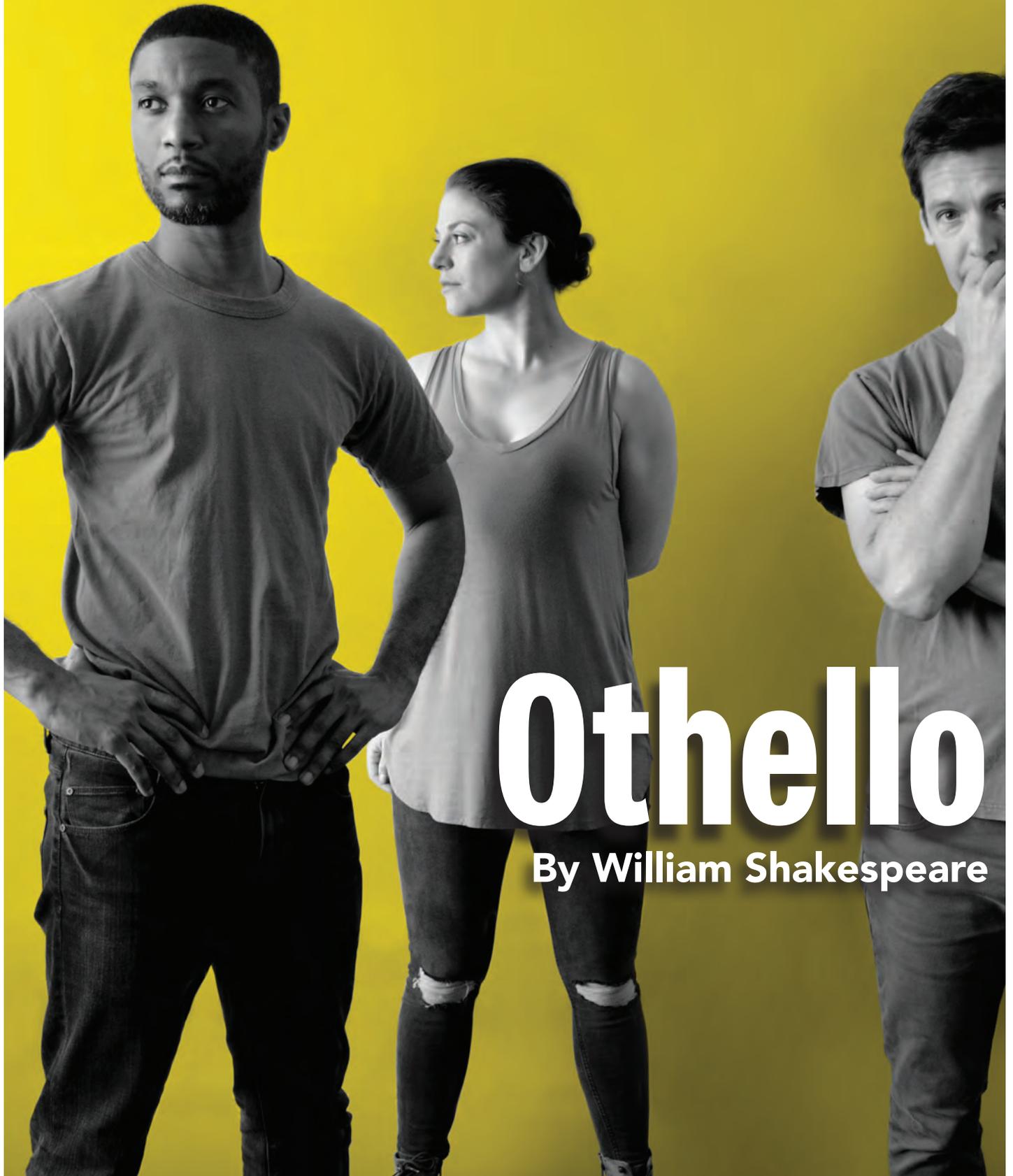


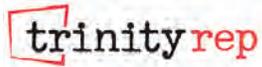
trinityrep

STUDY GUIDE



# Othello

By William Shakespeare



**Trinity Repertory Company,**  
 201 Washington St.,  
 Providence, RI.  
 (401)351-4242  
 www.TrinityRep.com

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Prepared by Trinity Repertory Company’s Education Department, Gillian Gurganus, and Fatima Faris.

