

Othello Literary Devices

Writer: William Shakespeare | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Literary Terms:

- **Soliloquy:** Iago's soliloquies are key in revealing his true intentions and thoughts to the audience, while other characters remain unaware of his evil plans.

Symbols:

- **The Handkerchief:** The handkerchief that Othello gives to Desdemona symbolizes their love and faithfulness. When it is lost and later found with Cassio, it becomes a symbol of Othello's mistrust and jealousy.
- **The Willow Song:** Desdemona sings the "Willow Song" in Act 4, Scene 3, a song about a woman who is abandoned by her lover. This song symbolizes Desdemona's innocence, her sorrow, and her premonition of her tragic fate.
- **The Candle:** The candle Othello blows out just before killing Desdemona symbolizes her life.
- **The Sea/Storms:** The sea and storms that occur at the start of the play symbolize the chaos and turmoil that will soon follow in the characters' lives.

Figures of Speech:

- **Irony:** Othello is filled with dramatic irony, especially surrounding Iago. The audience knows that Iago is manipulating Othello, while Othello believes Iago is trustworthy.
- **Symbolism/Symbols:** The handkerchief in the play symbolizes Desdemona's loyalty, and its loss represents the unravelling of trust between her and Othello.

Moral Lesson:

- Jealousy destroys relationships and lives.
- Truth and trust are essential.