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CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

M. A. Part-I : English
Semester-II :
Major Mandatory Courses of 2 credits (C2C)

C2C 2.2
Shakespearean Tragedy

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Preface

This course focuses on two important plays of Shakespeare - Othello and Romeo and Juliet. The two units in this SLM give you a glimpse in to the life and works of Shakespeare, the literature of the time and some importance features of the two plays.

Each unit is interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' exercises, which are simple questions requiring answers in a word, a phrase or a sentence each. The purpose of these 'Self-check Exercises' is to make you go back to the main unit and get your answers for these questions on your own. The model answers are provided at the end of each unit. But you should not look them up before you have tried to write your own answers.

Each unit gives you a list of reference books. You should find time to visit a college nearby to locate the original book as well as books on understanding the different approaches prescribed.

Exercises are given at the end of each unit, which contain broad-answer type questions which you have to face in the final examination. Try to answers these questions with the help of the course material provided in the units. Write answers in your own English, with the help of prescribed and reference books.

The content is presented in a simple and easy-to-understand mannor interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' type questions to boost the student's understanding of the topic.

We wish you all the best for your examination.

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INDEX

Unit No.	Topic	Page No.
	Semester-II : Paper-C2C 2.2	
1.	<i>Othello</i>	1
2.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	43

Each Unit begins with the section objectives -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. what has been presented in the unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific unit, once you have completed working on the unit.

The self-check exercises with possible answers will help you understand the unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answers only after you write your answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as study tools to keep you on the right track as you study the unit.

Dear Students,

The SLM is simply a supporting material for the study of this paper. It is also advised to see the new syllabus 2023-24 and study the reference books & other related material for the detailed study of the paper.

Unit-1

Othello

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.1.1 Biographical Sketch of William Shakespeare
 - 1.1.2 Works of William Shakespeare
 - 1.1.3 Check Your Progress
- 1.2 *Othello*
 - 1.2.1 Introduction to the Play
 - 1.2.2 List of Characters
 - 1.2.3 Check Your Progress
- 1.3 Plot of the Play
 - 1.3.1 Act-wise Summary of the Play
 - 1.3.2 Analysis of the Play
 - 1.3.3 Check Your Progress
- 1.4 Analysis of Major Characters
- 1.5 Major Themes in the Play
- 1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 1.7 Exercise
- 1.8 References

1.0 Objectives:

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- know the life and works of William Shakespeare
- understand the play *Othello* as one of the greatest tragedies
- outline the plot and analyse the play

- sketch the characters in the play
- comment on various themes emerged in the play

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Biographical Sketch of William Shakespeare:

William Shakespeare is considered as one of the preeminent wordsmiths in the English language who has earned fame both as a poet and a playwright. His works including plays, sonnets and poems are widely acknowledged for their profound and enduring impact on literature. His plays are translated into more than 50 languages, are performed all over the globe to the audiences of all ages. Popularly known as the ‘Bard’ or the ‘Bard of Avon,’ he had also put on the hat of an actor and erected the iconic Globe Theatre that has now been converted into a historical place attracting crowds from all over the world. However, despite being a popular figure in the literary circle, much of his personal life remains a mystery as there is no surviving descendant from his family or no autobiographical letters or diaries which can reveal or throw light on his personal life.

It is commonly believed that William Shakespeare was born around 23rd April, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare was a leather worker who produced the soft white leather used for gloves and similar items. Being a prosperous figure in the community, he married to Mary Arden, who also belonged to the notable Arden family. They had eight children; however, William became the eldest surviving child of John and Mary, as their first two daughters did not survive and died in infancy. William had three younger brothers – Gilbert, Richard, and Edmund – and two younger sisters: Anne, who passed away at the age of seven, and Joan. John held various local offices in Stratford, eventually reaching the position of alderman, and when William was five years old, John became the town bailiff, akin to a mayor. However, shortly thereafter, John withdrew from public life, and the reasons for this decision remain unknown.

As the son of a prominent Stratford resident, Shakespeare likely attended the town’s grammar school. The typical curriculum of such institutions at the time was the emphasis on the study of Latin classics, involving memorization, writing, and the performance of classic Latin plays. It is presumed that Shakespeare continued his education at this grammar school until around the age of 15. A few years after the departure from school, around late 1582, he married Anne Hathaway who was

probably already pregnant with their first child, Susanna, a situation not uncommon during that era. At the time of their marriage, Anne was 26 years old and William was 18 years old. Anne was brought up just outside Stratford in the village of Shottery, and upon marriage, she made her permanent home in Stratford. In early 1585, the couple welcomed twins, Judith and Hamnet, thereby establishing their family. In the subsequent years, while Shakespeare pursued his career in London, Anne and the children resided in Stratford, though the exact timing of his relocation to London remains unknown. Some later observers have speculated that this separation and the couple's relatively small number of children might indicate a strained marriage, but such details remain elusive. Those in the theatre profession had little choice but to work in London and it was not uncommon for the branches of the Shakespeare family to have the modest-sized households.

Following the birth of Judith and Hamnet, a significant gap obscures details about Shakespeare's activities: his means of livelihood, the timing of his departure from Stratford, and the origins of his entry into the world of theatre. The historical record resumes in 1592, marking Shakespeare as an established actor and playwright in London, satirically dubbed a "Shake-scene" by a contemporary critic Robert Green. This same writer makes the references to one of Shakespeare's early history plays, *Henry VI*, Part 3, suggesting its prior performance. In 1593, Shakespeare published the lengthy poem *Venus and Adonis*, and the first quarto editions of his early plays appeared in 1594. Tragedy struck in 1596 when Shakespeare's only son, Hamnet, passed away at the age of 11. His elder daughter, Susanna, later married a prosperous Stratford doctor named John Hall. Their first child, Elizabeth, Shakespeare's first grandchild, came into the world in 1608. In 1616, just months before Shakespeare's demise, his daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney, a vintner from Stratford. Regrettably, the family line eventually dwindled away, leaving no direct descendants of William Shakespeare.

For more than twenty years, Shakespeare played diverse roles in the London theatre, serving as an actor, playwright, and eventually becoming a business partner in the influential acting company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men. After the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, the acting company received a royal patent, leading to its rechristening as the King's Men, in honour of King James I. In 1599, Shakespeare, along with fellow players from his productions, established the Globe Theatre along the River Thames. Over time, his fame in the London theatre community steadily grew. While his name was initially absent from the first quarto

editions of his plays, it later became a regular and prominent feature on subsequent title pages, evidently serving as a significant selling point. He experienced financial success through his association with the Lord Chamberlain's Men and his endeavours in writing and acting. Subsequently, he made substantial real estate investments in Stratford, culminating in the acquisition of New Place, the town's second-largest house, in 1597. Among his final works was *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, collaboration with frequent partner John Fletcher, most likely completed in the year 1613. Shakespeare passed away on 23rd April, 1616, although the cause of his death is also a mystery; while his brother-in-law's recent demise suggests the possibility of an infectious disease, Shakespeare's health may have been on a gradual decline.

1.1.2 Works of William Shakespeare:

Plays:

History Plays:

1. *Titus Andronicus* (1587, pub. in 1594) – Political History
2. *Henry VI* (1588-91) – Historical play in three parts
3. *King John* (1595) – Political History
4. *Richard III* (1596) – Political History
5. *Richard II* (1597) – Full Title: *The Tragedy of King Richard II*
6. *Henry IV* (two parts: 1596 & 1597) – Political History
7. *Henry V* (1599) – Political History
8. *Henry VIII* (1612-13) - Political History (Heterogeneous History)

Tragedies:

1. *Julius Caesar* (1599) – Roman Tragedy
2. *Hamlet* (1599-1601) – Dark or Great Tragedy
3. *Romeo and Juliet* (1594-95) – Dark or Great Tragedy
4. *Othello* (1604) – Dark or Great Tragedy
5. *Timon of Athens* (1604) – Roman Tragedy
6. *King Lear* (1605) – Dark or Great Tragedy
7. *Macbeth* (1606) – Dark or Great Tragedy

8. *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1606-07) – Roman Tragedy

9. *Coriolanus* (1605-08) – Roman Tragedy

Comedies:

1. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1587) – Early Comedy

2. *The Taming of the Shrew* (1588) – Romantic Comedy

3. *The Comedy of Errors* (1589-94) – Early Comedy

4. *Love's Labour's Lost* (1593-94) – Early Comedy

5. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-96) – Romantic Comedy

6. *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-97) – Romantic Comedy

7. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597) – Romantic Comedy

8. *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598-99) – Problem Comedy

9. *As You Like It* (1599-1600) – Romantic Comedy

10. *Twelfth Night* (1601) – Romantic Comedy

11. *Troilus and Cressida* (1602) – Dark Comedy

12. *All's Well That Ends Well* (1603) – Problem Comedy or Dark Comedy

13. *Measure for Measure* (1604) – Problem Comedy or Dark Comedy

Tragi-Comedies:

1. *Pericles* (1607-08) – Heterogeneous Comedy or Dramatic Romance

2. *The Winter's Tale* (1609-10) – Heterogeneous Comedy or Dramatic Romance

3. *Cymbeline* (1610-11) – Heterogeneous Comedy or Dramatic Romance

4. *The Tempest* (1610-11) – Heterogeneous Comedy or Dramatic Romance

Poems:

1. *Venus and Adonis* (1593)

2. *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594)

3. *A Lover's Complaint* (1609)

4. Sonnets (1609) – 154 sonnets in the collection

1.1.3 Check Your Progress:

1. John and Mary had _____ children.
a. six b. seven c. eight d. nine
2. Ann Hathway was _____ years old at the time of her marriage with William Shakespeare.
a. 20 b. 22 c. 24 d. 26
3. _____ has satirically commented about Shakespeare as “Shake-scene.”
a. Robert Green b. Ben Jonson
c. Christopher Marlowe d. John Fletcher
4. Shakespeare’s son, Hamnet, passed away in the year _____.
a. 1594 b. 1596 c. 1598 d. 1599
5. The Globe Theatre was established in the year _____.
a. 1596 b. 1598 c. 1599 d. 1601
6. _____ is a play of Shakespeare written in collaboration with John Fletcher.
a. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* b. *The Tempest*
c. *Troilus and Cressida* d. *Pericles*
7. *King John* is a _____ play.
a. tragedy b. political historical
c. comedy d. tragic-comedy
8. *Othello* is written and published in _____.
a. 1604 b. 1605 c. 1606 d. 1607

1.2 *Othello*

1.2.1 Introduction to the Play:

Othello is considered as one of the greatest tragedies ever produced in the history of world literature. It deals with the themes of jealousy and possessive nature coupled with gullibility and blind passion as well as the threats that arise from a failure of its protagonist to see beyond the surface realities or appearances. It stands

in total opposition to other dark tragedies of William Shakespeare i.e. *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* which focus on the affairs of the state and deal with the issues universally applicable to human lives and societies. On the other hand, *Othello* deals with the private lives of human beings pointing out their passionate and emotional world. As a result, *Othello* is often described as the tragedy of character. Furthermore, the tragic events have become more intense with highly concentrated and tightly constructed single main plot with no intervention of other sub plots or no humour to relieve the tension.

The plot of the play relates to a novel *The Moor of Venice* written by Sicilian novelist Giraldi Cinthio. However, Shakespeare has made a number of changes in the events and modified the roles of characters in the play. All the minor characters and events support the actions of the protagonist and aid in creating conflict between the feelings of love and hatred. The feelings of love, jealousy, hatred and revenge create psychological complexity and take the intensity of the plot to the extreme point.

1.2.2 List of Characters:

1. Othello

- Protagonist of the play
- A Moor and General in the armies of Venice
- Eloquent and physically powerful figure
- Reputed for courage in battle and a sense of judgment in military affairs
- Falls in love with Desdemona and then marries her
- Has free and open nature
- Tricked to believe unfaithfulness of his wife
- Determines to take revenge and smothers Desdemona in bed
- Realizes the misleading of his ensign too late
- Kills himself in despair

2. Desdemona

- Daughter of Brabantio
- Noble and educated lady
- Demonstrates courage and loyalty

- Marries secretly with Othello
- Accompanies Othello to Cyprus
- Realizes Othello becoming distant
- Believes that Othello will find her true and loyal
- Declares her love for Othello even in death bed

3. Iago

- Villain of the play
- Twenty-eight years old
- Ancient (a captain) of Othello promoted to the post of ensign
- Hopes to be promoted to the post of Lieutenant but disappointed
- Determines to take revenge
- Exploits Roderigo financially and uses in his plan
- Creates misunderstandings and leads Othello to suspect his wife's infidelity
- Manipulates the situations and uses every possible means to destroy Othello
- His wickedness is revealed in the end, but refuses to speak
- His motivations remain mystery in the play

4. Cassio

- Lieutenant of Othello, a Florentine in Venetian army
- Young and inexperienced soldier
- Accompanies Othello during his courtship to Desdemona
- Iago dislikes him for his highest rank
- Feels guilty for dismissal after his drunken brawl
- Convinced as Desdemona's paramour to Othello
- Appointed as Governor of Cyprus after Othello's death

5. Brabantio

- Desdemona's father and a Senator of Venice
- Always attempts to secure his daughter (especially from suitors)

- Becomes angry at Desdemona's decision to marry Othello
- Warns Othello to be aware of Desdemona as she is a deceiver

6. Roderigo

- A wealthy gentleman in Venice
- In love with Desdemona
- Brabantio refuses him to visit his house
- Pays Iago to court Desdemona on his behalf
- Becomes a victim of Iago's plan
- Loses his life in fight with Cassio

7. Bianca

- A courtesan (prostitute) in Cyprus
- In love with Cassio
- Has skills in needlework

8. Emilia

- Iago's wife
- Accompanies Desdemona to Cyprus
- Suspicious of Iago's actions and motives
- Realizes too late of her husband's wicked plan

9. The Duke of Venice

- A Duke of city state of Venice
- Appoints Othello to defend Cyprus against Turkish attack
- Advises Brabantio to accept Desdemona's marriage

10. Gratiano

- Brabantio's brother
- Finds Cassio wounded after Cassio's fight with Roderigo

11. Lodovico

- Desdemona's cousin

- Questions Othello and Cassio together after the death of Desdemona

12. Montano

- Governor of Cyprus before Othello
- Othello's friend and loyal supporter

1.2.3 Check Your Progress:

- Othello* is often described as the tragedy of _____.
 - character
 - unfaithfulness
 - blood
 - society
- The plot of the play *Othello* relates to a novel _____.
 - The Leopard*
 - The Moor of Venice*
 - Robert Second Duke of Normandie*
 - Menaphon*
- The novel *The Moor of Venice* is written by _____.
 - Thomas Delaney
 - John Heywood
 - Giraldi Cinthio
 - Roger Ascham
- Iago is _____ years old.
 - twenty-two
 - twenty-four
 - twenty-six
 - twenty-eight
- _____ loses his life in fight with Cassio.
 - Roderigo
 - Iago
 - Montano
 - Gratiano
- _____ is a brother of Brabantio.
 - Lodovico
 - Iago
 - Montano
 - Gratiano
- _____ was the Governor of Cyprus before Othello.
 - Lodovico
 - Cassio
 - Montano
 - Gratiano

1.3. Plot of the Play

1.3.1 Act-wise Summary of the Play:

Act I

Scene I of Act I opens in a street in Venice during night where Iago reveals to Roderigo, a rejected suitor of Desdemona, his jealousy towards Othello, the Moor of

Venice. He tells that despite the recommendations of three leading Venetians, Othello has overlooked Iago for a promotion to the post of Lieutenant. Instead, he has promoted a Florentine called Michael Cassio and assigned Iago to the less significant role of ensign. Iago takes this opportunity and seeks the help of Roderigo to inform Desdemona's father Brabantio with alarming news of a robbery in his household. He then reports Brabantio that Desdemona has fled with Othello. Brabantio identifies Roderigo as the suitor he explicitly forbade from entering his house. Iago manipulates Roderigo's revelations with suggestive imagery, insinuating animalistic desires. Before departing, Iago advises Roderigo to leave promptly, considering his lower official rank compared to Othello.

