

Innuendo
As
A Rhetorical Strategy in Shakespeare's *Othello*
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It is admitted that one of Shakespeare's originality is the use of language. His figurative language is rich with rhetorical styles which make him a prominent phenomenon in the world of literature especially drama. The manipulation of language for its own sake becomes a visible feature of Shakespeare throughout his works. It serves as an integral part of the whole structure of his plays. As a result of its metaphorical nature, the language is often dense with meanings and connotations. In poetry as well as prose, Robert Southwick points out that "the speeches contain much imagery and very little literal statement"(1), which is liable to a wider range of interpretations than the kind of language that we are used to. The rhetorical styles, which are used in his language, give Shakespearean drama its identity.

One of these rhetorical styles is the employment of innuendo which means a way of implying something without actually declaring it. In *The Lexicon Webster Dictionary*, innuendo is "an indirect intimation, usually of a derogatory [often with a sinister] nature, about a person or thing; an insinuation."(2) It derived from a Latin term suggesting a hint or intimating. In Law, it means "a parenthetic explanation", especially in slander or libel action, of an injurious word or expression presented in the case. It is "a complaint in an action for libel or slander which explains the expressions alleged to be libelous or slanderous."(3)

The importance of innuendo lies in the fact that it does not mean the actual meaning which is referred to by its explicit expression. It is used by the dramatist to refer to another meaning which is highly associated with its explicit expression and co-occurred with it. This co-occurrence springs from the special contact where the speech is delivered.

The reason behind transferring of explicit into innuendo or implicit presentation lies in the fact that the effect of meaning will be great to stimulate the suitable psychological response. This is so because of the hint to intended meaning and referring to it by gesture. Thus, the listeners will grasp the intended meaning after exerting great effort and deep thinking. Hence, the structural innuendo will be of great benefit to rhetrics of the speech exceeding other types of rhetrics because it refers implicitly and without any other means or particles to a deep meaning with a deep reflection on the part of the audience through the means of conveying the message and its necessities.

Innuendo, as an instrument of poetic expression in Shakespeare's plays, reflects an implied events. It turns the imagination of the audience in a certain direction and helps to prepare the atmosphere, so that the state of expectation and feeling may be necessary for the full realization of the dramatic effect. Therefore; the use of innuendo becomes an effective instrument in the hand of the dramatist to create a kind of suspense in the mind of the audience and readers respectively. In this context, Hilda Hulme explains that;

***Shakespeare himself is speaking in allegory to those
who will come after him. He seems to be expressing his own
fear at the possibility[that] the linguist and textual critic of future
centuries may so confidently hang about him, so claim and haunt
him.(4)***

The direct and explicit style is replaced in the works of the mature Shakespeare by a more subtle and indirect method. The apparent statements are superceded by indirect expressions. Things are suggested, intimated, and hinted at. For this manner of suggestive and veiled presentation, Shakespeare employs innuendo as a suitable technique in his plays.

No doubt, the use of innuendo plays an important role in this connection, as is obvious where Shakespeare makes his characters say something which they cannot grasp its significance at the time of utterance. For what they say may have two meanings. The one meaning which the speaker has in mind, refers to the momentary situation, but the other meaning may point beyond this moment to other issues of the play.

This double meaning of innuendo is of importance for the development of the dialogue in Shakespeare's plays, especially tragedies. So, in interpreting the tragedies, "we must continually ask whether one character has fully understood what the other said, or whether he or she understood it in a secondary or false sense." (5) This is very significant for the further course of the action.

Shakespeare seems to employ quite consciously this mutual misunderstanding of the characters as an instrument of dramatic technique. In his early works, he exploits innuendo and the pun, a play upon words, merely as a form of witty entertainment but in his later works, Shakespeare develops it to a fine instrument of characterization and a means of double interpretation of a situation.

