

**The Role of Evil in Shakespeare's *Othello, the Moor of Venice, Titus Andronicus, and The Tempest***

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis mainly focuses on the acts of evil in William Shakespeare's three plays *The Tempest*, *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice* and *Titus Andronicus* in order to illustrate how the characters that represent the self in this case Iago, Titus and Prospero become in the position of the characters of the other Othello, Tamora and Caliban. The characters who are representations of the self reflect Edward Said's *Orientalism*, when they aim to destroy the desired victims as they see the other as inferior.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* illustrates how some selves see themselves superior to the other in terms of culture, religion and race, which brings into existence various binary oppositions of what the self, is not. To be more precise the binary oppositions include being uncivilised, barbaric, ignorant, savage and uneducated, which are all terms that are associated with the other as in the case of Othello, Tamora and Caliban. This then determines the self to be civilised, educated and wise which excludes what the other, is not. It is natural to identify evil with the characters that belong to the other because of the way the self represents them. On the other hand, it is not so natural to identify evil with characters of the self when they are associated with positive characteristics that exclude negative characteristics of the other.

This thesis aims to depict how evil as seen in Shakespeare's characters Iago, Titus and Prospero do not belong to a particular religion, ethnic or cultural group. Whether the individual is a Catholic, Protestant, English, Roman, Moorish or Goth evil lies in the self. The evil in the antagonist Iago and protagonist in Titus, and Prospero are associated with evil thoughts and actions, which comes from within, and defiles the individual. Evil often deals with the reality of individuals who have problems with

themselves in the society they live in. So, when the characters Iago, Titus and Prospero act in evil ways they become associated with the characteristics of the other, and they themselves become the uncivilized, barbaric and ignorant ones.

**Keywords:** Evil, Self-Other, William Shakespeare, Edward Said.

## ÖZ

Bu tez esas olarak William Shakespeare'in *The Tempest*, *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice* ve *Titus Andronicus* adlı üç oyunundaki kötülük eylemleri üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır. Bu bağlamda İago, Titus ve Prospero, Othello, Tamora, ve Caliban karakterlerini simgelemek amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Karakterlerin kurbanlarını küçümseyerek yok edişleri Edward Said'in *Orientalizm* (Doğu Bilimi)'ni yansıtır.

Edward Said'in *Orientalizmi* kişinin kendini diğerlerinden kültürel, din ve ırk açısından üstün görmesini anlatır ki aslında gerçek kişinin sandığının tam zıttı olmasıdır. Daha açık olmak gerekirse zıtlıklar uygarlaşmamış, zalim ve vahşi eğitimsizliği içerir ki Othello, Tamora ve Caliban bu terimlerle ilişkilendirilebilir. Bu da kişinin olmadığı halde, kendini diğerlerinden daha uygar, eğitilmiş ve zeki zannetmesidir. Doğal olarak karakterlerdeki kötülük kişinin kendini nasıl gösterdiği ile ilgilidir. Diğer yandan, tam tersi de doğru kabul edilir.

Bu tez Shakespeare'in kötü karakterleri İago, Titus ve Prospero hiçbir din, etnik köken ve kültürel gruba ait olmayışlarını tasvip etmek için yazılmıştır.

Birey ister Katolik, Protestan, İngiliz, Romalı, Kuzey Afrikalı, Müslüman veya Goth olsun kötülük insanın içinde yatar. Lider İago, Titus ve Prospero'nun içlerindeki kötü düşünceleri ve hareketleri ile bağlantılıdır ve kişiyi tanımlar. Kötülük genellikle bireyin yaşadığı toplumdan dolayı oluşan kendi problemleri ile bağlantılıdır. O yüzdendir ki, İago, Titus ve Prospero'nun kötü karakterleri diğer karakterlerdeki kötülükle ilişkilendirilebilir. Aslında uygarlaşmamış, zalim ve kötü olan onlardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kötü, Öz– Diğer ikilemi, William Shakespeare, Edward Said

*Dedicated to my Grandfather, and Parents*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZ .....	v
DEDICATION.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	viii
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Chapter Division.....	6
2 PROSPERO’S POWER AND EVIL IN THE TEMPEST .....	8
3 IAGO’S PLOT OF EVIL AND OTHELLO’S DESTRUCTION .....	21
4 EVIL BREEDING REVENAGE IN TITUS ANDRONICUS.....	33
5 CONCLUSION.....	46
REFERENCES .....	52

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Evil is a part of the human condition which is incontrovertibly common to people as every individual has a good side and a bad side to them. Shakespeare in his plays puts forward various concepts that can be observed in the lives of people even today. One of the most significant aspects of the human condition that appears in Shakespeare's plays *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice*, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Tempest* is the concept of evil. Shakespeare through these three plays reflects how the concept of evil is not only seen in particular people, but evil can be seen in any person according to the circumstance they are in. However, evil can also be desirable for some. In the Oxford dictionary evil is defined as "enjoying harming others; (being) morally bad and cruel". This means that if a person enjoys harming others evil then becomes far from what the normal human condition is, and can be seen as morally wrong. In other words, the desire to do evil out balances the good nature in a person because he or she is so eager to destroy the other. Therefore, the desire to do evil becomes extreme because it relates more to the bad side of an individual, excluding the good side. Thus, evil can include different notions such as, revenge, envy, personal desire and manipulation as seen in the character Iago in *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice* Titus in *Titus Andronicus* and Prospero in *The Tempest*. This shows how evil becomes

a powerful force, and can lead to the destruction of the self and the victim. In Shakespeare's plays the concept of evil is significant because it shows how the characters are in a never-ending process of evil acts such as Iago to Othello, Prospero to Caliban and both Tamora and Titus to each other. These evil characters aim to destroy others because of their racial, ethical and religious difference. In 1859, the German anthropologist Theodor Waitz asserts that:

If there be various species of mankind, there must be a natural aristocracy among them, a dominant white species as opposed to the lower races who by their origin are destined to serve the nobility of mankind, and may be tamed, trained, and used like domestic animals, or... fattened or used for physiological or other experiments without any compunction. To endeavour to lead them to a higher mortality and intellectual development would be as foolish as to expect that lime tree would, by cultivation, bear peaches, or the monkey would learn to speak by training. Wherever the lower races prove useless for the service of the white man, they must be abandoned to their savage state, it being their fate and natural destination. All wars of extermination, whenever the lower species are in the way of the white man, are fully justifiable (Ania Loomba, 102).

In Shakespeare's day Western civilization was largely identified with Christianity, and the teachings of the Church evident from the status of literate men, a large proportion of whom had received their education in religious institutions. Therefore, particularly African, Caribbean and Asian people with darker complexions, and generally illiterate were considered to be inferior and were the main capital of the slave trade.

That is to say, members of the white society regarded themselves as superior to any other person that belonged to another race. Then if the white man saw himself as superior to the other that belonged to another race, then the other was considered to be inferior. This means that the "white species" (Loomba, 102) had to protect and demonstrate their superiority to the "lower races" (Loomba, 102), in order to show that they were different from the other. In this sense, the "white species" (Loomba,

102) naturally believed that they were the ones in power and could not accept anyone from another race to be one of them or like them. This relates to Iago who does not accept Othello, the Moor to be a highly-respected general in the Venetian society or Prospero who does not accept Caliban to be a part of the unknown Island or Titus who cannot accept Tamora, a Goth to have a status in Rome. When the other race does something wrong that cannot be accepted in their society the self becomes vicious to prove that someone who belongs to “another race is useless for the service of a white man” (Loomba, 102). Therefore, when Othello does not choose Iago to be his lieutenant Iago manipulates him throughout the play by referring to his race such as “Moor”(1.1.41), “an old black ram”(1.1.90) and “a devil”(1.1.93). Moreover, Iago does not approve of Desdemona’s and Othello’s relationship (1.3.344-46) because he is a Moor and she is a Venetian and tells Roderigo that “when she (Desdemona) is sated with his body, she will find an error of choice” (1.3.352-53). In *Titus Andronicus*, Titus does something similar, not with words but with actions. He kills innocent family members of Tamora as seen in the first act of the play, the son of Tamora as he sees the Goths as expandable, and then when she responds back Titus becomes even more vicious, such as when Titus takes part in cannibalism in the last act of the play, by killing Tamora’s sons Chiron and Demetrius and feeding them to her in a pie. In *The Tempest* both words and actions are used by Prospero, whose main aim is to destroy Caliban in order to become the ruler on the unknown Island. Prospero with his magical powers treats Caliban as his slave. Moreover, Prospero tries to educate Caliban by teaching him his language because he sees Caliban as a barbarian savage who is uneducated. All three characters Iago, Prospero and Titus do everything they can to corrupt the others in order to sustain their superiority and make the others recognize that their inferiority is as Ania Loomba puts it “a part of being their fate and natural destination”(Loomba,102). Consequently, if the other, in

this case Caliban, Tamora and Othello are in the way of their superiors Titus, Prospero and Iago then they have the right to bring “extermination” (Loomba, 102) to them and this can be seen as “fully justifiable” (Loomba, 102).

This present explanation of the self and other is clearly emphasised in Ania Loomba’s “Colonial and Postcolonial Identities”, and is intensified in Edward Said’s theory on *Orientalism*. The image of the self and other goes back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the time when *Shakespeare’s Othello, the Moor of Venice, The Tempest* and *Titus Andronicus* were written. The idea of the self and other was analysed through binary oppositions in religious terms in medieval and early Europe.

Ania Loomba asserts that:

Christian identities were constructed in oppositions to Islam, Judaism or heathenism (which loosely incorporated all other religious, nature worship, paganism and animalism). Above all, it was Islam that functioned as the pre-dominant binary opposition of and a threat to Christianity (Loomba, 93).

Although, religious difference between the self and other was very confusing because Moors according to Shylock were seen as Arab Muslims, not all Muslims were dark-skinned and so at times it was difficult to separate them from the self. Nevertheless, religion became a guiding principle for racial, cultural and ethnic differences (Loomba, 93). The difference between the Moors and the whites were clearly seen when the whites associated the Moors with blackness and over time, as Ania Loomba says, “Religious and cultural prejudices against both blackness and Islam, each of which was seen to be the handiwork of the Devil, intensified the connection between them” (Loomba, 93).

