

Othello

Responses to Preparing for the Film

1. A couple's relationship might be strained if parental approval is not given to support the union. Counseling work might be necessary if one part of the partnership feels unwelcome or disapproved. The person in the relationship not approved may feel insecure, lonely, and threatened by the rejection. The person in the partnership whose parents welcome the union may feel more confident about the relationship and more dominant in it. If both sets of parents are against the union, the couple might be more strongly united in creating a bond to overcome the unanimous rejection of the parents. Parents who accept their love and union and respect the young adults' decision give a great gift to their son or daughter and to the partner.
2. Students will easily realize that when someone suspects a beloved spouse of cheating on him, he may respond by
 - being in denial, making excuses for his spouse
 - stalking, spying, going through letters, phone messages
 - suspecting and questioning the spouse's every move
 - feeling anger, outrage, betrayal
 - becoming controlling and possessive
 - behaving unreasonably and acting on impulse
 - being obsessed by jealousy
 - over-reacting to little things
 - imagining the worst and letting the imagination take over
 - feeling insecure and experiencing self-doubt
 - being consumed by paranoia
3. It is difficult to journey through life without a few good friends. When we place ourselves in a trusting relationship, we gain a strength and security that is fortified by the deep friendship. Conversely, when a trusted friend betrays the friendship—by revealing a confidence shared by the friend, or not keeping an agreement, or by forming another relationship that supplants or weakens the first—the betrayed individual suffers. Some betrayals may result in serious and lasting depression on the part of the injured party. He or she may feel worthless, lonely in the rejection, bitter in imagining life without the former friend, angry that the former friend's rejection has made life seem less than worthwhile. The friendship circle that surrounds the betrayed individual and the former friend will begin to take sides and the injured party may be further threatened by the loss of the peripheral friends as well as the former best friend.
4. If students have read Shakespeare's *Othello*, they will recognize the following challenges for a director adapting the play to the screen for a contemporary audience:
 - casting an Iago who can capture his malevolence without becoming a caricature
 - finding an actor to play Othello as an honorable general who still is vulnerable
 - portraying Othello and Desdemona's deep love so that Othello's sense of betrayal is credible

- deciding how much back story to dramatize--about Desdemona and Othello's elopement and Othello's relationship with Brabantio, Desdemona's father
- handling the deadly storm at sea as they travel from Venice to Cyprus
- choosing which scenes to dramatize and which to delete to insure DVD length
- staging Cassio's drunken brawl scene, Othello's seizures, and the murders of Roderigo and Desdemona
- dramatizing the ending to capture Othello's honorable nature despite the manipulation by Iago

Responses to Reflecting on the Film

1. Iago expresses in soliloquies his hatred of Othello. Iago's hatred of Othello is linked in his mind to Cassio's promotion to lieutenant, a position Iago had sought, and to Cassio's close relationship with Othello. Iago reveals the root of his envy when he admits that Cassio has such virtue, a "daily beauty that makes me ugly." Iago takes Cassio's success as a personal blow. That Cassio is "a proper man" further irritates Iago, and getting Cassio into trouble will cause him to lose his place and gain Iago a promotion, "a double knavery" because it will also hurt Othello. In another shared thought with the audience, Iago expresses a different concern about Othello: "it is thought abroad that twixt my sheets, he has done my office," that Othello has been intimate with Emilia, Iago's wife. Iago doesn't know if it is true that Othello has slept with Emilia but for the mere suspicion, Iago will act as if the rumor is "a surety." These expressed concerns motivate Iago's actions against Othello. In the film it is clear that the passion that Othello and Desdemona share further motivates Iago's hatred of Othello. In watching the two newlyweds interact, Iago expresses his perception that "they are well tuned now," but Iago intends to "set down the pegs" to control their harmony, their relationship. It appears that Iago has contempt for Othello's intimacy with Desdemona, envy over their passion or disgust that his general has a weakness in his obvious love and happiness with Desdemona. As Iago begins to work on Othello and create suspicion of Desdemona's relationship with Cassio, Othello firmly tells Iago that he will not live with jealousy. If he doubts his wife's fidelity, he will find proof and act on it, doing away with either the love or the jealousy. If Iago truly believes that Emilia has been intimate with Othello, or Iago distrusts her actions with anyone else, he must hate Othello's firm confidence in acting on doubts. Othello's conviction for action is so unlike Iago's own unresolved tensions with Emilia, further fueling Iago's hatred of Othello. As Iago's devious manipulation of Othello continues, and he sees how well his knavery is working, Iago expresses his disgust for Othello, a "credulous fool" who is so easy for Iago to trick.
2. Before Iago starts to poison Othello with suspicions about Desdemona, Othello is depicted as
 - *highly respected by all
 - *wise and judicious leader
 - *honest and honorable friend
 - *able to control provoked soldiers--not only his own but also Brabantio's men who come to apprehend him
 - *not easily angered
 - *self-disciplined, able to use restraint
 - *in command, doesn't need a "prompter"
 - *an experienced military general and hero
 - *confident and self-assured despite his outsider status
 - *the one individual chosen by the Duke and Senators to lead the expedition to Cyprus to defeat the Turks
 - *loving toward Desdemona and proud of their love
 - *trustworthy and trusting of those who have proven themselves, like "honest Iago"
 - *once close to Senator Brabantio, Desdemona's father
3. In his appearance with the Duke and important citizens of Venice, Brabantio describes Desdemona as "a maiden never bold," so he can't believe that she would have the courage to