By innuendo and multiplicity of meanings, Shakespeare makes his characters understand each other in different degrees. The characters may talk with each other and really believe that they understand each other. But the hidden or true meaning of the one is not grasped easily. Thus, a play on words may become the key to what is to follow. It is a necessary link in the chain of the dramatic structure in Shakespeare's plays.

This paper is an attempt to show the use of innuendo in Shakespeare's *Othello* and relating it to other elements of his dramatic art. It also aims at examining its specific dramatic function within this wider context, linking it up with situation

and character, plot and scenic action. In *Othello*, innuendo is used as a key to the play's ideas which are to be unfolded rather by images and repeated words than by the action on the stage.

According to Wolfgang Clemen who said that, "the tragedies display Shakespeare's dramatic technique at its best." (6) This means that every element of style, every single line becomes dramatically relevant. Shakespeare's *Othello* best reflects the employment of innuendo which has embodied by the character of Iago. He, as C. J. Sisson puts it, "is the true key to the play and to the conflict between him and Othello which, with its consequences, forms the action." (7)

The construction of the play is unique. Shakespeare placed the responsibility for Othello's deterioration heavily upon Iago. He made him the sort of man likely to fall prey to the persuasions Iago employs, and he depicted with great care the gradual process whereby Othello becomes ensnared.

In attempting to depict the process of Othello's transformation, Shakespeare set for himself an extremely difficult psychological and dramatic challenge. In other words, he makes use of innuendo as an effective means of his purpose. By innuendo, he shows that Othello, the public hero, is reduced to a state of helpless rage and is finally transformed into a murderer and a suicide.

From the very opening of the play, it is clear that the atmosphere is shrouded by breath of hostility between Iago and Othello. The roots of this hostility are prescribed to so many reasons without definite one. Iago's imagination feeds upon fantasies of displacement which found expression in public, domestic and sexual rule. These are the motivations which are exploited well by Iago to destroy the Moor. His resentment of Othello's choice of Cassio as lieutenant leads to envy and hatred. Therefore; Iago takes on his shoulders the task to implant the seeds of jealousy, 'the green-eyed monster' (111, iii, 166), whose habit Iago understands so well. But there is another side to his scheming, revealed in the glee with which he contemplates the ingenious symmetries of his vengeful design. In this respect, A. C. Bradley said, "Iago is an artist. His action is a plot, the intricate plot of a drama, and in the conception and execution of it he expresses the tension and the joy of artistic creature". (8) Iago is not simply a man of action. His public face of bravery and honesty conceals a satanic delight in manipulation and destruction. In act 1, scene 3, the inculcation of Cassio holds out the prospect of a double knavery, setting out 'to get [Cassio's] place' (1, iii, 388). He will achieve it by making Cassio appear to have taken Othello's. The effect will be to link Cassio and Desdemona in Othello's mind as persons who have proved unworthy of their office. The growing conviction that both Othello and Cassio have usurped his own place with Emilia gives Iago a further justification to the scheme by making Othello his own surrogate as both cuckold -victim and potential revenger. For these reasons, war is declared between Othello and Iago.

Like Richard III, Iago is a conscious and self- delighting artist in evil, and his pleasure in the aesthetic cunning of his creation is matched by a delight in

verbal ingenuity, in puns, innuendo, double entendres, and ironic equivoques. He has learned to moralise two meanings in one word and he weaves his net for Cassio, Othello and Desdemona from the threads of ambiguous hint and ambivalent suggestion. But this verbal duplicity also operates at a deeper and more vicious emotional level. When, for instance, the mechanism of Iago's revenge first begins to move in the drinking scene (Act II, scene iii), his satisfaction at the smoothness of its functioning finds play in a passage of intensely private innuendo. He steers the Lieutenant towards Desdemona in a speech whose apparently innocent language is full of gloating sexual suggestiveness. To Iago, language is his greatest weapon ;

Confess yourself
freely to her; importune her help to put
you in your place again. She is of so free,
so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition
she holds it a vice in her goodness not to
do more than she is requested.