Religion and cultural differences between the European nations and the other peoples reflected how the Europeans excluded the others from themselves. The Europeans identified the East as ‘outsiders’ (Loomba, 93), and associated various negative characteristics with them. Such characteristics included being uncivilized,

aggressive, violent, having greed, sexual promiscuity, and being irrational, which are attributes the Europeans excluded from the self. This idea of binary opposition is emphasised in Edward Said's *Orientalism*, "which is a specific exposition of the Eurocentric universalism which takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western, and the inferiority of what is not (Said, 192). So, if the other is associated with negative characteristics this makes the self attribute to positive qualities such as being civilized, rational and good. It is important to analyse the difference between the qualities of the self and other because in Shakespeare's plays the opposite of the self is seen in the characters Iago, Prospero and Titus who are representations of the self in white societies, for instance, Iago in Venice, Titus in Rome, Prospero in Milan. While it is possible to correspond to evil with the characters that are from another race, it is not possible to associate evil in the characters that are representations of the self. Thus, the others are entitled to have negative characteristics because it is seen in their nature. However, being uncivilized and irrational does not apply to the self because acting in such ways is the opposite of what the self is. The self must be civilized, rational and good. Therefore, when characters like Iago, Prospero and Titus go beyond what they are supposed to represent (being civilised, rational and good) they automatically become the devil themselves. If the devil is associated with the other race (the people from the East) then the real evil should ideally be seen in characters like Othello, Tamora and Caliban and not in the characters Iago, Prospero and Titus. I have also said before that anyone can be evil however, when an individual goes beyond evil, and when evil becomes a desire for them as seen in the characters Iago, Prospero and Titus then this type of evil is only seen in particular individuals and not by everyone. The characters Iago, Prospero and Titus become so caught in the acts of evil throughout the plays that when they cause suffering and pain to characters like Othello, Tamora and Caliban they start to get

pleasure out of the pain and suffering they cause. This is because if Europeans “identify too much with them (the other), he transgresses the boundary between ‘self’ and ‘other’ and regresses into madness” (Loomba, 118). On the basis of this, when caught in such acts of evil Iago, Prospero and Titus forget who they are and lower their own positions from being a civilised representative of Rome, Venice and Milan. In other words, Iago, Prospero and Titus misrecognize who they are and even their own society cannot recognise their superiors when they are in interaction with the other. This state totally contradicts on a theoretical level with the idea of the West superiority in civilized life.

## **1.2 Chapter Division**

With this in mind this thesis will focus on how evil is not related to a person being a Catholic, Protestant, English, Roman, Moorish or Goth, but that it comes from the heart. Although, in my conclusion Edwards Said’s *Orientalism* is used to bring the three plays together by comparing and contrasting the self and the other in *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice*, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Tempest*. The main reason is to show how the characters who are representations of the self that of Iago, Prospero and Titus are the ones who become in the place of the other that of Othello, Caliban and Tamora.

In Chapter Two in what ways Prospero tries to sustain his rule on the unknown Island will be analyzed. Moreover, Prospero faces many problems on the unknown Island and fails to rule because he becomes unsuccessful. The reasons why Prospero becomes unsuccessful on the unknown Island and the reasons why characters like Caliban go against him will be explored.

In Chapter Three the problems Othello has with Iago will be discussed and why he aims to destroy Othello will be exemplified. The idea of Othello murdering his wife

will not be seen as an example of an evil act, but how the actual evil lay in the Venetian Iago will be analyzed.

In Chapter Four, Titus's error in judgments will be analyzed in order to show how his errors become the reasons for the never-ending circle of revenge and bloodshed to continue throughout the play *Titus Andronicus*. The actual person responsible for all the vicious acts is Titus and why he undergoes a transformation from a civilized Roman to an uncivilized barbarian will be exemplified through the last act of the play when Titus takes part in cannibalism.

In Chapter Five I will compare and contrast the three plays *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice*, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Tempest* in order to reveal how Shakespeare more or less demonstrates what Said centuries later tried to do in his work *Orientalism*. That is to say, Shakespeare's plays reflect Elizabethan society by mirroring the problems Said recognized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



## Chapter 2

### PROSPERO'S POWER AND EVIL IN THE TEMPEST

The idea of evil describes the actions of wrong doing and can be seen as immoral actions in corrupt behaviour of individuals. Taking this into consideration, an evil act is something that a person does purposely and can be held responsible for harming, destroying, or killing innocent people as seen in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in the protagonist Prospero. In *The Tempest* the evil in Prospero is motivated by his power which brings negative consequences to others. In the play Prospero's evil behaviour functions on three levels, that of revenge, power and personal desires. The outcomes of revenge, power and personal desire are achieved through Prospero's "own agency" (Constance Jardon, 148). For this reason, Prospero's evil actions come from his own will and excludes as Philip G. Zimbardo states, "the unintended harmful outcomes, as well as prejudice or destruction of the environment by agents of corporate greed" (Jardon, 1). In relation to this, the first action of evil is seen when Prospero's brother Antonio has usurped and wrecked him as Duke of Milan. The second act of evil is illustrated when Prospero tortures Caliban, "a salvage and deformed slave" (1.1.10), Trinculo "a jester" (1.1.11) and Stephno "a drunken butler" (1.1.12). The third action of evil is seen when Prospero interferes in Ferdinand, the son of the King of Naples and his daughter Miranda's relationship in order to get them to act on how he desires them to be.

The setting is a Mediterranean Island of “indeterminate place” (Constance Jordan, 148) controlled by Prospero who has been exiled from Milan. As Constance Jordan states, “Prospero is ruling a ghostly state; its subjects are his daughter and two “servants” (Jordan, 148). Prospero has power over Ferdinand, Miranda, Stephano, Trinculo, and especially Caliban a barbarian black savage whom he exploits through his evil streak. Prospero seeks to take control over those on the Island in order to show his superiority, and not to do the same mistake he did with his brother Antonio. In the first act of the play Shakespeare introduces Prospero’s disgust and hate towards his unwarranted brother Antonio who has “transported/And rapt in secret studies” (1.2.76-77), and has deceived him with his “evil nature” (1.2.92). Although, Antonio is not the central character in the play his connection with the King of Naples goes against Prospero’s position as a ruler. This is clearly seen when Prospero asserts, “Of homage and I know not much tribute, Should presently extirpate me and mine Out of the dukedom, and confer Milan, With all the honours of my brother” (1.2.124-27). Prospero explains to his daughter Miranda how Antonio’s desire for power has destroyed his feelings and has threatened his position as a ruler. Being informed about the past shows how Antonio’s action has affected Prospero to resort to evil on an unknown Mediterranean Island. According to Zimbardo the act of “evil” really amounts to the participant acting in ways that harm others in that same setting (Zimbardo, 1). This is the reason why Prospero is very careful when he is in interaction with Trinculo, Stephano, Ferdinand and Caliban on the Island. He does not want to make the same mistake as he did when he was the Duke of Milan. Therefore, Prospero having learnt from his previous mistake acts differently and decides to be cruel and harsh bringing out the evil in him, in his struggle to become the sole ruler of the Island. This is clearly highlighted in the opening scene of the play where Prospero uses his magical powers to start a storm and shipwrecks Alonso, Ferdinand and

Gonzalo (1.1). The shipwreck is so severe that Miranda questions her father and implies that she suffered with those that also suffered (1.1.5-6). Prospero is conscious of his actions when he tells his daughter Miranda “I am, / nor that I am more better/ Than Prospero, master/of a full poor cell, /And they no greater father” (1.2.19-21). Prospero believes that he has learnt from his mistake as he asserts that he has become “more better” (1.2.19), which is an irony to show that Prospero has become something he is not, and now will destroy anyone he desires. Considering the conflict between the two brothers Prospero turning from a good person to a bad person shows that every individual has a good side and a bad side to them. This is because when Prospero was in Milan he helped his brother and showed him how to manage the state “being so reputed /In dignity, /and for the liberal/ Arts” (1.2.72-73). Without any hesitation Prospero gave all the knowledge he had to his brother, as Prospero asserts “The government I cast upon my brother” (1.2.75). In terms of being bad natured one cannot know how extreme the devil lies in oneself and as Max Born says “until the devil is roused”<sup>1</sup>. This emphasizes the fact that doing wrong to someone gives way for an individual to take certain cautions such as seeking revenge. However, the actual evil behaviour by a person whether physically or mentally deep down as Bertelsen puts it “comes from a natural feeling in the project in itself”<sup>2</sup>. In other words, evil comes from an individual’s free will because he or she chooses whether to act evil or not to certain individuals. This is because Prospero does not communicate with his family members but chooses to get back what belongs to him from his brother and uncle by doing everything he can to harm them. Both Antonio and Prospero demonstrate a lust for power, Antonio when he usurps power from Prospero in Milan and Prospero by his cruel and unbending control of all on the small Island.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/max\\_born.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/max_born.html)

<sup>2</sup> [www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/evil\\_4.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/evil_4.html)

The second example which highlights and helps to bring out the theme of evil in the play occurs in Act two and three when Prospero with his supernatural powers takes control over the lower-class characters Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban. Prospero does this by refining the magic that gives him the power he needs to punish and forgive his enemies. Prospero is the ruler and he knows everything that is going on, and decides what is going to happen next. Although, Prospero treats all three characters in a similar way by assigning them to a lower-class status, Prospero's main aim is to destroy Caliban. There seems to be three reasons why Prospero acts in an evil way to Caliban and regards him as different from Stephano and Trinculo. The first reason is because Sycorax who is Caliban's mother was a witch from Algeria, and was exiled to the Island for practising witchcraft. The second reason which is also linked to the first is that Prospero sees Caliban as a savage because his mother Sycorax comes from an African background, and is a part of the other race. Prospero who is a representation of the self does not accept Caliban to be a part of the English civilization because as Said says "the idea of European identity is a superior one in comparison with all non-Europeans peoples and cultures" (Edward Said, 7). Therefore, Caliban is far from being human unlike Stephano and Trinculo who are Milanese citizens. The third reason and the one that can be seen as a real motive is when Caliban is taught the language and education by Prospero. But learning becomes too much for Caliban and he breaks under the pressure of Prospero's knowledge and rebels by raping his daughter Miranda. A similar example is also seen in *Titus Andronicus*, when Titus kills Tamora's son and leaves her in such a hopeless state that she responds back doing the same. Both Prospero and Titus put their opponent into a state of mental anguish, which lead both Tamora and Caliban to respond back by breaking loose. However, for Prospero the first and the second reasons are what put Caliban into a mental anguish which is witnessed throughout the play. It is important to note that,