Designed by Priscilla Parisa.



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Cover: Jude Sandy as Othello, Rebecca Gibel as Desdemona, and Stephen Thorne as Iago

Left: Rebecca Gibel as Desdemona and Jude Sandy as Othello

# Etiquette AND Discussion

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY  
AND GO OVER WITH YOUR  
CLASSES BEFORE THE SHOW

## TEACHERS:

Speaking to your students about theater etiquette is ESSENTIAL. Students should be aware that this is a live performance and that they should not talk during the show. If you do nothing else to prepare your students to see the play, please take some time to talk to them about theater etiquette in an effort to help the students better appreciate their experience. It will enhance their appreciation of the show and allow other audience members to enjoy the experience. The questions below can help guide the discussions. Thank you for your help and enjoy the show!

## ETIQUETTE:

What is the role of the audience in a live performance? How is it different from seeing a film? Why can't you chew gum or eat popcorn at a live theater performance? Why can't you talk? What can happen in live theater that cannot happen in cinema?

Reiterate that students may not chew gum, eat, or talk during the performance. Please make sure all cell phones and pagers are turned off. Recording devices and cameras are strictly prohibited. If there is a disturbance, they will be asked to leave and the class will not be invited back to the theater. Students may not leave the building during intermission.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW AT TRINITY REP:

What are the differences between live theater and cinema? (Two dimensional vs. three dimensional; larger than life on the screen vs. life-size; recorded vs. live, etc.) Discuss the nature of film as mass-produced, versus the one-time only nature of live performances. Talk about original art works versus posters. Which do they feel is more valuable? Why?

Observation #1—When you get into the theater, look around. What do you see? Observe the lighting instruments around the room and on the ceiling. Look at the set. Does it look realistic or abstract? Try to guess how the set will be used during the show.

Observation #2—Discuss the elements that go into producing a live performance: The lights, set, props, costumes, and stage direction. All the people involved in the “behind the scenes” elements of the theater are working backstage as the play unfolds before the students’ eyes. Tell them to be aware of this as they watch the show. Observe the lighting cues. How do special effects work? How do the actors change costumes so fast?

Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students’ reactions to the play. Ask the students to write letters to the actors about the characters they played and to ask questions of the actors.

Send these letters to: Trinity Repertory Company, c/o Education, 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 or email to: [education@trinityrep.com](mailto:education@trinityrep.com).

USING THIS

# Study Guide

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

**A Letter from School  
Partnerships Manager  
Matt Tibbs**

Welcome to Trinity Rep and the 54th season of Project Discovery! The education staff at Trinity Rep had a lot of fun preparing this study guide, and hope that the activities included will help you incorporate the play into your academic study. It is also structured to help you to introduce performance into your classroom through the following elements:

- Community Building in Your Classroom
- Inspiration and Background on the Artist
- Entering and Comprehending Text
- Creating Text for Performance
- Performing in Your Class
- Reflecting on Your Performance

Trinity Rep's Project Discovery student matinees help high school students in the following common core areas (for more information on the National Core Arts Standards, visit <http://nationalartsstandards.org/>):

- Initiate and participate effectively in a ranges of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (CCS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)
- Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme (CCSS.RL.9-10.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (CCSS.RL.9-10.44)
- Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work (TH: Cn10.1.I.)
- Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works (TH: Re8.1.I.)
- Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices (TH: Re7.1.I.)
- Evaluate and analyze problems and situations in a drama/ theatre work from an audience perspective (TH: Re9.1.I)



2017–18 Season at the Lederer Theater Center  
under the direction of

Curt Columbus  
Arthur P. Solomon and  
Sally E. Lapidès Artistic Director

Tom Parrish  
Executive Director

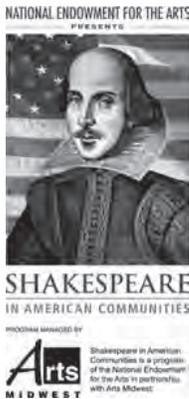
# Othello by William Shakespeare

## THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Directed by **Whitney White**  
Set Design by **Daniel Soule**  
Costume Design by **Andrew Jean**  
Lighting Design by **Amith Chandrashaker**  
Sound Design by **Mikaal Sulaiman**  
Fight Choreography by **Zdenko Martin & Charlie Thurston**  
Production Stage Managed by **Kristen Gibbs\***

**February 15 – March 18, 2018**  
in the Elizabeth and Malcolm Chace Theater

Supported by



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**Suzanne & Terrence Murray,  
The Murray Family  
Charitable Fund**



Trinity Rep's 54th Season is sponsored by



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**Southwest** Southwest is the official airline of Trinity Rep.

