

Preparing for the Film

1. If an individual falls in love and marries someone without parental knowledge or approval, how could this affect the young couple's relationship?
2. How might a spouse behave when he suspects that his beloved mate is cheating on him?
3. What happens to people when they feel their best friend betrayed them?
4. If you have read Shakespeare's *Othello*, what might be the challenges a director may face when adapting the play to the screen for a contemporary audience?

Reflecting on the Film

1. Considering Iago's conversations with Roderigo as well as Iago's soliloquies (speeches that only the audience can hear), what does Iago reveal are possible motives for his hatred of the Moor, Othello?
2. Before Iago starts to poison Othello with suspicions about Desdemona, how would you characterize Othello as a leader, general, husband, and friend? Include details from the film for support.
3. When Brabantio learns of the elopement of his daughter Desdemona, why does he believe it is not possible that she chose to elope with Othello and what does he think happened instead? How does Brabantio respond to Desdemona when she confirms his fears that she is married to Othello?
4. What do both Othello and Desdemona, separately, reveal to the Duke about their feelings for and their history with each other?
5. What are the strategies that Iago employs to convince Othello of Desdemona's infidelity? Give examples of each.
6. What is Othello's initial reaction to Iago's suspicions about Desdemona? What are some of Othello's vulnerabilities that Iago exploits?
7. How does Iago manipulate Cassio for his own advantage and why does no one suspect that Iago has fabricated the affair between Desdemona and Cassio?
8. What are Iago's characteristics that emerge throughout the movie? Illustrate each.
9. How do Emilia's character and values contrast with Desdemona's? Give examples for support and explain why Emilia doesn't tell Desdemona that she had found her handkerchief.
10. Why was Othello eventually defeated and deceived so totally by Iago?

Writing about the Film

1. Write an analysis of Iago's manipulation and exploitation of Othello's vulnerabilities and critical thinking lapses. Focus on why and how the characters behave as they do, not what they *should* have done. Include key scenes for support.

2. Focusing on Othello and Desdemona's interaction throughout the film, analyze key scenes that show how dramatically Othello has moved from his deep love for his wife to his conviction that he must murder her.
3. In an essay compare and contrast the character and values of Desdemona and Emilia. Analyze key quotations and scenes for support.

Works Cited

- Othello*. Dir. Oliver Parker. Perf. Laurence Fishburne, Irene Jacob, Kenneth Branagh, Nathaniel Parker, Michael Maloney, Anna Patrick, Nicholas Farrell, and Indra Ove. Castle Rock Entertainment, 1995. Film.
- Shakespeare, William. *Othello, the Moor of Venice*. The Folger Shakespeare Library. Ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Westine. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. Print.

Select Film Reviews and Critical Analyses of Oliver Parker's *Othello*:

<http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/othello-1995>

<http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9B0DE3DE1739F937A25751C1A963958260>

http://articles.latimes.com/print/1995-12-14/entertainment/ca-13693_1_oliver-parker