



Università  
Ca'Foscari  
Venezia

PROGETTO "PASSIONS: INTERVISTE A PERSONALITÀ DI  
RILIEVO INTERNAZIONALE"

Referente del progetto: Prof. F. Mitrano

## Table of contents

Introduction.....	3
<b>Robert Lyons.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Orson Welles and his groundbreaking movie 'Citizen Kane' (1941)..	5
<b>Bridget Geller Lyons.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Venice in 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Othello' .....	12

## Introduction

The interconnection between cinema and theater is undeniable; that is exactly what we have observed in the celebrated film director Orson Welles and in 'the Bard', that is to say the father of the English literature, William Shakespeare. This project gave us the opportunity to interview two scholars and discuss with them this relationship.

Giulia has worked with Professor Robert Lyons and noted the connection between the director Orson Welles and the theater. Indeed, Welles began his career precisely from the theater world. He founded in 1937 his own theater company in New York, 'Mercury Theater', that opened with an adaptation of the Shakespeare's tragedy 'Julius Caesar'. For his entire life though, Welles's obsession was Shakespeare. He produced and starred in his plays on Broadway and directed and starred in multiple versions of his work on film, as for example: *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Falstaff*.

Costanza has worked with Professor Bridget Geller Lyons on Shakespeare's plays *Othello* and the *Merchant of Venice*. This conversation has led to some interesting insights into Welles' transposition on screen of these magnificent plays. The world of theater and the world of cinema seem to have collided together thanks to these two great personalities and their works and studies on a figure as Orson Welles was.

Finally, the city of Venice played a lead role on the interviews and worked as well as a link to the chain of Shakespeare's plays. Not only is Venice the city here discussed, but it also played as the symbol of the interconnection between Mr. and Mrs. Lyons and Ca' Foscari University, our headquarter as students and for this project.

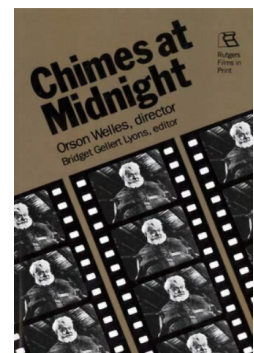
## ROBERT LYONS



The current pandemic situation has led us to live in a less socialized way, for this reason I have been inclined to join an online traineeship experience. I was interested in the activity of 'Passions' designed and supervised by Professor Mena Mitrano. The principal purpose of this project was to interview a public figure, chosen by her, that had to do with one of our interests. In my case, it was cinema.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, I had the pleasure to interview Professor Robert Lyons. I have been fond of cinema from an early age, Mr. Lyons told me about his involvement with it while he was still a college student and worked in a theater where they projected Ingrid Bergman films, as well as Italian and French movies, and the highly-ranked Curtiz masterpiece *Casablanca*. He has been an American literature teacher at Queen's college, City University of New York (CUNY) where he spent the largest part of his career. Later in his life, he was given even the opportunity to teach there for a semester a film course. During the last stage of his teaching career, he edited a multi volume series called *Films in Print* for Rutgers University Press; each volume focused on a single film, on the script, on a lot of interviews, and other materials about that. Among the many titles, two of those

*Chimes at Midnight: Orson Welles, director (1989)*



volumes were about Orson Welles films: *Chimes at Midnight* (1965) and *Touch of Evil* (1958).

## ORSON WELLES AND HIS GROUNDBREAKING MOVIE

### CITIZEN KANE (1941)



*Theatrical release poster (1941)*



*Orson Welles in Citizen Kane (1941)*

#### *1) First things first, how could we try to summarize this cutting-edge movie?*

##### *What is the plot?*

It is a 1941 Welles project, which is a sort of biographical film of a man's life, but it's put together in such an unusual way. The main character is Charles Foster Kane, a very prominent American newspaper owner, but here Welles certainly doesn't follow a straight timeline (birth, childhood, schooling, professional life, death etc....); instead, he rather plays with it in all kinds of ways. Indeed, the opening scene is a strange landscape, a mysterious "castle" at the top of the hill, and then there's a death scene that follows, where we don't know who we're looking at. We'll later get to know that the man who was repeating on the death bed the word 'Rosebud' is Kane. From there, what follows next is a newsreel that covers the life of this wealthy newspaper magnate narrated by a

reporter (Mr. Thompson) that investigates about his death and tries to discover the meaning of that word.