elope with Othello. He further expresses wonder that Desdemona could have “fallen in love with what she feared to look on,” an inference Brabantio may have derived from Desdemona’s shyness or lack of boldness in overtly admiring the handsome warrior Brabantio has welcomed into their home. The film shows Desdemona furtively glancing at the general who then also surreptitiously looks at her. Brabantio expresses dismay that “nature so preposterously erred” when Desdemona eloped with Othello. There are a number of possible interpretations of what Brabantio means by “nature erring.” Brabantio may refer to Desdemona’s expected natural allegiance to him, her father, or he may mean her lack of boldness that should have inhibited her actions, or her maidenly virtues that her father believes should have kept her from running off with a man, or perhaps Brabantio means that her nature in being a part of a white aristocracy in Venice should have kept her from falling in love with a black man, a Moor, and former slave. Brabantio thus believes that witchcraft “beguiled her of herself,” that Othello must have put a spell on Desdemona to convince her to run off with him.

When Desdemona’s willing marriage to Othello is confirmed in the Duke’s presence, at a gathering of the heads of state to prepare for war against the Turks, Brabantio questions Desdemona about where she owes allegiance. Her reasoned response is that she owes allegiance to her husband, just as her mother once owed allegiance to Brabantio over her father after she had married Brabantio. Brabantio’s reply is: “Goodbye; I have done.” He expresses bitter regret, “I would rather have adopted a child than get it,” as if an adopted child’s elopement or disobedience would not vex him as much as a disobedient child of his own line does. He places Desdemona’s hand in Othello’s hand, giving the hand that Othello already has, the hand Brabantio says he “would with all his heart” keep from Othello. In final words of bitterness Brabantio warns: “Look to her Moor, if thou hast eyes to see; she has deceived her father and may thee.”

4. Othello reveals to the Duke and Senators that he fell in love with Desdemona during visits to her home when he would tell her father Brabantio about all his military travels and adventures and life-threatening experiences, and Desdemona would listen attentively and empathetically. As Othello tells the Duke at the end of his narration: "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. / Here comes the lady. Let her witness it." Othello welcomes Desdemona's separate testimony because he knows that his honest rendition will be confirmed by her.

Even when her father presents her with a trick question, "Do you perceive in all this noble company / Where most you owe obedience?" Desdemona answers honestly and wisely: "To you I am bound for life and education; My life and education both do learn me / How to respect you. You are the lord of duty; / I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband, / And so much duty as my mother showed / To you, preferring you before her father, / So much I challenge that I may profess / Due to the Moor my lord." Desdemona avoids her father's trap by fully respecting her father and recognizing her allegiance to him as her father but also acknowledging that she has a new allegiance to her husband, just as her mother had to her father. Desdemona shows her love and commitment to Othello as she isn't intimidated by her father and is able to stand up to him and reason with him. Desdemona's quick intelligence and strength of character help viewers realize that her choice to marry Othello was not something she was pressured or persuaded to do. In fact, when Othello is being sent to Cyprus, Desdemona convinces the Duke that she "saw Othello's visage in his mind," fell in love with Othello's virtues on the battlefield, and wants to be able to support him during wartime, too. The Duke approves of Othello and Desdemona's request that she accompany

Othello to Cyprus, showing how much he trusts both of them.

