

## *Othello* – Act I Annotations

The following are suitable annotations for sections of the play. These annotations highlight significant aspects of character, plot, theme, and dramatic or literary merit. Find the sections in the text that reference these annotations, and use the comments below to annotate your book. WRITE IN YOUR BOOK. **Simply putting the numbers beside the area of text is next to useless (useless would be folding this paper into your book and calling it a day), will only waste time if you need the annotations in in-class writing, and will not get you any marks.**

### Background Information

**Moor** – Equivalent to the term “African” or somebody from the continent. A non-derogatory term.

**Ancient** – Military rank, similar to the rank of ensign. Iago’s ensign ranking is below Cassio’s Lieutenant and Othello’s General

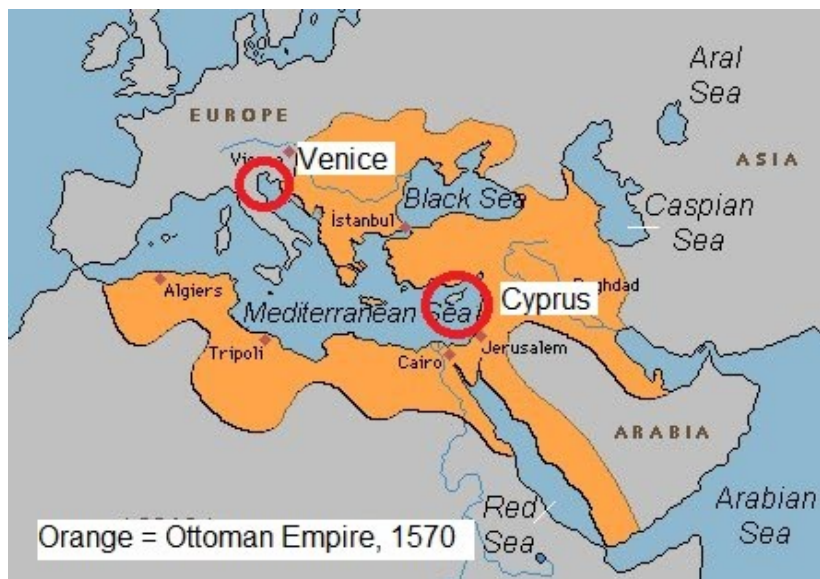
**Venice** - Italian city-state of enormous power and wealth created from commerce and trade. Series of conflicts and wars with the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, over trade and trade routes in the Mediterranean.

**Cyprus** – This island, near Turkey and Syria, was annexed by Venice in 1489 and conquered by the Turks in 1571. Important strategic location for the conflict between Venice and The Ottoman Empire.

**Ottoman, Ottomites, Turks** – People of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire

**In Medias Res** – “In the Middle of Things”. Dramatic and literary term where the telling of a story et either the middle or the end of events in that story

**Janus** –Roman god of doorways and transitions. The god is usually depicted with two faces, one looking to the past, the other looking to the future. This representation has come to suggest an element of “two-facedness”, that of deception or duplicity.



## Act I

### Scene I

1. The play begins with Iago revealing his true feelings for Othello. (1)
2. Iago's explanation for the reasons for his hatred toward Othello and Cassio. (1-2)
3. Iago reveals his nature, and the nature of those who serve, to Roderigo. FSQ
4. Complex self-revelation of Iago's character, containing ANTITHESIS, PARADOX; helps to establish Iago as Othello's FOIL.
5. Evidence of racist sentiment from Roderigo. (3)
6. Racist sentiment from Iago, mixed with cruel animal imagery (metaphor). What is the purpose to this?
7. Brabantio reveals why he has cause for dislike toward Roderigo. (4)
8. Iago's animal imagery continues... evidence of his powers of rhetoric (appeal to ETHOS) which play off of a shared racist sentiment.
9. FSQ euphemism for SEX
10. Roderigo again with a questionably racist comment about Desdemona and Othello's relationship (5)
11. Further evidence of Iago's duplicity towards Othello.
12. Evidence of Brabantio rationalizing of an explanation for the inexplicable union of DES and OTH, and the revelation of this hypocrisy, charged with racist sentiment. (6)

### Scene ii

1. Iago reveals how unbearable it was to hear BRA speak ill of OTH. (6)
2. Othello's character is initially defined by his confidence, self-respect, and love for Desdemona (7)
3. Othello chooses to defend himself and his actions, rather than run.
4. An ALLUSION from Iago revealing his "two-faced nature".
5. Brabantio offers a charged explanation, with METAPHOR, SYNECDOCHE, and HYPERBOLE, that incriminates Othello. (8-9)
6. In contrast, Othello seems to be rational and honorable, seeking a peaceful resolution (what does this, and Othello's entire countenance, say of him in this scene?)

### Scene iii

1. The First Senator and Duke's DICTION reveal how some esteem the foreign Othello in Venetian society. (11)
2. Lots of HYPERBOLE from Brabantio to introduce the nature of the crime that has been committed.
3. Othello's initial monologue is very revealing of his character... (12)
4. More irrational accusations by Brabantio highlight the perceived unnatural nature of the relationship between Othello and Desdemona (13)
5. Othello tells the story of his life and his relationship with Desdemona...Does this seem credible enough to justify a relationship that is so central to the play? (13-14)
6. Desdemona reveals her feelings in the matter.
7. Brabantio abandons his claims (METAPHOR)
8. The Duke offers comfort to Brabantio in the form of a series of RHYMING COUPLETS... Can you figure out what one means? (15-16)
9. Dramatic irony from Othello with regards to Iago (17)

10. Comment from the Duke (PARADOX/ PUN) helps to reinforce OTHELLO's character. (18)
11. A final word from Brabantio to Othello, spoken in RHYMING COUPLET, that has significant implications for later in the play
12. Iago utilizes an EXTENDED METAPHOR to comfort Roderigo by suggesting our lives are determined by our minds or attitudes.

The "Money in thy Purse" Speech (19)

13. What phrase is repeated? Give two meanings for this phrase.
14. How many "topics" are present in this speech? What is Iago trying to convince Roderigo of?
15. Three reasons why the relationship between Othello and Desdemona cannot last.
16. Iago reaffirms his support towards Roderigo, his feelings towards Othello, and hints at the schemes to come.
17. The effect of Iago's speech on Roderigo (20)
18. In Iago's SOLILOQUY, he reveals:
  - His true feelings toward Roderigo
  - His true feelings toward Othello
  - A possible reason for why he hates Othello
  - BUT... the fact that he is willing to destroy a man based on a rumor.
  - how Cassio will figure into his plans to deceive Othello
  - why this plan will work on Othello
19. A final RHYMING COUPLET (and metaphor), letting the audience know the importance of Iago's insidious conception.

*REMEMBER*, these are the themes we are working with in the play:

**Appearance vs. Reality      Jealousy      Importance of Reputation**  
**Human Nature and Gender Relations      Control and Influence**

**I will leave it up to you to consider where the text supports ideas connected to these themes. Ask if you are not sure!!**