**BOTTLES** Bottles is the official sommelier of Trinity Rep.

Program printing and advertising sales by **Rhode Island**

## THE CAST

Emilia **Angela Brazil\*\***  
Montano **Ryan Joseph Broussard\***  
Lodovico **Daniel Duque-Estrada\***  
Desdemona **Rebecca Gibel\*\***  
Roderigo **Mauro Hantman\*\***  
Gratiano **Brendan D. Hickey**  
Bianca **L'Oreal Lampley**  
Brabantio **Brian McEleney\*\***  
Othello **Jude Sandy\*\***  
Duke of Venice **Fred Sullivan, Jr.\*\***  
Iago **Stephen Thorne\*\***  
Cassio **Charlie Thurston\*\***

**Othello will be performed with one intermission.**

Production Director **Laura E. Smith**

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors & stage managers

\*\* Trinity Rep Resident Acting Company member

ON THE COVER: JUDE SANDY, REBECCA GIBEL & STEPHEN THORNE • IMAGE BY MICHAEL GUY

**PLEASE TURN OFF** cell phones, beepers, pagers, and alarms during the performance. Texting and cell phone use are limited to intermission, outside the theater. Photography, video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means are strictly prohibited.

## Unit One: Background Information



# About William SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

William Shakespeare was born in a little town sixty miles north of London called Stratford-upon-Avon in April of 1564, though the exact date of his birth is unknown. He was baptized on April 26th, giving us reason to believe he was actually born on April 23rd, since the customary baptism was held three days after a child's birth. By the time he passed away in 1616, he had written thirty-seven plays, two narrative poems, and one hundred and fifty-four sonnets.

Little is known of Shakespeare's life besides what is recorded in various documents such as billings and receipts. We can assume that Shakespeare went to the local grammar school in Stratford-upon-Avon when he was child, however he did not study at a university. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years older than he, and would have three children with her: Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judith. While still married to Anne, he would move away to London where he would work as an actor and playwright. He would eventually become a shareholder of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, who would perform at The Globe and the Blackfriars Theatre.

It is said that Shakespeare passed away on his birthday in 1616. In his will, he left his wife Anne his "second best bed," which in actuality was the bed they shared together, since one's 'best bed' was always saved for one's guests. Seven years after his death, two of Shakespeare's dearest friends (and two of his best actors) John Heminge and Henry Condell had his complete works published in the First Folio. It is on the cover page of this collection that the famous playwright and Shakespeare's contemporary Ben Jonson wrote, "He was not of an age, but for all time."



## Comedies

All's Well That Ends Well  
A Midsummer Night's Dream  
As You Like It  
Cymbeline  
Love's Labour's Lost  
Measure for Measure  
Much Ado About Nothing  
Pericles, Prince of Tyre  
The Comedy of Errors  
The Merchant of Venice  
The Merry Wives of Windsor  
The Taming of the Shrew  
The Tempest  
The Two Gentlemen of Verona  
The Winter's Tale  
Twelfth Night  
Troilus and Cressida



# A Complete List of Shakespeare's Plays

## Tragedies

Antony and Cleopatra  
Coriolanus  
Hamlet  
King Lear  
Julius Caesar  
Macbeth  
Othello  
Romeo and Juliet  
Timon of Athens  
Titus Andronicus



## Histories

Henry IV (two parts)  
Henry V  
Henry VI (three parts)  
Henry VIII  
King John  
Richard II  
Richard III

From left: Janice Duclos, Anne Scurria & Phyllis Kay in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Richard Kneeland in *King Lear*; Timothy Crowe & Anne Scurria in *Richard II*.



## Elizabethan Royalty and Society

Many of Shakespeare's plays were inspired by the tempestuous political climate of his times. During his lifetime there were two monarchs: Elizabeth and James I. Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. After Henry's death, his son by his third wife reigned as Edward VI. Edward was succeeded by Mary Tudor (or "Bloody Mary"), the daughter of Henry's first wife. She became ill and died, leaving the throne to the teenaged Elizabeth I in 1558.

