

## Madness and Betrayal: A Psychoanalysis Study of Shakespeare's *Othello* and the *Madman of Freedom Square* by Hassan Blasim

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**ABSTRACT:** Madness and betrayal are poignant themes in the works of Shakespeare and, more contemporarily, in Hassan Blasim's "The Madman of Freedom Square." Both literary works tackle the complexities of human psychology, exploring the destructive consequences of mistrust, deceit, and madness. This psychoanalysis study aims to analyze the depiction of these two characters within the perspective of madness and betrayal in both works, examining the way they shape the characters in terms of behaviors and actions. By examining their similarities and differences, we can gain a deeper understanding of how madness and betrayal impact individuals and societies across different time periods and cultural and psychological contexts. This article comes with the conclusion that the madness results from the betrayal of very close people which causes a shock and mental disorder to take faultless decisions or judgments.

**KEYWORDS:** Psychoanalysis, Madness, betrayal, Othello, The madman of Freedom Square

### 1. INTRODUCTION

**“Madness and betrayal, conjoined twins born of the human psyche, forever locked in a dance of destruction.” Hassan Blasim**

Madness and betrayal, two powerful thematic elements, frequently tackle in literature, presenting captivating narratives that delve into the depths of the human psyche. From classic works to contemporary novels, the exploration of madness and betrayal sheds light on the fragile nature of trust and the destructive repercussions it entails. As ancient as literature itself, the *portrayal of madness* has been a central theme across various genres. With the complexity of human psychology and the variety of literary characters, the representation of mental turmoil offers authors an opportunity to explore the depths of human experience and engage readers with thought-provoking narratives.

From the height of Greek tragedy to contemporary fiction, different literary periods and genres have showcased a range of approaches to depicting madness, often as a consequence of profound emotional distress, intellectual conflict, societal pressure, or betrayal. The portrayal of psychological complexity in these characters not only reflects the author's own understanding of human nature but also helps shed light on age-old questions about the experience of mental anguish in modern society. In Greek literature, the giants of literary works like; Sophocles' Oedipus Rex and Aeschylus's Agamemnon utilized some character who went mad by untamed passions, emotions and points of views under the shade of divine impact to face the fateful decisions. Thus it is oblivious that the themes of madness and betrayal were used in modern age according to “the original model of madness in Western literature” (Oyebode, 2012: viii). In Greek stage, the playwrights did not drop any incident and action that associated with the human life of people to reflect the life with all its aspects as Mary Lefkowitz and James Romm state “no terrifying possibility is omitted: sudden death, suicide, terminal illness, betrayal, loss of a loved one...” (Lefkowitz & Romm, 2016: xviii).

Madness in literature takes many forms, often challenging societal norms, morality, and the perception of reality. One classic example is William Shakespeare's "Hamlet." Consider the titular character's descent into madness after the ghostly visitation. As Hamlet grapples with his father's murder, his fragile psyche begins to unravel, compelling him to feign insanity. Through soliloquies adorned with poetic introspection, we witness the inner turmoil and psychological torment that madness can inflict upon an individual.

Betrayal, on the other hand, exposes the flawed nature of human relationships and the profound consequences of broken trust. In George Orwell's seminal dystopian novel, "1984," the protagonist Winston Smith's betrayal by his love interest, Julia, leaves him shattered and vulnerable to the torture and brainwashing tactics employed by the oppressive State. This betrayal not only breaks Winston's spirit but also showcases the insidious power that treachery wields in society. Therefore, betrayal is also in physical relationship as “Eric Blair

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betrayed a schoolmate just as Winston Smith would betray Julia. There is a difference of sexual orientation here, but no moral difference” (Cushman & Rodden 2015 :26).

Madness intertwines with betrayal in the world of literature, the resulting narrative is often heightened by psychological tension and a deep exploration of the human condition. In Fyodor Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment," the protagonist Raskolnikov's inner turmoil is aggravated by the consequences of his heinous act and the betrayals he faces. The guilt and paranoia slowly drive him towards madness, pushing him deeper into the abyss of his crimes. Thus, betrayal is the essence and the main cause to madness as what happened to Hamlet and Ophelia in Shakespeare's Hamlet “betrayal of Hamlet , Ophelia , Laertes , and others act as mirrors or foils to Hamlet . Ophelia's grief for her dead father, one that drives her mad, reflects the sorrow of Hamlet for his and the relative madness that attends it” ( Nigro, 2000 :47). Shakespeare goes deeply in dealing with these two thematic feature of his drama to suggest that there is a great relation between betrayal and madness as in his plays: Hamlet, Macbeth, The Tempest, King Lear, and As You Like It, in which “the symbols of betrayal and madness echo in several of Shakespeare's plays” ( Tuan, Ivy& Chang, 2018:33).