(II, iii, 317-321)

The above lines are said by Iago as an advice to Cassio during their first night on Cyprus. Iago sets Cassio to drinking. Even though he protests that he can not handle drink, Cassio is bullied by Iago and two natives of Cyprus until he has had slightly too much to drink. Iago then sets Roderigo upon him, inciting him to pick a fight with Cassio and make him angry. Roderigo succeeds beautifully. This event is part of Iago's strategy.

This is the scene that Othello sees when he is enjoyed to Cyprus. This action enrages Othello and leads him to strip Cassio of his title. Othello berates him soundly for his behavior. So, Iago suggests that he may use his friendship with Desdemona, enlisting her aid in getting back into Othello's favor.

From that moment, Iago poisons Othello's mind against Cassio and Desdemona. He never makes a clear suggestion. Instead, he lets Othello know that there is something on his mind, but he is loath to express it. With innuendo and hint he suggests to Othello that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him with Cassio. Though Othello actually voices the words, the idea is all Iago's. Othello protests that the two are friends, and that Cassio often served as a good companion while the two lovers were courting.

This is the crucial moment in the play, the scene where Iago deceives Othello and induces in him to fall. He does so by expanding on the tactics used prior scenes which will be explained later on. Once the seed of doubt is planted in the Moor's mind with a quick 'Ha! I like not that' (III, iii, 34) when they come upon Desdemona and Cassio. A few probing questions about the ex- lieutenant relationship to Othello's wife, the process of temptation begins with Iago's seemingly disinterested and innocuous question;

Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady,
know of your love?

(III, iii, 94-95)

Harmless though it seems, the question is sufficiently to provoke Othello's curiosity as to what lies behind it, 'what dost thou think?' (III, iii, 103). These questions go hand in hand with Desdemona's innocent and persistent appeal to Othello to forgive Cassio and keep him in his post which arouses Othello's bad thinking. With this language, Iago retreats into the guise he has adopted. He becomes honest Iago, again, as in the brawl in act II, scene ii, the reluctant truth-teller who must have unpleasant news dragged from him by a determined Othello. The honesty suggested by his reluctance to speak is reinforced, as we said before, by the moralizing tone that he takes with his commander. Iago actually lectures Othello, warning him against jealousy and insist that he will not speak slander ;

But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.

(III, iii, 159-161)

At the same times, he plays upon the insecurities of the honest, noble African in sophisticated, decadent Venice, by lecturing Othello on how Venetian women are deceitful and treacherous by nature. Iago exploits this point to the uttermost since Othello is an outsider to the Venetian society. He hints of a black alien, may be evidence of Desdemona's lasciviousness and sexual perversity. Iago refers to the fact that ;

[Desdemona] did deceive her father, marrying you ;
And when she seemed to shake and fear your look,
She loved them most .

(III, iii, 206-208)

The overall effect is to pour verbal poison in his master's ear- not by lying, but by flavoring truth with innuendo. Therefore; by the language used, Iago creates something from nothing. Terry Eagleton affirms that , " The problem , however, is that language itself can be a sort of nothing , as with Iago's insinuating fictions , punching a gaping hole in reality and inducing [Othello] to believe in what is not in fact there." (9)

Iago ensues his plot by a series of repeated demands by Othello that Iago should speak his mind. Having induced him to demand that he be freed with suspicions, Iago ostensibly with reluctance and motivated by 'love and duty' to his master, grows more specific;

Look to your wife ; observe her well with Cassio ;

(III, iii, 197)

Iago's speeches spread out , "like an inflecting plague into the language of Othello as he falls, increasing , under Iago's influence." (10) Here the speeches of Iago to Othello along with his soliloquies have an almost painful insistence. With each repeated interruptions, Othello loses his ability to speak, to reason and to act. Having planted those hints in Othello's mind, Iago then

cunningly withdraws but actually in order to allow the seeds of jealousy to germinate in Othello's mind.