Caliban's mother comes from North Africa and therefore Caliban is of Berber origin which is why Prospero's attitude towards him is racial, and treats Caliban differently from Stephano and Trinculo. Prospero does not see Caliban as his equal and he is blinded by his prejudice against Caliban's appearance and manners. Caliban is seen more as a beast than human, and because of this Caliban is a slave to Prospero. As a result, Prospero uses what he considers an inferiority in Caliban to oppress him and sustain his power over him. For instance, Prospero views Caliban as someone inferior and savage, and he feels he has the right to treat Caliban as a slave. Prospero forces Caliban to serve him by cutting wood and making a fire. This is an example of a master and slave relationship which mirrors the 16<sup>th</sup> century Elizabethan England, as in 16<sup>th</sup> century England, where many people of an African origin started to come to England, and were used by their masters for their own purposes, mainly to make profit out of them. This reflects how the West used the other people from the East in order to govern the Orient for their own needs (Edward Said, 5). A similar relationship is seen between Prospero and Caliban because he is forced to obey Prospero, and for Prospero's needs and desires towards making a better society which will exclude Caliban. The third reason and the one that seems to be an acceptable motive to torture Caliban is when Prospero sees Caliban as a threat to Miranda because he believes Caliban has no knowledge and is a mere unpredictable savage. The moment Caliban tries to rape Miranda shows how he has dishonoured Prospero and Miranda. Caliban is forced to do daily chores for Prospero, such as fetching fire wood, while he is taught language (1.2.3.11-313). Caliban represents the other race because he is seen by Prospero not just as a savage, but as a person who has a devilish culture with no language. By this Prospero reflects Said's idea on how Europe had the most powerful force of "civilization, languages, and its cultural contestant (Edward Said, 1). Although, Caliban has a language of his own, it is not accepted by Prospero and

Miranda because they do not understand him. Prospero believes that Caliban fails in expressing himself. Shakespeare ultimately “invents a character who needs to be taught language, who is willing to deal with problems of one who acquires language without acquiring its social contexts of respect and privilege” (Frank Kermode, 290). Caliban cannot acquire Prospero’s language because he has no way of acquiring its “social contexts of respect and privilege” (Kermode, 290), and this is because Prospero derive does not have any sort of respect and privilege for Caliban. This simply applies to Caliban who is very different from the others (Stephano and Trinculo) considering him as a crude barbarian who cannot express language from that of “his betters” (Kermode, 290). According to Said *Orientalism* was a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Edward Said, 3) just like Prospero “dominates” by treating Caliban as his slave, tries to “restructure” him by teaching Caliban his language, and impose “authority” over Caliban by using his magical powers. Therefore, when Caliban starts to learn the English language he becomes suppressed because he has no rights of expressing his own spiritual values and culture. Caliban becomes a slave because he has no choice but to do what he is ordered. However, Caliban gives no importance to the language of his masters nor does he value it. Thus, Caliban believes that language has not helped him to express his thought or become a civilized being. What Caliban does believe is that his master’s language has only intruded on him because it has only taught him how to curse (1.2). Moreover, Caliban is only interested in feeling at home on the Island. Caliban believes that the Island belongs to him because his mother Sycorax was the first person on the Island when he asserts:

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother, which thou tak'st from me.  
When thou cam'st first, thou strok'st me and made much of me...And I  
loved thee and showed thee all the qualities o' th' isle...cursed be I that  
did so! ...For I am all the subjects that you have, which first was mine  
own king; and here you sty me... (1.2.334-45).

While, Caliban is claiming that the Island is his, Prospero on the other hand, is only interested in making Caliban his “subject”. By constantly referring to Caliban’s Berber origin Prospero makes Caliban fall under the category of “otherness”, which performs an important role throughout Shakespeare’s play. Prospero who has power over the island aggravates such biases to the others on the island. He controls Caliban and the rest of the slaves by giving reference to being “Providence divine” (1.2.160). By doing this, Prospero implicitly points out that he has control over the island and its inhabitants. According to Ric Allsopp, Prospero’s dominance over Caliban reveals the social structure that existed in England in that period and which deprived foreigners of the possibility to lead normal lives under racial prejudices (Allsopp, 36), and it is this frustrated state of existence that puts Caliban into the mental anguish discussed earlier.

Moreover, Prospero’s power over Caliban and the other characters illustrates that an individual who commits any evil act and goes against the Christian religion is to suffer. Therefore Prospero’s magical powers are connected to the religious beliefs of early modern England where magic and witchcraft were considered evil and those indulging in such practises were burnt at the stake. Prospero has the magical power and punishes the characters as he wishes. He makes them suffer by imprisoning them in a cave and treats them as slaves. Prospero is a figure exhibiting much resemblance to the sorcerers and witches regarding the Elizabethan idea of magic. For example, Prospero is opposed both to his brother, who wants to take his role as Duke of Milan, and to Sycorax, an evil witch and mother of the “deformed slave” Caliban. Sycorax does not enter the action of the play as she has died before the play begins, but many references of her evil behaviour gives the right to Prospero to cause suffering to her son Caliban. In this way, Prospero uses his magic to accomplish his will and his bullying of the spirit Ariel and most of all his threats and punishment of Caliban, Trinculo, Stephano and Ferdinand. Prospero’s role is central to the play as he is in a

position to control all the characters with his magic. The rise of black people entering England was a threat to the English society, and therefore the English people had negative attitudes towards the other race. This is clearly emphasized when Shakespeare draws a contrast between Miranda and Caliban. Even though both to a certain extent were brought up by Prospero since his arrival on Caliban's island, Caliban did not comply with Prospero's civilising education. In contrast to this character, Miranda is a model of chastity and virtue. As a result Caliban's inferiority seems to result from his culture. This is clearly seen when Miranda calls him, "Abhorred slave" (1.2.353). Another reference of Caliban's inferiority is emphasised when Prospero views Caliban as a threat:

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature  
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,  
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost.  
And as with age his body uglier grows,  
So his mind cankers.  
I will plague them all, Even to roaring (4.1.189-193).

Such bias towards Caliban shows why he starts to become alienated to the place he lives. On the one hand, Caliban is innocent as he responds to passion and feelings of pleasure as he has been used to while, Prospero is the complete opposite because he is ruled more by his intellect and self-discipline. Caliban is innocent because he has not done anything wrong to be treated in such ways by Prospero. Caliban is aware of Prospero's behaviour when he says, "As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island" (3.3.40-42). At this point the real threat is Prospero and not Caliban who is described as "a tyrant" (3.3.40), "a sorcerer" (3.3.41) and "cunning" (3.3.41). Prospero has tortured Caliban and has made him his subject. By doing this, Prospero unquestionably takes on a role of a ruler and exploits his power by taking advantage over inferior beings by humiliating them in order to protect his superiority. As seen in the above instances the idea of evil has



been exploited on three levels greed, power and personal desires. These examples clearly exemplify that evil rises from the habit of immoral actions and corrupt behaviour of characters. According to Bertelsen, evilness “presupposes a level of self-organization where co-existence can be an intentional project in itself which can intentionally detach from it and act destructively towards it in a genuinely evil manner”<sup>3</sup>. In other words, it is the wrong actions of others that make the individual become a devil, and the only way one can react back is through evil as we also clearly see in the relationship between Titus and Tamora. In the case of Caliban he is seen as a threat to Miranda, he is a savage, and is seen as inferior therefore Prospero uses these reasons as accusations to exercise his evil side. It is primarily from Caliban’s savage nature that Prospero decides to bring certain rules to the Island such as lifestyle and language which gives pain to Caliban. However, Caliban does not accept Prospero’s rules of language and lifestyle because these rules are against his nature. Caliban is happy the way he is and thinks Prospero’s rules are a meaningless torture.

Due to this, Prospero never reaches a stable society because he destroys the characters on the Island and brings corruption to the society. Prospero’s philosophy and political regime for the second time fails. This is the reason why Shakespeare utilizes the cave as Prospero has punished Caliban and the rest of the characters on the Island. This image of the cave also relates to Willis Deborah’s<sup>4</sup> idea of the cave where Titus makes Tamora eat her two sons baked in a pie, in order to be forced back in her womb, which becomes the cave of her two sons. The men in the cave are prisoners and do not have any knowledge about the outside world. Until they learn about Prospero’s way of life and his morals, it is then when they will be freed. Although, at one stage of the play Caliban is released from the cave in order to be educated

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<sup>3</sup> [www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/evil\\_4.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/evil_4.html)

<sup>4</sup> See Willis, Deborah. “The Gnawing Vulture”: Revenge, Trauma Theory, and “Titus Andronicus”. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol.53, No.1 (Spring, 2002), p.21-52

teaching him “how/ To name the bigger light and how the less, / That burn my day and night” (1.2.337-338). In response to this Caliban shows his hate to both Miranda and Prospero when he asserts “You taught me language, and my profit on’t/ I know how to curse. A red plague rid you/ For learning me your language!”(1.2.365-67). Caliban going against Prospero symbolically reflects that he should be put back in this dark cave. In reality Caliban is actually a prisoner in a cave and this is clearly mentioned when Caliban says to Prospero, “and here you sty me/ In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me/ The rest o’ the island” (1.2.344-356). The cave which is a metaphor both signifies that Caliban is a character that is different from the rest due to his colour and origins. On the other hand, the cave also reinforces Prospero’s darker force of his evil character. The way Prospero treats these characters on the Island lies in the core of him being evil which means that it is in his nature. As seen at the end of the play Prospero does not succeed in his process of making a best society on the island. However, what he does succeed in is making Caliban, Stephano, Trinculo, Miranda and Ferdinand’s life hell.

When analyzing the relationship between Miranda and Ferdinand there are many problems that Prospero causes between the two. Prospero believes he has his own reasons to act the way he does. Although, Prospero wants Miranda to marry Ferdinand he believes that forcing them together can cause them to rebel against each other. Therefore, Prospero spy’s on the two lovers in order to keep track on how they come together. He plays with their minds and manipulates the two lovers to guarantee that they will come together at the end. He uses Ferdinand the same way he does with Caliban, and orders Miranda to follow his commands. In this way it is hard to determine Prospero’s character as he has many. It is seen through his actions that one characteristic leads to show another as seen in the case of causing such problems between Ferdinand and Miranda. Another change in Prospero’s character and the most

important of all is seen, when he helps Caliban on the Island but then turns against him by taking away the Island and despising him. In this case, Prospero's character is not stable because at times he shows his good side but as the play develops his good nature is transformed into an evil one. That is to say, People are assumed to be in control of their own behaviour. Hence, Prospero's evil nature takes over his good nature, and determines how he acts according to his own needs.