Scene II is set before the Sagittary in Venice where Iago informs Othello about Brabantio's anticipated displeasure over Desdemona's elopement. He also tells the way he recounts his restraint when Brabantio spoke disparagingly of Othello. Othello, on the other hand, shows his confidence in his reputation and genuine love for Desdemona. Their conversation is interrupted by Michael Cassio, who urgently summons Othello to a meeting with the Duke of Venice concerning a military expedition to Cyprus. Brabantio, Roderigo, and officers arrive at the place, who are prepared to confront Othello, but Othello calmly defuses any hostility at the time. Brabantio inquires about Desdemona's whereabouts and accuses Othello of enchanting her to win her love. Othello tells them that the Duke has urgently called him, and he is further supported by an officer, leading them all to the imminent conference.

Scene III opens in a chamber of Senate where the Duke of Venice deliberates with the senators on the Turkish fleet's movements toward Cyprus. Meanwhile a sailor delivers a message revealing that the Turkish fleet is now heading for Rhodes leading the Senate members to think it possibly as a diversionary tactic. A subsequent messenger brings news from Montano, the Governor of Cyprus, indicating that the Ottomites have joined the fleet at Rhodes, confirming the urgency to send the army to Cyprus immediately. At this moment, Brabantio and Roderigo appear along with Othello, Cassio and Iago; and soon Brabantio accuses Othello of deceiving Desdemona. Othello answers the duke that he has won Desdemona's affections but denies using any magic to gain it. He recounts the way his stories of various expeditions and adventures attracted Desdemona and turned her sympathy for his hardships into love. Desdemona arrives and respectfully expresses her predicament that she is torn between her father and Othello. She presents her natural

preference for her husband, drawing a parallel to her mother's preference for her own father. Othello is now declared not to be guilty and immediately appointed to lead the defence of Cyprus. Desdemona expresses her desire to accompany Othello who then entrusts Iago with the responsibility of transporting Desdemona to Cyprus, along with his wife Emilia as her attendant. Roderigo then meets Iago and reveals his love for Desdemona. Iago takes the advantage and manipulates him into believing that Desdemona will soon grow weary of Othello and turn to him. Left alone, Iago contemplates a scheme to insinuate Desdemona's infidelity with Cassio.

Act II

Scene I of Act II opens in Cyprus. Montano and two gentlemen are near the harbour talking about the storm wreaking havoc off the coast. A third gentleman arrives with news of the Turkish fleet's destruction and Michael Cassio's safe arrival at the seaport. At the same time, Cassio appears anticipating the safe passage of Othello to Cyprus. A messenger brings news of another ship, and Cassio instructs the second gentleman to see who has arrived. The second gentleman reports that Iago has arrived at the harbour. Desdemona enters, inquiring about Othello, and Cassio assures her of his well-being. At this moment, Iago observes the courteous way Cassio greets Desdemona. Engaging in playful banter with Iago, Desdemona and Emilia are joined by Othello, who is elated that the war is over and relieved to find Desdemona safe. He directs everyone to the castle and instructs Iago to unload the spoils of war. Left alone with Roderigo, Iago plants the seed that Desdemona is enamoured with Cassio and predicts she will turn to him once her interest in Othello decreases. Roderigo, initially sceptical, is swayed when Iago describes the warm greeting between Cassio and Desdemona. Iago urges Roderigo to provoke Cassio into a fight, assuring him that eliminating Cassio will improve his chances with Desdemona. Alone, Iago reveals his suspicion of Emilia's infidelity with Othello, his thirst for revenge, and his plan to deepen Othello's trust in him.

Scene II is set before the castle of Othello where a Herald arrives declaring the plan of Othello regarding a feast to celebrate the defeat of Turkish fleet and his recent marriage with Desdemona.

Scene III begins with Othello who enters the castle with Desdemona accompanied by Cassio and attendants. He instructs Cassio to look after the arrangements of the feast cautioning him not to overindulge in celebrations. Cassio assures Othello that he will arrange for the celebrations personally. Afterwards,

Othello tells Cassio that they will meet the following day and departs with Desdemona. Iago enters, and Cassio suggests that they should give the watch, but Iago reveals that Othello has released them early. Iago encourages Cassio to join the other celebrants for a drink despite Cassio's refusal who has already taken enough drink. When Cassio joins the others, alone he thinks that Cassio will be motivated to fight with Roderigo and other men effortlessly. After a while, Cassio, Montano, and a gentleman join Iago who then provokes Cassio in toasting and singing. When Cassio leaves, Iago informs Montano about Cassio's weakness for drinking, prompting Montano who then thinks to inform it to Othello. Meanwhile Cassio appears following Roderigo who has been incited into a fight by Iago. Montano tries to prevent Cassio from fighting with Roderigo; but drunken Cassio first of all threatens Montano verbally and then engages in dual with him. Othello who hears the noise arrives there only to find the fight between Montano and Cassio; Othello intervenes to stop them fighting and questions about the situation. Iago here comes forward to tell Othello that he and Montano were discussing while a fellow came there asking for help followed by Cassio. Hence, Montano tried to stop Cassio while he has pursued the fellow who escaped. When he returned to the place, he found Montano and Cassio were fighting until Othello intervened. Othello dismisses Cassio from service, leaving only Cassio and Iago on the scene. Cassio laments the damage to his reputation, and Iago suggests that he should plead his case to Desdemona. Alone, Iago plots to inform Othello that Desdemona has an attraction to Cassio. Roderigo, disheartened, expresses his intent to return to Venice, but Iago urges him to be patient, as his plan is in motion. Finally, Iago decides to have Emilia intervene with Desdemona for Cassio and create a situation where Othello discovers Cassio speaking with Desdemona.

Act III

Scene I of Act III is set before the castle of Othello. Cassio arrives with two musicians expressing his intention to please Othello and Desdemona with his song. There a clown appears and starts his commentary on the instruments of musicians informing the audience that Othello has no interest in hearing more music. Once the musicians depart, Cassio approaches the clown and asks him to tell Emilia his desire to meet Desdemona. Meanwhile Iago enters, and Cassio informs him of the message to the clown. Iago assures Cassio that he will fetch Emilia and keep Othello occupied. As Emilia arrives, she informs Cassio that Othello and Desdemona are

currently talking about the fight between Cassio and Montano and assures him she will make the necessary arrangements for his meeting with Desdemona.

Scene II of Act III opens in the castle of Othello where Iago meets Othello who then hands over the letters and asks him to send them to the Senate. After a while, Othello goes on a fortress walls with gentlemen for a walk.

Scene III begins in the castle garden, where Desdemona assures Cassio that she will do everything in her power to assist him. Emilia adds that Iago is equally distressed by the entire incident. Othello and Iago enter as Cassio departs, and Iago points out to Othello that Cassio's departure was suspicious. Desdemona suggests Othello to appoint Cassio back on his position, but Othello replies that he will have the conversation with Cassio for another time. However, upon her insistence and pleas for Cassio's cause, Othello agrees to speak with Cassio and then asks her to leave him alone for a while. Iago inquires about Cassio's familiarity with Desdemona, and Othello reveals that Cassio was often in their company during their courtship. Othello asks Iago to express his thoughts, even if they are vile. Iago warns Othello to beware of jealousy and suggests observing Desdemona with Cassio. He contends that many Venetian women are deceiving, using Desdemona's elopement as an example of her past deception to her father Brabantio. Othello oscillates between doubt and certainty regarding Desdemona, and Iago leaves him to grapple with his thoughts. Desdemona appears to inform Othello that the dinner is ready and the guests are waiting for him. Othello, however, tells her that he has been suffering with headache, and as Desdemona attempts to soothe him by wiping his brow with handkerchief, which he pushes away, causing it to drop. Emilia takes the handkerchief, and when Iago arrives, she mentions having it, which he instantly takes from her. After some time, Othello meets Iago and demands more concrete proof of Desdemona's infidelity. Iago claims to have seen Cassio wiping his beard with the handkerchief. Othello is enraged when he listens that Desdemona has given the handkerchief to Cassio and determines to take revenge of it; Iago also promises him that he will assist him to work out his revenge. The discussion then turns to Michael Cassio who needs to be killed.

Scene IV begins with Desdemona who inquires of Cassio to a clown with the intention to inform him that Othello is ready to consider his case. She expresses her concern about the whereabouts of her handkerchief, and Emilia, unaware of its location, responds negatively. Meanwhile Othello comes and demands the handkerchief as he has been suffering with a cold. However, Desdemona replies that

she does not have presently the handkerchief triggering Othello's displeasure. In frustration, he berates her, while Emilia suggests that jealousy might be the cause. Desdemona denies knowing Othello to be a jealous man. Iago and Cassio join the scene, and Cassio requests Desdemona to hasten Othello's forgiveness. Desdemona points out the unusual behaviour of Othello and advises Cassio to wait for a while. Iago asks about Othello's mood and departs to find him. Desdemona speculates that something is troubling Othello and supposes that she is not the cause of his unusual mood. She then sets off along with Emilia to locate Othello so that she can prove that she is not guilty. Meanwhile, Bianca enters and questions Cassio about his lack of contact for a week. Cassio, preoccupied with pressing matters, hands her the handkerchief. She expresses her displeasure as she believes that the handkerchief is probably given to him by another woman. However, Cassio explains that he got it in his chamber and requests her to make the copy of the strawberry design.

Act IV

Scene I of Act IV opens at the castle of Othello where Iago skilfully paints a vivid picture of alleged deception of Desdemona to Othello, ultimately causing him to succumb to overwhelming emotions, who then falls into a trance. Cassio finds Othello in trance and expresses his concern about Othello's condition. Iago deceitfully informs Cassio that Othello is experiencing an epileptic fit and will speak with him later. When Othello regains consciousness, Iago updates him that Cassio had been there when he was in fit and he will come again. Advising Othello to conceal himself, Iago encourages him to observe Cassio's reactions as Iago engages in conversation with him. When Cassio returns, Iago initiates a discussion about Bianca, but Othello, misled by his suspicions, believes Cassio is speaking about Desdemona, fuelling his rage. Bianca then appears arguing about the handkerchief Cassio has given her to copy that leads Othello to be sure about Desdemona's infidelity and take vow to revenge of it. Meanwhile a sound of trumpet is heard indicating the arrival of Lodovico bearing the letters from the Duke of Venice. The letters carry the message that Othello should return to Venice and Cassio should be appointed as a Governor of Cyprus. Desdemona welcomes this news, but an infuriated Othello strikes her. Lodovico, astonished by Othello's abrupt change, seeks an explanation of Othello's behaviour.

Scene II is set in the castle where Othello questions Emilia about any suspicious occurrences she may have observed between Desdemona and Cassio. Emilia faithfully defends that Desdemona is a honest and dutiful wife; so he instructs her to

inform Desdemona that he is calling. When Emilia departs, Othello expresses that the woman like Emilia should not be trusted. At the moment, Emilia re-enters with Desdemona to whom Othello accuses as whore that leads her to be confused as she is not guilty of any infidelity. She desires to learn what happened to Othello to call her whore; hence, she asks Emilia to fetch Iago. As Emilia enters with Iago, Desdemona requests him to show her way to get back Othello. Iago answers that Othello is disturbed with the matters of the state and leaves. He then meets Roderigo who expresses his frustration due to continuous failures of Iago's plans to get Desdemona. Iago takes this opportunity to further involve Roderigo in a new plot to assassinate Cassio before Othello departs from Cyprus.

Scene III of the Act IV begins with Othello who takes Lodovico out of the castle while instructing Desdemona to prepare the bed and ask Emilia to leave as he is going to return very soon. Sensing an unease in the air, Desdemona sings a poignant "willow song" that speaks of forsaken love and death. Desdemona is intrigued with the melancholic melody of the song and questions Emilia about whether there are women who deceive their husbands. Emilia acknowledges the existence of such women. Desdemona becomes curious and questions further to Emilia about whether she would deceive her husband. Emilia clarifies that she wouldn't do so for minor profits but might consider it if it meant elevating her husband to kingship. Desdemona vehemently asserts that she would never deceive Othello. At this moment, Emilia shares her views that women often betray their husbands when they are neglected or their husbands become insensitive.

Act V

Scene I of Act V opens on a street in Cyprus, where Iago instructs Roderigo to remain hidden in a bush on a road from where Cassio will pass by. When, after a while, Cassio is going from there; Roderigo attacks him but Cassio manages to survive and in reply wounds him. Iago seizes the opportunity and stabs in Cassio's leg who cries in pain. Othello, who hears the cry of Cassio, thinks that Iago has kept his promise by killing Cassio. Lodovico and Gratiano enter amidst the chaos, noting the distressful cries emanating from the street. Following them, Iago emerges and questions them about the confusion and who needs help. Cassio then appears and others recognize him, who then tells that a person who injured him is nearby in the area. Roderigo, in desperate need of help, cries out, but Iago hurriedly kills him. Bianca enters the scene during the turmoil and Iago blames her that she is involved in the plot. Iago calls for a litter to transport deceased Roderigo and wounded Cassio.

Emilia enters at this moment and demands to know what has been happening. Iago informs her that Roderigo and others attacked Cassio where Roderigo is killed whereas others managed to escape from the scene. He further tells her that the incident is the consequences of immoral behaviour. He then asks Emilia to investigate where Cassio had dined that evening. When Bianca admits that he was with her, Iago suggests that she will need to provide an explanation.

Scene II of the Act V is located in the bedchamber of Othello who enters and stares at sleeping Desdemona. He is captivated by her beauty in such a way that he almost cancels his plan of killing her. He kisses her in the bed that wakes her; so he questions her whether she has prayed tonight. He then begins to blame her of infidelity and demands an explanation about the handkerchief he has given her. Desdemona denies any romantic involvement with Cassio and also rejects the charge of giving Cassio handkerchief. Othello does not believe in her explanations and tells her that he himself has seen Cassio with the said handkerchief. Desdemona suggests that he should ask Cassio where he had found the handkerchief, but Othello declares Cassio's death. Desdemona laments for the death of Cassio leading Othello to smother her with pillow. At this moment, Emilia comes with the news that Cassio is wounded in a fight with Roderigo who is killed. Othello understands that something has been wrong when he learns that Cassio is alive. Desdemona, dying, cries out, and Othello confesses to murder her. Emilia questions Othello about his motive, and he directs her to Iago for information on Desdemona's deception. Emilia does not believe in Othello and cries leading Iago, Gratiano and Montano to rush in the chamber. Emilia questions Iago whether he had told Othello about Desdemona's infidelity; and he replies that it is the fact. Emilia blames Iago for telling lies and leading Othello to murder her. Iago commands her to leave, but she refuses to obey him any longer. Gratiano deems Brabantio's death fortunate, as witnessing Desdemona's demise would have definitely killed him. Othello tells that Desdemona had extra-marital affair with Cassio and, as evidence, explains that she had given him the handkerchief. Emilia interferes at this moment and reveals that she has stolen the handkerchief from Desdemona as Iago urged her to do so. Enraged, Othello tries to attack Iago, but Montano stops Othello and takes his weapons. Iago takes this opportunity, stabs Emilia and flees from there; hence Montano and Gratiano pursue him. Lodovico and Montano return with Cassio and Iago. Othello wounds Iago with a sword in chamber but is soon unarmed. Lodovico discloses Iago's admission that he has planned to kill Cassio and accuses Othello. Othello asks Cassio for the

forgiveness, who replies that he has never given a reason to Othello because the handkerchief is purposefully left in his room by Iago. Lodovico dismisses Othello from his position and hands over the charge of Cyprus to Cassio. In the end of the play, Othello requests a moment, stabs himself with a concealed weapon, collapses on Desdemona, and dies.