5. Iago employs a number of strategies to convince Othello of Desdemona's "infidelity." After Cassio acknowledges that he hasn't the physiology for alcohol or the "brains for drink," Iago talks him into one more drink. The drunken Cassio gets into a brawl with Montano, the head of Cyprus, who confronts Cassio because Iago has told Montano that Cassio habitually overindulges in alcohol. Montano is wounded, and Othello removes Cassio's rank as punishment for his disreputable conduct. This demotion not only satisfies Iago, who is envious of Cassio's promotion, but the demotion permits Iago to ingratiate himself with Cassio. Iago proposes that Cassio get reinstated in Othello's good graces by going through "the General's general," Desdemona. Iago knows that as Desdemona speaks up for Cassio to Othello, she will undo her own credit, hence Iago will "turn her virtue to pitch" and "create a net to enmesh them all." Getting Cassio and Desdemona together is his first strategy.

Iago's next strategy is to make more of innocent moments to suggest an intimacy that does not exist. When Iago, walking with Othello, sees Cassio leaving Desdemona with a customary, courteous kiss on the hand, Iago creates something more of the moment. He holds Othello back from witnessing the scene and then Iago mumbles, "I like not that," as if he has actually witnessed something inappropriate in Desdemona and Cassio's conduct. Iago underscores his suggestion of a relationship between Desdemona and Cassio by questioning Othello about whether Cassio knew of Othello's love for Desdemona. When Othello tells Iago that Cassio often went between him and Desdemona, presumably with letters or notes for arranging meetings, Iago replies "indeed," as if there is more significance in the information that Othello gives him or that he has an alternative interpretation of the actions. The "echoes" of Iago's replies suggest he knows more than he wants to impart to Othello. By holding back information, Iago suggests that he knows more than he does and that what he knows is significant and condemning.

Another of Iago's strategies is to ingratiate himself with Othello, to gain an intimate friendship with him. Iago confides in Othello and admits that it is Iago's nature to be jealous, to shape thoughts and perceive actions as darker than they are. This confidence disarms Othello who recognizes his own growing jealousy. When Iago cautions Othello to "beware, my lord, of jealousy. It is the green eyed monster which does mock the meat it feeds on," Iago creates awareness of jealousy in Othello. Iago advises Othello to "look to his wife" and observe her conduct with Cassio, advice that will expand in Othello's imagination with the filter of jealousy that Iago has created. Iago's strategy includes playing on Othello's weaknesses as an outsider to Venice's culture and habits. He weakens Othello's self confidence by insisting that he can't know Venetian habits, the "pranks" that women of Venice play with those other than their husbands. He reminds Othello that Desdemona deceived her father, that her father had no idea she was in love with Othello and would elope with him, a "prank" she played on Brabantio. Iago's insistence that he knows more than Othello about Venice and its ways prompts Othello to review his other weaknesses: he is not only an outsider but he is older and Black, a Moor and former slave in a gentile aristocracy.

Iago further works on Othello's self confidence by apologizing for dashing Othello's spirit, even as Othello tries to insist that his spirit has not been dashed by Iago's perceptions. Iago relentlessly pursues Othello's insecure discomfort by hounding him, exacerbating Othello's insomnia with questions, fully knowing that Othello will never be the content man he once was. Iago has set Othello "on the rack."

Open lies then become a part of Iago's strategy. When Othello demands "ocular

proof" of Desdemona's infidelity, Iago claims he can bring him to "the door of satisfaction." Iago fabricates for Othello an account of one of Cassio's dreams wherein Cassio exclaims "Sweet Desdemona, let us be wary; let us hide our loves." In Iago's fabrication, the witnessed dream becomes physical, with Cassio clutching Iago's hand and kissing him passionately. This fabrication incites Othello who takes it for truth even when Iago insists that it was only a dream.

When Iago then brings up the handkerchief that Emilia has found, the handkerchief that momentarily was forgotten on Othello and Desdemona's bed, and Iago lies that Cassio has been given the handkerchief by Desdemona, Othello becomes overwhelmed with anger and jealousy. Cassio has found the handkerchief that Iago plants and gives it to his girlfriend Bianca. Iago turns that scene into "proof" by contriving to have Othello overhear Cassio's acknowledgment of intimacy with Desdemona when Cassio is actually describing to Iago his relationship with Bianca. When Bianca produces the handkerchief to return to Cassio as some other girlfriend's token, Othello is outraged and ensnared by the appearance of the handkerchief and conversation he mistakes as Cassio's ribald admission of intimacy with Desdemona.