Prospero fails his study of philosophy in Milan and so he tries to continue his studies on the unknown Island. Here, Prospero experiences many problems with the people first with his brother Antonio and then with Caliban. Prospero attempts to make a better place for society by expressing his knowledge that he gets from his books. However, when Caliban realizes that Prospero's knowledge is a very important tool for him he plans to kill Prospero and tells Trinculo and Stephano to first take his books (3.2.87). By this Caliban knows that without his books Prospero will be nobody. On the contrary, nothing goes the way Prospero wants and his belief in teaching philosophy to the people on the Island fails. Caliban prefers to remain in the dark cave despite the fact that Prospero tries to teach him about life, but he fails in teaching Caliban. This is because Caliban awakens to Prospero's real character of trying to dominate him, and therefore rebels against him. To add, Prospero also helped his brother Antonio without realizing Antonio's plan to overthrow Prospero from his position. In spite of this, Prospero gains an important lesson from his failures as a ruler. Prospero with his powers, cruelty and the segregation of the men on the Island highlights that men whose actions are unjust can be taught a lesson through suffering. In connection to this, Prospero who succeeds in destroying the characters gives into his powers, lifts the spell, and eventually forgives the people on the Island. Prospero's desire to create a better society turns into corruption because he cannot reach his goals. On the one hand, he tries to justify himself as seen at the end of the play by

ordering the government and placing his daughter Miranda and Ferdinand as rulers to show the upper-class people that they are the ones responsible for their own corruption. On the other hand, the lower-class people such as Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban are to understand that they cannot be a part of government because of their low-nature and inferiority.

In *The Tempest*, the imaginary Island and the corrupt city, Milan are representations of how a leader in this case, Prospero, cannot reach a stabilized civilization. Firstly, because in Milan his brother Antonio goes against him and overthrows him from his position. Secondly, Prospero fails on the unknown Island because he tries to dominate all the characters but in return they all go against him. As for Prospero who tries to succeed in both worlds and hopes to do the best he can with his political regime comes to an end of ruling the Island just like he did in Milan. Once Prospero realises that nothing is going the way he desires he becomes evil. From the past to the present Prospero becomes unsuccessful in ruling the people on the Island and starts to respond in aggressive ways. Once Prospero succeeds in destroying the people on the Island by torturing them physically or mentally he begins to satisfy his lust for power. The effects of Prospero's aggressive behaviour become "increasingly pleasurable" (9) when he sees the characters suffer. Despite the fact of his enjoyment of bringing harm to all the characters on the small Island he also knows that it is the only way to dominate. When Prospero realizes that the people on the Island are not following him, he becomes heartless, selfish and wicked. He eventually destroys all the people, and once he has corrupted them he leaves them to suffer. As in the case for Caliban he is from a lower-class status, a savage and a threat to his daughter. For Alonso the King of Naples his son Ferdinand was not lost but Prospero used this against Alonso to make him suffer because he helped Prospero be usurped. This also reflects why he treats Ferdinand as a slave and instructs him to do things before his

marriage with Miranda. *The Tempest* reflects how the characters are treated wrongly by a single source of power. Primarily Prospero's actions in *The Tempest* exist as both reality and illusion to the characters in the play because the characters depend entirely on Prospero's magic until he surrenders his magic and gives in. That is to say, the magic on the Island reflects what Prospero cannot achieve in the real world of Milan. Thus, the real world does not revolve around magic or spirits like it does on the unknown Island but consists of problems of people in a real world of Milan. That is to say, the magic of Prospero does not work in Milan but only can be seen on the imaginary Island, where he uses his power in uncivilized ways to go against inhabitants like Caliban to sustain his political power.

## Chapter 3

### IAGO'S PLOT OF EVIL AND OTHELLO'S DESTRUCTION

*Othello, the Moor of Venice* is a tragedy that consists of deceit, revenge, hatred, love and jealousy. As seen the play embodies certain unique circumstances which mirror extraordinary events that befall a Moor who has power and rules the Venetian army. Othello's circumstance is not accepted by Iago, who proceeds to uncover his evil behaviour to destroy Othello. Othello a highly-respected general of Venice chooses Cassio instead of Iago as his lieutenant. For this reason, Iago goes against Othello and does everything he can to destroy him. Iago who has planned to destroy Othello affects him so severely that Othello falls into different states of feelings throughout the play. In the first half of the play, Othello's love is illustrated when he gets together with his beloved Desdemona. In the second half of the play his feelings change and he is disintegrated. This is because Iago has the ability to make Othello believe his wife has committed adultery. On a more intense level, Iago plays with Othello's mind, and even motivates him to murder his beloved. Iago unfoils his plans, by lying to those around him in attempt to destroy the innocent Othello and Desdemona in order to satisfy his own needs. At the end of the play Othello is corrupted as he murders Desdemona and then himself, but the villain Iago is left with pleasures of his own achievements for a short moment before he dies. On the basis of Othello's race, it is important to say that, no other characters seem to have a problem

with Othello's skin colour until Iago reminds others and brings into the picture that Othello is a "Moor" and is different from the Venetians. Edward Said puts forward that the European culture gained strength and identity by setting itself against the Orient (Said, 3). That is to say, Othello is characterized as a character that is somehow separated from the European culture (Edward Said, 3). Like it is seen in Said's *Orientalism* the Europeans represented themselves as superior to the people of the East, Othello's race then seems to represent the Orient, and is seen as a threat to the self. At this stage Othello is othered in relation to all the other Venetians, which in the light of Othello's otherness, maybe regarded as the 'self'. Othello does not have any problems with the other characters around him. He even has a status as the commanding general of Venice where the Duke highly respects him. In contrast to this, it is the villain Iago who experiences problems with Othello. Iago manipulates the Duke by implying that Othello is evil because he has been secretly having a relationship with Desdemona. Although, not every other is characterized as evil, somehow being different as in this a Moor is separated from society. Said explains that one sect of the Orient was identified with race (Edward Said, 7). He continues saying that the Europeans were culturally separated from those who belonged to the Orient (Edward Said, 7). Therefore, when Iago informs the Duke that Othello has been lying to him Iago tries to clarify that Othello's actions seem to be a part of his Moorish behaviour. Therefore, Othello is a representation of the Orient. Iago shows how Othello is to be separated from the Venetian society. With this in mind, the actual wickedness does not lie in Othello or his race because the result of Othello's immoral act is generated by Iago's imagination. In contrast to the innocent Othello, the real wickedness lies in the Christian Venetian Iago. He pretends to be the good, devoted and "honest" (inferior) person, however, as the play develops he turns out to be the

complete opposite and this romantic love between Othello and Desdemona starts turning into hate, pride, disgust and finally ends in death.

One of the most complex characters represented in *Othello, the Moor of Venice* is Iago from the beginning of the play Iago's character seems to be of pure evil. His capacity for cruelty is limitless and the motivation for his actions seems to stem from Othello's choice of Cassio<sup>5</sup> as his lieutenant (1.1). However, Iago's use of this reason against Othello is not a good enough excuse to explain the destruction he wreaks on the lives of the people he knows the best. When Othello gives Cassio the position which Iago believes should have been given to him, he inadvertently attacks Iago's honor. Othello's decision turns Iago into a jealous and mischievous person. Othello who is a leader and Cassio who becomes his lieutenant are both a threat to Iago because he feels inferior when compared to them. According to Babcock, "This ever-present sense of social inferiority forces Iago into compensating by manipulating his superiors: and it explains why Iago expresses jealousy of both Othello and Cassio" (Babcock, 300). Therefore, the choice of Cassio gives Iago the right to "hate the Moor" and to plan "revenge against him" (1.2.367-68). Thus, Iago is consumed with envy and plots to steal the position he feels he deserved. He uses jealousy and anger as excuses to perpetrate evil when he informs Brabantio that "Your heart is burst; / you have lost half your soul" (1.1.89) referring to the fact that he has lost his dear daughter Desdemona because she is having an intimate relationship with Othello "an old black ram" (1.1.91). Although, not portrayed specifically as societal threat sexuality and the Moor are projected in Othello which show Edward Said's binary oppositions of how white (the self) and black (the other) cannot come together. This is seen when Iago does not give a chance to Brabantio to question him about the situation, and this time directly tells Brabantio that his "daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with

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<sup>5</sup> Cassio is an honorable lieutenant to Othello.



two backs” (1.1.118-119). This information given to Brabantio is enough to play on his imagination and makes him fume, so as to call Iago a “profane wretch” (1.1.117) and “a villain” (1.1.120). This does not affect Iago as he continues to talk about the relationship between Desdemona and Othello when this time Brabantio starts to question and believe his daughter has deceived him. When Brabantio wants to learn the truth about the relationship between Othello and Desdemona they both do not hesitate to explain themselves. Othello tells the Duke that Brabantio loved him and invited him to his house telling him to explain the stories of his life and as Othello asserts, “From year to year- the battles, sieges, fortunes/ That I have passed” (1.3.132-133). Othello continues this time to express his love for Desdemona by giving reference to her character. He explains that Desdemona is a loving and a caring person because she listened to his stories and “she (Desdemona) gave me (Othello) for my pains a world of sighs” (1.3.161). In return, when Desdemona is to explain her side of the story she too tells the truth showing her extreme feelings to Othello. Her feeling for Othello is one of a kind because she has a capacity to sympathize with Othello’s past. She has the ability to express herself and show pity to the one she loves and as Kirsch puts it she has a “piteous heart” (723). Desdemona’s love is so deep that when her father asks her who she most owes obedience to, and while he is actually expecting her to reply and choose him, she fails in expectation when she does not fear her father and chooses her husband over him. According to Kirsch “...the impact and importance of her answer to her father’s question of obedience is seen in the first words of the play without any exaggeration” (723), she asserts:

My noble father,  
I do perceive here a divided duty:  
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 show’d

To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor my lord (1.3.184-190).

At the beginning of her speech Desdemona with the words “life”, “education” and “respect” fulfils the natural state of a daughter obeying her father. However, once married Desdemona gives an example of how a woman should obey her husband. She uses her mother as an example to reflect the issue on how a wife is to be dutiful to her husband. The actual transfer from daughter to a woman, and then to a wife is seen in these luminous lines above. Desdemona who gives her mother and father as an example to explain her own situation depicts how she is capable of showing her affection to Othello. By doing this Desdemona immediately reflects her love as a wife should, body and soul (Kirsch, 724).

The characters Othello and Desdemona both represent truth by showing their real love to each other. However, this love turns into hate by Iago in the second half of the play. As the play progresses both Othello and Desdemona cannot justify their love because Iago is so eager to destroy their relationship. For this reason, both Othello and Desdemona lack in having a stable relationship because Iago destroys them. Their relationship can never be fulfilled as Iago the character of pure evil leads Othello to believe his wife is unfaithful. Iago has no real motives as to bring harm to Othello’s relationship, except that Othello did not choose him as his lieutenant. For this reason, he represents a vice figure because he is extremely evil throughout the play and can be seen as a devil. Although, Iago’s character is difficult to understand he still shows characteristics that belong to a devil. This is illustrated when he starts to explain his tactical plans to Roderigo. Iago emphasizes that he will follow Othello not out of “love and duty” (1.1.62), but because he feels that he can take advantage of and deceive his master. In connection to this, Iago believes that people who are what they seem can be irrational. In other words, Iago is referring to himself because he acts as the honest

person. However, his plan to destroy Othello reflects that he is seen as the irrational one. The day Iago decides to reveal his inner- feelings will be the day he reveals his true self. Therefore, if Iago shows his real feelings to those around him he will reveal that he is weak, irrational, illogical and dangerous. To avoid these negative aspects, Iago falsely promises himself “I will wear my heart upon my sleeve. / For daws to peck at” (1.1.67-8). In other words, he swears upon his heart that such a day will never come. These words of Iago exemplify his mysterious and indirect manner of speaking. Phrases such as “Were I the Moor I would not be Iago” (1.1. 59) and “I am not what I am” (1.1.68) conceal as much as, if not more than they expose. That is to say, Iago is constantly playing a game of deception, with the characters and even the readers.

