

Trevor Meeks

ENGL 1102/ TR 9:30

29 April 2013

4 Reasons Iago is a Badass Villain

~~Any fan of William Shakespeare has read his play Iago.~~ Any fan of William Shakespeare has read his play Othello. The title character was a black war hero, but even though Othello was the title character, the play was stolen by another character. Enter Iago, the mastermind villain within Othello. Iago was so much the star of the play that it would have been more appropriate for him to be the title character. How did Iago steal the show? By being a badass. Iago was a badass for several reasons, like...



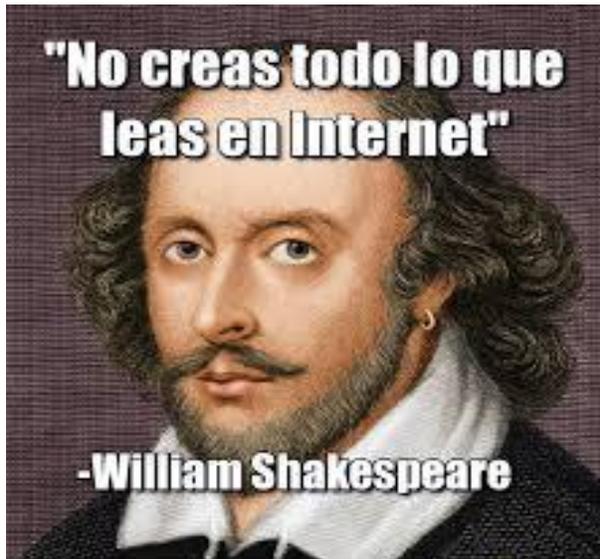
#### **#4. His Dialogue**

Not everyone can pull off the silent type badass, and Othello being a play would have made things even more difficult. Thankfully Shakespeare was able to craft up great dialogue for Iago. If you want witty one-liners, you should probably go watch the Amazing Spiderman 2 instead of reading Othello. While Iago was the smartest person in the play, he showed his wit through dialogue that was filled with pure epicness (not a real word and I don't care). Iago states, "I am not what I am"(1.1.167). I don't even know what that means! But as Will Ferrell says,

“Nobody knows what it means, but it's provocative.” Okay, maybe I do know what it means; the line is Iago admitting that he is no friend of Othello, and thankfully Iago did not just come out at say it plainly. Throughout the play, Iago gives money quote after money quote. When detailing his plans Iago says he will, “Make [Othello] thank me, love me, and reward me./ For making him egregiously an ass” (2.1.1109-1110). Dialogue like this makes Iago the most entertaining part of Othello and all the more a badass.

### #3. He Should Have Succeeded

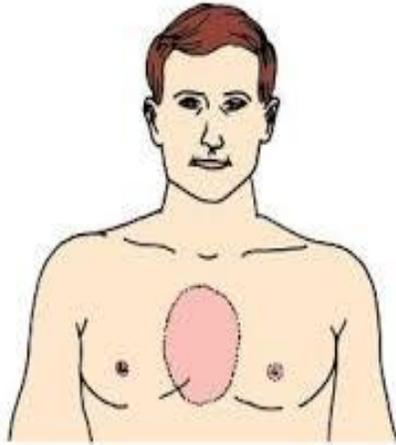
I feel robbed. Shakespeare gave Iago the shaft.



*Translation: I love ruining good things, like Iago.*

Iago from act I to IV and Iago from act V are completely different. As of now, I'm assuming Shakespeare decided to cut act 4.5 which detailed Iago replacing himself with his much less intelligent doppelganger at the last minute. Iago from act I to IV was a genius. This Iago used people flawlessly and never made a mistake. Iago's plan, “And out of [Desdemona's] own goodness make the net/ That shall enmesh them all” (2.3.1513-1514), was executed perfectly by genius Iago. Then in act V, we're introduced to dumb Iago who goes and gets himself caught even though his capture was entirely preventable. Dumb Iago's own non-action

causes his downfall. I'm about to detail a highly complicated plan that would have prevented Iago from ever being found guilty: stab Cassio somewhere other than the damn leg!

