



EXERCISE: JEALOUSY AND MANIPULATION

2 classes: approx. 120 minutes

OBJECTIVE: Students will critically analyse and make insightful connections between two central themes in the play: jealousy and manipulation and how they are related to power structures.

INSTRUCTIONS: Students will explore the text of Act 3, scene 3 together, starting with what they know and understand to be the key issues. Then students will closely examine the interconnectivity of power, hypocrisy and racism.

RESOURCES: Act 3, scene 3 script copies*, pens, pencils, notebooks
Using PerformancePlus
Othello: Act 3, scene 3 film video; *PDF script; Learning Activities video on Jealousy and Manipulation; Artistic Insights videos

INTRODUCTION

1. Begin with some discussion before exploring the scene together and have the students consider these questions either by responding with their own writing or by discussing with a partner or small group.
 - What is “the green-eyed monster”?
 - What triggers jealousy among people? What triggers jealousy among close friends?
 - Is it normal to be jealous? Why or why not?
 - How do people typically behave when they feel jealous?
 - What makes people susceptible to manipulation?¹

¹ **MANIPULATION:** a type of skillful influence or control that aims to change the behaviour or perception of others through indirect or deceptive tactics.

- How do dangerous people ascend to power?

EXPLORING THE SCENE

2. Now look at the play. Take some time to watch the scene. Remember, the students can read the text on screen while the scene plays out.
3. Next, have the students, working either independently or with a partner, make note of the following:
 - What is Iago's goal in this scene?
 - What tactics does he employ to plant the seeds of doubt in Othello?
 - What key words or phrases stood out for you while watching the scene?
 - At what point in the scene did you think that Othello became jealous? Was there a pivotal moment?
 - Why do you think Othello decides to promote Cassio over Iago?
 - How does Cassio's promotion expose Iago's racism² toward Othello? Consider what happens in Act 1, scene 3, and identify which other moments and characters' actions in the play prove that Iago's racism is a reflection of the shared values of his society.
 - Do you think Iago's jealousy and resentment are justified? Why or why not?

SUPPORTING OTHELLO

4. Have the students, working in groups of three, take some time to watch and/or read through the scene between Othello and Iago – but this time they are to imagine there is a third person present who is wise to Iago's plan and acts as a true friend and ally to Othello. They are to imagine this friend is beside Othello whispering in his ear as Iago speaks. This friend is trying to steer Othello away from jealousy. In writing what this friend might say, students should consider the following:
 - At what points does Othello most need to hear a different perspective?

² **RACISM:** prejudice, discrimination or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

- Recall the tactics you identified that Iago used to plant the seeds of doubt in Othello. What tactics might be used to prevent or supersede those?
 - What qualities in Cassio, Desdemona and Othello himself can you remind Othello of to help him remain confident in himself and his relationship?
5. After writing and reading through their newly imagined scenes, have the students perform their work for their classmates.

DEBRIEF

6. After sharing some of the work the students have created, use the following questions to debrief them, either by having them write independently or by discussing as a class:
- Which of the strategies Iago used to play upon Othello's mind were the most insidious? Why?
 - Why do you think Othello trusted Iago more than Desdemona? Why didn't Othello speak directly to Desdemona about what Iago said? What does it suggest about the world today that, even in a modern setting of this play, the characters don't behave differently?
 - Why was Iago able to convince Othello so easily?
 - If you were one of the other characters in the play, do you think you would have been able to see through Iago and foil his hateful actions? Why or why not?
 - How does having power threatened or revoked expose people's hypocrisy? Can you point to examples in the world today?