A vast effort is put into Iago’s plans to destroy his master Othello. By doing this his actions portray what Coleridge views him as “a being next to the devil, only not quite the devil”. This is because he is capable of destroying people around him and he uses characters such as Roderigo, Emilia (his wife) and Desdemona to demolish Othello. For this reason, Iago is cunning, dishonest, egotistic, and plotting; he is able to use the weaknesses of the people he wants to destroy to his advantage. Iago tries to succeed by his own advancement while plotting the demise of others, and this illustrates his motivation and the ultimate defeat of good by the rage of evil. From the beginning of the play Iago’s evil nature is exposed, however, it is also Iago’s ability to identify Othello’s otherness and weak character as he views Othello as a person with a “free and open nature/ That thinks men honest that but seem to be so, / And will as tenderly be led by the nose/As asses are (1.3.400-03). By realizing Othello’s weak characteristics as kind-hearted and a person, who fools for everything Iago works on them as a milder course of putting Othello “...in a jealousy to strong that judgment cannot cure” (Draper, 733). According to Braxton, Iago is the “natural enemy” (Braxton, 13) of Othello and he has the ability to trap anything that comes in its way

just like the spider that traps the fly. Iago represents the spider that does not have any real reasons in destroying Othello who represents the fly. Most importantly, Othello cannot save himself from his enemy because he is caught in the spider's web and has no way out.

Iago is concerned to push Othello deeper into corruption by making him believe his wife has committed a deed, it is also important to highlight that, Othello is unaware of Iago's abilities until the very end of the play. Othello has no idea of what Iago is capable of and does not expect any wrongs to be done by him. Othello sees Iago as a good person, which is illustrated throughout the play when he repeatedly identifies Iago as "Honest". Even before Iago plans to tell Othello that his wife Desdemona has committed adultery<sup>6</sup> with Cassio the word "honest" is still used several times. For example, when Othello commands Iago to do things for him he uses positive words such as "good Iago, / Go to the bay and disembark my coffers" (2.1.210). When Othello speaks to Cassio about Iago he speaks of him as the "most honest" man (2.3.6). This is emphasized by Empson who declares Iago, who is playing "honest" "... is the rat who stands up for the ideal; as soon as Othello agrees he is finely cheated; Iago is left with pleasures and Othello is destroyed" (Empson, 42). This is the reason why Othello, who sees Iago as "honest", makes an error in judgment because he is incapable of seeing through Iago's lies. Consequently, the word "honest" is a dramatic irony used by Shakespeare to show exactly what Iago is not, and what he is actually capable of. In this case, the opposite is associated with Iago such that he is not a good, loving and caring person like Othello or Desdemona but simply a cunning and evil person who is not honest but completely dishonest.

The evil nature and dishonesty of Iago is clearly emphasized when he uses Othello's love against Desdemona. He works on Othello's mind as he is well aware

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<sup>6</sup> Further in my thesis I will explain Desdemona's chastity that leads to her death.

that Desdemona is most precious to Othello. He tells his master that his wife Desdemona has been having an intimate relationship with Cassio. Although Iago does not tell Othello directly, he works upon the issue just like he does with Barbantio by saying it indirectly. While it can be assumed that evil people tend to be brutal and insensitive, or even disconnected from the people they aim to hurt. Iago, however, is able to hurt Othello by growing close to him as his plot progresses. His indirect manner of speech makes others suspect what is not true to be understood as the truth such as, “Think, my lord?”(3.3.115) or “I think Cassio an honest man” (3.3.142) shows a paradox because the word “think” plays on Othello’s mind and as a result it makes Othello assume that his wife has committed an immoral act. According to, Kermode Iago infects Othello through words such as “honest” and “think” with their derivatives; where one begins to understand how compact and fierce this writing is (Kermode, 177). Iago manipulates Othello in the cleverest ways that at times it seems he is actually inside Othello’s mind. Therefore, the words “honest” and “think” is an example of Iago’s manipulative power as he puts on an act to be sincere in order to ensure that he remains an angel in his master’s eyes.

Iago’s mischievous actions and the manner of speaking have already affected Othello. He is angry and hurt when he says “Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore! / Be sure of it. / Give me the ocular proof” (3.3.375-76). At this stage Othello is confused and does not want to believe that his wife has committed such a deed. Conversely, Iago has already planned to give proof to his master when he uses his wife Emilia (3.3.290-335) to steal the handkerchief<sup>7</sup>. Othello has asked for proof, and Iago who has already planned his plot to destroy Othello gives not one but two pieces of evidence to ensure Othello believes him. The first evidence is seen when Iago hears

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<sup>7</sup> The handkerchief is precious to Othello because it was given to him by his mother. It also has many meanings and different interpretations.

Cassio in his sleep say “Sweet Desdemona, / Let us be wary, let us hide our loves” (3.3.435-36), and the second evidence, is said soon after the first, occurs when Iago declares that he saw Cassio wiping his beard with Desdemona’s handkerchief (3.3.454). Before Iago turns to give the second proof he asserts “yet we *see* nothing done; / She may be honest yet”. While, Iago is planting this evil idea into Othello’s mind he is also trying to point out that it may not be true because there is nothing that they have seen as solid proof. Yet, Iago then goes deeper into firing up Othello and gives something visual something to “see” where the handkerchief is used this time as the second and most important as Iago says “ocular proof”. The second evidence of the handkerchief is enough to play on Othello’s mind and convince him that his wife has committed adultery. On the one hand, the insufficiency and the absence is seen in the first evidence. On the other hand, the completeness of Othello’s collapse is alert in the second piece of evidence when the loss of the handkerchief becomes “ocular proof”. The handkerchief as Kermode says, “is a false substitute and becomes itself the means of equally terrible reiteration” (Kermode, 177). This is because the handkerchief to Othello is an object which he values and it even has power over him. It symbolizes his father’s love for his mother, for if she had lost the handkerchief his father too would be furious and would despise her. For this reason, Othello’s reaction to the loss of the handkerchief is the first sign of his jealous behavior when he insists that Desdemona should show him the handkerchief as he asserts “Fetch me the handkerchief! My mind misgives” (3.4.91). The innocent Desdemona has no idea of the situation and is insisting on her husband to speak about Cassio. This brings out the devil in Othello and it also fires up his anger as he soon after repeats “The handkerchief” three times (3.4.94). Desdemona has no clue as to why Othello is so angry with her therefore, she is trying to make sense of Othello’s jealous actions towards her. Desdemona tells her servant Emilia that Othello should not be jealous of her (3.4.160) because “she has

never gave him cause, and it would be unworthy of him to imagine something unworthy of her” (Berger, 241). While, Desdemona is concerned with her husband’s behavior, Othello is so angry about the suggestion planted in his mind by Iago that it has put him into a state of emotional turmoil; he is lost in a trance. Iago’s control over Othello is so strong now that he convinces Othello to consider getting rid of Desdemona and even suggests methods of killing her such as advising Othello to “Strangle her in bed, / even the bed she hath contaminated” (4.1.209-10). That is to say, Iago’s true motive is not really Othello’s choice of lieutenant but obviously his love of evil and nothing else. Before Othello murders his beloved in act five he commits his first act of violence as he strikes Desdemona and calls her a “Devil” (4.1.246). Othello has become vulnerable to Iago and the jealousy within him begins to lead to the demise of others.

Desdemona, after her husband’s first act of violence, is so innocent that she speaks well of Othello. When in conversation to Emilia about committing adultery, she says that “Beshrew me if I would do such a wrong, / For the whole world (4.3.81-82). Desdemona has not done anything wrong she is a victim and therefore, suffers because “The jealous soldier who is deluded by the devil to suspect his wife, almost kills her before she has a chance to explain” (Draper, 731). This leads Othello to commit his second violent act by murdering his wife without thoroughly investigating the truth. Nevertheless, Desdemona can only insist on how truly she loves Othello with her sins:

And have you mercy too! I never did  
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio  
But with such general warranty of heaven  
As I might love. I never gave him token (5.2.62-5).

Desdemona’s love for Othello is intense as she with her last breath says “Oh, falsely, falsely murdered! /A guiltless death I die” (5.2.120-26). To the point of her death Desdemona is obedient to her husband as she blames her death on herself by declaring

“Nobody; I myself. Farewell. / Commend me to my kind lord (5.2.128-29). Desdemona acting in this way once again highlights that she is naïve and a victim as she dies a “guiltless death”(Berger, 250). For this reason, Desdemona is a representative of “goodness” and “heaven” (5.1.) as she is pure, truthful and symbolizes the angel unlike Iago who is not what he seems to be and symbolizes the devil.

The reason why Iago attacks Othello is to show how he does not belong to the Venetian society, and this is done by bringing to picture Othello’s otherness. The idea of the good versus evil in terms of Moors reveals Said’s binary opposites of the self and the other relationship such as lighter versus darker, wise versus ignorant, powerful versus weaker, and outsider versus insider (Edward Said, 3). Therefore, Iago does not only show that Othello is different in colour of skin but how a person who belongs to the other is associated with negative characteristics such as cruelty and wickedness, and this is seen in Othello when he murders his wife. In contrast to this, Othello’s jealous behavior is the result of wrong perception. To add, Othello loves Desdemona greatly and passionately, however he loves her unwisely as his pride, hate, violence and disgust has taken control. He is not hurt because he fails to love Desdemona, but the thought of his wife committing an immoral act affects him, and destroys his pride and vanity. In Othello’s relationship his violent behavior lies in loving Desdemona so blindly as he confesses at the end of the play by announcing that he is the “one that loved not wisely, but too well”(5.2.344). However, in Said’s *Orientalism* the Europeans associated violence, wickedness and ignorance with the Orient (Edward Said, 3). Therefore, when Othello murders his wife he represents the characteristics seen in the Orient by the Europeans. For this reason, Iago knows that Othello who belongs to the other is naïve and unrealistic because he becomes blind and kills his



wife and falls from a highly respected general to someone inferior, which by nature Iago believes belongs to Othello.

