
Although published as part of a Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare series called 'Shakespeare NOW', Othello's secret: the Cyprus problem is as much about Cyprus as it is about Shakespeare's Othello. In this short study, R.M. Christofides explores the intersections between Othello and Cyprus's conflicted history through the lens of his own personal family history and his deep long-term relationship with Shakespeare's play. As Christofides is at pains to point out, four of Othello's five acts are set in Cyprus, yet Shakespeare scholars have paid the island setting scant attention. This book seeks to redress that oversight, while also demonstrating the many ways in which Shakespeare's tragedy can illumine the island's political struggles, both past and present. For Christofides, Othello's inner turmoil and sense of a divided self, figured in his self-slaughter of the Turk within, stands as an allegory of Cyprus's own divisions and current partition.

Christofides understands the power of the anecdote and uses personal family stories--most notably the story of his father's involvement with EOKA (the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) and subsequent detainment and torture by British occupying forces in the 1950s--as a hook to draw us into his meditations on Othello and its prescient depiction of the Cyprus problem. Family stories are threaded through the...