The attack on Cassio's honesty gets confused with an insinuation against Desdemona's chastity. Othello's tremendous ejaculation, 'By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts!' (III, iii, 162), shows that Iago's plan is succeeded. This explains why the fabric of lies woven by Iago is at the same time extremely tough and extraordinarily fragile. The net "which enmeshes Othello and Desdemona is without a loophole." (11). Iago makes his first positive move, hinting that although Cassio seems to be honest, he is not so in fact. This is bound to make a dent in Othello's mind, for he has just seen that in some respects Cassio is not the man he took him for. After this everything is grist to the mill. The motivating circumstances give Iago the soil he needed to plant the seeds of jealousy.

The process of disintegration to which Othello is subjected begins almost as soon as he arrives at Cyprus, on his mission of war. Before the canker begins to work, however, "Shakespeare balances the contrasted forces of the play one against the other." (12) The day which opens with Othello's fortunate landing and should have been marked by the peaceful consummation of his marriage ends in a night of darkness and strife in which Iago's plot is fast taking shape.

From now onwards Iago's harrowing arguments are first to affect, and , ultimately, to undermine him. He conveys, as Anne Richter said, "a sense of horror, an overwhelming evil and malevolence" (13), which infects everything beautiful .Then , a larger movement of emotion comes into his language, but only gradually. To Iago's earlier suggestions he responds as one determined to cling to the life of reason;

Why? why is this?
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions?
(III, iii, 176-179)

As the mood grows, and as the 'green-eyed Monster' works its will upon him, he is given a wider range of imaginative language to announce his distress. For the first time, his language identifies itself with that imagery of corruption out of which the central values of the tragedy develop;

I had rather be a toad
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses.
(III, iii, 269-272)

Iago's evil machinations take shape and the Moor begins to doubt his wife's fidelity. Othello progressively loses his ability to speak coherently and thus, as he fears, his ability to reason;

\Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul
But I do love thee! And when I love thee not,

Chaos is come again.

(III, iii, 90-92)

To insure that disorder and uncertainty come to Othello, Iago "treats him like a confused and disordered child, telling the Moor no direct lies but inferring the worst through stealth and innuendo". (14) For his purposes, Iago taints first Othello's imagination, then co-opts his speech.

This ability to make use of others for his own advantage is one which he practices time and again as the tragedy develops, he induces Brabantio to accuse Othello before the senate; he allows Cassio to discredit himself by becoming drunk; he gets Desdemona to plead for Cassio and thereby place the two of them under suspicion; he forces Emilia to give him the handkerchief; he persuades Roderigo to assault Cassio in the hope that one or both of them will be disposed of. Iago puts all the characters in his circle to the extent that they seem to be puppets, including Othello who is treated as "a toy in the hands of a person so much less real than himself; in every sense, human and divine, so immeasurably inferior." (15)

As well as being an opportunist, a man who uses his insight into others in order to employ them for his own ends, Iago has a strong sense of the military and social hierarchy and of his own inferior place in it. Iago is self-interest, "and he attributes to others the motives which he claims to see in himself." (16) Although he calls Othello 'Sir' to his face, he refers to him as "the Moor" behind his back, thereby calling attention to the colour of his master's skin. After that Othello's lack of self-knowledge makes him easy prey for Iago, who is through innuendo and pretended honesty, makes him almost mad with jealousy.

The completeness of his fall is reflected in the gross irony implicit in his demand; 'Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore! (III, iii, 357), and Iago leads him on with a sneer that now works like poison on his fantasy;

And may; but how? How satisfied, my lord?

Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?

Behold her topped?