By suggesting a relationship that does not exist, by wearing Othello down with jealousy that defeats Othello's confidence and ability to reason, by working on Othello's insecurities and then overtly using fabrication and deceit, Iago is able to strategically defeat Othello.

6. Othello's initial reaction to Iago's suspicions about Desdemona is adamant: "No, Iago, I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove; / And on the proof, there is no more but this--/ Away at once with love or jealousy." Othello seems reasonable and firm here. As Iago continues to plant suspicions, Othello becomes concerned but still says, "I do not think but Desdemona's honest." However, Iago doesn't let up and eventually, when Iago leaves, viewers hear Othello ask himself, "Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless / Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds." Convinced that Iago knows much more than he is letting on, Othello feels insecure about his own lack of knowledge. Moreover, inexperienced with women, Othello may feel that Iago has been married much longer and may be more of an expert at understanding how women behave.

Iago doesn't hesitate to exploit Othello's insecurities in matters of the heart; therefore, it is not a surprise that Othello begins to regret his marriage as soon as he encounters doubts. Othello is experienced in times of war but not of peace so he is not accustomed to talking over concerns with women or working on problems in love relationships.

Othello may also be insecure about his looks because Desdemona is so beautiful and Cassio is also exceptionally handsome and attracts women easily. As a dark-skinned Moor, Othello is treated as an outsider whom Brabantio rejects as a marriage partner for his daughter Desdemona. Iago deliberately uses the term "Moor" when he refers to Othello, to encourage others to see Othello as different and even to make Othello feel insecure. Iago tells Othello that Cassio during a dream said, as if speaking to Desdemona, "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor."

Iago also exploits Othello's trust that Iago had earned in past wars together. Othello is trustworthy himself and would naturally expect that he could trust those who have proven worthy in the past. Othello believes that people's actions should speak for themselves; he is not accustomed to people's actions and words being so manipulated and artificial.

Honorable and honored above all, Othello is used to being respected as a leader and a general. He can't handle being ridiculed as a "cuckold," and Iago uses this indignation to goad

Othello into murdering Cassio. Most of all, Iago exploits Othello's isolation, once Iago has distanced Othello from his wife Desdemona and from his best friend and confidant, Cassio. Unable to turn to the two people he has always trusted, Othello has no one to share his jealousy and concern with, except Iago, who has designed this devastating trap.

7. Iago manipulates Cassio to achieve his goal of defeating Othello. Iago's first overt action is to get Cassio to drink too much, especially after Cassio has confided in Iago that he has "unhappy brains for drinking." When a drunken brawl ensues, Iago denigrates Cassio's character by quietly imputing to Montano, the head of Cyprus, that Cassio is often drunk, that alcohol is "ever more the prologue to his sleep." When Iago manipulates Roderigo to stir up Cassio to fight with Montano, Montano is wounded by the intoxicated Cassio. When Othello appears to sort out the public disorder and demands an account of what happened, Iago seems to hold back condemnation of Cassio's actions. This seeming reticence endears Iago to Othello, who perceives it as loyal protection of Cassio. Cassio regards Iago as a friend who supports him in his moment of ignominy. After Cassio is stripped of his rank, he listens to Iago, who gives him advice about how to be reinstated. Having Cassio believe that he is a friend and supportive is central to Iago's manipulation of him.

After establishing his friendship with Cassio, Iago can easily advise Cassio to seek reinstatement in Othello's favor by going to Desdemona for help as Desdemona is "our General's general." The advice to "repair the crack" in the love between Othello and Cassio will actually create a more significant rupture, as Iago knows. He can only fabricate the alleged relationship between Desdemona and Cassio if they are seen together. By ingratiating himself as a friend to both Othello and Cassio, and gaining a reputation as the "honest" Iago, Iago is able to fabricate the affair between Desdemona and Cassio. No one, including his wife Emilia, fails to believe Iago who appears concerned and helpful. As a friend to all, how would anyone suspect that his plan is to undermine Othello, Cassio, Roderigo and, incidentally but apparently unimportantly, Desdemona?