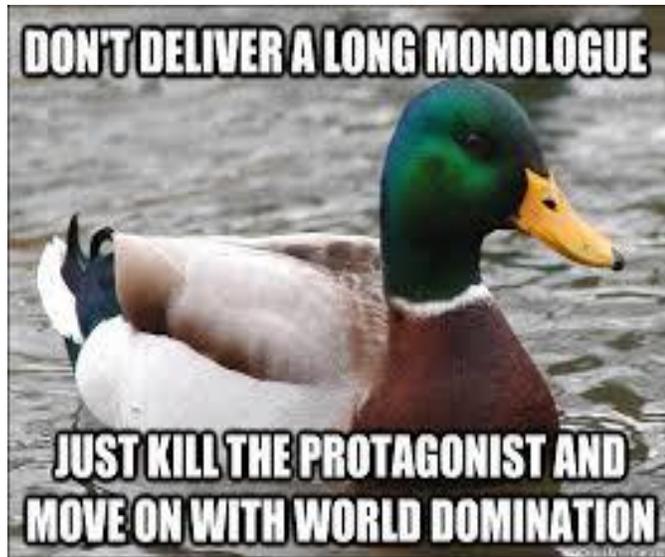


*RIGHT HERE! STAB HIM HERE!*

When Cassio and Roderick are fighting, it is dark out; if Iago kills Cassio while no one can see (like Iago kills Roderick), Iago is scot-free. By killing Cassio, Iago makes the case against himself come down to Emilia's word verses his own word. Considering Iago's stature, reputation, and Emilia's lack of Y-chromosome, Iago's word would have won out. I haven't even mentioned how dumb Iago confesses to his crimes in record fashion. But nonetheless, the floundering of act V Iago isn't enough to detract from badass act I though act IV Iago.

## **#2. He Didn't Monologue**

So you are an up-and-coming villain and today is the day that you have managed to actually successfully build a death ray or something of the such. How do you celebrate this victory? By monologuing yourself into defeat of course! At least, that is what any villain worth his salt does.

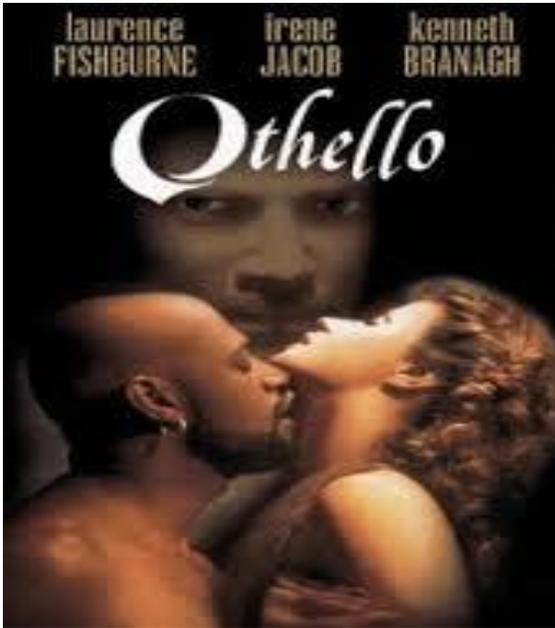


*This is one smart duck.*

Villains continuing to monologue is a tradition that is completely dumb. Iago manages to escape the pitfalls of the monologue however. Iago worked in the shadows, and he would have been completely fine leaving his victory in the shadows. Most villains just talk too much; Iago literally goes silent as his last act of defiance! Man, even when Iago is not delivering epic lines, he finds a way to remain badass.

### **#1. He Deceived Everyone**

Nothing makes a story more memorable than a twist ending. In Othello, not only are we, the audience, entertained by everyone realizing they were wrong the whole time, but we get to be in on the secret from start to finish. Every person affected by Iago's villainy shared one common characteristic: they were extremely close to Iago. Iago was a villain so great at hiding what he was, that he was able to hide in plain sight.



*Look, they're completely clueless that he is even there.*

To discover the levels of deception Iago accomplished, just look at what the other characters said about him. Iago was called honest Iago so often that you would think it was his official title. Imagine the horror of reality that Othello and Emilia found themselves facing when they realized they were used by someone that they put so much faith in. These are the true levels of Iago's villainy.

Iago's deception is what made him such an effective villain. When you think of villains, you likely think of the type of villain whose goal is to make something go boom and create a big show. But the ones like Iago, who can work outside of public view while still seeming visible are the most effective; like the fine print of TV ads detailing all the crazy adverse effects the promoted medicine can cause or the Senate office building, which like the mirror from Oculus, is alive and feeds on futility instead of dogs.



*We must kill it.*

Iago is badass. Look at Iago's dialogue; it is filled with epicness. Read acts I through IV and tell me that that Iago would not find some way to fulfill his goals. Appreciate the levels of deception Iago was able to produce, and he did it all without monologuing at inopportune times! In the end, Iago successfully got Othello to kill Desdemona, but I doubt even Iago could have imagined how much that action would continue to affect our world today...



*Somewhere this man, Clippers owner Donald Sterling, is reading the ending of Othello going, "See, this is what I'm trying to stop!"*

#### Works Cited

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, 1971. Print.