1.3.2 Analysis of the Play:

The play *Othello* is one of the greatest dark tragedies ever produced in the history of the world literature. It differs from other great tragedies of Shakespeare such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* where supernatural elements work to create terror and evoke the atmosphere of dirge, and *King Lear* which unveils the profound psychological derangement through the insanity and fury of Lear. The kingdom is neither at the centre of attraction for the protagonist nor is any political interest. Rather, he deliberately directs his focus toward personal rather than public life, emphasizing Othello's descent into obsession, occurring predominantly in private – a secretive struggle known only to Othello and Iago finally resulting in the murder of Desdemona. Described as a domestic comedy gone awry, its tragedy unfolds as the contented personal lives of the General and his bride are annihilated by the malevolence of a single discontented man. Despite its intimate scale, *Othello* remains profoundly social, highlighting the crucial human quality of trust, a binding force within society. The play's central motif is jealousy that emerges as an especially venomous manifestation of interpersonal disbelief. The tragedy in *Othello* lies in the noble protagonist losing faith and succumbing to a bestial frenzy, resulting in the destruction of love and life, evoking horror in the audience and deep pity for Desdemona.

The central force in the play *Othello* revolves around the shifting attitude of Othello toward Desdemona. Initially, the couple is content, portrayed as mature lovers defending their elopement in the third scene of first act, their passion that encompasses both spiritual and sexual dimensions, having mutual understanding, who rely on self-knowledge and take decisions. However, the weakness in Othello shatters this happiness as trust converts into jealousy and eventually jealousy turns into a murderous hatred under Iago's influence. At the same time, his belief in his ensign remains unshakable till he is exposed in the end of the play. Iago succeeds in manipulating Othello and changing his views towards love, who then begins to see love totally from the perspective of Iago. In a way, Desdemona and Iago are the representatives of two sides in the character of Othello – Desdemona represents the

loving aspect of society which is responsible to foster social cohesion in the personality of Othello, whereas, Iago unveils the darkest side, in Othello's nature, of a man whose passions are centred around his ego. Although, honesty, love and trust emerge as a dominant force as Othello learns purity and goodness in the character of Desdemona, and Iago is accused for villainy in the end of the play, evil forces dominate the action throughout the play.

The relations between Othello and Desdemona as well as between Othello and Iago depend upon the motif of belief and trust which is eventually destroyed as the action of the plot proceeds. Othello is placed between two opposite forces – Desdemona who symbolizes unconditional and pure love and Iago who lacks trust in love and is prejudiced. As a result, the play is closely related with the traditional Morality Plays where the protagonist is torn between angel and devil, each of whom demands the total submission of the protagonist. In the play, Iago represents devil whereas Desdemona represents angel who unfortunately accepts her undeserved fate echoing the themes of Christian love and the submission to the will of God.

The play continually directs attention to its dominant theme – jealous mistrust – through Othello's parallel relationships with Desdemona and Iago. The other characters stand far away in terms of establishing these relationships with Othello. It can be evidenced as Othello's credulity is foreshadowed in Roderigo's victimization through the hands of Iago in the opening scene. In the same way, Cassio's transformation from distrust to trust mirrors the main plot's development. Cassio's appreciation of Desdemona's virtues contrasts with Othello's declining perception, while her admiration of Cassio ironically comments on Othello's misguided opinion of Iago.

The relationships between Othello and Desdemona should be evaluated with the relationships between two further couples, i.e. the relationships between Cassio and Bianca and the relationships between Iago and Emilia. Although Cassio is not married with Bianca, their relations seem to demand honesty and determination which can be witnessed when Bianca becomes jealous as Cassio hands her the handkerchief and asks to copy the design. She thinks that it has been gifted to Cassio by another woman and hence she refuses to copy it. Furthermore, Iago also considers Bianca in the place of Desdemona to mislead Othello subsequently leading Cassio to reveal the loving relations between them. In addition to it, Bianca's complaint that Cassio is neglecting her shows the passionate relations she expects which makes her feel jealous that also establishes parallel between the feelings of Othello and Bianca.

The relation between Iago and Emilia puts forth another angle as, even after their marriage, their relations lack love; rather Iago seems to be jealous of Emilia as he suspects Emilia's infidelity. He is suspicious that Emilia probably has sexual relations with either Othello which is revealed in the third scene of first act or with Cassio as he tells in the first scene of second act. Iago's plot can be justified up to certain extent only when his suspicion of his wife's adultery with Othello is considered. Probably this suspicion is the result of the affectionless relations between Iago and Emilia. Hence, Emilia's statements in the third scene of fourth act is quite revealing in this context as she states in response to Desdemona's question that adultery is the weapon woman has against the bad husband. She also comments that she does not have any objection to have extra-marital relations if it is going to give her or her husband maximum profit. Her attitude possibly works as a motif of jealousy for Iago which is again the reason of distrust or disbelief in their relations. Thus, the relationships between the three couples show the human nature.

Iago's jealousy holds significant implications, suggesting that when he deceives Othello, he is essentially projecting his own psychic sickness. Apart from a merely sexual context, Iago's motivations stem largely from envy, a jealous perception that others possess advantages over him. He is afraid of other characters in the play, and specifically Desdemona, with their free and virtuous natures, that may highlight his own perceived insignificance. Othello's constant, noble, loving nature becomes intolerable to Iago, who acknowledges Cassio's daily beauty, deeming it a reflection that makes him feel ugly. In response, he proposes to use Desdemona's goodness as a net to ensnare them all. He fabricates an imaginary love affair, suggesting its longstanding existence, while the marriage of Othello and Desdemona is only a matter of few hours before they depart for Cyprus on separate ships; while Cassio makes his passage on a third ship. The spatio-temporal order dedicated to the development is only of two days as Othello spends his first night with his wife and kills her on the second night. Within this short, unrealistic time period, the unbearable tension is created in the play which is possible only with the device of, as critics call it, 'double time.' The 'double time' effectively brings together the events far beyond human senses and makes possible the development of the play in two directions which can be experienced when Iago masks his intentions while asking Cassio how often and how long he made love with Desdemona in the first scene of fourth act. Later in the second scene of fifth act, Othello refers to this manipulative presentation to open the infidelity of Desdemona with Cassio and justify his act of

murdering her. He tells Emilia that Cassio had made love a thousand times with Desdemona and gives the handkerchief as the evidence. At this moment Emilia exposes the wicked intentions of her husband who has requested her hundred times to steal the handkerchief from Desdemona and throws light on the fact that Othello has been acquainted with Desdemona for a year or two implying that he must know the character of Desdemona. If Desdemona and Cassio had made love for numbers of time, then Othello would have got an opportunity before they arrive to Cyprus to suspect and know the reality; but Othello fails to go beyond the surface reality and see the truth. Furthermore, he has trusted only Iago and looked at other characters totally from Iago's point of view. Thus, the 'double plot' effectively masks this incongruity in the events through strategic references hinting at a different time frame. These hints maintain a convincing illusion of more extensive occurrences than would be realistically possible.

However, 'double time' is impractical for exposition of the play as the first act is performed in real-time frame in Venice, and marks a difference from the rest of the play. The first act introduces the characters and their world in the realistic circumstances, avoiding the compression of events before the main action begins. The playwright takes a liberty here to sketch the characters – their appearance, mannerisms, nature, and relation with other characters – in more precise and realistic way. As a result, the character of Iago is painted with minute details through his interactions with Roderigo in first and third scene of first act, the lies he presents in the second scene of first act and the final soliloquy providing enough time to present his wicked nature and malevolent intention that also helps to establish a setting for further developments in the plot. Act first also sets the background of Othello establishing his position in the Venetian Senate as well as in the society as highly dignified General, placing him in the crucial role with which he meets to his downfall. The reaction of Desdemona's father to his daughter's marriage makes clear that Venetian city is full with racist society that hates the decedents of African-Caribbean people. Brabantio's derogatory remarks points out the impossibility to believe that Desdemona loves a thing like Othello presenting the unconditional rule in Venice where there is no possibility of white woman in love with a non-Venetian man of mixed origins. Furthermore, the influences of commercial values that do not consider the well-being of people are clearly visible in the character of Iago who not only exploits Roderigo's degraded view of love as a commodity but also exploits him financially. The commercial attitude of Iago and Roderigo is also seen when they

inject the furious Brabantio with the racist remarks like ‘old black ram,’ ‘Barbary horse’ and ‘lascivious Moor’ in the first scene of the first act. The reflections of this racist attitude are soon visible when Brabantio comments in the second scene of first act that Desdemona has sacrificed herself to the ‘general mock’ by choosing a black man as her husband revealing the prejudices of the white people. As a result, the Venetian society, satirized for its mercantile values, fails to appreciate Othello’s virtues, leaving the General isolated in a society that questions his mixed marriage and lacking the reassurance of a respectable social position to temper the fear of rejection fuelling his jealousy.

Although the city of Venice is full of greed and racism, another angle of the city should also be considered here as it will make the difference between Venice and Cyprus where Iago succeeds to work out his plan. The society in Venice represents trust and cooperation which is clearly evident in the third scene of first act where the Duke of Venice arrives at the consensus on the issue of Turkish threat after the deliberation with his Senate member. It is in the meeting held in the Senate where they decided to send the General to defend Cyprus against Turkish attack. Similarly the Senate has also given an opportunity to Othello to present his side against the charges of Brabantio. As Othello presents his genuine love for Desdemona who also supports him, they collectively decide that Othello is innocent and appoint him as the General of the Army to be sent to defend Cyprus. Brabantio also respects the collective judgment and agrees with the final decision made in the Senate. Overall, Venice appears less conducive to Iago’s schemes. On the other hand, Cyprus is isolated from such socio-political influences that will free Othello from the manipulations of Iago. This isolated setting also makes Desdemona alienated leaving her without any resource with whom she can interact or seek advice for her un-comprehended situations. The truth is revealed in Cyprus only with the representatives from Venice. Thus, the play ends with the re-establishments of social order by unfolding the truth and arresting Iago for his wicked plans, ultimately removing evil from the society.

1.3.3 Check Your Progress:

1. _____ informs Brabantio about his daughter’s elopement.
a. Roderigo b. Cassio c. Iago d. Gratiano
2. _____ summons Othello to a meeting with the Duke of Venice.

- a. Roderigo b. Cassio c. Iago d. Gratiano
3. _____ assures Roderigo that Desdemona will soon grow weary of Othello.
- a. Brabantio b. Cassio c. Iago d. Gratiano
4. Scene I of Act II opens in _____
- a. Venice b. Sagittary c. Cyprus d. Sea
5. _____ reveals his suspicion of Emilia's infidelity with Othello.
- a. Iago b. Cassio c. Roderigo d. Desdemona
6. _____ delivers the message of Othello regarding a feast to celebrate the defeat of Turkish fleet and his recent marriage with Desdemona.
- a. Roderigo b. Cassio c. Iago d. Herald
7. _____ informs Cassio that Othello has released them early on the night of celebration.
- a. Iago b. Bianca c. Emilia d. Desdemona
8. _____ thinks to inform Othello about the drinking habit of Cassio.
- a. Roderigo b. Montano c. Emilia d. Bianca
9. Cassio threatens _____ verbally and then engages in dual with him.
- a. Roderigo b. Iago c. Montano d. a gentleman
10. Cassio approaches _____ to intimate Emilia his desire to meet Desdemona.
- a. Iago b. clown c. a gentleman d. Bianca
11. _____ steals the handkerchief of Desdemona.
- a. Iago b. Cassio c. Bianca d. Emilia
12. _____ denies knowing Othello to be a jealous man.
- a. Desdemona b. Emilia c. Cassio d. Montano
13. A sound of trumpet in the first scene of fourth act indicates the arrival of _____
- a. Othello b. Lodovico c. Brabantio d. Gratiano

14. _____ stabs in Cassio's leg.
a. Iago b. Roderigo c. Montano d. Gratiano
15. _____ stops Othello attacking Iago.
a. Cassio b. Lodovico c. Montano d. Gratiano

1.4 Analysis of Major Characters:

Othello:

Othello is the protagonist of the play. He is a Moor, a black person of mixed origin. He is a noble man having influences as well as respect in Venice for his valour in his profession. It seems that he is enjoying his success and the higher officers are in his favour including the Duke of Venice. He is General and the Commander in the army of Venice who has been later appointed as the Governor of Cyprus. As the play opens, he has been secretly marrying Desdemona. It seems that probably he is aware of his race and the fact that despite being a reputed soldier he will not be accepted in the Venetian Society because of his non-Venetian belonging or his African ethnicity. His marriage to Desdemona also reflects his ability to transcend racial and social boundaries. Although Desdemona has a number of suitors in Venice, she has chosen him as her husband; and as a result, her father accuses him of using black magic to win the favours of Desdemona. However he has proved that he has pure and genuine feelings for Desdemona and he truly loves her. Desdemona also supports him in front of the Duke of Venice and says that her sympathy for him has been turned into love; therefore, she is naturally attracted towards him.

Othello has been appointed as an In-charge of the mission set to defend Cyprus against the Turkish fleet. Immediately, he leaves for Cyprus with his newly wed wife on separate ships; and everything seems to work in favour of him. He has reached Cyprus safely in the storm that has also destroyed the Turkish army in the sea. He and Desdemona become a loving couple expressing themselves more openly and behaving in a less formal way than they seem to be in Venice. He even decides to celebrate their victory over the Turkish army as well as his recent marriage and offers a party to his soldiers. He demonstrates self-control and confidence when the celebration has been disturbed with the unexpected fight between Cassio and Montano. He reveals his heroic qualities when he comments on the fight in the third scene of the second act that the person, whose soul is light, is responsible for his own

rage and dies because of his own act. It seems that he is the type of man who will act first and then ask the question.

There seems to be a perfect mutual understanding between Othello and Desdemona; Othello loves Desdemona passionately and she gives respect to all his decisions. However, Othello's trust begins to shake with his confidence as he has been immune to Iago who starts manipulating him with the picture that Desdemona has extra marital relations with Cassio. Initially, Othello shows his faith in his wife as he says that he will not be jealous if other men feel attracted towards his wife's beauty, because she has chosen him as her husband. He becomes a victim of Iago's thoughts and begins to question himself how a black person like him will be loved by a beautiful woman like Desdemona and how long she will love him. Iago reminds him that she has deceived Brabantio, her father; so he begins to think that his deception is inevitable because he is black, older than his wife and does not have the courtly charm that keeps her attracted towards him. He begins to believe that all Venetian women are unfaithful; therefore, it is certain that Desdemona will deceive him.