8. Throughout the film, Iago emerges as the ultimate con-man who pretends to be candid and is repeatedly called "honest Iago," but, as he reminds the gullible Roderigo, "I am not what I am." He reveals to Roderigo how much he hates the Moor, but he tells Othello, "My lord, you know I love you." He is bright and intelligent and has proven himself to Othello on the battlefield even though he is merely Othello's "ancient" or ensign and not his honored lieutenant, a position that Iago sought but that went to Cassio.

Iago is vindictive and bitter, but he hides his true feelings so he can deceive others. In fact, Iago is a masterful manipulator who deceives everyone, including his own wife. Bright, perceptive, and capable individuals like Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and Montano do not detect his deception, so it is not surprising that the more gullible Roderigo can be convinced to carry out Iago's devious schemes and give him all his money and jewels, hoping that Iago will use them to win Desdemona's affection for him. Even when Roderigo confronts Iago, accuses him of keeping his jewels, and plans to expose Iago's scheme to Desdemona, Iago can still convince Roderigo to murder Cassio by flattering Roderigo for his "mettle" and "valor" and then promising that Roderigo will be able to "enjoy" Desdemona the following night if Roderigo is able to kill Cassio.

No evil deed seems too horrendous for Iago: he plots Othello's downfall, Cassio's death, Desdemona's death, and personally kills Roderigo and Emilia. Such deadly undertakings are mere "sport" for him. He *enjoys* watching people suffer and causing chaos in their lives. When Desdemona is devastated to hear Othello call her "whore," Iago feigns ignorance even though he has instigated and fueled Othello's

jealousy. He pretends to comfort Desdemona, using saintly language, "I pray you, be content."

Iago is sexist and chauvinistic; he degrades women, tells Brabantio of Othello and Desdemona's union in racist terms: "an old black ram is tupping your white ewe." Iago sees human sexuality in bestial terms, as he tells Brabantio, "your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs," referring to the consummation of their marriage.

Iago is an opportunist who takes advantage of every chance event: an elopement, a handkerchief, a move to Cyprus, Bianca's angry return of the handkerchief to Cassio. Iago uses everything and everyone, without ever having any limits. He will say and do anything and tell blatant lies to benefit himself. Iago is materialistic, greedy, and ambitious, but ambition alone doesn't explain Iago's scheme against Othello. Iago doesn't require a motive or reason to destroy others but seems to relish using people's goodness against them. As he says of Desdemona, "So will I turn her virtue into pitch and out of her own goodness make the net that shall enmesh them all."

Sadistic and sinister, Iago seems a man without a conscience and without any remorse. When Iago's evil is exposed at the end of the play, Othello refers to him as "the Devil" and as "demi-devil."

9. Emilia is the older, wiser, and more experienced woman whose character, perhaps shaped by her experience, contrasts with Desdemona who is young, innocent and from a higher social class. Emilia is cynical or bitter about male-female relationships. (By the end of the film we see that she has a terrible relationship with Iago.) When she sees how suspicious and angry Othello is over the missing handkerchief that Desdemona can't provide, she exclaims that very shortly, "a year or two" presumably after marriage, shows the true character of men. She proclaims them "all stomachs" and women "but food." She continues: "They eat us hungry and when they are full, they belch us." Her sexual degradation by Iago is suggested in one scene of the film. When she produces the handkerchief that Iago often has bidden her to procure, Iago initiates quick and violent sexual activity, grabs the handkerchief from her, and then ignores her completely. Iago gloats over having the handkerchief, the light and airy proof that he needs to convince Othello of Desdemona's infidelity with Cassio.

When apart from Iago, Emilia is outspoken and strong. Under Othello's harsh interrogation about what she knows of Desdemona's relationship with Cassio, Emilia stands firm and frank in her insistence that Desdemona is innocent and the relationship with Cassio non-existent. Emilia can be earthy and a bit crude. When the innocent Desdemona questions her about whether women ever do "abuse their husbands" by having "coarse" relationships with other men, Emilia frankly acknowledges that there are some women who do. And when Desdemona exclaims "by this heavenly light" that she would never cavort with another man than her husband, Emilia retorts that she "might do it in the dark," not only playing with Desdemona's words but also acknowledging her openness to "sport."

