Iago as Moral Other in Jonathan Munby’s Production of Othello (2016)
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Iago as Moral Other in Jonathan Munby’s Production of *Othello* (2016)

Othello as Racial Other

“rich Eastern garments, strongly scented with musk”
wear a turban
thick African accent
difference in skin color
Iago as Moral Other
in Jonathan Munby’s
Production of Othello (2016)

Othello as Racial Other
object of alienation
Iago as Moral Other in Jonathan Munby’s Production of Othello (2016)

Othello as Racial Other identification and corresponding alienation

“If I identify with the Democrats, I am alienated from the Republicans. If I identify with my father, I am alienated to some extent from my mother. Worse yet, every alienation brings with it a sense of loss and creates boundaries between self and others” (Smith 322).
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Research Questions

What techniques unique to theatre did Munby implement to affect change in the audience?

What devices were used to create identification between the audience and Iago?

What devices forced distinction from Iago?
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Analysis of theatrical techniques such as script alterations, scenic design, lighting design, costume design, props, blocking, music, actor’s performance, and interaction with audience to gather data of “Moral Otherness.”

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**Thesis**

1. Munby’s *Othello* initially guides the audience into self-identification with Iago.
2. Challenges each member of the audience to distinguish himself or herself from Iago’s character and stand opposed to his inhumanity.
Iago as Moral Other
in Jonathan Munby’s
Production of *Othello* (2016)
1. The religious environment of William Shakespeare, *Othello’s* playwright

Born 1564
1558: Queen Elizabeth returned England to Protestantism
1559: Queen Elizabeth’s Act of Uniformity

Bible and the Book of Common Prayer
2. Measure for Measure by William Shakespeare

Matthew 7:2, “For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

The Beatitudes articulate moral principles of selflessness, care for others, and endurance in times of suffering.

1603
Iago as Moral Other in Jonathan Munby’s Production of *Othello* (2016)
Theatre Production

Devices: lighting, props, costume, stage direction, sound, blocking, and setting

“limited life and then disappears from view” (deKoven 155).

Self-Criticism: “Each play is a mirror of reality” (Adler 335).

Audience as Performer

“Theatre is one of the only forms of art in which the subject is the same as the object. The art form has human beings portraying human beings while being watched and observed by other human beings. It allows the human audience to criticize themselves by criticizing the mirrored image before them” (Magbanua 8).

laughing, applause, whistling, crying, booing, sighing, silence

“Leaning forward, sitting on the edge of their seats, the audience play a part in what transpires on stage, they actively contribute to the creation as co-creators” (Heim 146).
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Identification

**Breaking the Fourth Wall and Humor**
Blocking with Brabantio’s appearance
Blocking after Cassio states, “I do not understand.”
Added reaction after Roderigo hugs Iago
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Lighting
Top of the Show
Freeze frame with Cassio and Desdemona
“...we are mentally joined with him in our understanding of what is going on, no matter how much we loathe him as a character”
(Novy 114.)
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**Other Characters**
- Roderigo for Dominance
- Desdemona
- Cassio for Understanding Trust

*Othello* “This displacement of audience perspective from the victims’ point of view certainly justifies Aristotle’s idea of pity as a classic emotional response to tragedy: we are sorry to see well-meaning personae destroyed by their own credulity. But we cannot identify with either their ignorance or their moral simplicity”  
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Distinction

Other Characters
Blocking of Othello and Desdemona
Othello and Props
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**Distinction**

**Other Characters**
- Blocking of Othello and Desdemona
- Othello and Props

**No Breaking of the Fourth Wall**
Iago as Moral Other in Jonathan Munby’s Production of *Othello* (2016)

**Distinction**

**Other Characters**
Blocking of Othello and Desdemona
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**No Breaking of the Fourth Wall**

**Blocking**
Blocking after Emilia’s Kiss
Blocking with Desdemona
Iago as Moral Other in Jonathan Munby’s Production of *Othello* (2016)

**Distinction**

**Other Characters**
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**No Breaking of the Fourth Wall**

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- Blocking after Emilia’s Kiss
- Blocking with Desdemona

**Lighting**
- Ending Scene
Iago as Moral Other in Jonathan Munby’s Production of *Othello* (2016)

**Conclusion**

Iago’s actions opposed Judeo-Christian teaching and the Beatitudes

“Although the director wanted ambiguity, it was [Antony Sher] who was clear about the meaning of Iago’s confrontational stare at the audience:

In our production, Iago was left in a sitting position after Othello wounded him; handcuffed, head bowed. Then after Lodovico’s closing couplet, and just before a snap black out, we had Iago suddenly look up, confronting the audience with his eyes. [The director] wanted the moment to be a strange, final aside, enigmatic, open to your own interpretation, but I was always clear about it myself. The dangerous wordsmith may be silent, but in my head this question always rang out: *You saw what was happening – why didn’t you stop it?*” (Maguire 34).


Works Cited and Consulted


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