Othello has been injected with many insinuations that turn into a jealous rage. The trick of handkerchief works more than all other events that Iago provides as evidence of Desdemona's infidelity. He has given his handkerchief as a present to Desdemona – a token of his love which she should never lose or separate from herself. However, he is misguided that Desdemona actually has given the handkerchief to Cassio as a symbol of her love. He begins to consider the handkerchief as the physical evidence of his wife's infidelity. As a result, he repeatedly refers it to Desdemona before killing her and she repeatedly denies that she has given the handkerchief to Cassio and even tries to suggest that probably Cassio has found it somewhere. She even urges him to question Cassio about it, but her pleading becomes useless as he is fully convinced of her unfaithfulness and smothers her in the bed. When Emilia asks him the reason, he tells her that Desdemona has paid for her infidelity. However, in the end, he understands that he has been deceived not by Desdemona but by Iago and provoked to kill the innocent Desdemona. His final words reveal his understanding that Desdemona has loved him deeply. With a concealed weapon, he kills himself and dies in regret.

Thus, Othello's tragic flaw is his susceptibility to jealousy. His intense love for Desdemona is overshadowed by his irrational jealousy, which is fuelled by Iago's manipulation. His inability to control this destructive emotion leads him to doubt

Desdemona's faithfulness and, ultimately, to commit a heinous act. His jealousy becomes the driving force behind the tragic murder of Desdemona. Upon discovering the truth about Iago's deceit, Othello is overcome with guilt and grief, leading him to take his own life.

Desdemona:

Desdemona is another central, complex and multifaceted character in the play. She is the daughter of Brabantio, a Venetian nobleman, and belongs to upper class society. She is a young, virtuous and beautiful woman who falls in love with Othello, a Moorish General in the Venetian army. She is trusting and pure-hearted, and her love for Othello is genuine and unconditional. Her decision to marry Othello without her father's consent is a bold and unconventional move that sets the stage for the unfolding tragedy.

It seems that Desdemona is a kind of sophisticated and educated girl for whom a number of suitors are waiting to marry. Roderigo is one of these suitors who have been denied the access of Brabantio's house for his eyes on Desdemona. However, her decision to marry Othello incites disapproval from not only her father Brabantio but also from Iago and Roderigo. As a result, Iago injects Roderigo about the love of Othello and Desdemona with the images of animal lust and sends him to intimate Brabantio who then accuses Othello of using black magic to convince his daughter to submit herself to a thing like him. Yet, Desdemona shows courage and tells before the Senate that they have been truly in love with each other. She re-confirms the account that Othello was occasionally invited to the house of Brabantio to tell the story of his adventures. But, most of the time, the Senator was called to attend his duties with some other guests leaving Othello unfinished with his story. As a result Desdemona could not listen to the stories of Othello being at foreign places and the adventures he faced. As she becomes charmed with the adventurous stories, Othello tells her the whole story on another occasion. She begins to feel sympathy for the adventures of Othello and her pity turns into love. She confesses her love for his perilous experiences, and he reciprocates, expressing admiration for her compassion.

Desdemona is a dutiful wife who follows her husband to Cyprus. Her father is not going to permit her to stay with him in absence of his son-in-law as she has married Othello against his desires. Therefore, she decides to accompany Othello on his mission; who in response makes the further arrangements: asks Iago to take his wife Emilia as Desdemona's attendant and look for their safe passage to Cyprus. Her

love and care for Othello is seen when she becomes restless due to the unexpected tempest in which the ship of Othello is trapped. After reaching there, she runs to Cassio to see whether Othello has been safely reached or not, who in reply assures her of Othello's safety. Her concerns for her husband are also seen when Othello tells her that he is suffering with headache and she tries to relieve him from the pains. However, her simplicity, innocence and inability to fully comprehend the socio-political complexities around her lead her to be punished for the crime which she has not committed at all. Some critics criticise her innocent nature to prove her ability of deception as she deceived her father with her elopement with a man who is not liked by her father. These critics also comment that she has the capacity to manipulate and control the situation which can be evidenced in the comments of Iago who says that now his General's wife is a General pointing that Desdemona has controlled Othello. Iago exploits Desdemona's perceived capacity of deception to weave a web of deceit that seals her tragic fate.

Desdemona becomes the victim of Iago's intrigue who wants to take revenge of his unfulfilled desire on his General. Iago manipulates Othello's thoughts and Desdemona fails to understand the racial tensions that surround her relationship with Othello. Othello begins to see her character from the perspective of Iago and thinks that she has romantic relations with Cassio. She is suspected of infidelity with the continuous manipulations of her husband that reaches to the height when Iago misleads Othello to listen to Cassio confessing when, how and how many times he has loved Desdemona. As a result, Othello is convinced of Desdemona's unfaithfulness and goes in a trance; but he demands more concrete proof leading Iago to request his wife Emilia to steal the handkerchief of Desdemona which can be presented as a proof.

Desdemona's inability to convince Othello of her faithfulness becomes her tragic flaw in the course of the play. Emilia steals her handkerchief which has been fallen on ground when Othello hits her in a rage. Iago plants it in the room of Cassio and then tells Othello that Desdemona has gifted his token of love to Cassio. On the other hand, unable to understand Othello's fury, she tries to seek the help of Iago to know the cause of Othello's indifferent behaviour. Iago easily deceives her by telling that Othello is disturbed with some pressing issues of the state. Anyhow, she has an idea that her husband is suspecting of her faithfulness and asks Emilia whether there live such women who have extra-marital affairs. Emilia tells her that there are such women; and even she will deceive her husband not for trivial cause but for the big

deal. However, Desdemona tells Emilia that she will not be unfaithful to Othello even if for the greater reward. Later Othello asks Desdemona about the handkerchief and she honestly replies that she has lost it; but he accuses her of giving it to Cassio. She attempts to tell him that she has not presented it to Cassio and he should ask Cassio where he has found it, but Othello does not believe in her wife anymore; rather he is sure of her infidelity. She fails to prove her purity and innocence to him who has been looking at the surface realities and trusting only Iago.

As Othello contemplates Desdemona's death, he echoes Iago's suggestion that she must die to prevent further betrayal. In the eyes of Iago and Othello, Desdemona's purity is only attainable in death, where desire no longer poses a threat to men. Emilia enters after Othello smothers Desdemona and asks her who has done this. Dying Desdemona replies that she herself is responsible for her death and Othello should not be blamed proving her selfless and genuine love for Othello as well as her forgiving nature. Thus, Desdemona's tragic fate is sealed when she becomes entangled in the web of deceit spun by Iago. Misunderstandings and manipulation lead Othello to believe that Desdemona has been unfaithful, which ultimately results in her untimely death. She is often seen as a symbol of purity and fidelity. Her innocence becomes a tragic contrast to the deceit and jealousy that surround her. The handkerchief is a significant symbol in the play that represents her fidelity and becomes a key element in the unfolding tragedy.

Iago:

Iago is one of Shakespeare's most complex and cunning villains. He serves as an Ensign (a lower-ranking officer) in the Venetian army and harbours a deep-seated resentment and jealousy towards Othello, the Moorish General. He spoils the character of Cassio and leads him to be discredited not only from his post but in the eyes of Othello, uses Roderigo financially as well as emotionally and then kills him to keep himself safe, convinces Othello of Desdemona's infidelity and puts into action his unnecessary plan to destroy the lives of people around him.

Iago is an experienced soldier in Venetian army who has fought various battles under the leadership of Othello, especially at the fields of Rhodes and Cyprus. He seems to be very close to Othello as he expects to be deputed on the post of Lieutenant after Othello appointed as the General of Venetian army. Furthermore, the close relationships between Othello and Iago are clearly seen as Othello trusts Iago more than any other person in his life including his dearest and loving wife.

However, Iago seems to be furious on Othello from the beginning of the play for not being posted as Lieutenant; rather he has been appointed on the post of ensign, which is less significant. He feels that he does not deserve such inferior treatment from Othello for the kind of service he has done for him over the years. Hence, as he tells Roderigo, he desires to take the revenge of it on Othello.

Iago is a master manipulator and strategist. His ability to manipulate others, especially Othello, is a central aspect of his character. Iago's cunning nature allows him to plan a series of events that lead to tragic consequences. His primary motivation is his intense envy of others, particularly Othello. He not only resents Othello for promoting Cassio over him but also suspects that Othello has had an affair with his wife, Emilia. This envy fuels his malicious schemes. He skilfully deceives the other characters, exploiting their weaknesses and manipulating their emotions. He uses lies, insinuations, and forged evidence to create doubt and discord. He uses the affections of Roderigo promising to help him to win Desdemona and uses him financially and emotionally. In the opening scene of the first act, he paints the thoughts of Roderigo regarding the love of Othello and Desdemona with the lustful imagery and sends him to the house of Brabantio to inform him about the elopement of his daughter with the Moor. Iago's manipulations work in such a way that Brabantio accuses Othello for using his black magic to win Desdemona. Iago plays with the feelings of Roderigo assuring him that Desdemona will definitely turn to him as she will fed up of Othello in the course of time and then asks him to keep his purse ready signifying his intentions to use him financially.

Iago's manipulation is calculated and strategic, reflecting a Machiavellian approach to achieving his goals. He notices the courteous way Cassio greets Desdemona when they arrive at Cyprus and determines to use these informal and friendly relations between Cassio and Desdemona in his plan. He knows the weakness of Cassio and plots his demotion leading him to drink excessively and entangle in unnecessary fight. He cunningly suggests Cassio to seek Desdemona's help to present his case in front of Othello to regain his position as well as prestige. He also promises Cassio that he will make arrangements to keep him alone in the company of Desdemona so that he can show his regret on his behaviour and ask her to plead on his behalf to Othello. He intentionally brings back Othello knowing that Cassio will run away seeing Othello returned and then points out something unusual in the way Cassio departs, sowing the seeds of suspicion. Othello begins to believe in the unfaithfulness of Desdemona as Iago highlights seemingly innocent incidents,

referring Desdemona's past elopement and the differences in their age, colour, and social status. He injects Othello with his constant words that Venetian women are always deceitful and they turn to other men when they are fed up with their husband. He tells that Cassio will himself reveal his love for Desdemona and instructs Othello to hide himself and listen to their conversation. He skilfully asks Cassio first about his meeting with Desdemona and then about his love relations with Bianca in such a way that Othello begins to believe that Cassio is talking about his love for Desdemona. The handkerchief becomes Iago's final tool to intensify Othello's suspicions and further his devious agenda. He asks Emilia to steal the handkerchief from Desdemona, plants it in the room of Cassio and then informs Othello that Desdemona has gifted the handkerchief to Cassio providing Othello a concrete proof of Desdemona's infidelity.

The baseless jealousy Iago has for Othello is, in a way, similar to the jealousy Othello feels for Desdemona leading both the characters to develop parallel features of their personality. Othello fears of being rejected because of his age, colour and ethnicity; and, in the same way, Iago feels humiliated as he has been rejected from the post of Lieutenant. Similarly, like Othello, Iago suspects of the adultery of Emilia with Othello and is jealous. Furthermore, both feel excluded from upper-class Venetian society. However, Iago lacks a moral compass and engages in deceit and manipulation without remorse. He is driven purely by a desire for revenge and personal gain, leading him to be a morally ambiguous character. Further, his relationships are marked by manipulation and betrayal which differentiates him from Othello. He exploits the trust of characters like Othello, Cassio, and Roderigo for his own purposes. Even his relationship with his wife, Emilia, is tainted by manipulation and mistreatment which sets him apart from Othello. In the end of the play, his evil plan is exposed and he is arrested, but he chooses to be unspoken when Othello questions him. Thus, Iago's character is pivotal to the thematic exploration of jealousy, betrayal, and the destructive power of manipulation. His actions drive the tragic events of the play, making him a central figure in the unravelling of the characters' fates.

Cassio:

Michael Cassio is a young and honourable Lieutenant in the Venetian army. He serves under Othello, the Moorish General, and plays a significant role in unfolding the events of the play. He is depicted as a man of honour and virtue. He is loyal to Othello and conducts himself with professionalism and integrity on and off the

battlefield. He is great arithmetician, but as Iago presents, he is a person who has no practical battlefield experience and solely relies on theoretical knowledge. He is a sociable and charming character, capable to find his own way in different social situations. His friendly and amiable nature makes him well-liked by his peers, but it also becomes a source of vulnerability when manipulated by Iago. He is loyal to his General and expresses genuine concern for Othello's well-being. It can be evidenced when he thinks of Othello's safety in his voyage to Cyprus during the tempest. His concern for Othello can also be seen as he expresses worry when Othello slips into a fit.

Cassio maintains a friendly and platonic relationship with Desdemona. They seem to share very informal relations which can be seen in their behaviour at Cyprus: Cassio greets Desdemona in a courteous way; and their subsequent engagement in playful jokes after Cassio assuring Othello's safety. However, this friendship becomes a point of contention and manipulation in Iago's schemes. Iago identifies the weakness of Cassio and tries to build his character in such a way that even Montano feels that Cassio's habit should be reported to the General. Hence, even though Cassio refuses to drink beyond his capacity at the time of celebration as he has been instructed to keep the watch that night, Iago persuades him to drink and sing delivering him the false message that Othello has asked them to retire early. As a result, his reputation is tarnished when he engages in a drunken brawl during Othello's wedding celebration.

Cassio becomes a pawn in Iago's plan to destroy Othello. Iago exploits Cassio's trusting nature and uses him as a tool to fuel Othello's jealousy. He drives Cassio to take the help of Desdemona to seek excuses from Othello and creates a suspicious scene with his lies that Cassio shares romantic relations with Desdemona. Jealous Othello takes it as the treachery of Cassio and determines to take the revenge of it. Thus, Cassio unknowingly involves in Iago's intricate plan, with his charm inadvertently reinforcing Othello's susceptibility to Iago's insinuations about Desdemona's desires. While he is ultimately not as severely affected as Othello and Desdemona, his character represents the collateral damage caused by Iago's manipulation.

Despite the challenges Cassio faces, he ultimately demonstrates resilience and integrity. He seeks redemption for his tarnished reputation and strives to do what is right, reflecting his underlying moral character. In the end of the play, he tells Othello that he has never given Othello any cause of complaint proving his

innocence and unquestionable devotion to Othello. Surviving an assassination attempt by Roderigo, Cassio earns distinction as Deputy Governor of Cyprus after Othello's return to Venice. Thus, Michael Cassio is a virtuous and honourable Lieutenant whose character is manipulated by Iago, leading to tragic consequences.

1.5 Major Themes in the Play:

1.5.1 The Role of Race in Othello:

Race plays a significant role in the play Othello. The critics of William Shakespeare pay attention to the historical developments so far in order to point out the role of race that places Othello, a black man, in white society. Although the ethnicity of Othello is trivial for some intellectuals, who consider its minor impact on the tragedy of Othello; there are some critics who claim that Othello is indirectly the victim of racial discrimination. These critics point out that though the Elizabethan society was not influenced by racial concerns in the way the modern society shows; there was definitely a feeling of superiority in the Elizabethan society than to the non European people. However, there is no direct proof of racial discrimination in Elizabethan society and these critics rely mostly on what they have analyzed through the treatment of these black characters during the period.