(III, iii, 393-395)

Iago touches Othello at his most vulnerable point. He offends him in his personal respect. Othello's reaction is a characteristic mixture of pathetic bewilderment and defiant-esteem. He is aware of the racial difference which separates him from the Venetians around him and vaguely conscious of a mortifying social inferiority. Othello is "secretly unsure of himself as a lover because he too was conscious of the difference of race." (17) This matter makes him pathetically cry;

Happily for I am black

And have not those soft parts of conversation

That chamberers have, or for I am declined

Into the vale of years-yet that's not much she's gone.

(III, iii, 262-266)

A few ambiguous phrases, a trick almost infantile in its simplicity, and a persistent inflaming of the sensual imagination of his victim, Iago has “reduced Othello to an absolute slavery to passion.” (18) He himself, in a solitary moment, describes perfectly his own method and achievements:

The moor already changes with my poison;
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
But with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur.

(III, iii, 323-327)

The idea of poisoning is quite conscious in Iago, when he seeks to awaken that false suspicion in Othello;

I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
That she repeals him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

(II, iii, 356-362)

The scene in which these developments take place forms a kind of pivot upon which the whole subsequent action turns. At the end of it Othello's fate is sealed, and we have only to trace the growth in him of destructive animal feeling and the crumbling into futility of his personal pride. As it closes, Othello abjures love and invokes vengeance in a speech which reveals the changing temper of his emotion;

Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic Sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course,
Ne'er keeps retiring ebb, but keeps due on,
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,
Even so my blood thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge,
Swallow them up.

(III, iii, 451-458)

The above image which appears at the critical turning-point of the play, reveals that Othello responds fully to Iago's insinuations. Iago has supplied him with the evidence of the handkerchief. Othello's suspicion is now hardened. This surrender to bestiality brings with it the collapse of Othello's integrity as a person. He expresses himself, most confidently in the egoistic poetry of war;

and it is significant that his acceptance of Iago's insinuations is regarded by him as "tantamount to a renunciation of his prowess as a soldier." (19)

Othello undergoes a dark night of the soul, but his meditations are perpetually disturbed before he can achieve the ecstatic moment. In his first soliloquy, which does not occur until Act 3 (3-3. 242), Othello asks himself, 'Why did I marry?' only to have Iago reappear and interrupt him after two lines, thus suggesting the degree of his profane insinuation into Othello's private thoughts. For Othello, even private meditation can no longer be satisfactorily articulated, leaving him reliant upon what others say and do. When he demands an action that will prove his love a whore, "Ocular proof" of Desdemona's adultery, Iago manages to steal a handkerchief, a love token given her by the Moor, and put it in the hands of her alleged lover, the unsuspecting Michael Cassio. Iago purposely uses the handkerchief to best advantage, claiming that Cassio would deny how he came by it and merely "lie";

Othello. With her?

Iago. With her, on her, what you will ?

Othello . Lie with her , lie on her ?

Handkerchief... confessions... handkerchief!...

It is not words that shake me thus ,

Pish! Noses, ears, lips. Is't possible?...

Confess?... Handkerchief?... O devil!

(IV, i, 33- 45)

It should be noted that the handkerchief represents much for Othello. For him , it stands for fidelity, love, honor , purity, and faith .When it is lost by Desdemona , Othello begins to think that she betrays him . More than one critics focuses on the strawberry – red fruit embroidered on Desdemona's handkerchief and its symbolic association" with the blood stained sheets of marriage night " (20) When she is unable to produce it , Othello's passion mounts steadily to the point of his murdering her for what he assumes to be whoredom .

Equally valid , however, is the scarf's representation of binding love , which Desdemona attempts but fails to tie about the head of the distempered Othello in order to relieve his headache when he is moved by Iago's insinuations . With its symbolic investment of unrealized passion and his inability to secure his marriage , the missing love token sets off a chain of ideas within Othello that robs him of coherent speech . The handkerchief is said to possess magical powers ;

' T is true . There's magic in the web of it .

.....