During Elizabeth's forty-five year reign (from 1558 to 1603), England transformed into a political power, and enjoyed tremendous cultural achievements, in no small part thanks to Elizabeth's incredible intellect, shrewd political cunning and personal charisma. Elizabeth realized great personal political advantage could be had if she remained unmarried, and while her tenure as Queen was filled with many offers of marriage, none were accepted.

Elizabeth was incredibly popular among her subjects—her public appearances drew enormous crowds, and her taste in fashion set the bar for the aristocracy and, by extension, the rest of society. Her interests were broad and varied: literature, philosophy, history, poetry, theater. Her love of art fostered an atmosphere where artists felt comfortable and encouraged, and were much more likely to find financial support.

During her reign England achieved many victories, both at home and abroad. The victory over the highly-lauded and much heralded Spanish Armada in 1588 brought prestige and respect to the country, and in 1599 England began to move towards colonization and world trade with the conception of the East India Trading Company.

However, life in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century was far from pleasant. Disease and pestilence were rampant, and the threat of lawlessness or rebellion hovered over England throughout the sixteenth century. Londoners flocked to public executions to watch criminals be hanged and, in the case of treason, disemboweled. In fact, punishment for criminal behavior during Elizabeth's time often involved some kind of public display.

Elizabethan literature often mirrored the violence, brutality and death which were so prevalent in English society. Many of Shakespeare's tragedies often involved the murder or suicide of leading characters: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Hamlet* all conclude not only with the death of the eponymous characters, but also nearly every other major character in the play.

The Elizabethans were also living through the Renaissance, a time when beauty and grace were valued by all classes of people as never before; where poetry, drama and language were being pushed to incredible, imaginative heights by writers such as

Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson. There were advances in science, as well: Sir Francis Bacon invented what became the Scientific Method, which gave credence to hypothesis based only on natural observances and experimentation, as opposed to supernatural factors. English composers rivaled the finest composers in all of Europe, and in England music was cherished as never before. Music, singing and dancing were suddenly commonplace in Elizabethan society.

In short, Elizabethan society held an impressive variety of beliefs and ideas, ambitions and achievements. Among those achievements were the masterpieces written by William Shakespeare, which contain such flights of linguistic wit and genius that they have never been matched. In fact, without hyperbole, they are perhaps the most cherished pieces of literature in the history of mankind.



# The Lord Chamberlain's Men (and NOT women!)

The Lord Chamberlain's Men was the acting troupe that Shakespeare belonged to during Queen Elizabeth's reign. Actors were highly skilled: not only were they often tumblers, jugglers and dancers, but because the actors generally had little in the way of sets or costumes, actors were forced to set the scene for the audience: was it raining? Snowing? Was it night or day? All of these factors were heaped on the actors' shoulders.

If you wanted to be an actor (or "player") in a theater, you had to work for a nobleman who could give a company a license to act. If you were caught acting without a license, you were thrown in jail. Women were not allowed to perform at this time, so young boys played the female roles. Shakespeare himself had wanted to be an actor as a young boy. Once he entered puberty, and his voice deepened, his career for acting in women's roles was over, though he continued to act throughout his life.

When King James I inherited the crown, he adopted Shakespeare's company and it became known as The King's Men. By then, they were among the most popular theater companies in all of London. Shakespeare made a decent living, though not an especially lucrative one, working for the company as an actor and playwright. It was for this specific troupe of actors that he wrote his plays.

When Shakespeare wrote a new play, he never gave the entire script out to his players. They received their "sides" with their lines only, and they were given only a few days to memorize them. Then they usually rehearsed for only a few days and performed the piece once, before going on to another script. Most actors had to keep at least 15 plays memorized at all times because they would change the play every day to keep people coming back for more.

# The Globe Theatre



As one of the senior company members, Shakespeare was also a part-time owner of the theater space called the Globe, which opened in 1598 and burned down in 1613 during a battle sequence in one of his plays (most believe it to be Henry VIII). It was rebuilt immediately and reopened to the public.