The first reference to the race of Othello is found in the first scene of first act when Roderigo calls Othello as a thick lip. Further, in the same scene, Iago refers to Othello as 'an old black ram' pointing to his ethnicity and placing him in the white society with reference to Desdemona who is called as 'white ewe.' The derogatory remarks of Iago are based on skin colour that establish a divisive standard for discriminating unnatural, black acts from natural ones.

The other characters in the play, except Iago and Roderigo, seem to be in favour of Othello as they do not have any disregard pertaining to the colour or race of Othello including Brabantio who occasionally invited Othello to his house. More than that Brabantio seems to be more conscious of Othello's race only when he is injected with the lustful animal imaginary of love between his daughter and Othello. Apart from it, Othello holds a significant position in the white Venetian society as a military champion who is appointed as the General in the army. It seems that he is aware of his military power that offers him dignity in the white society. In the third scene of the first act, he comments that he has served Venice for nearly seven years and presently he has not been on the battlefield for almost nine months, a ground which is necessary to maintain his identity.

Othello seems to be more conscious of his race with the manipulations of Iago, who continuously feels of being rejected due to his colour of skin. He thinks of his inferior status only because he does not have the charm like Cassio to attract forever the attention of his beloved. This inferiority complex leads him to be jealous and suspicious of his wife's infidelity.

According to some critics, the character of Othello has emerged as a stereotype in the play because blacks were always associated with black magic and witchcraft during the Shakespearean period. It can be witnessed in the play as Brabantio accuses him of using black magic to win the favours of Desdemona indicating that the love between them is not natural at all. Similarly, the way Othello provides an explanation about the significance of the handkerchief, for him, missing through the hands of Desdemona indicates that his mother was associated with black magic. However, the role of race is less explicit in the play; and, except a few instances, it has been a feeling created purposefully by Iago to take revenge of his unrequired jealousy. Race, therefore, plays a nuanced and multi-faceted role in *Othello*, intertwined with cultural, societal, and historical elements.

1.5.2 The Villainy of Iago:

Iago is cruel, cold-blooded and cunning villain who is totally responsible for the tragedy of Othello. He is rightly described in the end of the play as 'Spartan dog' by Lodovico, one of the respected Venetian noblemen. He is the representative of the Duke to Cyprus, who also happens to be a blood relative of Desdemona. He plays the role of a moral arbiter in the second scene of the fifth act. Lodovico calls Iago as a 'hellish villain' and supposes him totally responsible for the murder of Desdemona and the suicide of Othello. Iago's intentions to take revenge, his strategic calculations, manipulations of other characters as well as use of figurative language throughout the play places him next to the demonic activities of Satan. It can be witnessed in the third scene of the first act as he comments "for my wits and all the tribe of hell" while promising Roderigo that he will definitely get Desdemona. The use of figurative language can be observed throughout the play as he presents his thoughts with the words like "Divinity of hell" and "Burn like the mines of sulphur" projecting the picture in his mind. His heinous crime is finally identified even by Othello himself who call Iago "a devil" and wounds him in his attempt to kill him for such kind of acts.

Iago's motive for grudge against Othello in the play is somewhat ambiguous as the cause of his jealousy seems to be very trivial. In the beginning of the play he makes clear that he hates Othello for choosing Cassio as the Lieutenant and giving him the third position of ensign. According to him Cassio does not deserve the second in command post as he has only theoretical knowledge and no experience of battleground. Furthermore, he has also used the influence of three Venetian noblemen to convince Othello his suitability for the post of Lieutenant. He tells Roderigo that despite the recommendation of three noblemen, Othello overlooked him and promoted Cassio which is the reason of his hatredness towards Othello. In the end of the first scene of first act, his treacherous nature is revealed as he comments that he needs to show the sign of love towards Othello for the necessity of present life even though he hates him.

In order to take revenge, Iago proves that he is the only trusted man in the service of Othello. However, it should be also noted that Othello's simple nature and casual approach to everything makes him a "credulous fool," as Iago points it out, and "as ignorant as dirt." Iago takes the advantage of this weakness of Othello and becomes the most honest man in service. Yet, the opportunistic nature of Iago's plans, driven by circumstances rather than a grand design, distinguishes him from other villains of Shakespeare. His dependence on Roderigo's purse and lacking a master plan coupled with insecurities of Othello, susceptibility of Cassio and incomprehension of Desdemona somewhat weakens the quality of Iago's villainy. Furthermore, his actions, including stabbing Cassio and killing Emilia in a fit of rage, lack the strategic foresight typical of great villains.

Iago's cunning nature allows him to plan a series of events that lead to tragic consequences. He not only resents Othello for promoting Cassio over him but also suspects that Othello has had an affair with his wife, Emilia. He uses the affections of Roderigo promising to help him to win Desdemona and uses him both financially and emotionally. He sends Roderigo to the house of Brabantio to inform him about the elopement of his daughter with Othello. Iago's manipulations work in such a way that Brabantio accuses Othello for using his black magic to win Desdemona. Further, when they arrive at Cyprus, he notices the courteous way Cassio greets Desdemona and determines to use these informal and friendly relations between Cassio and Desdemona in his plan. He knows the weakness of Cassio and leads him to drink excessively and entangle in unnecessary fight. He cunningly suggests Cassio to seek Desdemona's help to present his case in front of Othello to regain his position. Then,

he intentionally brings back Othello in order to create a scene of suspicion. Othello begins to believe in the unfaithfulness of Desdemona as Iago highlights seemingly innocent incidents, referring Desdemona's past elopement and the differences in their age, colour, and social status. He injects Othello that Venetian women are deceitful and they turn to other men when they are fed up with their husband. He leads Othello to believe that Cassio and Desdemona share intimate relationships. The handkerchief becomes Iago's final tool to intensify Othello's suspicions and further his devious agenda. He asks Emilia to steal the handkerchief from Desdemona, plants it in the room of Cassio and then informs Othello that Desdemona has gifted the handkerchief to Cassio providing Othello a concrete proof of Desdemona's infidelity. Thus, Iago leads Othello to kill Desdemona and when his lies are discovered becomes the reason of Othello's suicide.

1.5.3 Deception in Othello:

Deception is another significant and recurrent theme in the play *Othello*. The intricacies of deception trigger emotional turmoil leading to create mental anguishes and psychological disturbances in the play. Iago occupies a central place in terms of deception as his manipulative schemes derive the other characters to face the tragic events in their lives. However, he is not the only character who uses deceitful tactics and strategies to secure personal gains. Although Othello is the victim of deception by Iago, he himself is involved in deception; but it's a kind of self-deception that leads him to his own destructions. Othello is conscious of his status as an outsider in the Venetian society. He knows that he is respected only because of his military powers which also grant him a new identity in the white society. It is this new identity that makes him comfortable in Venice and establishes his relationships not only in the Senate but also with his beloved. Before his marriage, he was not concerned about his ethnicity; but as Iago destructs his new identity and reminds him of his black origins, he begins to deceive himself providing fertile ground for Iago's insidious manipulation. He starts to think that Desdemona will desert him and turn to another man only because of his black origin creating an unnecessary jealousy in him.

Desdemona is another character, although depicted as innocent, who deceives her father. She is the daughter of Venetian nobleman, and belongs to upper class society. She is a well-educated, virtuous and beautiful girl. However, she falls in love with Othello, a Moorish General; and is probably aware of the impossibilities of their marriage. Therefore, she elopes with Othello and marries secretly against the wishes

of her father Brabantio. As a result, Brabantio accuses her for deceiving him and warns Othello to be aware of her as she has deceived her father and may deceive him also. Yet, Desdemona thereafter remains untouched by intrigue or deceit and embodies chaste beauty and unwavering commitment to Othello. Despite accusations of treachery, her love for Othello remains pure and honest. While her elopement may be viewed as a weak point, it is overshadowed by the overwhelming power of her love for Othello, making her the only character untouched by the web of deception that engulfs others.

Iago is a master of deception who projects an image of frankness and honesty to others while revealing his sinister thoughts secretly. Despite his seemingly unassailable confidence, he succumbs to jealousy, recognizing its corrosive effects on himself. His grandiose plans crumble due to unforeseen circumstances and the courage of his wife Emilia, exposing him as a petty human being rather than an archetypal villain. First of all, he deceives Roderigo by promising him that he will help Roderigo to gain his General's wife. He pretends that he is doing everything to help Roderigo and exploits him financially as well as emotionally. He also shows that he is a well wisher of Cassio and advises him to seek the help of Desdemona so that Othello may excuse him. However, it also should be noted that it is he who deceives Cassio to drink excessively and then spoils his character in front of Montano. He also deceives Desdemona when she needs his help to understand the indifferent behaviour of Othello and tells her that Othello is under tension due to some affairs of the state. He takes the advantage of Othello's trust and deceives him whenever he gets an opportunity. The secret marriage of Othello was only known to a few including Iago; but he deceives Othello and sends Roderigo to inform Brabantio about the elopement of his daughter. When they arrive at Cyprus, he deceives Othello by sowing the seeds of suspicion pointing the unusual way Cassio departs from Desdemona by seeing Othello. He then misguides Othello managing to reveal that Cassio has made love with Desdemona many times before. After it, he leads Othello to believe that Desdemona has gifted his token of love, the handkerchief, to Cassio. He also promises Othello that he will help Othello to take revenge of Desdemona's infidelity by killing Cassio and uses his trick by sending Roderigo to attack Cassio. Thus, deception emerges as a dominant theme and is significant in leading the action to tragic events.

1.5.4 The Women in *Othello*:

The role of women in the male dominated white society is revealed in the play through the characters of Desdemona, Emilia and Bianca who experience the hardships and rejections by their male partners. All the three women are dutiful wives devoted to their husbands and love them without any selfish cause. They remain loyal till the end and even when they are confronted by their husbands in the situations that are against them. There is also an emotional attachment between the women which is rarely seen in the relationships of men.

The husbands of Desdemona and Emilia belong to the military background: Desdemona is the wife of army General Othello and Emilia is the wife of an Ensign, a man in service of Othello. Similarly, Bianca's lover Cassio is also from military services working on the post of Lieutenant. Desdemona is recently married to Othello; and, therefore, has no experience of the military lives and tactics, despite her sophisticated elite class where she has been raised. Although, she is the daughter of Venetian nobleman in service of Venice state, she is far away from the ways of the world and affairs of the state. On the other hand, Emilia has the experience of some years of marriage and, hence, is aware of military ways that makes her cautious of her husband's strategies. It should also be noted that these two women – Desdemona and Emilia – are although introduced from the beginning of the play in touch with one another, Emilia's relationships with Desdemona or her psychology is not clear until the Willow scene in act four where her real feelings for Desdemona are reflected. In the third scene of fourth act, Desdemona is not able to comprehend the unexpected anger of Othello and tells Emilia that even in her husband's anger; she finds a grace and favour for her. She reveals her desire to Emilia that if she dies before her, Emilia should dress her in wedding sheets that are currently on the bed. Emilia does not pay much attention to Desdemona's thoughts thinking that may be a girlish talk; but, she continues telling her the willow song that she has learnt from the maid of her mother. It is at this moment both the women share intense relations where Emilia, while unpinning the hair clips as well as the gown of Desdemona, is placed in the role of mother preparing Desdemona like her daughter for her bed.

The scene creates close relations between Emilia and Desdemona leading them to generate their own space and revealing their inner workings. Shocked by the idea of women cheating on their husbands, Desdemona questions Emilia about the women who are unfaithful to their husbands. While Emilia attempts a light-hearted response, she acknowledges that Desdemona's view of love is romantic, emphasizing a serious

undertone. Emilia, speaking in blank verse, advocates for female equality, appealing to intangible qualities beyond social and financial ties. She suggests that if women lack fidelity and sensitivity from their partners, the partners cannot be surprised at women's reactions because it is the only way women can take revenge on their husband's harshness towards them. It is, in fact, Emilia's plea for relief from the double standards. It also seems that Emilia is aware that both she and Desdemona are away from their native place where there is no system that provides them support, status, or financial security. Hence, there are very little chances of their survival in the absence of their husbands which leads them to experience and tolerate bad treatment, sometimes leading them to be humiliated. In such situations, they find each other as the only way of consolation; which, of course, is not a possibility in case of the third woman of the play Bianca.

Bianca, a courtesan, who, like Desdemona, moved from Venice to Cyprus for Cassio; hence, she represents a worldly character who loves Cassio unconditionally. Venetian courtesans, renowned for their refined conduct, occasionally resembled noble wives. Thus, visually, there is no discernable difference between Desdemona and Bianca. Similar to Emilia, Bianca is honest and loves Cassio without reservation. There is mutual understanding between Bianca and Cassio; yet, Cassio does not trust Bianca which can be seen when Bianca wants to know the owner of the handkerchief and despite knowing its Desdemona's handkerchief, Cassio chooses not to tell Bianca about it. It should also be noted that Cassio has not informed Bianca about his dismissal from the post of Lieutenant, and he always attempts to hide his relations with her. Bianca is also aware of her identity as well as place in the male-oriented society. In the first scene of fourth act, Iago himself points out that Bianca is driven to prostitution because of her necessities for survival. But, Bianca is more honest than Emilia in a sense as Emilia lies about the handkerchief when she is asked by Desdemona that becomes the cause of her murder. On the other hand, Bianca refuses to copy the design of strawberry from the handkerchief reflecting her attachment to Cassio.

All the three women are disrespected by their respective male partners. Othello disrespects Desdemona's love and genuine feelings with the suspicion of his wife's fidelity leading him finally to murder her. Iago always disrespects Emilia as he is suspicious of her adultery with Othello; and he has also never cared for her, so she thinks to deceive him for the sake of great reward which she ultimately gets in the end of the play as Iago stabs her for not obeying him. Cassio has also disrespected

Bianca which can be seen in his conversation with Iago where he reveals their intimate moment. Ironically, like Bianca, Desdemona is also labelled as a prostitute showing the inhuman face of men who fail to understand their women fully. Thus, these women face miserable lives finally resulting in the deaths of two – Desdemona and Emilia – and disappearance of one – Bianca.

1.5.5 Geography's Role in Othello:

Geography plays a crucial role in the play *Othello*. The play is set at two different places viz. Venice and Cyprus. Although the play depicts domestic violence, these two different places have a significant influence over the events in the play. The analysis about geography's role in the development of action begins with the full title of the play which is 'The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice'. The term 'Moor' in the title locates Othello outside of Venice, someone who is foreign both ethically and culturally. At the same time, it also provides a space that enables Othello to be a part of Venice. However, he is also aware of his status as an outsider in the Venice city; and he has been a part of Venice only because of his military powers. His remark is quite revealing in this case when he says that he has been away for nine months from the battleground, which is the only thing that provides an identity to him. His military services make him part of Venice and his marriage with Desdemona further establishes his emotional bond with this geographical location. However, he can neither be a part of its culture nor a citizen as there is always a line cutting these people from the identity of Venetian. It is clearly seen in the first act when he is described as 'black lips' setting him apart from the people of Venice. In the similar way, Iago describes Cassio as a Florentine, making him a foreigner in the land of Venice that can also be a cause to feel envy of Cassio as the Lieutenant. Thus, geography plays a significant role in establishing identities of the characters in the play.