*2) It was my first time seeing this Orson Welles masterpiece, and at first, I was rather confused because the movie is a continuum of flashbacks alternated with the present narrative time... Could you talk about this storytelling technique?*

His way of directing does move forward, in a certain sense. Each of the interviewers are touching some of the different stages of his life. But it does seem scrambled because at the beginning you get his death from the very first time, which is photographically strange since you perceive it from a distance . . . Then there's the newsreel that covers the highlights of his public life, and then he starts over again with episodes of childhood, private life... It keeps shifting between the interviewers that have very different perspective on the character. These roughly chronological series of flashbacks tell Kane's life story from five different points of view. The result of this nonlinear narrative is that it gives even more the idea of Charles Kane's character as a complex enigma.

### *3) Was it based on real-life events?*

The movie was based on William Randolph Hearst, that owned a whole string of newspapers and had very powerful editorial influence on politics in America. What is interesting is that for something like 30 years Hearst's chain of newspapers never mentioned a word about any work that Welles has done. It came down from the boss, you don't talk about Welles. That was a punishment in Welles' eyes, but it didn't help him to get other jobs, let's put it in this way.

There are a few things connected with *Herst*, for sure, but it isn't a careful recreation of his life. *Herst* did have an enormous castle house in California where he lived, but in the film, Welles portrays a very solitary man, with a stiff walk which is stressed due to his age. That was not *Herst*, he had great parties, very active... but was a different kind of person. He gave Welles a few ideas but not the complete portrait.

*4) What could be the most important or most striking scenes of all? How would you describe his directing style?*

Well, for sure the scene on his deathbed where he pronounces his last words which is the repetition of the word 'Rosebuds', and here to emphasize the importance of it, there's a big close up on his lips. One of the things that always struck me was how inventive and various were the scenes. When Welles shows us one scene against another, they seem very different in their inventiveness, different quality, and there's a kind of surprise on how they have been done.

Other two important scenes could be: firstly, the flashback starting from outside on young Charles playing in the snow, unaware of his impending fate, the camera tracks inside the window as his mother looks on him, tracking all the way across the room, as the deal of his mother to send him away with the banker Mr. Thatcher, is being done. Charles is ultimately positioned – imprisoned, even – in the background window, between his feuding parents. It is brilliant visually and gives a foreshadowed 'clue' of what 'Rosebud' is, as at the end of the sequence there's the technical use of the deep focus on the sled.

And then another one is the one towards the end where we perceive a Kane at his lowest point, when he's abandoned by his wife Susan Alexander. He's devastated and to vent his anger, he smashes anything possible in his room until

at some point, he finds a snow globe which reminds him of his childhood (reference to what we've said beforehand of him playing in the snow). He's enchanted by this item, and he starts to repeat again the word 'Rosebud', while trudging he's wonderfully visualized by this hall of mirrors shot, as a symbol of his fractured soul.

Welles's vast use of depth was technically very unusual for Hollywood films and even though it was produced 80 years ago, it is still particularly innovative, since in all the scenes mentioned before he applied different devices. As for example, one of the techniques that distinguished him was what is called 'wipe', as seen in the breakfast scene, where one shot is replaced with another and it keeps being wiped off by another. Then he can use thirty seconds for the dialogue between Kane and his wife, to make a whole change of the relationship. It's kind of a portrait of a marriage in a short compressed inventive way.