Emilia is also a pragmatist. When Desdemona further questions the more experienced woman about infidelity in marriage, and asks, "Would you do that deed for all the world?" Emilia responds that the world is "a huge prize for a small vice," and she admits that she would deny her actions when she had done it. She also analyzes that she would make her husband a monarch of the world if she won it for the "small vice," and she would "venture purgatory for it."

Emilia reveals that she has feminist leanings when she concludes that women should have the same rights as men and that a husband's "ills" instruct his wife. If women fall, "it is their husband's fault," she reasons. She speculates that men might slack their "duties," pour

their wife's "treasures into foreign laps," or "break out in peevish jealousies." She observes that women have their own goals, and if men strike them, they "have some revenge." She believes that husbands should know that wives have senses as their husbands do, have palates "for sweet and sour as husbands have," and she concludes that they might also want change for "sport."

Finally, Emilia shows how outspoken and brave she is when she insists that Desdemona was innocent in her conduct with Cassio. After Desdemona's death, when Emilia hears Othello explaining that Iago told him of the illicit affair between Desdemona and Cassio, Emilia exclaims, "If he say so, may his pernicious soul rot half a grain a day," for "he lies."

She speaks out to charge both Othello and Iago with lies, and when the handkerchief is revealed as the evidence, she realizes that she is at fault but does not hesitate to speak up. She knows that she is the only one who can explain that she gave the handkerchief to Iago and even with Othello's sword at her throat, and finally with Iago's dagger about to slay her in order to silence her, she continues to speak.

There are possible interpretations as to why Emilia doesn't tell Desdemona that she has found her handkerchief. First, it is clear that Othello has brushed the handkerchief aside, knocking it from Desdemona's comforting hand. Neither seems interested in the handkerchief at first so Emilia must consider it a lucky chance that she can pick it up without anyone else knowing she has found it. Perhaps Emilia considers hiding the handkerchief more a blow against Othello than Desdemona, and Emilia does not like the way Othello is treating his wife. The script supports the fact that Iago clearly wants Emilia to "filch" the handkerchief from Desdemona. Perhaps Emilia wants to please Iago, and this slight token seems an inconsequential way to achieve marital harmony. By the time Emilia realizes that the handkerchief is a significant prop in Iago's plan, it is too late to do other than admit her involvement and Iago's deceit in using the handkerchief in his evil plan. Emilia's cynicism, relativism and pragmatism—her personality traits—all contribute to her taking the handkerchief and not returning it to Desdemona.

10. Although he has defeated many enemies and survived life-threatening escapes from "the insolent foe," Othello had no reason to suspect that a trustworthy friend and comrade like "honest Iago," who had proven himself in so many battles, would betray him so ruthlessly. Othello is an expert at fighting outside enemies, who are clearly defined, but fails to detect a deceptive enemy, like Iago, who is within his own ranks. Othello is not the only bright individual betrayed by Iago: everyone else was deceived by Iago as well, even Cassio, Desdemona, and Emilia, Iago's own wife.

Othello himself is trustworthy and dependable and may expect the same behavior from those who have proven to be honorable in the past. In addition, Iago designed a plot that isolated Othello from his wife and best friend, two individuals who would normally have been able to offer Othello support and good reasoning to help him detect Iago's manipulation. Worse still, Iago made Othello totally dependent on Iago's friendship and guidance, and then abused his trust. Iago also took advantage of Othello's inexperience with love relationships and his tendency to act decisively when needed rather than to contemplate and consider multiple perspectives.

Newly married, Othello hadn't had time to test his relationship, and his courtship had been done secretly, because of Brabantio's racism and disapproval, so Othello hadn't had time to build trust and to learn how to have intimate conversations with Desdemona about fears and anxieties. Othello is also haunted by Brabantio's warning: "Look to her, Moor, if thou

hast eyes to see. She has deceived her father, and may thee." Later, Iago reminds Othello that Desdemona deceived her father: "She did deceive her father, marrying you; And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks, she loved them most." Othello also put Desdemona on such a pedestal, expecting her to be "divine" and heavenly, even though Desdemona doesn't expect this of him. Accustomed to being honored and respected, Othello seems too proud to be considered a "cuckold" and to be humiliated by his wife and best friend. Iago takes advantage of Othello's possible insecurities about his race, and age, and looks, even though Othello initially and wisely tells Iago, "She had eyes, and chose me." Unfortunately, Iago's endless suspicions and manipulations overcome Othello's resistance and restraint.