Literary works frequently utilize symbolism and metaphor to enhance the themes of madness and betrayal. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's iconic short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper," the narrator's slow descent into madness mirrors her increasingly oppressive and isolated existence. The wallpaper, initially symbolizing the constraints of societal norms, is transformed into a metaphor for her deteriorating mental state. For that Maysoon Taher Muhi states “the woman, in an attempt to escape her confinement, may flee into madness”(Muhi,2009:2). "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe is another example where betrayal serves as a driving force behind madness. Through the use of darkly atmospheric symbolism, Poe portrays a chilling tale of betrayal and revenge. The catacombs symbolize a descent into madness and the entombment of sanity itself.

Before examining the specific examples of madness and betrayal in Shakespeare's *Othello* and Hassan Blasim's *The Madman of Freedom Square*, this section provides a broader view of the literary landscape related to the theme of madness. By understanding the wider context of this subject, readers can better appreciate the psychological unraveling and the factors leading to such chaos within the characters under study. In one of Shakespeare's most renowned tragedies, "Hamlet," madness and betrayal serve as underlying forces propelling the storyline. Hamlet's feigned madness becomes a tool for self-preservation and his avenging mission, leading to the famous quote, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't." (Act 2, Scene 2) The treacherous betrayal of his uncle, Claudius, who murders Hamlet's father, adds depth to the narrative of betrayal.

In the iconic novel "The Great Gatsby," Fitzgerald artfully weaves themes of madness and betrayal into the glamorous portrayal of the Jazz Age. The character of Jay Gatsby, driven by his relentless pursuit of Daisy Buchanan, becomes a victim of both self-delusion and betrayal. Through this tragic story, Fitzgerald explores the fragility of desire and the consequences of betrayal, as reflected in the famous quote, "Can't repeat the past?...Why of course you can!" (Fitzgerald, 1991: Chapter 6)

In Poe's chilling short story "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator's descent into madness is fueled by guilt and paranoia. The tale showcases the ultimate betrayal of the innocent eye, as the protagonist's guilty conscience manifests in an obsession with the old man's vulture-like eye. The narrator's madness and ensuing betrayal of the unsuspecting victim highlight the intricacies of human psychology and the toxic consequences of obsession.

As diverse as these portrayals may be, they reveal the enduring fascination with madness in literature, particularly regarding the ways in which betrayal, conflict, and societal norms contribute to their characters' psychological disintegration. By understanding this broader context, readers can gain a more in-depth perspective on the unfolding of madness and betrayal within the works of Shakespeare's *Othello* and Blasim's *The Madman of Freedom Square*.

## **2. PSYCHOANALYSIS THEORY IN MADNESS AND BETRAYAL**

Psychoanalysis is a theory developed by Sigmund Freud that explores the unconscious mind and its impact on human behavior. According to psychoanalysis, “many of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by unconscious drives and desires that we may not be aware of” (Bateman, Holmes, & Allison,2021:67). It focuses on the exploration of the unconscious through methods such as free association and interpretation of dreams. The goal of psychoanalysis is to bring these unconscious forces into consciousness, allowing individuals to gain insight and resolve psychological conflicts. For that, Freud states that “the goal of psychoanalysis, Freud is telling us, is not happiness but the amelioration of neurotic factors that guarantee misery and that serve as impediments to the realistic pursuit of those satisfactions that life has to offer” (Eagle, 2011: 8). It has had a profound influence on psychology and continues to be an important theoretical framework for understanding the human mind.