*5) This question comes from a personal reflection: while watching a movie I have usually the tendency to empathize with the main character. Because this movie was focused so much on the 'Rosebud' enigma, do you think that it generates empathy with the character?*

I wouldn't say so. It is focused because the reporter asks anyone he interviews if they have a clue about this 'Rosebud'. It does evoke something about Kane and his early childhood, how and what he thinks back remains a mystery. Then we have the final toss to the fire and that's when we see the sled and we read the word 'Rosebud' as a closure to the life and to something wider. This tells how many ways Welles can approach within the film; he is a kind of magician in being able to keep the film coherent while doing so many different uses of



reducing cameras, lighting... he was a wonderful director even though he had never walked into a movie stage before walking in RKO (American film production company). And furthermore, what is interesting is that he is the star of the film, playing Kane.

*6) What are the main themes of the movie?*

It could be the loss of childhood because it seems like he has always this resentment toward Mr. Thatcher, as seen in the last scene when he sees the sled this reminds him of his childhood in a nostalgic way and as a symbol, it does a good job of representing the innocence that Charles once had as a little boy. The father instead is played quite sympathetically because he doesn't want to lose the boy, but the mother is a much stronger character that wants to send him away for a better life. As a little boy he grew up in a very modest way but then he lives in luxury and ostentation. So, another theme could be wealth, that turned him from a good person into a bad one.

*7) Would you say that Citizen Kane might be considered one of Orson Welles's masterpieces?*

It is hard to say but I think it is a marvelous film (for all the things that we've mentioned beforehand). I can certainly agree for the fact that one of the astonishing things to me are all the greatest film award it received and continued over such a long period of time. Every two or three years, the British film journal *Sight and Sound* does an international film critics poll, with hundreds of authors and journalists from all over the world, to select the best

films of all time. For something like the last 20 years, *Citizen Kane* has finished always first or second in the poll, which is impressive for a film that's 80 years old.

In way it's a great tribute to Welles because he never had any studio funding and was in his early career, a lot of his time was spent to scrounge up some money to do this film and the later ones (*Chimes at Midnight*, *Touch of Evil*). For example, even for *Chimes at Midnight* he had to do all of kind of tricks: he lied to producers saying that he was making the film of *Treasure Island*. *Touch of Evil* was his first real Hollywood film because Charlton Heston who was the star and a bankable figure for Hollywood executives said << I won't do this unless you have Welles >>. Furthermore, to reduce the costs, the cast for *Citizen Kane* came from his New York theater company "Mercury Theater" and half a dozen of them were acting for the first time in a film.

#### **8) For last, what's your favorite movie of all?**

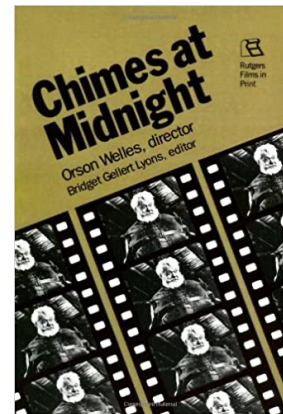
Well, Welles is really the director that I admire most, and I guess I know most about. *Citizen Kane* as well as *Chimes at Midnight*, *Touch of Evil* are all wonderful and I truly recommend them to you if you haven't watched the last two.

I like a lot some Scorsese films but also John Ford. I've done a volume on one of Ford's movies: *My darling Clementine*, a western in which stars Henry Fonda. I've watched it with my wife Bridget a week ago, and we haven't seen it in 15 years, and it was amazing. I really recommend it to you If you haven't seen it.

## Bridget Gellert Lyons



Mrs. Bridget Lyons is a noteworthy professor and language educator specializing in the literature of the English Renaissance. In her career she published works as *Reading in the Age Theory* (1997) and *Voices in Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (1971) and she was a long-time editor of *Renaissance Quarterly*. She had the possibility to work on some masterpieces of the director Orson Welles with her husband, Mr. Robert Lyons, in this respect she published *Chimes of Midnight: Orson Welles, Director*. (1989).



During this conversation, Bridget and I, went through two of the major plays that Shakespeare has ever written: *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*. These two plays were adapted by Mr. Orson Welles on theater and on the screen too. Venice, the city that works as a *pivot* point for those two plays, was the focus of our conversation. I had this great opportunity to have a friendly talk with Mrs. Lyons about these immense masterpieces and their relative adaptation for the theater, the interest we have in common.