The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk ,

And it was dyed in mummy , which the skilful

Conserved of maidens' hearts

(III, iii , 70 – 76)

After a tortured free association of ideas, Othello finally loses all coherence, collapsing in a seizure at the feet of the triumphant Iago who says above the debased body of his general, 'work on, / My medicine, work' (IV, i, 46- 47). Now the large phrases are abandoned, verse is discarded, even grammar is thrown away. What remains of Othello only a heap of broken phrases of a mind out of control. Language becomes for Othello only a fabric of mocking duplicities as the world seems a tissue of deceiving appearances, so that by act 4, scene i, when Iago's medicine has already thoroughly done its work, the most innocent remark can inspire a frenzy of jealous rage. Desdemona's prior harmless reference to the love she bears to Cassio is heard as an outrageously public declaration of infidelity. Othello is close to break down. Language now begins to break upon the rack of equivocation;

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, tonight

I do entreat that we may sup together.

You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. –Goats

And monkeys!

(IV, i, 259- 261)

Just beneath the surface of this speech, there is a thread of frightful association ('Cassio my place..... tonight sup together welcome to Cyprus!').

At the end, Othello is left stage mute, and reduced to an impotent lover, warrior and murderer. He is blinded by Iago to kill pure Desdemona. The murder of Desdemona "acts out the final destruction in Othello himself of all the ordering powers of love, of trust, of the bond between human beings". (21) Othello makes clear when, at the end of the tragedy, he realizes what Iago had done to him, 'I look down towards his feet- but that's a fable' (V, iii, 283)

Yet I think that the primary aim of Shakespeare's *Othello* centers upon the protagonist's inability to anticipate the intentions of others, an anticipation that both figuratively and literally represents an articulation of speech and action. From the first moments of Shakespeare's play to the final scene, Iago spent the entire play manipulating Brabantio, Roderigo, Cassio, Othello and Desdemona. His language which is filled with innuendo and images become anticipated, delayed and then ultimately, "blasphemed into a grotesque parody of love's consummate action". (22) Othello's inability to understand the far significance of Iago's language provide an equitable mirror of his failure to realize his plotting.

The pejorative use of language appears in Iago's lewd insinuation at the beginning of the play, as he coarsely informs Desdemona's father of the pair's elopement, 'an old black ram/ is tugging your white ewe' (I, i, 85- 86). He wants to incite and provoke a violent response of Brabantio not by clear statement but by innuendo and an ambiguous question, 'Are your door locked?' (I, i, 82). This question with the animalistic image suggest Iago's unabashed urgency of passion which establishes his attitude towards his victims. However, the play is

full of animal imagery, used mostly by Iago, vividly describing sexual intercourse in all its grossness of vulgarity. Iago employs everything to destroy others, including language used. By language and images used, Shakespeare presents Othello and Iago's in such away to reveal their personalities. When we study Iago's lines ;

*we find that he consistently describes himself in image
of hunting and trapping, we learn not only his pleasure
of his action but something of his attitude to
occasions, to his victims, and to himself;*

and beyond that there is fixed for us an image of evil.(23)

Othello and Iago have entirely different attitudes towards their images. Iago is consciously looking for those which best suit his purpose. With Othello, however, the images rise naturally out of his emotion. They come to him easily and unconsciously whenever he is talking. He is a character endowed with a rich imagination. He is a noble soul but unfortunately "caught in the toils of a diabolically cunning being, who tempts him to doubt the divine goodness of one in whom he has absolute faith." (24)

Iago's attitude towards the world, in contrast with Othello, is rational and speculative. He selects his images with deliberate intent . He constructs them in the very same manner as he constructs his whole language. It is not without significant that Iago introduces many of his images with as and like , which we rarely find in Othello's language . The particles as and like show that the speaker is fully conscious of the act of comparing. In his speech to incite Othello's fury against Desdemona's infidelity;

It is impossible you should see this,
were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross,
As ignorance made drunk.