Othello and Desdemona as portrayed in the play are the two greatest innocents who are influenced by the devil Iago. The two appear to love one another romantically at first, but this romantic love becomes more of a profane love. The cause of the profane love lies in Iago's exploitation of evil. The destruction also lies in Othello and Desdemona's failing of a sustained relationship as they both lacked in trust, communication and understanding. Their romantic love turns into a hellish love as Othello is "tenderly led by the nose" (1.3.402) to murder his wife and, after realizing his immoral act kills himself. This takes us back to the idea of the spider's victim. A fly is an insect that brings no harm to people or anything of its kind. It is "typically some kind of wandering insect who blunders into the spider's web" (Braxton, 13). In the case of the spider it does not track down its victim, but when it sees it close in the web it immediately attacks and destroys it (Braxton, 14). That is to say, the action of the play dramatizes Iago as the spider that hates and sees Othello as the fly who wanders and comes in his way. This idea of the spider and the fly can also be associated with the Orient because the Venetian Iago does not accept Othello to be a part of the Venetian society. Othello seen as a Moor creates effective reflections of Said's ethnocentric views of other cultures who try to live in a European society (Edward Said, 3). Being a different race meant, primarily being the other which was also associated by the Europeans as monstrous and savage (Said, 3). Conversely, the opposite is seen in Iago when compared to Othello because his actions exacerbate his own emotions and make him a villain. Moreover, Iago successfully, eliminates the one character representative of heaven, innocence, and honesty. Thus far, Iago remains the censure of this hellish villain as Iago states himself that "I am a very villain else" (4.1.128).

## Chapter 4

### EVIL BREEDING REVENAGE IN TITUS ANDRONICUS

Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* a play that seems to hinge on the motive of revenge reveals how characters like Tamora and Titus can go beyond the levels of revenge, which can be seen by the violent and disturbing scenes in the play. Rome, in which the play takes place, is an imperial city. The opening scene of the play demonstrates the idea of an imperial Rome such as "Noble patricians" (1.1.1), "the justice of my curse" (1.1.3) and "the imperial diadem" (1.1.6). Titus a highly respected general has returned from a twelve year war against the Goths. He is very proud and shares his feelings with his people when he asserts "To re-salute his country with tears, / Tears of true joy for his return to Rome/ Thou great defender of this Capitol" (1.1.75-77). There is a triumph for the returning victorious general Titus who captures and brings back with him the queen of the Goths and her three sons. Titus' victory over the Goths represents the victory of a civilized Rome over the barbaric world. The relationship between the Europeans and the Orient is a relationship of power, of domination of varying degrees of complex hegemony (Edward Said, 5) as seen in an imperial Rome. If Rome is civilized, then Titus himself is a representation of this civilization. However, in return for the loss of twenty-four sons killed fighting the Goths, Titus sacrifices Tamora's eldest son Alarbus in front of a large Roman crowd. The sacrifice of Alarbus shows how Titus makes his first error in judgment because he listens to his son Lucius and kills an innocent person to take place of the loss of his twenty-four sons who were killed in the war and in order to punish Tamora. His second error in judgment is also seen at the beginning of the play when this time he chooses loyalty to

Saturninus the new Emperor of Rome and accepts to give Saturninus to his daughter Lavinia. Meanwhile Lavinia rejects her father's offer because she has been promised to Bassianus, and Titus in return kills his own son Martius for defending Lavinia's rights. The first error in judgment of Titus's immoral actions becomes a crime because the deed of killing Tamora's son does not fit any Christian law and civilized norm. Titus is a highly respected general in society and so when he commits such a deed he becomes equally barbaric as Tamora is considered by Romans. Said asserts that "cultures and nations whose location is in the East, were seen as a brute reality by the West (Edward Said, 5). For Tamora she is already a Goth and so her barbaric behaviour lies in her nature. Tamora's barbaric behaviour is carried out when Titus's crime opens the doors for Tamora to act in the same way as him. In other words, Titus's crime breeds Tamora's desire for revenge which can be seen as her punishment of Titus's crimes which in return breeds a desire for revenge in Titus to punish Tamora. Hence, a vicious circle begins between the two major characters, Titus and Tamora. Both seek revenge against each other and try to destroy each others' families in the bloodiest way. *Titus Andronicus* demonstrates that members of both sexes, male and female, take part in brutal acts of revenge, creating a tension in the play. Violent revenge, by Tamora and Titus, shows how vengeance really affects the state of mind leading especially Titus to madness. The sons of Tamora, Chiron and Demetrius against the daughter of Titus, Lavinia, are the victims of revenge in this play. On the basis of this, extreme vengeance depicts the darkness of the mind, and the acts of each character reflect evil. Moreover, Titus's and Tamora's revenge is also a response to immoral acts that affect notions, such as, honour, shame, and humiliation. All these notions which are somehow connected to evil acts are associated with the bloody desires of revenge of Tamora and Titus. These notions are the reasons for their desire to take revenge upon one another. While, Tamora and Titus are trying to protect

their honour, the reality of family members being killed becomes unavoidable. In order to satisfy their sense of honour, Titus and Tamora lose their sons and daughter that make them feel pain. So, there are two sides to the act of revenge: a negative and a positive side. On the positive side, after fulfilling revenge, one feels one has protected one's honour. While on the negative side, the consequence is damage to the self which comes as loss or humiliation. Hence, revenge is both sweet and bitter, a paradoxical situation where feelings of vengeance cause both parties to undergo a metamorphosis, like Titus and Tamora when they desire to kill and damage each others' families. Metamorphosis is a transformation from being the self to something completely opposite of what the self is. Titus' metamorphosis is from a civilized Roman self into what that civilized self would normally negate, a blood thirsty barbarian and cannibal. This idea of metamorphosis is seen in the characters Tamora but it is more severely observed in Titus. The theme of revenge and counter revenge brings out the metamorphosis of Titus because from a civilized Roman general he transforms into a hateful cannibal. According to Said, "the Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be Oriental (cruel, wicked, irrational) but also because it could be submitted to be made Oriental by the Europeans" (Edward Said, 5). Therefore, when Titus transforms into this hateful cannibal he himself reflects the Orient. Thus, Titus should not have listened to his son but should have taken into account the pleas of a mother. Therefore, Titus's behaviour is pointless and becomes a barbaric act in itself. This is because Tamora's son has not done anything wrong to Titus. For this reason, Titus's action gives Tamora the right to exploit her barbarous nature and harm Titus. Tamora's metamorphosis is seen when she tells her husband Saturninus "I'll find a day to massacre them all/And raze their fraction and their family" (1.1.451-52), meaning that she will do everything she can to kill Titus and his family and make him suffer the way she did. Although, Tamora is a Goth it is Titus

himself who forces Tamora to change and become like him the vengeful person, when she commands her sons Demetrius and Chiron to rape Lavinia. That is to say, it is not a logical way for both Titus and Tamora to kill each other's family members in such a violent way; therefore it is the evil that lies within oneself and intoxicates one for revenge. For this reason, Tamora and Titus become blind to themselves and to the others around them. Both become conditioned to damage each other. However, revenge makes Tamora and Titus to behave in a barbaric way and affects other lives violently and this becomes a way of life for both throughout the play. They are not aware of the fact that they destroy others while harbouring the desire to destroy each other. This causes the loss of life because they sacrifice themselves and their families under the strong and brutal desire for revenge in the bloodiest ways. Revenge tragedy is not only important to understand, it is also necessary to comprehend emotionally. This kind of tragedy helps the readers to analyze the resolution of revenge in both rational and psychological ways. In other words, the events can be analyzed in the light of psychology as affected by the state of mind. Therefore, this kind of revenge play gives readers the chance to interpret the play with different opinions where the mind is affected. In that sense, the question of who is virtuous comes into existence. The dilemma is the one, who shows a desire to take revenge, will prove to be the one swaying away from reason. The one who sways away from reason taken over by violent emotions, which indicate unhealthy state of mind is, in this case Titus. If civilisation is characterised by reason it should not be difficult to see Titus' metamorphosis.

According to Deborah Willis, revenge "is a nearly irresistible response, yet it also a source of escalating violence and new wrongs."<sup>8</sup>(Willis, 23). If there is an immoral act

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<sup>8</sup> See Willis, Deborah. "The Gnawing Vulture": Revenge, Trauma Theory, and "Titus Andronicus". *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol.53, No.1 (Spring, 2002), p.21-52

committed by an individual as in the case of Titus when killing Tamora's son, there should be a response given to the deed committed as seen in Tamora when she harms Lavinia. However, the wrongs can also bring out more severe wrongs, as it does in the play when Titus kills his son at the beginning of the play, and his daughter at the end of the play. The most important of all Titus makes Tamora eat her sons baked in a pie. There are three key events which leads to revenge and show how severe violence can come into existence: The sacrifice of Alarbus, The rape of Lavinia and The killing of Titus' sons, Chiron and Demetrius.

The sacrifice of Alarbus is the first wrong which causes revenge. After losing many sons in the war, Titus decides to sacrifice a human for the funeral. Under the suggestion of Lucius, one of Titus's three living sons, Titus chooses the eldest son of Tamora, Alarbus. At this stage, Tamora begs for the life of her son as she asserts:

Stay, Roman brethren! Gracious conqueror,  
Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed,  
A mother's tears in passion for her sons;  
And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,  
Oh, think my son to be as dear to me! (1.1.104-108).

Tamora appears to have a more traditional female role in the first act of the play as Judith M. Karr mentions, "Tamora, (is) a Roman captive, kneels, weeps, and begs Titus to spare her son"(Karr,1). At the start of her speech she "kneels" (1.1.103), and she stays kneeling to the very end of her speech; she weeps when she declares "Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed, / A mother's tears in passion for her son" (1.1.105-6), and she pleads to Titus to "spare my (her) firstborn son" (1.1.120). Tamora reminds Titus of a mother's love for her son and she suggests that "Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge" (1.1.119). Tamora's words reflect her weakness and powerlessness against Titus when she is about to lose her son. However, a very important part of her beginning becomes a very important part of the play, that mercy is noble and civilized notion. Titus in his lust for resorting his and his lost sons'

honour disregards all civility. Tamora is left powerless as she cannot prevent Titus from sacrificing her son; therefore, the only chance left for her is to utilize her weakness and her victimhood. In return to a response for a mother's begging, Titus does not sympathize with Tamora and cruelly says that "To this your son is marked, and die he must/ To appease their groaning shadows are gone." (1.1.125-6). This can be seen as the beginning of revenge spree that develops throughout the play. In return for this wrong, Tamora's weakness and powerlessness shifts, thanks to Titus, in the first act of the play to a woman who adopts absolute power, and tries to seek revenge in different ways. From grief over the death of a son, Tamora's feelings shift to her own sense of shame, because her son is slaughtered in front of society. She is humiliated and her honour has been destroyed. Tamora has already lost her son and her son being slaughtered in front of society gives her a cause to show her anger through a desire of revenge. Tamora's humiliation is "rendering the offense to her honour more acute, deepening her narcissistic wound" (Karr, 37). Tamora demonstrates her intentions and her intense desire to take revenge in Act 1:

I'll find a day to massacre them all,  
And raze their faction and their family,  
The cruel father and his traitorous sons  
To whom I sued for my dear son's life,  
And make them know what 'tis to let a queen  
Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain (1.1.451-6).