In 1576, James Burbage built the first theatre in London on rented land, appropriately naming it “The Theatre.” Later, when Richard and Cuthbert Burbage (who had inherited the theatre and the land it was leased on from their father) were unable to re-negotiate the rent of the land, the landlord reclaimed his land and claimed that since “The Theatre” was on his property, it was therefore legally his. Unwilling to hand over their theater without a fight, the actors proceeded one evening to take the theatre apart piece by piece, float it over the Thames, and rebuild it; they named the theatre “The Globe.”

We are not sure what the Globe actually looked like, because no building or construction records survived. What we do know is brought to us by written descriptions in surviving journals, the de Witt drawing, and various sketches of all of London. We do know that the Globe had a circular shape, because in Henry V the chorus states,

“And shall this cockpit hold within  
this vasty fields of France  
Or may we cram within this wooden ‘O’...

It is believed that the Globe was actually a twenty-sided building, similar to that of the Rose Theatre which was excavated in 1989.

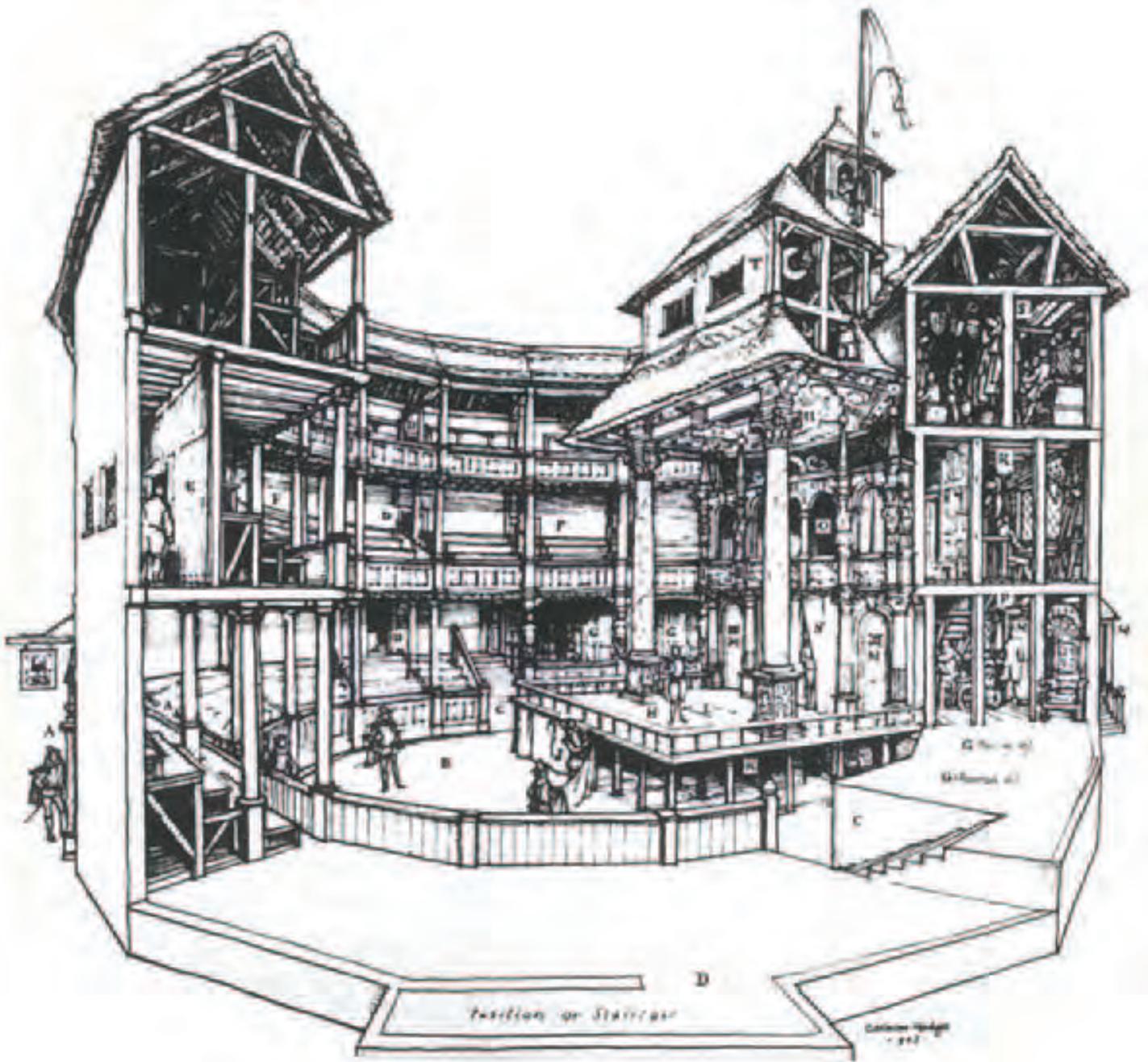
**Interior.** The sketch on the left is what is commonly referred to as the “de Witt Drawing.” In 1596 a student by the name of Johannes de Witt visited the Swan Theatre, a theatre similar to that of the Globe. While at the Swan he drew a sketch of the interior which his friend Arend van Buchell copied; it is his friend’s sketch of de Witt’s drawing that actually remains. It is the only remaining drawing of the interior of a public theatre from Shakespeare’s time, helping us to imagine what it was like inside.