The socio-cultural, traditional and commercial significance of the city of Venice is clearly evidenced in the first scene of the first act through the revelation of the Senate Council. During the period of Shakespeare, Venice was a significant city providing opportunities in trade and commerce along with the pleasures in art, culture and free sex to the travellers. The problems of business were solved in the meeting held at the Senate Council and equal opportunities were provided to all the citizens of Venice. The significance of the Senate and the possibilities of fair justice can be noted in the first scene when Brabantio determines to confront Othello in the Senate with the hopes of justice. However, with the support of Desdemona, the

Senate members agree that Othello is not guilty and the Duke of Venice further gives the responsibility to Othello to lead the army against the Turkish fleet.

The geographical location of Venice also serves as a boundary to the marriage of Othello and Desdemona, limiting them to the rules and culture of Venice and providing them an opportunity to successfully lead their lives. Here, their marriage seems to be uninfluenced with the intervention of external forces as neither Iago and Roderigo nor Brabantio succeed to break the bond between Othello and Desdemona. However, as they move from Venice to Cyprus, their married life becomes more open, giving the opportunity to other characters to influence and disturb their private space. Their move to Cyprus seems to be a move to free themselves from the geographical and cultural codes of Venice and act in a more open space free from all the rules. The tragic end of the play symbolically points out the dislocation of Venetian culture with the collapse of societal structure. It should also be noted at this juncture that there is no any citizen from Cyprus involved in this tragedy. Hence, Cyprus acts as an unknown land to the Venetian people; a kind of place which has always been a threat or not secure to live. This insecurity of the place can be viewed in the form of attack by the Turkish army. Although the government in Cyprus is looked after by the governor appointed by the Duke of Venice, it does not follow the social, cultural codes of Venice. The influences of this insecure open cultural space linger in the insecurities of Othello who then could not make himself comfortable in Cyprus. Thus, the geographical locations depicted in the play become a canvas to articulate the actions in the play.

1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress:

1.1.3 Check Your Progress:

1. c. eight 2. d. 26 3. a. Robert Green 4. b. 1596
5. c. 1599 6. a. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* 7. b. political historical 8. a. 1604

1.2.3 Check Your Progress:

1. a. character 2. b. *The Moor of Venice* 3. c. Giraldi Cinthio 4. d. twenty-eight
5. a. Roderigo 6. d. Gratiano 7. c. Montano

1.3.3 Check Your Progress:

1. a. Roderigo 2. b. Cassio 3. c. Iago 4. c. Cyprus
5. a. Iago 6. d. Herald 7. a. Iago 8. b. Montano

9. c. Montano 10. b. clown 11. d. Emilia 12. a. Desdemona
13. b. Lodovico 14. a. Iago 15. c. Montano

1.7 Exercise:

A) Answer the following questions in about 450-500 words.

1. Discuss in detail the development of the plot of the play *Othello*.
2. *Othello* is Shakespeare's great dark tragedy. Elaborate
3. Critically comment on the tragedy of Othello.
4. Write a note on the theme of deception reflected in the play *Othello*.
5. Bring out the role of race in the tragedy of Othello.
6. Comment on the relationship between Othello and Iago.
7. Why does Othello change his mind about Desdemona's fidelity?
8. Write a note on the women in *Othello*.

B) Write short notes in about 300-350 word.

1. The 'double time' in the play *Othello*
2. The character of Othello
3. Iago as a villain in the play
4. Character-sketch of Desdemona
5. Cassio
6. The role of geography in *Othello*
7. The relationships between Othello and Desdemona

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Unit-2

Romeo and Juliet

Index:

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Presentation of Subject Matter: Drama
 - 2.2.1 Shakespeare's Life
 - 2.2.2 Elizabethan Literature
 - 2.2.3 Check your progress
 - i) Answer in one word or a sentence.
 - ii) Fill in the blanks.
- 2.3 Act wise Summary
 - 2.3.1 Characters in the play
 - 2.3.2 Brief Summary of the play.
 - 2.3.3 Notes
 - 2.3.4 Check your progress
 - 2.2.4 Key to check your progress.
 - 2.2.5 Exercise
 - 2.3.5 Key to check your progress
 - 2.3.6 Exercise
 - 2.3.7 Further Reading

2.0. Objectives—

After Studying this unit you will get acquainted with

- ❖ life and works of well-known dramatist William Shakespeare.
- ❖ the ethos of Shakespeare's time.
- ❖ Shakespeare's play '*Romeo and Juliet*'

2.1 Introduction

In this unit we are going to study William Shakespeare, an English playwright, poet and actor. He is widely regarded as the world's eminent dramatist. We will study in detail the four periods of his writing career. We are going to study Shakespearean period and the tragedy '*Romeo and Juliet*.'

2.2 Presentation of Subject Matter: Drama

2.2.1 Shakespeare's Life

William Shakespeare was born on April, 23, 1564 in the village of Stratford-upon-Avon in the country of Warwickshire. He was a prosperous tradesman of the town. He went to the local Grammar School, an excellent institution of its kind, where he was taught Latin and Arithmetic. In his 18, he married Anne Hath a way, a woman eight years his senior, the daughter of a well-to-do yeoman. He had three children: Susana and twins Hamnet and Judith. He was an eminent English playwright, poet and actor. He is widely regarded as the greatest writer in English language and the world's greatest dramatist. He is often called England's National Poet and the "Bard of Avon". Shakespeare's dramatic work comprises 37 plays, 154 sonnets, three long narrative poems, and a few other verses. His plays have been translated into every major living language. Shakespeare remains arguably the most influential writer in the English language.

Shakespeare produced most of his known works between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were primarily comedies and histories and are regarded as some of the best works produced in these genres. He then wrote mainly tragedies until 1608, among them *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, all considered to be among the finest works in English.

2.2.2 Elizabethan Literature

Elizabethan period is known as the Golden Age of English Literature. The age witnessed flowering of literature, music and poetry. The era is most famous for its theatre, as William Shakespeare and many others composed plays that broke free of England's past style of theatre. Elizabethan period refers to the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) and is one of the most splendid ages of English Literature. In addition to drama and the theatre, it saw a flowering of poetry, with new forms like sonnet, the Spenserian stanza, and dramatic blank verse. Major writers of this period were William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlow, Richard Hooker, Ben Johnson, Philip Sidney and Thomas Kyd.

2.2.3 Check your progress

A) Answer the following questions in one word or a sentence.

1. When and where was Shakespeare born?
2. How many sonnets did Shakespeare write?
3. What is the name of Shakespeare's wife?
4. What Shakespeare is known of England?
5. Which age is known as a Golden Age in English Literature?
6. Who are the prominent writers of the Elizabethan age?

2.3 Act wise Summary

Act-I

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* opens in Verona, a city in Italy. There are two noble families in Verona: Capulet and Montague. There is an old quarrel between these families. Sampson and Gregory, the servants of Capulet family, meet Abramand and Balthasar, the two servants of the Montague family. They fight for their masters. Benvolio, Montague's nephew and Romeo's friend, tries to separate them. The Capulets, the Montagries, and Escalus, the prince of Verona, appear to the scene. The prince is angry because of the quarrel between two families. He warns that, " they will lose their lives if they quarrel again". Later, Benvolio gets Romeo, who has been tearful and withdrawn, to admit that he is suffering from heartbreak

over a woman who does not respond to his love. Benvolio promises Romeo to support and help him.

Romeo and Juliet begins as the Chorus introduces two feuding families of Verona: the Capulets and Montagues. On a hot summer's day, the young men of each faction fight until the Prince of Verona intercedes and threatens to banish them. Soon after, the head of the Capulet family plans a feast. His goal is to introduce his daughter Juliet to a Count named Paris who wishes to marry Juliet.

Montague's son Romeo and his friends listen about the party and decide to attend the party in disguise. Romeo wants to see and meet his beloved Rosaline at the party. There, he meets Juliet and falls immediately in love with her. Romeo sees Juliet from a distance and is struck by her beauty. Meanwhile, Romeo approaches Juliet. They hold hands, kiss, and exchange romantic banter. Juliet's cousin recognizes the Montague boys and forces them to leave as Romeo and Juliet discover each other.

Lady Capulet and her nurse discuss Juliet's marriage. Juliet is not yet fourteen. But Lady Capulet, her mother, wishes to see her married. At the beginning of the play, when Romeo appears on the stage, he looks sleepless; he seems to be suffering from the agonies of unrequited love for Rosaline. He groans, he sighs, and he tosses in his bed. When he sees Juliet he forgets Rosaline.

Another interesting point is that Shakespeare hints at the working of fate and family feud. In showing the working of fate and feud, Shakespeare does not ignore the development of the characters.

Act-II

Romeo has forgotten Rosaline. He and Juliet are in love with each other. Romeo lingers near the Capulet house to talk with Juliet when she appears in her window. Romeo watches Juliet on her balcony. He climbs over the wall into the Capulet's garden. Juliet appears at the balcony window. Now it is morning. Romeo goes to Friar Laurence and tells him all about his love for Juliet. He asks the priest to arrange the marriage ceremony secretly. The pair declares their love for each other and intends to marry the next day.

It is nine in the morning. Juliet has been waiting impatiently for the Nurse. The Nurse returns from Romeo. After a lot of unnecessary chatter she at last gives Romeo's message. With the help of Juliet's Nurse, the lovers arrange to marry when

Juliet goes for confession at the cell of Friar Laurence. Waiting in his cell, Friar Laurence warns Romeo about the risks of excessive love. When Juliet arrives and hugs Romeo, the Friar muses in an aside that this passion might be too fleeting to last. Finally, he urges the happy couple to proceed with their marriage vows. There, they are secretly married.

Act-III

Mercutio, Benvolio and others are at their ease in the shade. Tybalt and others approach them. Tybalt and Mercutio exchange hot words. Romeo appears on the scene; Tybalt calls Romeo a villain and challenges him to fight. Romeo refuses to fight, which angers his friend Mercutio who then fights with Tybalt. Mercutio is accidentally killed as Romeo intervenes to stop the fight, but Tybalt fatally stabs Mercutio. In anger, Romeo pursues Tybalt, kills him, and is banished by the Prince.

Juliet is anxious when Romeo is late to meet her and learns of the brawl, Tybalt's death, and Romeo's banishment. Friar Laurence arranges for Romeo to spend the night with Juliet before he leaves for Mantua. Following their wedding night, Romeo and Juliet bid each other an emotional farewell. Juliet feels forbidding, but Romeo promises to see her again. Meanwhile, the Capulet family grieves for Tybalt, so Lord Capulet moves Juliet's marriage to Paris to the next day. Juliet's parents are angry when Juliet doesn't want to marry Paris, but don't know about her secret marriage to Romeo.

Act—IV

Friar Laurence and Paris are in the cell. Paris wants to marry Juliet next Thursday. The Capulet household is busy with wedding preparations. Juliet returns, begs her father's forgiveness, and promises to marry Paris. The Friar finds himself in a difficult situation. The Friar gives her a small bottle containing sleeping potion, or a drug. She has to drink this next day at the night time that would be Wednesday night, the night before the day fixed for marriage. The drug would put her to strong sleep. She will be taken as a dead. The effect of drug would last for forty two hours.

Juliet asks her mother and nurse for privacy overnight so she can prepare for her marriage to Paris. The fateful night arrives. Juliet is alone in her room. She is afraid of the potion. Doubts and fears attack her mind. The preparation for marriage feast is going on. The bridegroom has arrived. The Nurse goes to wake up Juliet and thinks she is dead: "death lies on her like an untimely frost upon the sweetest flower of all the field," the Nurse mourns. The wedding changes into a burial. Friar Laurence

asks the Capulet to take the body of their daughter to the grave in the customary way. The Friar sends a messenger to warn Romeo of Juliet's plan and bids him to come to the Capulet family monument to rescue his sleeping wife.

Act—V

Friar Lawrence sends his message to Romeo with Friar John. Friar John comes to Friar Lawrence and tells him that he has not been able to go to Mantua to deliver the message to Romeo. The vital message to Romeo doesn't arrive in time because the plague is in town. Hearing from his servant that Juliet is dead, Romeo buys poison from an Apothecary in Mantua. He returns to Verona and goes to the tomb where he surprises and kills the mourning Paris. Romeo takes his poison and dies, while Juliet awakens from her drugged coma. She comes to know what has happened from Laurence, but she refuses to leave tomb and stabs herself. The Friar returns with the Prince, the Capulet's, and Romeo's widowed father. The deaths of their children lead the families to make peace and they promise to erect a monument in Romeo and Juliet's memory. Montague and Capulet sorrowfully make peace, each promising to honour their loving children with a golden statue. Prince Escalus concludes that there is no story as sad as Romeo and Juliet.

Capulet and Montague bury their quarrel in their children's grave.

B) Choose the correct alternative from the following.

1. Where do Romeo and Juliet meet?
a) Venice b) Verona c) Paris d) Italy
2. Who requested Romeo to attend the Capulet feast?
a) Mercutio b) Benvolio
c) Lady Montague d) Capulet
3. With whom is Romeo madly in love for the first two scenes of the play?
a) Rosa b) Juliet c) Mercutio d) Rosaline
4. Who speaks the Prologue?
a) Chorus b) Romeo c) Juliet d) Rosaline
5. Who tells Juliet about Romeo's identity.
a) Tybalt b) Nurse

- c) Lady Capulet d) Mercutio
6. Who performs Romeo and Juliet's marriage?
a) Friar John b) Friar Lawrence
c) Father John d) Mercutio
7. What does the Nurse advise Juliet to do after Romeo is exiled?
a) follow her husband to Mantua b) wait for Romeo in Verona
c) act as if Romeo is dead and marry Paris. d) commit suicide.
8. To what does Romeo first compare Juliet during the balcony scene?
a) The moon b) The stars
c) A summer's day d) The morning sun.
9. Who proposes that a gold statue of Juliet be built in Verona?
a) Montague b) Lady Capulet c) Paris d) Romeo
10. On what day do Romeo and Juliet meet?
a) Saturday b) Friday c) Wednesday d) Sunday
11. To which period of Shakespeare's dramatic career does the play *Romeo and Juliet* belong?
a) first b) second c) third d) None of these
12. How many families are involved in the action of the play?
a) five b) three c) two d) four
13. By whom is Tybalt killed?
a) Romeo b) Benvolio c) Mercutio d) Paris
14. What object is given by Laurence to Juliet?
a) a sword b) a prayer book c) a drug d) a book.
15. Where does Romeo take shelter after his banishment?
a) Venice b) Padua c) Mantua d) Verona

2.3.1 Characters in the play:

Romeo

Romeo is the only son of Lord and Lady Montague. He falls in love with Juliet. Romeo is a central character of the play. He is an immortal lover. He is an embodiment of an ideal love and through his character Shakespeare glorifies ideal love.

At first, Romeo pines for Rosaline. Rosaline is ‘a cold hearted beauty’. She does not care to return Romeo’s love. Therefore, Romeo seems to be sad and unhappy because of his unrequited love. He broods and thinks. He seeks solitary places. Romeo sees Juliet at the feast at Capulet. He soon falls in love with her at first sight. He forgets Rosaline and recognizes this sudden new feeling to be real love.

Romeo is completely transformed by his true love for Juliet. Before this love he seems to a boy. He transforms into manhood. He is now all changed from dreamer into the man of action. He sees Juliet at feast. Later, he sees her in an Orchard. He remains a man of action to the end.

His fanciful love for Rosaline has made him morose and his real love for Juliet makes him sociable and brilliant. Romeo is a man of culture and refinement. He is the very opposite of Tybalt. As we read the play we note a contrast between Romeo and Juliet. Romeo is a psychic personality. He reflects Shakespeare’s mysticism. Throughout the play he has premonition of coming disaster. He has a dream before Capulet’s feast. As he passes to the feast his mind, “misgives some consequences yet hanging in the stars.”