Consequently, her son being killed brings damage, which injures her identity as a queen and mother. Even if she feels that she is strong being queen, she is actually a mother. The loss of her son causes her to find a way to take revenge by exploiting the similar methods used by Titus. The second revenge then follows when the sons of Tamora rape Lavinia in the forest and cut off her hands and tongue. In this scene Tamora uses her power of persuasion where she is capable of influencing others around her to believe what she says. This is demonstrated when she lies to Chiron and

Demetrius telling them that in the forest Bassianus and Lavinia planned for Tamora's "miserable death"(1.3.108). She does not give her sons any chance to suspect her relationship with Aaron when she adds "And then they called me foul adulteress, Lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms/ that ever ear did hear to such effect" (2.3.109-11). Tamora, after all her lies, instructs her sons to "Revenge it, as you love your mother's life" (2.3.114). Not only does Tamora instruct her sons to kill Bassianus and rape Lavinia, but she threatens them by stating that if they do not do as she requests "Or be ye not henceforth called my children" (2.3.115). Without feeling any pain for the innocent Lavinia, Tamora's address to the girl emphasizes her overwhelming desire for evil as her revenge against Titus:

Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,  
Even for his sake am I pitiless.  
Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain  
To save your brother from the sacrifice,  
But fierce Andronicus would not relent.  
Therefore away with her and use her as you will--  
The worse to her, the better loved of me (2.3.161-7).

The victimization of Lavinia and her silence show how there are bloody ways of revenge. Lavinia takes the position of Alarbus in a way, because they are the ones, who are used as objects in revenge. Both Titus and Tamora try to relieve themselves through evil acts because they believe it will ease their own pain for the loss of their family members. In order to give a response, they choose the brutal way of revenge which is a kind of protection of their honour. Revenge becomes their ambition as they kill family members willingly, and continues throughout the play to show their desire for evil. However, one difference in Tamora and Titus is in their way of revenge. On the basis of this, one similar aspect is also reflected which is both Tamora and Titus share the experience of loss and disgrace. It is a kind of war where both Tamora and Titus have injured parts, and need to be healed.



Through the rape of Lavinia, Titus tries to find a healing method in order to reduce the pain of his raped daughter. For this reason, Titus' honour becomes damaged when he feels loss and grief; therefore, he needs to protect his honour. This is the reason why, Lavinia is victimized into silence, now, it is Titus' turn for revenge. Titus' desire for revenge against the sons of Tamora is expressed in his speech:

You know your mother means to feast with me,  
And calls herself Revenge, and thinks me mad.  
Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,  
And with your blood and I will make a paste,  
And of the paste a coffin I will rear,  
And make two pasties of your shameful heads (5.2. 184-9).

Titus shows his male lust for vengeance when he learns that Tamora's sons' raped Lavinia. The revealing of the rapists impels Titus to plan his revenge and get his own back at Tamora. He does this by means of the same procedure done to his dear daughter "ensuring that his victims will not be able to speak he tells them at length and in detail of their impending fate" (Willis, 48). This is seen when he commands Chiron and Demetrius to close their mouths (5.2.164). Titus ensures that Chiron and Demetrius suffer as Lavinia suffers. He plans a feast where Tamora's sons' bones will be transferred into dust (5.2.189) and invites her to eat "two pasties of her sons shameful heads" (5.2.189) baked into a pie. Willis highlights that Tamora's sons will be forced back into her stomach, which signifies that "she will swallow her own increase" (5.2.191). Tamora will eat the flesh that she has given birth to, and as Willis puts it "her (Tamora's) stomach will become their (Chiron and Demetrius) graves" (Willis, 49). By doing this, Titus reflects the anguish and pain of his daughter where Tamora devours her sons through vengeance. Louise Noble argues that the relationship between the action of killing somebody in such a violent way is the act of cannibalism. According to her, "Cannibalism is a term used to demarcate cultural boundaries and sharply discriminate between 'civilized' and 'barbaric' modes of

behaviour.”<sup>9</sup> (Noble, 678). She tries to make a difference between “civilized” and “barbaric” behaviours, and brings to attention the concept of cannibalism. In this sense Titus’ way of revenge is considered as barbaric rather than civilized when Titus’ declares:

Why, there they are, both baked in this pie,  
Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,  
Eating the flesh hat she herself hath bred.  
Tis true, ‘tis true; witness my knife’s sharp point (5. 3. 60-2).

The tragedy of *Titus Andronicus* portrays how revenge reproduces revenge in the light of loss and feeling of grief. It leads Titus to be in the state of madness that he kills the sons of Tamora violently. In each side of revenge, there is murder and violence, which derive from the feeling of pain and brings out their evilness as the main concept in the play.

The aspect of the Christian religion can also be analyzed through the play where both characters go against the Christian religion as they do the complete opposite of what the Bible provides. The actions of Tamora and Titus show the ambivalent approach to revenge. According to the Bible, “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”<sup>10</sup>(Leviticus 19:18), the Bible claims to choose love instead of revenge. In Proverbs, kindness is emphasized as “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.”<sup>11</sup>(Proverbs 25:21-22). In another command, it says that: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute

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<sup>9</sup> Noble, Louise. “‘And make two pasties of your shameful heads’: Medicinal Cannibalism and Healing the Body Politic in ‘Titus Andronicus’ “. *ELH*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Fall, 2003), p.677-708

<sup>10</sup> See The Bible, *Revenge*. Leviticus 19:18.  
<http://www.bibletopics.com/Revenge.html>, 20<sup>th</sup> of January, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> See Bible, Proverbs 25:21-22.

you” (Matthew 5:44)<sup>12</sup>. It is suggested to leave revenge to God rather than being carried out by the individual. Moreover, the Bible also asserts that:

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain (Matthew 5:38-41).

As can be seen in these sacred lines, the emphasis is on being kind and resisting revenge in any circumstance, and leaving punishment in God’s hands. At the core of revenge, there is a lust for anger seen in Tamora and Titus which one needs to satisfy in order to ease their pains. The Bible refers to anger as one of the seven deadly sins. Additionally, in the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments refers to be virtuous and to be good human beings avoiding themselves from bad behaviours. The Bible rejects the idea of being a bad person, and suggests being a good person in life. As mentioned before, revenge has effects over the personality by damaging self. Revenge becomes a circulation between Tamora and Titus. The anger that Titus and Tamora have is the opposite side of a personality when compared to the Bible.

*Titus Andronicus* highlights that women can also be associated with revenge as seen in Tamora. In the male dominated world women are usually victimized through the act of revenge. Even if the male dominant world is discussed, there is an opposite issue that Tamora and Titus act in the same way despite their genders. Revenge, which is causing Tamora and Titus to bring murder in wild ways, makes no difference between genders. As in the case for Tamora she may show her weakness in the first act of the play when her son is about to get killed but one needs to consider that she is a Goth and therefore, is barbarous and sensual. Tamora is a woman of power and she challenges the patriarchy with violence and lust. She exploits vengeance to the very end of the play and by doing this “she combines the attributed of the warrior woman-

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<sup>12</sup> See Bible, Matthew 5:44.

masculine prowess, military skill and male authority with sexual promiscuity” (Loomba, 802). Therefore, Tamora becomes a representative of Lavinia’s destruction because Lavinia adopts more feminine qualities when compared to Tamora. Lavinia is helpless and passive as her rape makes her become impure to live. Whereas, Tamora adopts more masculine qualities as she battles until she fulfils her role as a brutal woman. It is clearly seen that gender is not very important when it comes to violence because such events as killing family members can cause one to commit the same wrong done and can become vice versa. That is to say, Tamora and Titus behave through their instincts, because they become blinded to themselves and even forget who they are. For Titus he is more evil than Tamora because he goes beyond the levels of revenge to a hateful cannibal. Hence, the real source of evil lies in the civilized Titus, and not in the uncivilized Tamora. At the end of the play, Titus shows how he plans for revenge in a wild conscious:

Good Lord, how like the Empress’ sons they are,  
And you the Empress! But we worldly men  
Have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes.  
O sweet Revenge, now do I come to thee,  
And if one arm’s embracement will content thee,  
I will embrace thee in it by and by. (5.2.64-9)

Here, it is understood that roles always change in this play, if Titus first tries to take revenge, Tamora feels pain, and then if Tamora tries to give response to the wrongs, Titus feels pain and there is a never-ending circle. As in the article, it says that “We know Titus, and sometimes Titus even knows himself, by his mirror image in Tamora.”<sup>13</sup>(Green, 320). There is substitution of roles that Tamora becomes the reflection of Titus, and Titus becomes the reflection of Tamora and they affect each other. Additionally, according to Judith M. Karr, “Positions are indeed reversed, as the

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<sup>13</sup> See Green, Douglas E.. “Interpreting ‘Her Martyr'd Signs’: Gender and Tragedy in Titus Andronicus”. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol . 40, No. 3 (Autumn, 1989), p. 317-326

formerly powerful general is reduced to a position similar to Tamora's in the first plea. Like Tamora, Titus weeps and beseeches these men in authority to take pity on a father's pain and to spare his sons."<sup>14</sup> (Karr, 279). He emphasizes the reversion of positions between Tamora and Titus. Both take the position of each other and protect their children from the violence of bloody desires. They are accepted in the same position when they are in desire of taking revenge. They reduce their high position, like being queen and a general and become the victims of their own desire.

There are some similarities and differences between Tamora and Titus in terms of aims and ways of revenge. Both fight for justice, but according to Daborah Willis, Titus "does not kill innocent members of Tamora's family."<sup>15</sup> (Willis, 50). So, whose revenge is more just? Titus kills the ones, who raped his daughter, while Tamora desires to damage Lavinia, who is the innocent one. On the other hand, there exists an opposite view when it is said that Titus does not kill 'innocent members'. Alarbus is also fairly innocent, too, when he is sacrificed in the beginning of the play by the suggestion of Lucius. Although, Tamora takes part in the scene where Lavinia is mutilated Titus responds in the similar way, and this time murders his own daughter by referring to the myth of Virginius (Gilo Aloni). Titus asks questions telling the Emperor if the cause of Virginius's death was because she was "enforced, stained, and deflowered", in which he implies the reference to Lavinia. He then continues his last speech before he kills her by saying "Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, / And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die!"(5.3.46-7). Titus' actions and last words before Lavinia's death are addressed to himself. This is because it is his grief, shame

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<sup>14</sup>See Karr, M Judith. "The Pleas in Titus Andronicus". *Shakespeare Quarterly*.14:3. (1963), 278-279.