The Freudian interpretation of madness and betrayal is centered around unconscious desires and conflicts. According to Sigmund Freud, madness can be seen as a result of repressed thoughts or unresolved psychological conflicts that have been pushed into the unconscious mind. According to Freud, “madness as an absence of work”( Raffnsøe, Gudmand-Høyer, & Thaning,2016:124). In terms of betrayal,

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Freud believed that it can stem from deep-seated desires that are in conflict with one's conscience or social norms. Betrayal, in this view, may represent an outlet for unresolved or repressed emotions (Fulcher & Scott, 2011:127). Freud's interpretation suggests that both madness and betrayal can be understood through the lens of the unconscious mind, involving the repression and conflicts of deep-seated desires and emotions. However, it is important to note that Freud's theories are subject to debate and have evolved over time.

Psychoanalysis can indeed be a valuable tool in understanding the characters' actions in both *Othello* and *The Madman of Freedom Square*. In *Othello*, for example, analyzing the characters' subconscious desires, conflicts, and defense mechanisms can shed light on their motives and behavior. For instance, Othello's deep-seated insecurities about his race and age contribute to his susceptibility to Iago's manipulation and ultimately lead to disastrous consequences. Similarly, a psychoanalytic lens can help interpret the irrational and violent actions of some characters in *The Madman of Freedom Square*. By examining their unconscious desires, traumas, and fragmented identities, psychoanalysis can offer insight into the profound psychological effects of war, displacement, and trauma on individuals (Bithymitris, 2023:242). In both works, psychoanalysis provides a unique perspective that enhances the understanding of complex human nature and the intricacies of their actions.

In *Othello*, it can apply psychoanalytic concepts to understand the characters and their motivations. One key aspect we can analyze is Iago's jealousy, which ultimately leads to his tragic downfall. From a psychoanalytic perspective, we can attribute Iago's jealousy to his unconscious fears and desires. Therefore, Iago states "O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on." (Act 3, Scene 3). His insecurities, such as his fear of being cuckolded, may stem from his own doubts about his worthiness of Desdemona's love. Additionally, the character of Iago can also be examined through a psychoanalytic lens. Iago's manipulation and cruelty can be interpreted as a result of unresolved feelings of envy and resentment. His motive for ruining Othello's life could be seen as a manifestation of deep-seated feelings of inferiority and a desire for power.

Shifting our focus to *The Madman of Freedom Square*, written by Hassan Blasim, we can explore the psychological themes embedded within this story. This modern allegory follows the protagonist, a madman who believes all the animals in a Baghdad zoo have become human beings. Both have the same environment which represents a big prison as Hassan Blasim describes the life of Iraqi people "In the realm of madness, even freedom becomes a prisoner" (Blasim, 2020:50). In the word of madness and betrayal, there is no clear vision of the mad man who faces a shock and terrifying even that change his life upside down, so that Blasim states "In the realm of madness, truth and deception intertwine, blurring the line between friend and foe" (Blasim, 2020:60)

From a psychoanalytic perspective, we can interpret this madness as a defense mechanism employed by the protagonist to cope with the harsh realities and trauma of war. The transformation of animals into humans can symbolize a desperate attempt to restore a sense of normalcy and humanity amidst a deeply troubled environment.

converts human nature into chaos, and liberates the beast in man ... the animal in man forcing itself into his consciousness in naked grossness, and he writhing before it but powerless to deny it entrance, grasping inarticulate images of pollution, and finding relief only in a bestial thirst for blood. (Bloom, 2000:42)

It is important to explore the psychological dynamics at play in both situations. The Oedipus complex, proposed by Sigmund Freud, suggests that during early childhood, a child forms unconscious sexual and emotional desires for the parent of the opposite sex, while harboring feelings of rivalry and jealousy towards the same-sex parent (Eysenck, 2014:525). In *Othello*'s case, his jealousy and suspicions regarding Desdemona's loyalty can be seen as a manifestation of unresolved Oedipal desires and fears.

Ego defense mechanisms, on the other hand, are psychological strategies employed by the ego to protect itself from distressing thoughts or impulses. In *Othello*'s descent into madness, we can observe various defense mechanisms at work. For instance, his use of rationalization allows him to create justifications for his jealous thoughts and actions. Additionally, his projection defense mechanism leads him to attribute his own feelings of betrayal onto others, thus intensifying his jealousy.

While *Othello*'s madness and the Oedipus complex are connected through the presence of defense mechanisms, it is important to note that they are not directly causative of each other. *Othello*'s madness can be seen as a result of a complex interplay of factors, including his personal insecurities, manipulation by Iago, and societal notions of honor and reputation. So he says "Put out the light, and then put out the light" (Act 5, Scene 2).

