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Chapter 1: Background on William Shakespeare

1. The Youth, Marriage, and Career of William Shakespeare
   John E. Andrews
   Shakespeare left his wife and three children behind in his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon to become a famous actor, playwright, and businessman.

2. Historical Events Influenced Shakespeare’s Writing of Othello
   Peter Ackroyd
   Several historical events were likely an influence on the writing of Othello, especially the conflict between Spain and the Moors.

3. Othello, the King’s Men, and James I
   Anthony Holden
   Shakespeare’s theater company, named the King’s Men by King James I, enjoyed special privileges and honors, beginning just before the 1604 production of Othello.

Chapter 2: Othello and Race

1. The Question of Othello’s Color
   Norman Sanders
   The long-standing debate over whether Othello was a black African or a tawny Arab can never be settled with any certainty.

2. Contradictory and Shifting Notions of Black and White in Othello
   Doris Adler
   Othello is smeared by Iago with the evil attached to the blackness of his race.
3. Sexuality and Racial Difference

*Ania Loomba*

In a racist atmosphere, Shakespeare creates a tragic black hero who loses his standing in Venice when he and a white woman plan to marry.

4. Prejudice at Once Fulfilled and Rejected in *Othello*

*Karen Newman*

The racist Iago manipulates other characters in the play, including Othello, and the audience as well.

5. Racism Is Not a Key Element in *Othello*

*Meredith Anne Skura*

Although there are elements of racial prejudice in *Othello*, Shakespeare departs from other portraits of race in making Othello the play’s hero.

6. Othello’s Marriage to Desdemona Incites Racism

*Lara Bovilsky*

Desdemona’s refusal of white men and her defiant choice of the black Othello will result in the polluting of the state.

7. Attitudes About Race Shift in *Othello*

*Emma Smith*

By giving Iago the characteristics that Queen Elizabeth I attributed to blacks, Shakespeare upends racial stereotyping.

8. Race in the Criticism and Production of *Othello*

*John Salway*

Critics have often avoided the importance of race in *Othello*, and classroom discussions of the play have betrayed racist attitudes.
Chapter 3: Contemporary Perspectives on Race

1. A Backlash Has Occurred Against President Obama’s Race  
   Dan Kennedy  
   After the election of an African American president, an undercurrent of racism rises to the surface.

2. Miscegenation in Presidential Politics  
   Stephen Ducat  
   Much anti-Obama hatred is based on his being the result of racial mixing. This intolerance is driven by fundamentalist Christian views of the separation of races.

3. Stifled by Sound Bites  
   Ellis Cose  
   The right-wing media distorted an African American’s speech to make her appear racist, showing how difficult national conversations about race have become.

4. Interracial Couples Still Face Discrimination  
   Caylor Ballinger  
   Discrimination against interracial couples has always existed in the United States, and couples still face a bias within families and communities.

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