Romeo is certainly a “star crossed” and “death marked lover”. The prologue states this idea clearly and definitely and the many premonitions of the coming disaster received by Romeo and Juliet. Romeo and Juliet are doomed to suffer and die. Whatever their characters Romeo is not responsible for the family quarrel.

Juliet

Juliet is the daughter of Capulet. She is the female protagonist of the play. She falls in love with Romeo. Just as Romeo is an immortal lover, Juliet is also an immortal lover and beloved. She is an embodiment of love. She is Shakespeare’s glorification of ideal love. Shakespeare has drawn Juliet’s character so powerfully that she has passed into a universal type.

According to her father, her mother, and her Nurse, she is not yet fourteen. She has a child's simplicity, innocence, truthfulness and obedience. She trusts the Nurse in a touching way. She is perfectly obedient to her mother," Madam I am here, what is your will?" She asks her mother. She responds to her mother's suggestions of marriage with Paris in a calm and dignified manner. She is perfectly obedient and modest.

She is amazingly beautiful. Her beauty blazes out of her one glance at her, and Romeo's heart falls at her. Juliet is harmony of beauty and virtue, sweetness and light, loveliness and purity. She is melody of truth, simplicity and beauty. She can harbor a limitless, selfless and deathless love. In her turn, she inspires love and devotion in Romeo and Paris. Romeo dies because he thinks she is dead. Paris comes into vault to strew her tomb with flowers. He calls her, "Sweet flower." She dies defending her grave from what he thinks an outrage of the hands of Romeo. His last wish which Romeo respects is to be led by the side of Juliet. Juliet is thus an immortal beloved.

Juliet falls in love with Romeo at first sight. This happens in the ball room scene. Love is for her a great transforming influence. Through it she leads into womanhood. Her whole nature with its moral, spiritual, intellectual, and imaginative elements is changed, transformed. She does not know Romeo in the ball room scene. They are strangers to each other but Juliet has fallen in love with Romeo. She does not ask the Nurse at once 'Who he is?' She makes enquiries about him. She is careful, guarded, and tactful; she has become woman in love. When she knows who Romeo really is? She cries, "My only Love sprung from my only hate!" This is not a child speaking but a woman. The balcony scene reveals her measureless love for Romeo: "My bounty is as boundless as sea."

Love makes Juliet eager, impatient and impulsive, when she anxiously waits for the Nurse. She marries Romeo; her love is not sensual. It is spiritual. She waits for the wedding night and her Romeo.

Juliet is faced with the proposal of marrying Paris. Her father threatens to cast of her, if she does not obey him. Thus, Juliet finds herself torn between loyalty and love—loyalty to her parents, love for her lover and husband. Shakespeare sometimes tastes the metal of character by placing it in a strange situation. Juliet is quiet helpless here. But she finds a way out of this critical situation. Her parents wish that she should marry Paris. This situation brings out the supreme courage and heroism of

Juliet. She obtains the potion from the Friar. She would die rather than marry with Paris. After some doubts and fear, she drinks the drug and falls into her death-like trance. The cunning way in which she decides to get ready for marriage, shows the complete transformation in her love.

Further, we see her rising from her trance in the vault. The Friar tells her what has happened: Romeo is dead. Juliet refuses to go away with the Friar. She kills herself with Romeo's dagger. She dies but her love lives on. She is an immortal beloved. Like Romeo, Juliet is psychic personality. She has premonition of the coming disaster. She represents Shakespearean mystic. She makes us aware of titanic force, some supreme power controlling human destiny.

Juliet is the heroine of the play. She is very young and beautiful. She cannot be compared, dramatically with any Shakespearean heroine like Desdemona. She is not yet fourteen. All the same you can agree that she is not Shakespeare's great female character. She does not belong to great and grand family. She has no impressive political importance. She has great strength and amazing will power. She is a true tragic heroine.

Friar Lawrence

Friar Lawrence is an important character in the play. He is a holy man of the Francis order. He is a very significant character in *Romeo and Juliet*. Friar is human. He is more the man than the Church man. He has understanding and practical knowledge.

Friar Lawrence is a Franciscan monk. He is a trusted friend of Romeo. He is kind, civic minded, a proponent of moderation, and always ready with a plan. Friar Lawrence secretly marries the impassioned lovers in hopes that the union might eventually bring peace to Verona. As well as being a Catholic holy man, Friar Lawrence is also an expert in the use of mystical potions and herbs. He is a student of nature. He is simple and scientific. He is a herbalist. He collects and studies land. He is well versed in plant lore. He knows the killing and curing properties of the vegetable kingdom. This holy man is a lonely hermit and philosopher. His philosophy is simple. It's derived from experience of human world and the study of plant's world. He stands for calmness and modernization. It is rather strange that such a man should be afraid and should run away from Juliet in the church yard scene. But this temporary and momentary weakness passes away. He makes a full confession to the prince and prefers sacrifice to life.

The Nurse

The Nurse works for the Capulet family. She looks after Juliet since she was a baby. The character of Juliet's Nurse is worth considering. It is one of the important characters in the play. Nurse's name is Angelica. She is old and experienced in the ways of the world. She is a minor character, but hers is a major role in the play and she certainly not a minor figure in the house of Capulet. She is an indispensable servant. She is in the confidence of her master and mistress. Lady Capulet conceals Juliet's age. The Nurse is quite sure and positive that Juliet is not fourteen. She can state with authority. She enjoys in the Capulet household the freedom and forwardness of an old and trusted servant. She is an important person in the house of Capulet. She has her own attendant, Peter. She can advise, scold, and guide her master and mistress.

The Nurse has an imposition in the house of Capulet. She has nursed Juliet with her own milk. She has been also Juliet's intimate and trusted old companion. She loves Juliet dearly and truly. Her greatest desire is to see Juliet married,

"Thou Wast the prettiest babe that e'er

I nursed. An I might live to see

thee married once, I have my wish."

There has been a tragedy in her life. Her child Susan, who was of Juliet's age died. The most striking character of Nurse is her habit of going into long and irrelevant speeches. She is very talkative, a chatter box. She does not stop to consider the situation; once she starts talking no one can stop her. Most of her talk is about herself and her memories.

Juliet's Nurse, is the woman who breast-fed Juliet when she was a baby and has cared for Juliet her entire life. A vulgar, long-winded, and sentimental character. The Nurse provides some relief with her frequently inappropriate remarks and speeches. The Nurse is Juliet's faithful and loyal intermediary in Juliet's affair with Romeo. Juliet is idealistic and intense. The Nurse believes in love and wants Juliet to have a nice-looking husband, but the idea that Juliet wants to sacrifice herself for love is incomprehensible to her.

Mercutio

Mercutio is a friend of Romeo and relative of Prince Escalus. He is a kinsman of Escalus, the Prince of Verona. He is a sincere friend of Romeo. Friendliness is one of

his lovable characteristics. He is not an idealist; he is realist, a self-sufficient man, a man of sound commonsense. He lives in every word he speaks. And therefore, he is gay and charming. His great zest for life and his wit and humor make him mischievous and talkative. As he is not an idealist, he cannot understand Romeo's great love for Juliet. He is genius in wit, and poet in his fancy. Mercutio is one of the most extraordinary characters in all of Shakespeare's plays. He loves wordplay, especially sexual double intender. He can be quite hotheaded, and hates people who are affected, pretentious, with the latest fashions. He finds Romeo's romanticized ideas about love tiresome and tries to convince Romeo to view love as a simple matter of sexual appetite. It is right to say that Mercutio belongs to the machinery of the play but not its texture.

Benvolio

Benvolio is Montague's cousin and thoughtful friend. Benvolio makes a genuine effort to defuse violent scenes in public places, though Mercutio accuses him of having nasty temper in private. He spends most of the play trying to help Romeo get his mind off Rosaline, even after Romeo has fallen in love with Juliet.

Benvolio is Lord Montague's nephew and friend to Romeo and Mercutio.

Tybalt

A Capulet, Juliet's cousin on her mother's side. Vain, fashionable, supremely aware of courtesy and lack of it, he becomes aggressive and violent. He is quick to draw his sword when he feels his pride has been injured. Once drawn, his sword is something to be feared. He loathes Montagues.

Tybalt is Lady Capulet's nephew. He always dislikes the Montagues.

Paris

A kinsman of the Prince, and the suitor of Juliet. He is most preferred by Capulet. Once Capulet has promised him he can marry Juliet, he behaves very presumptuous toward her, acting as if they are already married. Paris is a nobleman and wants to marry Juliet.

Lord and Lady Montague

Lord and Lady Montague are heads of the Montague house and Romeo's parents.

Lord Capulet

Lord Capulet is head of a Capulet family and Juliet's father. The patriarch of the Capulet family, father of Juliet, husband of lady Capulet, An enemy for inexperienced reasons, of Montague. He truly loves his daughter, though he is not well acquainted with Juliet's thoughts or feelings, and seems to think that what is best for her is a "good" match with Paris. Often prudent, he commands respect and propriety, but he is liable to fly into a rage when either is lacking.

Rosaline

The woman with whom Romeo is infatuated at the beginning of the play. Rosaline never appears on stage, but it is said by other characters that she is very beautiful and has sworn to live a life of chastity.

Friar John

A Franciscan, Friar Lawrence takes the news of Juliet's false death to Romeo in Mantua. Friar John is held up in quarantined house, and the message never reaches Romeo.

Peter and Abram

Peter is a Capulet servant who invites guests to Capulet's feast and escorts the Nurse to meet with Romeo. He is illiterate and a bad singer.

Abram Montague's servant, who fights with Sampson and Gregory in the first scene of the play.

Balthasar

Romeo's dedicated servant, who brings Romeo the news of Juliet's death, unaware that her death is a ruse.

Sampson and Gregory

Two servants of the house of Capulet, who like their master, hate Montagues. At the outset of the play, they successfully provoke some Montague men into a fight.

Abram

Montague's servant, who fights with Sampson and Gregory in the first scene of the play.

The Apothecary

An Apothecary in Mantua. Had he been wealthier, he might have been able to afford to value his morals more than money, and refused to sell poison to Romeo.

Friar Lawrence

Friar Lawrence is an important character in the play. He is a holy man of the Franciscan order. He is a very significant character in *Romeo and Juliet*. He has the reputation of a very honest, kind and holy servant of God. At first while taking the potion, Juliet has doubts about him but she dismisses these doubts as Friar Lawrence is a good human. He is more the human than the churchman. He has understanding and practical knowledge.

2.3.2 Brief Summary of the play.

Romeo and Juliet is a play written by Shakespeare. An age-old vendetta between two powerful families erupts into bloodshed. It is a tragic love story where two main characters, Romeo and Juliet, are supposed to be sworn enemies but fall in love. Due to their families' ongoing conflict, they cannot cope with being separated from each other.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* opens in Verona, a city in Italy. There are two noble families in Verona: Capulet and Montague. There is an old quarrel between these families. There has been fighting three times. The play begins with the fourth. The Montagues and Capulets have been carrying on a feud for as long as they could remember.

At the beginning of the play when Romeo appears on the stage, he looks like a sleepless, worried lover; he seems to be suffering from the agonies of unrequited love for Rosaline. He groans, he sighs, and he tosses in his bed. He moans about unaware of his surroundings. He seeks out isolated places. When he sees Juliet he forgets Rosaline.

Sampson and Gregory the servants of Capulet family, meet Abram and Balthasar, the two servants of the Montague family. They fight for their masters. Benvolio, Montague's nephew and Romeo's friend, tries to separate them. He bids down their swords. Tybalt, Lady Capulet's nephew rushes forward; there is a riot. The citizens and the officers of the watch come in. The Capulets, the Montagues, and Escalus, the Prince of Verona, appear in the scene. The Prince is angry because of the quarrel between two families.

The Montague and Benvolio discuss the sadness of Romeo when crowd disperses. Romeo is the son of Montague. Romeo has secret sorrow of his own. The Montagues leave Benvolio. Benvolio learns from Romeo that he is in love with a lady who does not return his love. He advises to Romeo to “forget, and examine other beauties.” But Romeo says “He that is stricken blind, cannot forget, the precious treasure of his eyesight lost.” But Benvolio tries his level best in persuading Romeo to forget the unrequited love.

Capulet intends to marry his only, loving daughter, Juliet to Paris, Prince’s kinsman. But Juliet falls in love with Romeo, a young Montague. It is love at first sight. She persuades Friar Lawrence to arrange their marriage immediately. As he returns from his wedding, Romeo is challenged by the quarrelsome Tybalt, a Capulet, but refuses to fight his new kinsman. Romeo’s friend Mercutio fights instead, and is slain. Romeo avenges Mercutio by killing Tybalt, and he is banished by the prince.

Juliet loves Romeo and praises his love in songs sometimes, but Capulet does not want to do so. The beginning of rivalry, hate and jealousy starts from this moment. As wish of Capulet, he proceeds with his plan to marry Juliet to Paris. Friar Lawrence tries to prevent this by supplying Juliet with a drug which will make her appear dead for forty two hours; meanwhile he will send a message for Romeo to rescue Juliet. The message given to Juliet is delayed. Romeo learns only that Juliet is dead, and, decides to die with her. The mourning Paris tries to prevent Romeo breaking into Juliet’s tomb, and is slain. Romeo poisons himself, and the waking Juliet, finding him dead, stabs herself with his dagger. The Montague and Capulet families are reconciled, but in vain, for all the members younger generation are dead. After the death of their lovely, budding sweethearts, Romeo and Juliet it is meaningless for the Montague and Capulet to be in grief. They cannot compensate this disaster with sorrow and they are the only reason preventing Romeo and Juliet to marry for having a lovely life ahead.

2.3.3 Notes

Consider *Romeo and Juliet* as Shakespearean tragedy.

Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy. It is a story of two lovers, Romeo and Juliet. The characters of Romeo and Juliet are responsible for tragedy or their destiny? Their stars or their free will? Their stars or they themselves? The love of Romeo and Juliet, their marriage, Tybalt’s death at Romeo’s hands, Romeo’ banishment, the

fixing up of Juliet's marriage with Paris, Juliet's potion drinking and removal to vault, the Friar's arrival and Juliet's waking up immediately after Romeo's death, the entire chain of event does not issue from the character of Romeo and Juliet. Romeo seems to be responsible for only some of these events: for example marriage with Juliet, his killing of Tybalt, his banishment, his rush to the Vault, his death etc. Juliet seems to be responsible for only some of the events such as her potion drinking and her death. Romeo and Juliet die at their own hands. It is however not logically correct to take these few events out of the complete chain, and interpret them as active and issuing from character. Yet critics have done so. In these few events they have seen excess of emotion and haste in their secret marriage. Romeo has been hasty in believing Balthasar's news about Juliet's death. He ought to have waited and watched. He has been hasty, in rushing to the Vault and killing himself. Everything would have been all right, if he kept a little patience. Juliet too, has been hasty drinking of the potion. She ought to have waited patiently over her approaching marriage with Paris. She would have found some other way out of her trouble. The various dreams and premonitions and instances of dramatic irony in the course of the play hint at the existence of some ultimate power. Balthasar's waiting outside Juliet's tomb, dreams and fight between Romeo and Paris. Besides dreams there are premonitions of impending doom. Romeo is sad before going to the feast. Thus, in *Romeo and Juliet*, character is not destiny, free will is not fate. The tragedy or tragic action does not issue from character, any tragic trait or flaw responsible for tragic catastrophe.