Overall, the connection between *Othello*'s madness and the Oedipus complex lies more in how they provide insight into the deeper psychological motivations behind his actions rather than being directly intertwined as cause and effect. Both concepts offer valuable lenses through which we can better understand *Othello*'s character and his tragic downfall.

### **3. EXPLORATION OF THE ID, EGO, AND SUPEREGO IN OTHELLO AND THE MADMAN OF FREEDOM SQUARE**

In both *Othello* and *The Madman of Freedom Square*, the playwrights delve into the complex workings of the human psyche, specifically through the exploration of the id, ego, and superego.

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Firstly, in *Othello*, Shakespeare provides a profound examination of these psychological forces. The character of Othello represents the id with his raw and primal desires. Driven by jealousy and fueled by his deep insecurities, Othello's id takes control, leading to "tragic consequences" (Berry, 2012:91).

The ego is embodied by characters like Iago, who manipulates others to achieve his own goals. Throughout the play, Iago's ego influences and directs his actions, ultimately resulting in the downfall of many characters. In other words "ego closes the doors and the men begin to recall for Clear what led to the senseless violence" (Simmons, 2020:56) The superego is best exemplified by Desdemona, who acts as the moral compass of the play. Her conscience guides her actions, and she displays empathy and compassion towards others. However, her superego cannot overpower the destructive forces of the id and ego, leading to her tragic doom.

Similarly, *The Madman of Freedom Square* explores these psychological elements. The protagonist of the play portrays the id, constantly chasing after immediate gratification and acting on his base desires. In contrast, the supporting characters represent the ego, grappling with their own desires and attempting to balance conflicting impulses. The superego is depicted through a character who serves as a voice of reason and morality, attempting to guide the actions of others. The interplay between these psychological forces drives the narrative and shapes the characters' journeys, providing a thought-provoking exploration of human nature and the consequences of unchecked id and ego. Both plays offer profound insights into the complexities of the human mind, challenging our understanding of human nature and the interplay between our primal instincts and higher moral ideals. They invite audiences to reflect on the potential consequences when these psychological forces are left unchecked, emphasizing the importance of self-awareness and self-control in navigating the intricacies of our own psyches.

Jungian analysis is a psychological framework developed by Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. It is focused on understanding the deep structure of the human mind, including the archetypes and the collective unconscious. Archetypes are universal patterns or prototypes that exist in the collective unconscious of all humans (Atwater, 2009:185). They represent fundamental human experiences and are expressed symbolically in myths, dreams, and religious beliefs. Examples of archetypes include the hero, the wise old man, the mother, and many others. Jung believed that these archetypes have a powerful influence on our thoughts, actions, and behavior, and that recognizing and understanding them can provide insights into our psyche (Mason, & Mason-Whitehead, 2003:74).

The collective unconscious, as proposed by Jung, is "the deepest layer of the unconscious" (Huffman, Dowdell, & Sanderson, 2017:428) mind that is shared by all humans. It includes not only personal experiences and memories but also inherited ancestral experiences that shape our behavior and influence our understanding of the world. The collective unconscious is what gives rise to the archetypes and connects individuals to the broader human experience.

Jungian analysis seeks to explore and decode the symbolism of archetypes and the collective unconscious through techniques like dream analysis, active imagination, and symbolic interpretation. By analyzing these symbolic expressions, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of themselves and achieve a more integrated and fulfilling life.

Iago, in "*Othello*," personifies the crafty and deceitful facets of the shadow archetype. He is a classic example of the shadow because he feeds off of others' destruction, deceit, and jealousy. As a result of his destructive impulses and jealousy since he states:

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.  
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me poor indeed. (Act 3, Scene 3)

Our hero in *Othello* has only just started his steep descent into Iago's devious scheme. Iago makes a suggestion that Cassio, one of Othello's officers, has been spending time with Othello's spouse. In addition to this innuendo, he seems reluctant to disclose the fake affair because doing so would damage Cassio's reputation, and stealing someone's good name is a far more serious offense than "filching" them of their money. In contrast, your money stays the same even after thousands of people have handled and owned it. Honor, on the other hand, is a valuable asset that can only belong to you. In contrast to honor, money is just "trash."