### Venice in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*

- C: I would like to start our conversation asking you how your career started and if you had a direct connection with the theater.
- B: Oh, no, I don't have a direct connection in the sense of working in a theater, I started - you know- just as sort of an American academic specializing in the period of 16th and 17th century literature and particularly drama. Then I wrote about melancholia which is a big subject. Now everybody is feeling melancholy, or it's just me? but, anyway that is what it is, when you said theater, I thought you might mean an actual connection to the theater now. We both [she and Mr. Robert Lyons] go occasionally.
- C: What I meant was if you, by any chance, had studied any subject related to theater, or drama before working on the Renaissance.
- B: Yeah, particularly I was interested in Shakespeare, of course ... Who wouldn't? Who wouldn't be, right?
- C: That's right! so, what's your favorite play of Shakespeare?
- B: What is my favorite? Well, I love some of the tragedies, like everybody, you know: King Lear and Hamlet and so forth on favorites. Then I also like some of the comedies enormously and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. One of my nieces now actually runs a theater company in Vermont and she was asking me what plays they should put on, which of course, at the moment, unfortunately it's nothing, but I was recommending for some of these, *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Who doesn't like it?
- C: Yeah, it's very funny and it's wonderful. Anyway, it's just the simplest thing of represent something. Theater permits you to have a direct connection with the audience and all around, it's just an incredible thing

to do and helps to reconnect people to those stories whether tragedies or comedies, they do that just representing what Shakespeare wrote.

B: This is absolutely right! when my husband and I were in London the last time we actually went to the Globe theatre. They've reproduced the effects and so forth, that is quite wonderful because of the relationships they have - the actors have with the audience. So, I mean there were people standing - we didn't, but you had the choice of sitting also - but there was this dynamic with the people standing that screamed at the actors and the actors screamed back at them. It's very much in an effort to reproduce the ambiance of the Elizabethan stage. It's very nice!

C: Yeah, you certainly had the full Elizabethan experience!

B: Yes! then I was very interested also - as my husband is - in Shakespeare and the film versions of Shakespeare. We actually put out a book together on Orson Welles's *Chimes at Midnight* which is based on three of the history plays of Shakespeare. You know, we went through scene by scene, and we interviewed one of the main actors. I had to write an introduction to it and so on. That was a lot of fun, I mean it's a wonderful film actually, and it got our very interest just in the general representations of Shakespeare in films – even the Japanese ones have been terrific! *The throne of blood* and *Ron* which are the kingly add shown above the *Macbeth* and so forth – yeah just how people reimagine Shakespeare for film...

C: Yeah, and Orson Welles also directed and produced the film on *Othello*, the play we will talk about soon!

B: He did very much so! I think it's quite wonderful - I mean - people who are very pure and thinking of the Shakespearean texts would take umbrage at some of the things that he does; he cuts this and that, but the

imagery is absolutely wonderful, you'll never forget it once you have seen it -those images and people enclosed in cages. And what he does with Iago at the end of the play is just so remarkable. And Othello himself - which of course he plays himself.

C: I think it's not even an easy part to play, of course there are lots of emotions, plus he has many monologue...

B: You're absolutely right! and so the question is: where you can cut without really doing any damage to the end? because I sort of worked on the play - on the film version - they've remastered a lot of those films including the *Othello*.

C: So, speaking of *Othello*, let's talk about these two plays we've chosen, which are *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*.

B: Well, the reason why I proposed Venice is obviously because you are studying in Ca' Foscari and he wrote two plays in which Venice is actually really important.

C: It is, it really is! When I read the two plays, the thing I found worthy to mention was Venice! What this place represents and the differences we - as students - see and live. It's interesting to read about this city through Shakespeare's eyes, mostly because he seems to have never visited Venice.

B: Did you find any aspect particularly convincing?

