Choose from the characters of Othello, Iago, Cassio, Desdemona, and Emilia and answer the question:

**What role does that character play in the drama *Othello* and how do different audiences react to him/her?**

Consider:

* Early Modern reactions to the character
* language and imagery used about that character in the play
* language and imagery used by that character in the play
* the character’s dramatic role in the play or ultimate fate
* modern, twenty-first century reactions to the character

Develop a thesis statement that establishes your argument:

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INTRODUCTION (hook, TAG, thesis statement)

BODY PARAGRAPHS (topic sentence, PEE)  
CONCLUSION (broadens the scope)

\*Your essay must also include a Works Cited page with *Othello* plus two other sources.

LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY *SAID ABOUT* THE CHARACTER:

LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY *USED BY* THE CHARACTER:

EARLY MODERN REACTIONS TO CHARACTER TYPE AND SPECIFIC CHARACTER:

HOW THE CHARACTER DRIVES THE PLOT AND HIS/HER ULTIMATE FATE:

MODERN, 21st CENTURY REACTIONS TO CHARACTER TYPE AND SPECIFIC CHARACTER:

**Early Modern Views of Moors**

**“The people are generally all tawney, moores, verye sturdye and stronge of bodye…They are very jealous of their wyves…and very hardlye can forget any injurye against them…The countrey swaynes are better, more lovinge, and patiente, but so simple that they will beleeve any incredible fiction.”**

Ortelius, Abraham, and Michiel Coignet. *Abraham Ortelius His Epitome of the Theater of the*

*Worlde: Nowe Latlye, Since the Latine Italian, Spanishe, and Frenche Editions, Renewed and Augmented, the Mappes All Newe Grauen According to Geographicall Measure*. At London [i.e. Antwerp: Printed for Ieames Shawe, and are to be solde at his shoppe nigh Ludgate, 1603. Internet resource.

**“The qualyties principalley to be associated with black peoples are : courayge, pryde, guilelessness, credulity and passions arouseyed with a sudden flayre.”**

Leo, Joannes, and Pory, John. *A Geographical Historie of Africa, Written in Arabicke and*

*Italian. ... Before Which ... Is Prefixed a Generall Description of Africa, and ... a Particular Treatise of All the ... Lands ... Undescribed by J. Leo ... Translated and Collected by J. Pory.* Londini: Impensis G. Bishop, 1600.

**“It would be something monstrous to conceive this beautiful Venetian girl falling in love with a veritable negro. It would argue a disproportionateness, a want of balance in Desdemona, which Shakespeare does not have in the least to have contemplated.” (Samuel Coleridge, nineteenth century)**

Coleridge, Samuel T, and Thomas M. Raysor. *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*. London:

Constable & Co. Ltd, 1930.

**Early Modern Views of Women**

**“…It is certainly right to teach ladies how to love, because I’ve rarely encountered one who does know how to do so. And their beauty is nearly always accompanied by cruelty and ingratitude towards those who serve them most faithfully, and whose nobility, gentleness and virtue deserve to be rewarded. Very often, too, they abandon themselves to the most stupid and worthless rascals, who despise rather than love them. So to help them avoid these gross errors perhaps it would have been as well first to teach them how to choose a man worthy of their love and only then how to love him…”**

**“…if a man is to be loved he must himself love and be lovable; and these two things are enough for him to win the favour of women…I declare that everyone knows and sees that you are most lovable; but I am very doubtful as to whether you love as sincerely as you claim…Your own constant lamenting and accusations of ingratitude against the women you have served, which do not ring true, considering your great merits, are really designed as a kind of concealment to hide the favours, the joys and the pleasures you have known in love, and to reassure those women who love and have abandoned themselves to you that you won’t give them away. So they too are content that you should openly make a pretence of loving other own in order to conceal your genuine love for them. And so if the women you pretend to love now are not as credulous as you would wise, it is because your technique is beginning to be understood…”**

Castiglione, Baldassare, and Daniel Javitch. *The Book of the Courtier: The Singleton*

*Translation: an Authoritative Text Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.

**Early Modern Views of Judgment and Lying**

**“Lying is indeed an accursed vice. We are men, and we have relations with one another only by speech. If we recognised the horror and gravity of an untruth, we should more justifiably punish it with fire than any other crime…[l]ying…[is] the only fault whose birth and progress we should consistently oppose. They grow with a child’s growth, and once the tongue has got the knack of lying, it is difficult to imagine how impossible it is to correct it”**

Montaigne, Michel , Charles Cotton, and William C. Hazlitt. “On Liars.” *Essays of Michael De*

*Montaigne*, 2016. Internet resource.

**“We cannot be held responsible beyond our strength and means, since the resulting events are quite outside our control and, in fact, we have power over nothing except our will which is the basis upon which all rules concerning man’s duty must of necessity be founded.”**

Montaigne, Michel., Charles Cotton, and William C. Hazlitt. “That our Actions should be Judged

by our Intentions.” *Essays of Michael De Montaigne*, 2016. Internet resource.

**“I believe there is a question of cruelty used well or badly. We can say that cruelty is used well…when it is employed once for all, and one’s safety depends on it, and then it is not persisted in but as far as possible turned to the good of one’s subjects…Those who use this method can, with divine and human assistance, find some means of consolidating their position…So it should be noted that when he seizes a state the new ruler must determine once all the injuries that he will need to inflict. He must inflict them once for all…and in that way he will be able to set men’s minds at rest.”**

Machiavelli, Nicolo. *Prince, the*. South Bend: Infomotions, Inc, 2000. Internet resource.

**On Iago**

**“We no longer feel, as Shakespeare’s contemporaries did, the ubiquity of Satan, but Iago is still serviceable to us, as an objective correlative of the mindless inventiveness of racist aggression. Iago is still alive and kicking and filling migrants’ letterboxes with excrement.” (Germaine Greer, twenty-first century)**

Greer, Germaine. *Shakespeare: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Sterling, 2010.

**“Psychologically Iago is a slighted man, powerfully possessed by hatred against a master who (as he thinks) has kept him down, and by envy for a man he despises who has been promoted over him.” (Nevill Coghill, twentieth century)**

Coghill, Nevill. *Shakespeare's Professional Skills*. Cambridge, England: University Press, 1964.

**“The cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance.” (Samuel Coleridge, nineteenth century)**

Coleridge, Samuel T, and Thomas M. Raysor. *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*. London:

Constable & Co. Ltd, 1930.

**On Othello**

**“Othello is a man of mystery, exoticism and intense feeling, trustful, open, passionate but self-controlled: so noble… he inspires a passion of mingled love and pity.” (A. C. Bradley, early twentieth century)**

Bradley, A. C*. Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear,*

*Macbeth*. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1905.

**“Othello has a propensity to jealousy and possess a weak character: the stuff of which he is made begins at once to deteriorate and show itself unfit. His love is composed largely of ignorance of self as well as ignorance of Desdemona.” (F. R. Leavis, early twentieth century)**

Leavis, F.R. “Diabolic Intellect and the Noble Hero”, 1937, reprinted in *The Common Pursuit*,

Chatts and Windus, 1952.

**On Desdemona**

**“In spite of her masculine assertiveness in choosing her own husband, Desdemona accepts her culture’s dictum that she must be obedient to males and is self-denying in the extreme when she dies.” (Marilyn French, twentieth century)**

French, Marilyn. *Shakespeare's Division of Experience*. New York: Summit Books, 1981.

**“The soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, unconscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected.” (Samuel Johnson, eighteenth century)**

Johnson, Samuel. *Preface to Shakespeare*. Project Gutenberg, 2004. Internet resource.