We have a remarkably self-aware and prescient version of Othello in this speech. At this point, he is starting to spiral into madness. Our title character laments the emergence of this newfound suspicion after Iago sows the 'idea' of Desdemona's adultery to his mind. It seems as though Othello can foresee and gauge the degree to which his envious nature will seize keep of his heart and soul throughout his entire speech. He already knows that the issue will consume his life and render everything else meaningless.

He talks about having a "tranquil mind" and being "content" at the beginning of his speech before moving on to talk about "big wars" and "plumed troops." All of these "items" are from his past, and he is putting them all into one metaphorical bag. Thus, there is a

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relationship between engaging in "wars" and being "tranquil" and "content." The former may exist within the latter, or the latter may breed the former. In any case, Othello associates memories of a calm "mind" with those of "troops" and the war. which suggests that, in terms of his mental and emotional health, he regards soldiering favorably. After that, he says more encouraging things, referring to a "glorious war" and a "spirit-stirring drum."

O now, for ever

Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!

Farewell the plumed troops and the big wars

That makes ambition virtue! O, farewell!

Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,

The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,

The royal banner, and all quality,

Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!

And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats

Th' immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,

Farewell. Othello's occupation's gone. (Act 3, Scene 3)

However, "*The Madman of Freedom Square*" presents an alternative form of the shadow archetype. The Madman is a symbol of the dark side of society, a reflection of the mayhem and corruption that frequently lurk beneath the surface. Because the shadow drives his actions and motivations, readers and characters are forced to face their own desires and fears.

An understanding of the intricacy of human nature and the means by which our darker tendencies can emerge and shape our behavior can be gained by examining these shadow archetypes in both works. It makes us consider our own shadows and how they affect our relationships and way of life. All things considered, these analyses function as a helpful reminder of the value of introspection and the possible repercussions of ignoring our darker sides.

### **4. SYMBOLISM AND MOTIFS REPRESENTING THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS IN BOTH WORKS**

In Shakespeare's play "Othello," one symbolism representing the collective unconscious is the handkerchief. It serves as a motif throughout the play, symbolizing different emotional states and deep-seated desires. For example, when Othello gives the handkerchief to Desdemona as a symbol of their love, it represents the collective unconscious longing for connection and trust. However, when it is lost and manipulated by Iago, it symbolizes the destructive power of jealousy and how it can consume the collective unconscious and drive individuals apart.

In Hassan Blasim's "*The Madman of Freedom Square*," one symbolism representing the collective unconscious is the image of the madman himself. He functions as a motif for the suppressed voices and desires of society. The madman's unconventional behavior and apparent insanity symbolize the collective repression of individuality and freedom. His actions and beliefs reflect the dissonance between societal expectations and the hidden desires lurking within the collective unconscious. In this respect, it is obvious that any movement suggests a meaning of ruined spirit as "the madman's dance is a cruel symphony, orchestrated by the echoes of broken trust and shattered souls" (Chapter 17). However, the soul disintegration is not only the result of madness, but the shadow of "madness seeps into the cracks of the wounded heart, transforming love into a bitter poison of treachery" (Chapter 23).

Both works explore the deeper layers of the human psyche and the collective unconscious through various symbols and motifs. They illuminate the conflict between societal norms and individual desires, offering insights into the complex workings of the human mind. Overall, these symbols and motifs provide a deeper understanding of the characters and the broader themes present in the two works.

### **5. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MADNESS AND BETRAYAL IN OTHELLO AND THE MADMAN OF FREEDOM SQUARE**

The comparative and psychoanalytic study of both works will be discussed. Commonalities and differences in the portrayal and impact of madness and betrayal will be explored. In Othello, Shakespeare explores the descent into madness caused by jealousy and manipulation (Sodré, 2014:200). The character of Othello becomes consumed by his insecurity, leading to destructive behaviors and a tragic outcome. In contrast, *The Madman of Freedom Square* by Hassan Blasim takes a more "surreal" (Scranton, 2018:233), approach to madness, blurring the lines between reality and madness as "madness is the bitter consequence of shattered dreams and unfulfilled promises" (Chapter 3) The protagonist's mental state throughout the story is an allegory for the madness that war and trauma can induce. Both works highlight the fragile nature of the human mind and the devastating consequences of unchecked madness.