C: Well, for example in *The Merchant Venice*, Shylock's religion suggests that he could live in the Jewish ghetto, that is an important neighborhood in Venice from a historical perspective and it can be helpful to emphasize his [Shylock] tradition. Now of course it's not as strict as the one Shakespeare wrote about in his play.

- B: Well, it's not clear that he even knew there was a ghetto at the time. I mean Shylock's house isn't necessarily in the ghetto. Certainly, one of the film versions - that I remember - makes a big point of that and then, when Shylock is forced to change his religion. He's not really accepted by the Christians and then the Jews also rejected him. Shakespeare doesn't carry the whole thing quite that far; I mean he hasn't stumbled off the stage. I guess one of the things that Shakespeare wanted to stress was that it was a city that was accepting the diversity. Now it's a very difficult play to put on because of the anti-Semitism.
- C: Yeah, of course it's difficult to portray that aspect because of our history...
- B: Yes, but he wanted to stress that it was a city that was friendly to an international population. He gave equal rights to everybody, and the basis of their commercial success was that they didn't have any sort of prejudices against people from anywhere - although then it does come out in the play - but what about Portia? I mean, she lets all his complexion "choose me" and so forth - she too has her prejudice.
- C: Yeah, also because Venice is portrayed as the city of wealth.
- B: Yes, definitely!
- C: I think that people maybe thought about having new opportunities in Venice, because they could be whatever they wanted to be in Venice, it's portrayed as a place where you can have commerce with other places. For example, in the play the commerce with Geneva and Frankfurt is mentioned.
- B: Absolutely. I think one of the underlying things is the different attitudes to wealth between the Venetians and Shylock. It's very clear, isn't it?

- C: It is clear! Especially the differences between Antonio and Shylock. They have such a different perception of money – well, Shylock is a moneylender and Antonio, on the other hand, doesn't really care for wealth. He [Antonio] cares a lot more for love and relationship. He makes a loan to help his friend to conquer his loved one, Portia.
- B: That's right, that's absolutely the point. He's interested in what the money will buy then, and Shylock wants to keep it and save it, he doesn't want to have a servant who doesn't give him his money worth, and who won't run away. And then he shuts up the house. Didn't he?
- C: Yeah, exactly!
- B: You know, everybody was doing it by that time, I mean it was. It was a lot of wishful thinking to go back to an age when you lend out money without judging any interest on it. It was gradually ceasing to exist altogether, but there was a sort of nostalgic feeling. But that looked like it's the right way to do it, but well... What about Belmont vs. Venice? I mean now I think there's a lot of writing above the fact that there's a lot of hypocrisy there, because of all that idyllic space - it's underwritten on this word by money too.
- C: Of course! I think that Venice, compared to Belmont, is portrayed as an innovative place, different from the other one, even if they are both based on wealth. But Venice is - as I already said - a city of commerce. You just must have money in order to conquer what you wanted, even just to have a good reputation.
- B: That's absolutely the case, yeah. How does one respond to Jessica?
- C: Well, Jessica just wants love. She wants to marry Lorenzo even if his father is completely against their love - of course she wants to do something to feel this emotion – to love – and to be loved. Her father



doesn't really give her the access to this. This reaction – the reaction of Shylock- is unusual if we think it comes from a father: actually, he cares more for the money and the turquoise ring she takes rather than his own daughter's wishes.

B: This is true, and you know people always go on saying "my daughter and my ducats, my ducats and my daughters". The two things are very equivalent to each other but, on the other hand, she does rob him and there's one line - which now people want to see the play in a different light - where she says, "I'll kill myself". That is not a very favorable line to her either. Then she goes and spends the money on total frivolities - as is reported at least. how does one play on the stage these days - with all that the world's been through with ferocious anti-Semitism - put it on so it is bearable for an audience to display?

C: It needs some context. If you give the audience a real context with a date and a scenography that represent what happened at the time - with a scripted moral - the reason behind portraying atrocious events will become bearable for the actors and audience. Of course, it is a real problem – anti-Semitism is still a problem - we should try to avoid any situation where racial and religious faith is discriminated, but it still happens, and it happened in the past. It's important to set the right ambience to stage such a play.