**Daylight.** Plays were performed during the daylight hours, because they didn’t have any lighting system to speak of! The Globe Theatre had no roof so the light of the day could illuminate the stage. That meant that the players could always see the audience and vice versa. The players would often speak right to the people in the audience—who would often speak right back!

**Scenery.** Shakespeare’s troupe didn’t really use scenery. They had basic chairs, a throne for the king, and any important props the play called for (swords, scrolls, etc.) The focus of the play was on the wording—scenery and props were simply a second thought.

**Costumes.** Actors’ costumes were hand-me-downs from the nobility of the time; therefore the actors always looked current and fashionable!

**Special Effects.** The Elizabethan audience was more interested in hearing about the action rather than seeing a bunch of special effects. The focus was on listening; often an event in the play would take place offstage and a character would come onstage to inform the audience of what had happened. [For example: In Hamlet, the death of Ophelia is not seen on stage but rather the story of her death is told to the audience by the Queen in Act IV: Scene vii]. Of course there were some special effects used in his productions such as canons, fireworks, trapdoors and a rigging system from above.



# The Layout of the Globe

## WHERE'S MY SEAT?

If you were poor then you didn't get a seat, instead you had to stand in the yard down in front of the stage; these spectators were called **groundlings**, due to the nature of their 'seats.' Here the audience members often yelled, talked directly to the actors, pushed, shoved, ate and drank all during the performance.

If you were moderately well-off, you could sit in the **Gallery**. Lining the walls of the theater, they provided benches and some shelter from the elements.

If you were wealthy you could sit in the **Lord's Room**. These were box seats with private entrances (so you wouldn't have to run into the groundlings), and were located right near the stage on the walls so that you could better hear the actors. Also, these seats allowed you to be seen by all of the spectators, making your seat a representation of your class.

# From Heaven

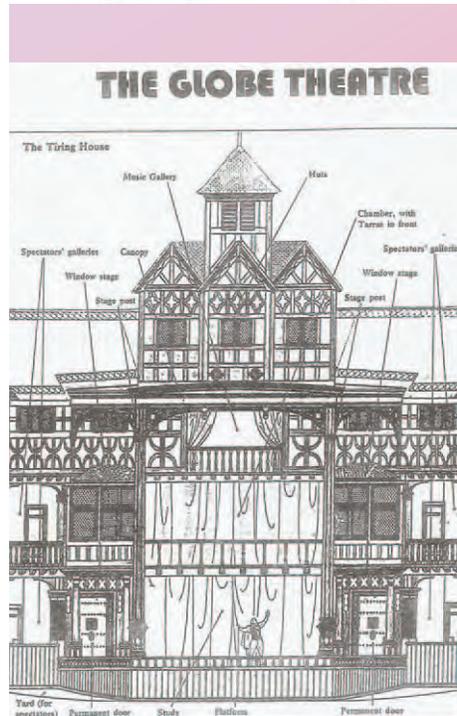
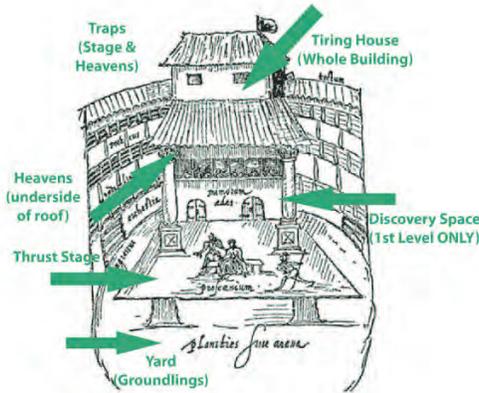
While the players didn't have much in the way of sets, they did have their own vertical layout of the stage, which was divided into **four levels**.