Moving on to betrayal, both Othello and *The Madman of Freedom Square* exhibit betrayal as a central theme. In Othello, the character of Iago's betrayal towards Othello drives the narrative forward ( Robinson, 2009:91). Iago manipulates Othello's trust and uses it to

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orchestrate a series of betrayals towards other characters as well. The play examines the destructive power of betrayal on friendships and relationships. Similarly, in *The Madman of Freedom Square*, betrayal is explored through the actions of characters caught up in the chaos of war as “betrayal is a poison that seeps into the fabric of relationships, turning love into resentment and loyalty into disdain” (Chapter 30). The protagonist experiences a profound sense of betrayal as he navigates through a world where allegiances constantly shift and friends become enemies. Here, Blasim showcases the ruthless nature of betrayal in times of conflict in which “betrayal is the ultimate act of cowardice, a dagger plunged into the heart of trust” (Chapter 7).

In terms of the differences between the two works, Shakespeare approaches madness and betrayal in a more grounded and psychological manner. The characters in *Othello* are driven by their emotions and their individual flaws, resulting in tragic consequences. On the other hand, Blasim takes a more allegorical and surrealistic approach in *The Madman of Freedom Square*. By blurring reality and madness, he explores how social and political turmoil can lead to a collective descent into madness, resulting in widespread betrayal and chaos. While both works share themes of madness and betrayal, they do so in distinct ways. Shakespeare's focus on individual psychology creates a highly personal and introspective exploration, illuminating the darker aspects of human nature. In contrast, Blasim's work takes a broader perspective, examining how madness and betrayal can become systemic within a society ravaged by war and political strife.

On the other hand, “Madness and Betrayal in *The Madman of Freedom Square*,” Blasim explores complex ideas of madness and betrayal against the backdrop of contemporary Iraq. Blasim's stories navigate the blurred lines between reality and illusion, blending elements of “peculiar hybrid of science fiction and magical realism” (Qutait, 2021:14), to capture the absurdity of life amid war, chaos, and political oppression. With a distinctive blend of dark humor and poignant imagery, Blasim weaves tales that challenge societal norms, exposing the absurdity inherent in a war-torn nation. “Madness and Betrayal in Freedom Square” invites readers into a world where the ordinary becomes extraordinary, and characters grapple with their own madness, often mirroring the madness of their surroundings. Blasim dissects the layers of human psychology, questioning the nature of truth and the boundaries of sanity.

Betrayal, another recurring theme in the collection, is explored through different lenses, the betrayal of personal values, the betrayal of country, and the betrayal of self. Blasim portrays a society where allegiances are constantly shifting, leaving characters haunted by the choices they make and the consequences that follow. Through his evocative and thought-provoking prose, Blasim challenges readers to confront the chaos and darkness of the human condition while searching for beauty and meaning. His stories serve as poignant reflections on the psychological toll of war and the fragility of the human spirit, ultimately offering a nuanced examination of the complexities of life in post-war Iraq. “Madness and Betrayal in Freedom Square” is not a collection that can be easily summarized or neatly categorized. Blasim's writing dares to push boundaries, exploring the depths of human experience and the surreal nature of reality. It is a testament to his literary brilliance and serves as a powerful reminder of the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Throughout this psychoanalytical exploration of madness and betrayal in both literary works, it has been uncovered the fascinating psychological depths within Shakespeare's *Othello* and Hassan Blasim's “*The Madman of Freedom Square*”.

Iago, Othello's trusted advisor, is driven by jealousy and manipulates everyone around him in order to plan Othello's downfall. Through devious manipulation and lies, Iago sows doubts in Othello's mind that finally cause him to question the loyalty of his beloved wife. Irrational jealousy consumes Othello, and his once noble and collected manner crumbles into madness. Whereas Gabriel's unpredictable conduct, recurrent hallucinations, and puzzling behaviors illustrate his spiral into insanity. Those who were once closely associated with him are betrayed as a result of his insanity. As Gabriel's hold on reality weakens, he betrays friends, coworkers, and even family members. Everyone around him is left hurt and perplexed by his unpredictable behavior.

Both literary works are not just stories that deal with madness and betrayal, however, they are thought-provoking explorations of the human conditions. they showcase the destructive powers of unchecked madness and the repercussions they have on the lives of those involved. With their vivid descriptions and compelling narratives, they immerse readers into a world where insanity and betrayal intertwine, leaving a lasting impact on both the characters and the audience.

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