B: I think that's absolutely the case, I mean nowadays anyone who wants to play the role have to really concentrate on that speech particularly - where he [Shylock] says he doesn't have to have eyes and ears, and the way you do too - when you suffer a wrong, you revenge yourself – "so why shouldn't I?" and so forth... He shows that there's a great hypocrisy when, on the other side, there's a great affinity between the two of them.

Shakespeare was quite amazing because he always saw both sides of the question! I think that's one of the remarkable things about the play.

Shylock embodies the figure of the villainous character, but Shakespeare also saw the human side of him.

C: Yes, for example when he shows his love for his deceased wife

B: Yes, exactly, exactly!

C: In that moment he shows love: he is capable of love, and he fell in love with his wife.

B: that's right, it's very true.

C: But what about the Venetian law? I mean, we see how it should have worked out for Antonio and Shylock.

B: Right, he appeals to Venice - Shylock appeals to Venice - he said if you don't respect the law of contracts - this is a legal contract - and if you don't respect that, it would be bad - I think the word "president" even comes up there before other people will realize that their contracts are not exactly honored in this city either. It would be very bad for the whole commercial and legal life of the state, he has a point of course. I mean they all agreed that he has a point, even the duke agrees.

C: Yes, he wanted some justice, he had mercy from the duke. At the end, he had mercy from Antonio.

B: That's very true, I mean it's a little ambiguous. One influential critic said Shylock loses his opportunity to be a real tragic hero because, when they forced him to change his religion, he should have said no, but he doesn't. He said "yes, I am content" and he shuffles off the stage that way. Some other critics think that is just a horrible cruelty on the part of the Christians. I mean, I'm thinking at the end of the 16th century problems, it's very ferocious. But what about the last act? I mean it bills itself as a

comedy and a lot of this doesn't feel very comic. How do you think the last act smooths all that out?

C: I think that it could be funny the part when Portia dresses up like a man in order to convince Shylock not to harm Antonio. On the one hand, it's funny but, on the other hand it's bizarre, I don't know, in my opinion it's a little forced action the one they try to do, even if at the end they do the right thing. I mean, Shylock must change his religion in order to save himself from his life-sentence.

B: Yes, it is very harsh and then the last act, with all the music, tries to reestablish the idea that this is a comedy! He tries to bring it back into the comic world with Lorenzo and Jessica and that wonderful language about the music of the stars. And although everybody points out that the love stories that they bring up from classical times - you know, like *Dido and Aeneas*, are actually unhappy stories when, whether the audience catches so, they just feel overwhelmed by this wonderful music. Portia plays the law game even more rigorously and cleverly than Shylock himself.

C: Yeah, that's right, she demonstrates to be a wise woman.

B: Of course, she's absolutely the heroine. She dresses up as a man and succeeds.

C: Absolutely, let's change the topic, shall we? Let's speak about the *Othello*, what about Venice in *Othello*?

B: Well, when Verdi wrote his opera, he completely left out the whole Venetian act at the beginning.

C: Yes! I researched a little about it: they left out the whole first act of *Othello* readapting the whole play through musical numbers. I think that for that

reason he had to reduce the whole play too, to make the dramaturgy as tight as possible.

B: I think that's absolutely what it was, I mean he wanted the compression!

C: Yeah, that's absolutely right. Verdi had to rewrite the musical numbers with Boito - his librettist - they readapted some important scenes of the first act, they put them in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> act. They had to take and craft the most important parts trying not to leave out anything.

B: Of course, I think that's absolutely right. What did Shakespeare want with that first act? I mean right once bottled waters; the first action of the drama contributes to create the right ambience.

C: Well, of course it gives us a set and *Othello* makes his first appearance there. We find out that he serves Venice, he is a general of the Navy of Venice and that's actually huge because he is a Moor, he works in Venice which - as we said before - was represented as the place of opportunities. That was an innovation for the time, he is a black man, and he has an important role for the Venetian society.

