which “functioned according to the ‘pleasure principle’” (ix). This concealed narrative or ‘latent content’ which consisted of thoughts underlying the ‘manifest content’ of the dream could be inferred. The reason why the ‘latent content’ was concealed was its being unacceptable to the conscious mind, which usually functioned in accordance with the ‘reality principle’. The ‘manifest content’ might appear as symbols in mere disguise. Freud stated that “dreaming is not a psychic activity at all, but a somatic process which makes itself known to the psychic apparatus by means of symbols” (Freud, 10). In the case of Iago’s fabricated dream of Cassio, the language Iago uses with its erotic connotations as well as the strong intensity of passion described in the act of kissing, caressing and putting the feet upon the thigh, shows the latent homosexual desire of Iago for the handsome Cassio and the strongly-built and attractive Moor in the play. Adelman states that:

Iago’s hoarding, his sadism, his references to purgatives and clyster-pipes can be read through the language of classical psychoanalysis as evidence of an anal fixation... 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. (Adelman, 134)

Marvin Rosenberg in *The Masks of Othello* regarded that the clue to the play was not Iago’s hatred for Othello, but his deep affection for him (Rosenberg, 205). According to Rosenberg, Iago himself possessed a subconscious affection for the Moor. After the fabricated dream of Cassio, Othello becomes much more furious and jealous and decides to put an end to Desdemona’s life. Iago advises him not to use poison but to strangle or smother her. Iago’s advice to smother Desdemona is evaluated by Hyman in his article as an example of psychoanalytic “displacement upward,” shutting off an inoffensive orifice for the lower orifice

which is seen as evil (Hyman, 380). After Iago's promise to help the Moor to take his vengeance upon the adulterous wife, Shakespeare uses a very interesting scene in which both Othello and Iago kneel down together and swear for revenge but from the point of view on stage they appear to be vowing a union of marriage, and this scene, of course, takes the attention of the psychoanalysts in their interpretation of the latent homosexuality in Iago. Randolph Splitter in his essay states that "after kneeling together with Othello to seal the 'sacred vow,' he pretends to swear loyalty to him in words that suggest amorous devotion more than military duty: 'I am your own forever' (III, iii, 458,476)" (Splitter, 18).

Ambiguity of binarisms

Iago's dialogue with Othello can be evaluated in Derridean terms as destructive with respect to Othello's relationship with his wife but at the same time life-sustaining for Iago's subconscious prospective affair with the Moor. In "*La Pharmacie de Platon*" Jacques Derrida deals with the conception of language in Plato's *Phaedrus* in which Socrates compares and contrasts language seen in writing and heard in speech. He regards the function of language as 'pharmakon', a drug, medicine or magic potion which can be both poisonous and life-sustaining. The term, then, carries a double meaning. Splitter claims that "Iago's poisonous (verbal) images of sexual violence, in which the fetishistic pharmakon is lost and destroyed, are, in effect, substitute pharmaka which replace what one has lost but also break down the integrity of the self" (Splitter, 23). Unfortunately with the poisoning speech of Iago, Othello is unable to think and evaluate the reality. As his mind and imagination are poisoned, his self is no longer his own, he has become the shadow of Iago in a way in Jungian terms. Janet Adelman in her essay regards Iago in different terms, stating that "Marking himself as opposite to light through his demonic "I am not what I am," Iago calls forth a world, ... in which he can see his own darkness localized and reflected in Othello's darkness. (Adelman, 127).

Even though Shakespeare's play seems to rest on binary oppositions such as dark versus white, good versus evil, love versus hatred, naivety versus cunning, honesty versus dishonesty, reality versus illusion, vulgarity versus tenderness, Iago's manipulations destroys these binarisms and creates ambiguity in the understanding of the play. In her analysis Janet Adelman compares and contrasts the two main characters; Iago and Othello as follows:

