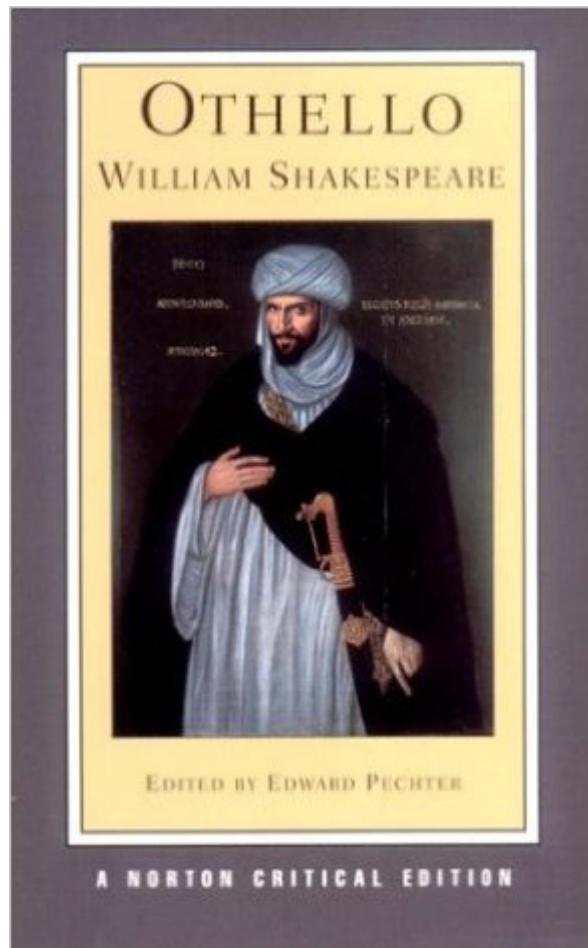


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Othello (Norton Critical Editions)



Synopsis

The text of this Norton Critical Edition is that of the First Folio, printed in 1623. Additions and emendations adopted from the First Quarto (1622) appear in the Textual Notes that follow the play. Othello is accompanied by detailed explanatory annotations. "Sources and Contexts" • reprints the sixteenth-century story by Giraldi Cinthio that Shakespeare used for the plot of Othello and for many of its details. Edward Pechter's essay provides context for readers through its discussion of the play's central topics • Moors, Turks, Venetians, marriage and domesticity, fathers and daughters, and female sexuality. Seventeen wide-ranging interpretive essays are reprinted. Contributors include Samuel Johnson, William Hazlitt, T. S. Eliot, Kenneth Burke, Lynda E. Boose, Mark Rose, and Patricia Parker. An annotated Selected Bibliography is also included.

Book Information

Series: Norton Critical Editions

Paperback: 432 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; annotated edition edition (December 5, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393976157

ISBN-13: 978-0393976151

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars • See all reviews (10 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

For anybody who hasn't read Shakespeare in a while, you might consider Othello. With memorable lines (like "I loved not wisely but too well..."), the play takes a very personal look at envy and jealousy on the domestic scene. Yes, Othello is a great prince and a warrior who has made himself irreplaceable to Venice. Yes, he is a Moor of royal background, meaning that he was exotic and black and to Shakespeare's 17th c. audience was seen as an Other, an outsider who wanted to be accepted enough to convert to Christianity. Desdemona, wealthy daughter of Brabantio, was a great catch for an ambitious man wanting to make his mark. The fact that Othello loved her completely

made her the whole package. Desdemona was fair and beautiful, and although Othello was perceived as an outsider and black, he was admired by most Venetians for his courage and nobility. Iago, however, hated Othello, and his motivations for his actions have made for many good discussions, although it is generally accepted that his sociopathic character suggests that he loves the thrill of wallowing in evil. Iago is the ultimate manipulator; he gets most of the characters in the play to do his bidding and to bring about the utter destruction of Othello and Desdemona, as well as most of the minor characters. By making Othello erroneously believe that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio, and as Othello's trusted right hand man, Iago gets rid of everybody he envies and hates. The play is powerful and tragic, as Othello realizes that he had wronged Desdemona and dies without ever knowing why Iago wanted to destroy him. The audience can see why, however, and as we watch Iago's plot unfold before our eyes, only we understand how it all happened as we watch Iago's deadly plot work itself out.

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