(III, iii, 400- 403)

Iago likes the form of general statement. He places a distance between himself and his images. He does not care to identify himself with what he says. Iago would rather have his utterances understood as being as objective, neutral, and general as possible. He seeks to poison the others with his images and innuendo. The aim of this is to implant in the mind of his victims a conceit which will gradually assume gigantic proportions. In his battle, Iago vows to Roderigo that, ' I will wear my heart upon my sleeve,/ For daws to peck at ', he also adds that ' I am not what I am' (I, i, 60- 62). The euphuistic pattern of style presupposes that the sentences are carefully prepared, and that they are balanced one against the other, before their utterance.

Almost everything Iago says, is marked by this conscious and purposeful quality. He always adopts himself to his partner in conversation. He uses his language as a chief means of influence and ensnarement. Iago is not stranger in

Venetian life, like *Othello*, but is indeed well informed about the abilities and the behavior of men of the most various states and classes.

Iago is accustomed to observe others and how he goes through life with critical and open eyes. In fact, the best and most appropriate judgment of *Othello* is uttered by him, 'The Moor is of a free and open nature' (I, i, 394). Iago is "the believer in shrewd observation and in corruption in whose credo, which is not altogether unique, man is a union of lusting, folly, and plotting." (25) His design to put *Othello*, 'into a jealousy so strong/ That judgment can not care', driving him 'even to madness' (II, i, 304- 314). Iago is the self-conscious processor of brain-power. His most far reaching method is to seduce others philosophically in the sense that, to woo them from assumptions in which their salvation lies. Robert Ornstein declares that, " *Othello* reveals the capacity and will for self-deception which the ego nourishes. It reveals too the cunning irrationality of human reason and the subtlety with which man can prove to his satisfaction a truth which has no connection to fact". (26)

As it has already shown, Shakespeare has defined the function and character of each of the major figures in the tragedy by the language they employ, and never more clearly. *Othello*'s own early speeches explore his proud, manly, and simple character. Unlike Iago, he is direct in speech without any twisting tone of Venice. So, in his defense before the Duke, he uses simple words without images, or rhetoric or argument. His gifts for articulate speech equal his military prowess, which symbolize confident manhood. When faced with Brabantio's charge that witchcraft was used to steal his naive daughter's love, he beautifully says;

..... Still the house-affairs would draw her thence,
And ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'ld come again, and with a greedy ear,
Devour up my discourse.....

(I, iii, 147- 150)

His summation of their courtship and love exquisitely reflects the lover's eloquence by means of its honest brevity, 'She love'd me for the dangers I had pass'd, / And I love'd her that she did pity them./ This only is the witchcraft I have use'd'. (I, iii, 167- 170)

Othello won Desdemona with the simple telling of his adventures and brave deeds as a soldier;

Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent
deadly breach,

(I, iii, 135- 136)

Desdemona, on the other hand, loves *Othello* so much. She announces publicly her love and duty for *Othello* in spite of her father's refusal. But what is *Othello*'s tragic flaw lies in the fact that *Othello* depends entirely for guidance on Iago, an experienced soldier like himself but also apparently a man of the

world and one whom everyone recognizes as trustworthy .Iago actually exploits to his own advantage the trust which others place in him to achieve his aims . Othello's over- confidence is the main reason behind his downfall at the end .Therefore; it is not the jealousy and suspicions which bring about Othello's disaster but his lack of knowledge of evil and the violence of his passion . In addition , Othello is betrayed by circumstances which makes everyone jealous. The jealous which springs from honor .He is zealous and his zeal made him kill Desdemona , the virtuous women .

Notes

- 1- Robert Southwick , *Othello* (London : Longman Group UK Limited , 1993) , P. Xiv. All citations from Othello will be to this edition.
- 2- Noah Webster , *The Lexicon Webster Dictionary* . Vol. 1. (USA : The Delair Publishing Company, Inc. , 1971) , p. 496.
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