Iago's "I" beats through the dialogue with obsessive insistence, claiming both self-sufficiency ("I follow myself" [1. 58]) and self-division, defining itself by what it is not ("Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago" [1. 57]), in fact simultaneously proclaiming its existence and nonexistence: "I am not what I am" (1. 65). I, I, I: Iago's name unfolds from

the Italian *io*, Latin *ego*; and the injured “I” is his signature, the ground of his being and ... Othello -- and particularly in relation to Desdemona -- becomes Iago’s primary target in part because Othello has the presence, the fullness of being, that Iago lacks. Othello is everywhere associated with the kind of interior solidity and wholeness that stands as a reproach to Iago’s interior emptiness and fragmentation: if Iago takes Janus as his patron saint (1.2.33) and repeatedly announces his affiliation with nothingness (“I am not what I am”; “I am nothing, if not critical” [2.1.119]), Othello is initially “all in all sufficient” (4.1.261), a “full soldier” (2.1.36), whose “solid virtue” (4.1.262) and “perfect soul” (1.2.31) allow him to achieve the “full fortune” (1.1.66) of possessing Desdemona ... the extent to which Othello’s fullness and solidity are the object of Iago’s envy can be gauged by the extent to which he works to replicate his own self-division in Othello. Split himself, Iago is a master at splitting others: his seduction of Othello works by inscribing in Othello the sense of dangerous interior spaces-thoughts that cannot be known, monsters in the mind. (Adelman, 127-128)

— 26 — Iago’s emptiness of self and his desire of splitting other characters’ selves appear to be an interesting element of the workings of his psyche. He seems to gain a temporary sense of self as he plays the roles projected to him. Othello calls him “honest Iago” just as Desdemona does in the play. He can exist for a moment in the projection of the other, whereas this emptiness and temporary existence of Iago’s self can be regarded as the absence of the self, which is an ambiguity. Much like a *bukalemön*, Iago is ever-changing in his acting of different roles projected on him. Iago is most skillful like an artist in creating illusions about himself. He pretends that he is loyal and helpful to Roderigo who is in love with Desdemona but he spoils him by taking Roderigo’s gifts for Desdemona and his money. He also acts as if he were helping Desdemona when she is in difficulty. He creates the illusion that he is honest and loyal to Othello while he is pouring the poison of suspicion and jealousy into Othello’s soul. Knowing Cassio’s inclination to alcoholic drinks, he lets Cassio drink a lot and causes him to become quarrelsome and injure Montano with his sword. When Cassio loses his military position because of this quarrel and fight, Iago advises him to ask help from Desdemona in order to let them appear together in close and sincere relationship in front of the eyes of the Moor. Iago deliberately creates an illusion about himself as an honest man impressing people as if he were a man of integrity. He is playing with appearance and reality as well as seeming and being as if he were an actor dissimulating and ever-changing in accordance with profitable situations. Iago also appears to be a skillful *metteur en scène* and an artistic designer as he profits every situation on his behalf by manipulating his victims into the web of their destruction. Robert Heilman

identifies the Satanic aspect of Iago with Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost* (Heilman, 42). Iago uses the supremacy of his evil upon the lives of the innocent and naive ones. Iago who swears "By Janus" which is most proper for his villainy as a double-faced man, has the design from the very beginning of the play to destroy the harmony created in the soul of Othello because of his profound love for Desdemona. Iago expresses his desire for Othello's destruction by declaring his purpose to untune Othello's music in his aside; "O, you are well tuned now: but I'll set down/ The pegs that make this music, as honest/ As I am" (*Othello*, II, i, 197-199). Iago is like a destructive force of discord or disharmony which is the eternal enemy of human love and harmony.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in Shakespeare's tragedy of *Othello*, Iago with his cunning method and with his lies and fabricated dream of Cassio achieves to shatter the sense of self or the illusion of Othello's fullness, complete personality and presence. Othello's erotic power, deep love for Desdemona as well as his self-confidence are all shattered into pieces by Iago, which brings out his separation and alienation from Desdemona. This is what Iago aims at in his villainy. Shakespeare in this play displays a latent homosexuality of Iago who creates the improvised dream as well as the steps of a villain to achieve the destruction of the tender love between Desdemona and Othello who utters in his last lines before committing suicide the desire to be remembered as someone who "loved not wisely, but too well, (V, ii, 340) and he stabs himself. As spectators we are left with the sense of the waste of goodness as well as innocence at the very end of this tragedy. The darkness of the soul of Iago, the white man destroys with the poison of his language the dark Moor's pure happiness and innocence of his beloved, Desdemona but sustains his own existence.

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