

## *The Tragedy of Othello*

Re-meditation: Different mediums in which literature exists.

Intertextuality: The idea of there being only so many kinds of stories, and that they can be referenced and made in new contexts.

Hecatommithi (1535) by Giraldi Cinthio, 10 novels with 10 chapters with 10 stories in each chapter that tell of stories that inspired Shakespeare. he pretty much took all the stories and put them in one play.

Two time frames: One long, one fast.

For example, in Act 1 Scene 1, we have the contrast of knowing Othello and Desdemona are married while also not knowing if they are married. We only learn they have eloped when Desdemona is introduced. Othello must go to Cyprus for war, and Desdemona must go with them. When they set foot in Cyprus, everything speeds up. The play only takes place over 33 hours, but there are references to a slower timeline (Bianca saying Cassio has been in Cyprus for a week).

“There are many events in the womb of time that must be delivered.” Iago sees himself as controller of time.

Iago: Motives for evil are not receiving Cassio’s position, Othello passing him over for attendant. He also has a racial prejudice, and does not like that Othello was bred from nobility. He suspects his wife of being of ill-faith, and that he even believes Cassio and Othello are sleeping with his wife.

Iago and his soliloquy at the end of act 2 scene 3. “That Cassio loves her ----- is never seen till used.” He wants to be even with Othello wife for wife, as he suspects Othello and Cassio of sleeping with Emilia, so this is where he lays out his vow to seek revenge. In poetic terms, the sentences have new thoughts begin in the middle of lines; this combined with the uneven syllables and harsh “T” sounds make it seem bitey and messy, contemptuous, like Iago himself. His language is not as controlled, but for the most part, he is ordered and in iambic pentameter. It is only where he is considering future plans that are uncertain does the meter change.

Women of Othello:

Emilia: Debate as to whether her actions were justified and if blame can be laid to her for giving the handkerchief to Iago. Was she a strong female character?

Desdemona: Did she ever make any moves which were not at the will of a man? Yes, she betrayed her father by marrying Othello, but she said that this is what her mother would have done, and that her father would have wanted her to marry a strong man. Was she a strong female character?

Bianca: She was a prostitute and there was not much discussion of her.

**Othello himself:** Moral? Amoral? He was focussed on honour, but was this focus blinding? How much can we believe that he was an honourable man?