B: Of course, and they absolutely need him!

C: Yeah, and we have a first impression of the Venetian society. We find out about the relationship between Othello and Desdemona for the first time. We also find out that the father of Desdemona doesn't agree with their elopement... this is an important part for the play.

B: Definitely. They depend upon Othello because they need him - as you say -he is a successful general, he has this wonderful poetic language in the first act and one of the unfortunate things in his downfall is how he got tricked by Iago. But let's take a step back, you also realize that **it** subliminally could be a very racist place to be, I mean that and the kind

of things that Iago says in the first act which are very vulgar, but then they grow and so forth...

C: While reading the play I noticed that Iago calls Othello only with words as "Moor" or "Him" or "His Moorship", as if he was trying to reduce his person only to his race. What do you think about this?

B: Some of it is just crassly vulgar, you know, a black ram is now topping, you're white and so on and so forth. I mean it's very gross, you feel that this is not only Rodrigo but also others... The Senate, for example. What about the Venetian Senate, when they finally meet? I mean when one of them says "well my daughter... like that too" and so forth, like they got mad about this relationship.

C: Yeah, at the beginning it's like they don't believe him. it's impossible that Desdemona can fall in love with him. For this reason, I think the racial problem is present throughout the entire play. Even in the finale we have a problem: Othello is jealous because he thinks he's not worth the love of Desdemona, perhaps for his origins.

B: Absolutely! one of the ways in which Iago gets to his nervous system alleged by telling him "You have never really understood Venice, you have never really understood Venetian women" and he totally distorts this of course, that Venetian women will have other lovers – and as the father says "there's a curse on them". In fact, if she could see the father, she will deceive you also and "you don't you don't really understand this woman", "I don't understand that culture" and "you don't understand how people behave and think and feel" and so forth. That whole Venetian act really plays into this.

- C: Yes, even the other women who are playing these roles in the play are just women! they don't get to be more relevant than lovers of certain men, for the sole purpose of elevating their status.
- B: That's absolutely the case. What about Iago?
- C: He is the villain, a very good villain!
- B: That's very good way of putting it!
- C: Well, he set up the whole plan to make Othello jealous of Desdemona. He has a plan, and he does everything in his power to make it work. And at the end it worked out!
- B: This is absolutely the case! Quite a lot was written by critics about this play - about how Shakespeare's plays totally loose with time. In this play an audience would never think about it, only critics. There is no time in the play for all of the infidelities Iago describes to Othello, I mean the they've been together the first night in Cyprus is their wedding night – which is mentioned more than once - and on the other hand, when Iago tells him the hours and hours of lust that she spent with Cassio... it's all an illusion that, not only Othello believes, but the audience, in some sense, think it is credible! I mean, it's credible that Othello is taken in by this. This business of double time in the play, it's rather interesting, it's a dramatic manipulation and that's why they say Elizabethan's drama could get things in every way as they left. The classical unit couldn't, I mean, you just set up some reporting about the past and then Venice comes back into the play!
- C: Yes, at the end, when Cassio goes back to Venice and takes the place of Othello, he becomes the general. Cassio should have died, killed by Othello – that was the plan – but at the end it doesn't happen.

- B: That's right, he's named as the next general of the island, and another thing that was totally unbelievable, that sort of work in the play- because you get caught up in.
- C: Yeah, of course. And then there is Bianca who is totally ignorant of everything that is going on until act five.
- B: Yes, again, the audience gets completely caught up in this, I mean it's a massive illusion because only at the very end she said, "oh is that what my husband wanted, that handkerchief from Leo". Well good, but you've obviously read this play. Did you like it?
- C: Yes, I liked it pretty much.
- B: I'm glad. So anyway, those are the ones where Venice comes in!
- C: I think we went through almost everything. It's been such a pleasure to talk about this with you!
- B: I did too. And as we say now everywhere, stay safe!
- C: Thank you so much! It was such a pleasure. All the best and thank you for your time! Until the next time!
- B: Absolutely, Until the next time!