<sup>15</sup> See Willis, Deborah. "The Gnawing Vulture": Revenge, Trauma Theory, and "Titus Andronicus". *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol.53, No.1 (Spring, 2002), p.21-52

and powerlessness which he lacks in returning his daughter's chastity. As a result, Titus becomes powerless because he is aware that Lavinia will carry the shame with her for the rest of her life. The only choice left for him is to conceal his shame by taking his "priority over Lavinia's life" (Willis, 49) and leaves her to suffer an innocent death. For this reason, the never ending cycle of revenge is not ethical for both sides; because Lavinia, Chiron, Demetrius and Alarbus are used as objects for the satisfaction of revenge or for their own honour.

This dramatic structure of the play demonstrates how evil acts reproduce more revenge. Evilness becomes an obsession for revenge as seen in Titus and Tamora. For this reason, revenge causes both Tamora and Titus to reveal changes in their personalities. In the sense of personal identity, they lose their goodness, and they become the victims of vengeance. They sacrifice themselves to the strong desire of revenge, and they both use their children as objects. By this, it is possible to comprehend to both Tamora's and Titus's worth of living life. This is because both Tamora and Titus's choose to live their life in total darkness especially, when they use their children as objects to satisfy their lust for revenge. One can say that both Tamora and Titus choose to live life in profane ways. Both fail to live a moral life as they become loss in the acts of evilness. On the other hand, Tamora and Titus succeed in one thing, and that is their eagerness for evil. Their intention is vigilant from the very beginning of the play, and it develops to more extreme levels of violence. For this reason, one can say that, the process of evilness and revenge become hand in hand throughout the play. Simultaneously, evilness and revenge become the way of living for Tamora and Titus as seen in the darkness they cast against each other in the bloodiest ways.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

The main aim of this thesis is to reveal how evil is not a natural outcome of being the other. Nobody can be responsible for things human beings purposely choose to do to each other. If one chooses to act in evil ways to others, then it is also up to one to face certain consequences, either at the time of the deed or after the deed. This means that while one is in the process of demolishing one's rival one also has the ability to destroy oneself as in the case of Iago in *Othello, the Moor of Venice* and Prospero in *The Tempest*. Some such characters in Shakespeare not only destroy themselves, but also have the ability to destroy their own family members and the other's family members as seen in the case of Titus and Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* and Iago, Emilia, Othello and Desdemona in *Othello, the Moor of Venice*. In other words, the evil acts of one can lead to the downfall of the desired victims, and can even bring harm to oneself. For this reason, evil as seen in Shakespeare's characters Iago, Titus, Tamora and Prospero do not belong to a particular religion, ethnic or cultural group. Whether the individual is a Catholic, Protestant, English, Roman, Moorish or Goth evil lies within the individual. The evil in the antagonist Iago, the protagonist Titus, and Prospero are associated with evil thoughts and actions such as murders, wickedness, deceit and desire for power. They are all elements of evil acts which come from within, and defiles the individual. These are elements that often deal with the reality of individuals who have problems with themselves. So, then what are the problems that make the characters Iago, Prospero and Titus resort to evil? For

Prospero it is his failure to rule Milan, as a result of which he tries to keep at all costs his power on the unknown Island. For Iago it is his inability to accept the fact that Othello, a Moor is a highly-respected general in the Venetian society. In the case of Titus, who has already won a war against the Goths, it is an error in judgment, which is killing an innocent person, the son of Tamora, the queen of the Goths. By means of this, the only evil that exists in the characters of Iago, Prospero and Titus are the ones they create for themselves. Edward Said in his work *Orientalism* identifies differences of what the West think about the Orient (the people from the East). Said who is a Palestinian himself also identifies many assumptions about what the West thinks about Arabs. Such examples are seen when Said asserts that “they (Arabs) are irrational, anti-Western, menacing and dishonest” (Edward Said, 35). Said continues to explain that these assumptions about the East are constructed in oppositions of what the West thinks about itself, and therefore defines this projected image of Arabs in the mind of Westerners as the other (Edward Said, 35). For this reason, it is important to refer to what Peter Barry says about, “Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) which is a specific exposition of the Eurocentric universalism which takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western, and the inferiority of what is not”(Barry,192). That is to say, the Europeans or the Westerners see themselves superior to the other who belong to another race, religion or cultural group. Hence, Barry asserts “the East becomes the repository or projection of those aspects of themselves which Westerners do not choose to acknowledge (cruelty, sensuality, decadence, laziness, and so on)” (Barry, 192). In this sense, the self who are Iago, Titus and Prospero identifies the other with negative characteristics such as being barbarous, sensual as seen in Tamora, a savage as seen in Caliban and a Moor as seen in Othello, which are all opposites of the self. Shakespeare’s characters Iago, Titus, and Prospero who are the real evil doers overcome their problems through their desire for evil. Moreover, evil acts that are



committed by an individual are associated with freewill. That is to say, an individual is truly free in making certain decisions in society. However, each individual's actions can only be accepted if they are considered to be morally significant, which applies to Iago, Prospero and Titus who are representations of the self. In other words, an individual has no choice but to act in certain ways. If an individual goes against the moral way of life as seen in Iago, Titus, and Prospero then they are responsible for what happens to themselves, and to the people they desire to demolish. Therefore, Shakespeare in his plays mirrors that evil does not stem from religion, ethnicity or culture of the other but lies within the human heart. According to, Collier good and evil functioned on levels of perpetual struggle. That is to say, evil is the opposite of good such as being well-behaved, victorious and dutiful which are all characteristics that should be seen in Iago, Prospero and Titus because they are the representatives of the self. However, all three characters Iago, Prospero and Titus ignore the characteristics that should belong to them and that they had previously shown. This is because they are so into destroying the characters Tamora, Caliban and Othello that they become the opposite of themselves. In others words, they become the evil "other" rather than the "self", because they associate themselves with characteristics that belong to the other, which should not belong to them. The fundamental nature of life is to be good, "evil is merely the faculty of reflection found in a world of particulars" (Funk and Wagnall). Basically, evil is everything what good is not, to be more precise it is the absence of any good.

On the basis of this according to Funk and Wagnall there exist two different types of evil. The first type of evil is moral evil and the second type is natural evil. Natural evil is the one that is seen in Shakespeare's characters Iago, Prospero and Titus. Moral evil consists of an individual making wrong decisions. On the other hand, natural evil is the one which comes from within the heart. The results of natural evil include

feelings such as pain and suffering as seen in Titus to Tamora, Prospero to Caliban and Iago to Othello. The main differences between the two are moral evil is controllable but natural evil is uncontrollable. The only problem with moral evil is that the individual may not be aware of the result. Therefore, the individual may not know whether their choices can lead to positive results or negative ones. However, natural evil is uncontrollable and can lead to severe wrongs. That is to say, the individual is conscious when making certain decisions and can expect adverse results. The guiding principles of understanding natural evil are mirrored in Iago, Prospero and Titus. All of these three characters entirely understand the consequences of their actions, and neither care about the destruction of others lives or family members. However, the methods of natural evil are exploited in different ways. In *Othello, the Moor of Venice*, Iago seeks the destruction of Othello because he is jealous, and attains it by remaining honest. Iago invents lies and manipulates the characters as he wants in order to harm Othello. Yet, Iago does not care for anyone and is rather interested in his revenge. Iago uses Othello's otherness as a cause to give him the right to corrupt him. As seen at the end of the play Othello is corrupted as he murders Desdemona and then himself. Therefore, when Othello murders his wife he immediately falls from a highly-respected general to a heartless man. Whilst, Iago who is actually the real villain is left with pleasures of his achievements for a short moment before he dies. It is then possible to say that, the actual wickedness does not lie in Othello or his race because the result of Othello's actions is generated by Iago's imagination. In contrast to the innocent Othello and Desdemona the real evil lies in the Christian Venetian Iago. He pretends to be the good, devoted and "honest" person. However, as the play develops he turns out to be the complete opposite. In *The Tempest*, Prospero is motivated by his magical powers and uses them against the people he wants to tame. Prospero's evil behaviour consists of revenge, power, and personal desire which are all characteristics

that come from the self. Prospero destroys his brother Antonio because he has usurped and wrecked him as Duke of Milan. The second example reflects Prospero's power because he tortures Caliban "a savage", Trinculo "a jester" and Stephno, "a drunken butler". The third cruel behaviour is an example of personal desire. Prospero has the ability to manipulate characters in order to satisfy his lust of making people suffer. This is seen when Prospero interferes in Ferdinand, the son of the King of Naples and his daughter Miranda's relationship. In *The Tempest* Prospero sees himself superior in relation to the other characters. He wants to remain and protect his power so he becomes heartless, selfish and wicked. In *Titus Andronicus*, the characters Titus and Tamora are in a never-ending cycle of revenge. They kill each other's children without feeling any pain or sorrow. This never-ending cycle of revenge continues throughout the play, and breeds more revenge in order to justify ones honour.

In conclusion, the three plays reflect the idea that everyone has a dark side to them. The main difference is whether or not an individual decides to act upon these impulses of evil. Edward Said claims that the West had many problems in associating with the Orient. In Said's *Orientalism* the West was constructed in opposition to what the West thinks of the East. This is the reason why the West projects an image of the Orient as the other (Edward Said, 37). In relation to this, Said explores the process of constructing binary opposites by uncovering the values that cause these opposites to come into existence (Edward Said, 37). Above all, Said depicts the process of explaining binary oppositions of how the Westerners see themselves different to the other. Such, binary oppositions include black, white, civilized, barbaric, liberated, repressed, educated and ignorant, which are all oppositions that are reflected in the plays. Whoever is defining the self then regards the other as evil. Therefore, if Rome is a representation of a civilized self then Titus also becomes the civilized self, if Iago is Othello's ancient in the Venetian society he also becomes a civilized self, and if

Prospero is the right Duke of Milan then he also becomes a representation of a civilized self. Whereas, Tamora being a Goth and heathen barbarian, Caliban being a savage and Othello being a Moor would normally be expected to reflect evil in the eyes of the self. However, Titus, Iago and Prospero are the ones that are evil and become uncivilized, barbaric and ignorant. For this reason, all three characters become a mirror reflection of the other. According to Said's *Orientalism* the white regarded the other as inferior as seen in *The Tempest*, *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice* and *Titus Andronicus*. Shakespeare more or less demonstrates what Said centuries later tried to do in his work *Orientalism*. That is to say, Shakespeare's plays reflect Elizabethan society by mirroring the problems Said recognized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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