Grade 12

Othello Questions

Act one

ACT 1 SCENE 1

LOOKING AT THE TEXT

Answer the following questions on the dialogue between Iago and Roderigo in lines 21-67

1. In line 30, Iago mentions that he was *leed* and *calmed*. What does he mean by this metaphor? From what field does he draw his image? (4)
2. How many times does Iago refer to Othello as the Moor? Why does he do this? (4)
3. In line 42, Iago states *I follow him to serve my turn upon him*. What does Iago intend to do, and what does this statement show about him? (2)
4. Summarise what Iago says in the speech that follows in lines 43-65. (3)
5. Show how *I am not what I am* connects with the appearance/reality theme. (4)
6. In line 66, what does Roderigo’s comment about Othello’s *thick lips* show in terms of the play’s themes? (3)

(20)

ACT 1 SCENE 2

CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS

Read lines 59-82 in which Brabantio attacks Othello and tries to arrest him. Then answer the following questions:

1. Othello uses a wonderful metaphor in the confrontation. *Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them means* that the sword should be sheathed before blood or dew rusts them. What does Othello’s handling of the situation in this manner show about him? (3)
2. Brabantio says Othello is a thief. How does the word *stowed* support the image? (2)
3. How, according to Brabantio, has Othello managed to get Desdemona to agree to the marriage? Look at the speech as a whole. (2)
4. Is Desdemona in favour of their marriage? Give a reason for your answer. (2)

5.1. How does Brabantio show racial prejudice towards Othello? In your answer include the two offensive images Brabantio uses. (4) 5.2. Brabantio clearly distrusts Othello on the grounds of his race. But how does his attitude refer to wider views held by Elizabethan society? (2) 6. When Brabantio accuses Othello of being an abuser of the world, he is being illogical. Do you agree? (3) 7.What do both sides do when Brabantio says Subdue him at his peril? (2)

 (20) Act 1 scene 3

Questions

Looking at the text:

In lines 202-225, the Duke uses cliché’s (stale and tired ideas) in his advice to Brabantio. These are in the form of rhyming couplets.

1. Why does the Duke use this form of communication?
2. For each pair, try to find a modern idiom that fits the sense of what is said.
3. How does Brabantio cynically answer the Duke?
4. Do you think that the Duke has appreciation for Brabantio’s grief?

Looking at the text

Identify each of the following quotations in terms of:

1. The speaker
2. The context
3. The implications of what is said.
4. I follow him to serve my turn upon him. (3)
5. I am not what I am. (3)
6. O heaven? How got she out? O treason of the blood. (3)
7. For if such actions may have passage free, Bond slaves and pagans shall our statesman be. (3)
8. ‘twas pitiful, ‘twas wondrous pitiful. (3)
9. I do perceive here a divided duty. (3)
10. A man of honesty and trust. (3)

(24)