Emma Magbanua | Dr. L. Monique Pittman | English Department Undergraduate Research Scholarship



Othello as Racial Other

"rich Eastern garments, strongly scented with musk" wear a turban thick African accent difference in skin color

Othello as Racial Other

object of alienation

> Othello as Racial <u>Other</u> 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).



Research Questions

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

What devices forced distinction from Iago?

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Investigative reading of text wherein rhetorical features, structural elements, cultural references, denotative and connotative meanings of words, changes in poetic meter, thematic material, juxtapositions highlighting tension, and evaluation of overall act and scene structure are identified.

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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.

Morality

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

Morality

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

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).

"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).

"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).

Audience as Performer

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

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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

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Distinction

Other Characters

Blocking of Othello and Desdemona Othello and Props



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Distinction

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Blocking of Othello and Desdemona Othello and Props

No Breaking of the Fourth Wall



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Other Characters

Blocking of Othello and Desdemona Othello and Props

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Blocking Blocking after Emilia's Kiss Blocking with Desdemona



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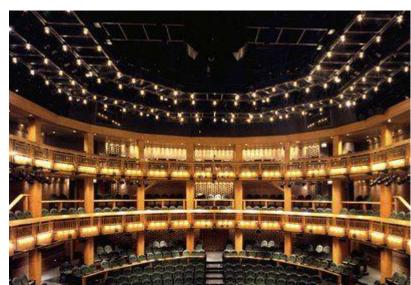
> **Lighting** Ending Scene





Conclusion

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



Every performance inevitably disappears from view. Some combat this disappearance with archival recordings, but these are limited to one specific performance. This thesis preserves the theatrical production for future reference.

"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).

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