Now a tragedy in which destiny is all powerful and character is ineffective has no human interest. We cannot enjoy it, but we do enjoy *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare's magic poetry and supreme dramatic power save it from ruin and also the final impression left by it is that of love victorious, not life defeated.

Potion Scene: Its dramatic Significance and Importance

The potion scene in the play is III scene of the Act IV. It is so-called because it represents Juliet's drinking of the sleeping potion or sleep inducing drug given to her by holy Friar Lawrence. Both, in terms of drama and psychology, it's very interesting and important scene.

Juliet and Nurse are in Juliet's room. They are busy with the clothes which Juliet is to wear for her wedding with Paris next morning. Juliet asks the Nurse to let her be alone in her room this night. Lady Capulet comes in. Juliet asks the Nurse to sit up

with her as she is so busy. Lady Capulet and Nurse leave Juliet alone. Now follows Juliet's famous potion speech. Juliet is cold with fear. She has a mind to call back the Nurse and her mother. She is attacked by doubts and fears. Suppose the potion does not work? What if the potion is a poison with which Friar means to kill her to escape his responsibility for her marriage with Romeo? What if she goes mad? She sees the ghost of Tybalt seeking out Romeo. She is driven to drink out the potion, she falls upon her bed.

This scene is a strikingly dramatic scene. It is serious and spell-binding. It is set against the brisk cheerful preparation for the wedding next morning. Thus, it presents a very effective dramatic contrast. The scene shows the climax, the highest point in the development of plot, of Juliet's love for Romeo. Her boundless love for Romeo makes her do so. Juliet cannot bear any danger to Romeo, she does not care for her own life, and she drinks potion.

This potion scene presents Juliet as completely transformed by her love of Romeo. She is no more a little girl. She is a fully developed woman. She is a true wife who prefer to die out of her love for her husband. She knows how to handle the Nurse and her mother. The clever way in which she sends them out of her room and manages to be alone is proof of her developed and worldly-wise womanhood.

Her drinking potion proves that she has reached the height of womanhood and wifehood. She is not a little girl. No little girl could do that. Juliet's potion speech reveals Shakespeare's profound knowledge of working human heart and mind. The potion scene is a fine piece of psychological analysis. In a way it is a psychological drama with emotions and imagination as its pillars. The potion scene is full of logical development. Juliet bids farewell to a Nurse and her mother

"Farewell, God knows when she shall meet again." Here is a shadow of coming events. This scene has some elements of suspense, fear, excitement, horror as we are in the modern field of detective stories. We share with Juliet, her doubts and fear.

Write a note on Opening scene of play.

A play if it is to be effective, then it must begin with interesting incident arresting conversation or an event. The opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet* serves this purpose. It brings in the gathering of people in the street. The first scene presents quarrel and fighting on the street of Verona. We understand the city and its situation. We also understand that there is an old quarrel between two well-known families of Verona, the Capulet and Monague. There has been fighting three times. The scene

begins with the fourth clash between two families. Sampson and Gregory the servants of Capulet family, meet Abram and Balthasar, the servants of the Montague family. Sampson insults the Montagues by biting his thumb at them. This leads to fight. Just at this moment Tybalt, a Capulet and Benvolio, a Montague, appear on the scene. Benvolio tries to part the fighting servants. He and Benvolio try to part the fighting servants. Tybalt rushes forward. Thus, we see riot. Crowd collects on the street of market place. The Prince of Verona appears on the scene. He is angry; he warns Capulet and Montague who is present that any further break of peace will mean death to any peace breaker. The crowd disperses on this note.

The street Brawl Scene is one of the most significant scenes in the play. It gives the play a striking, exciting and effective beginning that arrests the attention of audience. It grips the interest of spectators. Thus, it is most important and significant part of exposition or the introduction of tragedy. The scene catches the background against the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. The scene sets forth the main theme of the play. The theme is: Human conflict ends in human disaster, an opportunity for peace wasted means tragedy itself. Everyone is fed-up with the Capulet and Montague feud. The scene also reveals Shakespeare's wonderful art of short characterization. The street quarrel scene has another interest. This scene is an admirable piece of history, that is to say, it gives us a living picture of the past. In the middle ages noble men and their servants throughout Europe were often at feud as it is shown here. Family quarrel and street fight were quite common in Shakespeare's England. The scene gives a vivid representation of the past.

Write a brief note on Balcony Scene

The Balcony Scene is the second scene of the act no. II. It is called the Balcony Scene because it shows Juliet appearing at the window of her balcony and remaining there to talk to Romeo. It is also called the Orchard Scene or the garden scene because it shows Romeo standing in the Capulet's Orchard or garden, below Juliet's balcony. The Balcony Scene presents this romantic passion of Romeo and Juliet at its heights. The intensity of love all inspiring. Romeo has forgotten Rosaline. He and Juliet are burning in furnace of love. After the feast, Romeo cannot bear himself away from the house of Capulet. This love has been sudden. It has transformed Romeo and Juliet into a man and a woman. It burns in the Balcony Scene with a flame like intensity. The Balcony also seems bringing a doom. It reminds us these lovers are 'star crossed'. They are fated to suffer. Destiny is against them.

The setting of this scene is strikingly dramatic. Romeo and Juliet are burning in love but they are kept apart : one at window, the other is down below in the garden.

The Character of Mercutio, Some scholars opine that Mercutio belongs to the machinery of the play but not to the texture.

Mercutio is a mere name, a faith figure in Painter's story. He is complete, living, breathing character in *Romeo and Juliet*. He is one of Shakespeare's finest achievements.

He is a kinsman of Escalus, the Prince of Verona. He is a sincere friend of Romeo. Friendliness is one of lovable characteristics of Mercutio. He does not like Romeo to go about sad and morose. Therefore he is very glad when Romeo finds his former self. He is not an idealist; he is a realist, a sufficient man, a man of sound commonsense. He throbs with life. He takes life as it comes to him. He lives in every world he speaks. And therefore he is very gay and gallant, merry and charming. His animal spirits are infectious. Out of his life comes his wit. Mercutio is one of the Shakespeare's intellectual characters. His great zest for life and his wit and humour make him mischievous and talkative. As he is not an idealist, he cannot understand Romeo's great love for Juliet. He does not belong to Romeo's world. He provides a contrast to Romeo. He is ribald and sensual. He is gay young blood. Woman is toy to him, not a mate of the spirit. He voices comic aspect of love. He advises to Romeo, "if love be rough with you, be rough with love."

He is genius in his wit, and poet in his fancy. His Queenmab speech illustrates his graceful and fascinating fancy. He has no patience with fashionable, arrogant fools like Tybalt. He is the first and earliest to die in the play. The play is tragedy. The wit and humour of Mercutio are high comedy. Had they gone on longer, they would have contradicted the tragic tone and temper of the play. They would have ruined the tragedy. Mercutio would have killed the play. So, Shakespeare ends his existence in a casual brawl. Again, he is at first designed to serve as a contrast to Romeo. But because of his bravery, high spirit, humour, wit, fancy, and imagination, he threatens to outshine Romeo. Romeo is the hero of the play. There cannot be a rival to him. Thus, Mercutio's death becomes a dramatic necessity. Shakespeare gets rid of him before he can affect Romeo's position as the hero of the play.

The final impression left by Mercutio on our minds is that of a gallant spirit.

The feast at Capulet house.

The Feast Scene is the V and the last scene of Act I. It is called the Dance Scene or the Feast Scene because it deals with dance and feast at the house of a Capulet. This is the one of significant scenes in the play.

The scene is significant because it takes the story forward. We have in it a very important step, in the development of the plot. Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio attend the Capulet feast. Romeo is dressed as palmer or pilgrim from the holy land. He sees Juliet for the first time. He forgets Rosaline and falls really and truly in love with Juliet. Tybalt recognizes him. He wants to strike him dead. But Capulet quiets him. Tybalt resolves to take revenge for this intrusion. Romeo and Juliet talk gently and lovingly with each other but they soon discover from the Nurse that they are children of enemies. The scene closes on the painful note.

The scene presents a chief and central event of the tragedy. Romeo and Juliet fall in love with each other at first sight. Romeo and Juliet take fire at the same moment, a single kiss unites them forever. Their only love is sprung from their only hate. The Ballroom Scene provides a sharp, dramatic and psychological contrast to Romeo's love for Rosaline. Romeo's love for Rosaline is not true love. He is a lover of himself. He is intellectual and thoughtful, not emotional, he is a man of head, not of the heart, but his love for Juliet is true. The scene shows us the sudden complete change which the birth of love brings about in Romeo and Juliet. Love transforms both Romeo and Juliet. Romeo becomes man, Juliet becomes woman. The scene is built by Shakespeare with amazing dramatic skill. Romeo has a feeling of something evil to come.

The dramatic significance of the Parting Scene.

The V scene of Act-III presents the parting of Romeo and Juliet. Romeo and Juliet are now wife and husband. Romeo has been banished from Verona for killing Tybalt. Therefore he must part with his wife on the wedding night. The necessity of this parting is tragic. Romeo is in Juliet's room. They are saying farewell at the window. The dawn is breaking. The lark has sung its morning song. Juliet wants Romeo to believe that it was the nightingale with its night's song. The unwillingness of the lovers to part is really touching. Their talk is steeped in sorrow, drenched in love, still trembling with desire. Nurse warns Juliet about her mother's coming to her. Romeo goes down. Lady Capulet comes to Juliet's room and tells her about her marriage with Paris the following Thursday; "I will not marry yet", Juliet firmly

states. This scene is known for its poetic beauty and expression. The morning is described in picturesque manner. The beauty of the morning has been described in a wonderful way but the sorrow, love, the desire, the fear, the pain, the hope of parting lovers are finely depicted and successfully brought out in a way.

The Parting Scene is darkened by the shadow of coming tragedy. Juliet is afraid that she may not meet Romeo again. The parting of Romeo and Juliet, now married, is shown against the picture of Juliet's marrying with Paris on the following Thursday and Juliet has heard the talk of this marriage immediately after Romeo's departure. These dramatic contrasts are a great technical achievement of Shakespeare. Paris departs from Lady Capulet. The separation of Romeo and Juliet is the effect of the family feud, the street quarrel, Tybalt's violence, Romeo's love for Juliet, his killing of Tybalt and his banishment.

Churchyard Scene and its dramatic Significance

Churchyard Scene is presented in the III scene of Act V. It is the end of play. It deals with final happenings of the play. It is therefore called the end of the play. As it takes place in the churchyard; it is called the Churchyard Scene.

The place is the Vault of the Capulets. A tomb with the body of Juliet can be seen here. Paris and his boy servant enter. Paris has come to attend his tributes to Juliet by strewing flowers over Juliet's tomb. The setting of the scene is grim and terrible. It is the church and Capulet vault. It is a night- a dreadful night. Darkness lies thick all around. The atmosphere of violent death is the chief feature of this scene. The effect is one of pity and fear. The deaths of Paris, Romeo, and Juliet constitute the tragic climax. The death of Paris, Romeo and Juliet bring out their love to perfection. Paris dies in defending, as he thought, Juliet is dead. He lays down his life for the sake of his love. His last wish is to be laid by the side of Juliet. Romeo honors this wish and he lays the dead body of Paris by the side of Juliet's tomb. And then he drinks the poison and dies. Love conquers life. The last thing a lover can do is done. Then Juliet kisses Romeo and kills herself with his dagger.

The Capulets and Montagues are reconciled in the end. The scene presents this reconciliation and end of the feud. But, Mercutio, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet, Paris, lady Montague have had to die for this reconciliation.

Love in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy. It is a story of two lovers, Romeo and Juliet. These two lovers marry, suffer and die ultimately a violent and dreadful death. It is a story of two 'star-crossed' lovers from the feuding families. It is an enduring tragic love story written by William Shakespeare about immortal love and sacrifice of two lovers whose deaths ultimately unite their feuding families. *Romeo and Juliet* is the most famous story in the English literary tradition. Love is naturally the play's dominant and most important theme. The play focuses on romantic love, the intense passion that springs up at first sight. In *Romeo and Juliet* love is a violent, ecstatic overpowering force that supersedes all other values, loyalties, and emotions.

How does Shakespeare glorify true and real love in *Romeo and Juliet*?

In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare has glorified love and sacrifice of Romeo and Juliet. He has shown us the intense love of Romeo and Juliet for each other and Juliet's beauty that attracts Romeo towards her. Romeo thinks that he has not seen such a beautiful lady like Juliet. She shines like a jewel and star. Juliet has also deeply fallen in love with Romeo. She eagerly waits for Romeo and requests night to turn him into a star that shines bright. She strongly wishes to visit Romeo. She feels he is like a day that comes during the night.

The theme of love and hate in the play

Love and hate is the central theme of the play. *Romeo and Juliet* is considered one of the world's greatest love stories. But at the same time there is hatred and rivalry. It is the art of William Shakespeare. He mixed up the happiness and sadness, pleasure and deep grief or sorrow equally till the end of the plot or the events chained after one another. Love and hate go similarly till the end of the play.

2.3.4 Check your progress

Answer the following questions in one word or a sentence.

1. Where do Romeo and Juliet meet?
2. Who kills Mercutio?
3. When was *Romeo and Juliet* written?
4. In which area does the Friar Lawrence is an expert?
5. What is the name of the last person who sees Juliet before she stabs herself dead?

6. When did Shakespeare die?
7. What is the term that Chorus use to describe the lovers?
8. Why is Romeo exiled?
9. Who arranged the marriage of Romeo and Juliet?
10. What is the age of Juliet?
11. How does Juliet address Romeo?
12. To whom does Romeo address as 'yonder lady'?
13. Who had hosted a grand feast?

2.2.4 Key to check your progress

A)

1. April, 23, 1564 in the village of Stratford-upon-Avon in the country of Warwickshire.
2. 154 Sonnets.
3. Anne Hathway
4. National Poet and the "Bard of Avon"
5. Elizabethan Literature.
6. William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlow, Richard Hooker, Ben Johnson, Philip Sidney

B) 1. Verona 2. Benvolio 3. Rosaline 4. Chorus

5. Nurse 6. Friar Lawrence

7. Act as if Romeo is dead and marry Paris.

8. The morning sun 9. Montague 10. Sunday

11. First 12. Two 13. Romeo 14. a drug 15. Mantua

2.2.5 Exercise

1. Consider *Romeo and Juliet* as a Shakespearean Tragedy.
2. Examine critically Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in the light of statement, "Character Is Destiny."

2.3.5 Key to check your progress

1. Both of them met at Capulet's feast.
2. Benvolio
3. In 1590s
4. In plants and herbs.
5. Friar Lawrence
6. In 1616.
7. Star-crossed.
8. For killing Tybalt.
9. Friar Lawrence.
10. Thirteen.
11. As a 'day in night.'
12. To Juliet.
13. Lord Capulet

2.3.6 Exercise

1. Write a note on Shakespeare's treatment of love in *Romeo and Juliet*.
2. Why does Mercutio fight with Tybalt?
3. Who is Rosaline?
4. Why do Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio go to the Capulet's party?
5. Why does the Prince exile Romeo?
6. Discuss *Romeo and Juliet* as a tragedy of Love.
7. What is role of Fate in *Romeo and Juliet* ?
8. Discuss Shakespeare's concept of tragedy?

2.3.7 Further Reading.

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