**Hell.** This was on the ground level below the stage (near the groundlings) and was accessible from trapdoors. Characters of low status or living in Hell would appear from below.

**The Stage.** This was the platform on which most of the action took place. There were usually two doors for character entrances, one on either side, as well as a little alcove at the back of the stage where a curtain was drawn. This little alcove was used to reveal action going on inside a house (a private scene), or to provide a hiding place for eavesdroppers.

**The Upper Gallery.** Directly above the stage was a little balcony to provide a different level for playing. This was often where a beautiful woman would appear (like Juliet on her balcony), because these women were considered a little bit higher in status than the male-driven world below. Often musicians were located in the top alcove to play accompanying music.

**The Heavens.** This space literally represented Heaven, and was located at the top of the theater, directly above the stage. The roof, which would keep rain off the actors, was painted with stars.



# to Hell

This vertical architecture is a representation of the class structure of the time; that is, going from the poor groundling to the elevated rich. The poor people stood in the yard and had to look up to the players on the raised platform dressed as Kings (remember, the costumes came from the nobles, so even if they were playing a King from 300 years ago, they looked like the King of the time). Standing on the same level as "Hell," the groundlings could look up and see the Heavens high above them, behind the players. Their view of the action was of humans striving for the divine.

On the other hand, the wealthy would look down from their cushioned box seats and see poor players dressed in their hand-me-down clothing. They sat on a similar level to the Heavens where they could feel more superior. But they were also aware of how close the level of human experience and Hell were to them.

The theater was extraordinarily popular and rather inexpensive form of entertainment. All kinds of people frequented the theater. They would look across the Thames River to see if a flag were raised, which let everyone know that a show was planned for that afternoon; there were three different colored flags: red, white, and black. A black flag stood for a tragedy, a red flag for a history, and a white flag for a comedy.

# Did You Know...

Shakespeare is given credit for introducing nearly 2,000 words into the English language, either by using foreign words, making conjunctions of two or three new words, using nouns as verbs, or simply by invention! Here are some words attributed to Shakespeare:

Alligator

Auspicious

Castigate

Critical

Dauntless

Divest

Eyeball

Eyesore

Frugal

Gloomy

Gnarled

Hoodwinked

Impede

Jaded

Laughingstock

Leapfrog

Lonely

Luggage

Majestic

Manager

Mimic

Mountaineer

Obscene

Pedant

Petition

Puke

Rancorous

Reinforcement

Rumination

Torture

Unmitigated

Worthless

Zany

Shakespeare also coined some of these famous phrases which we still use today:

All that glitters  
is not gold

Too much of  
a good thing

Dead as a doornail

Good riddance

Elbow room

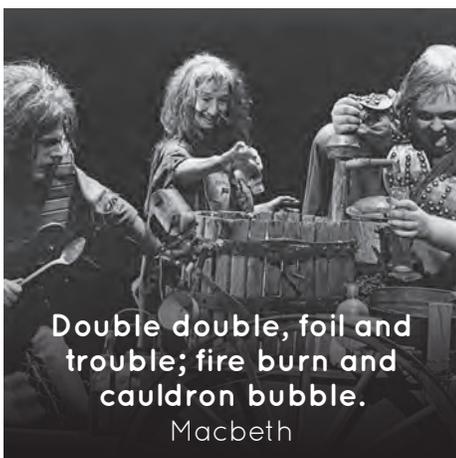
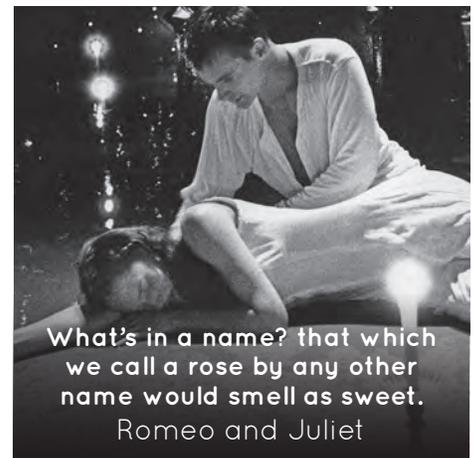
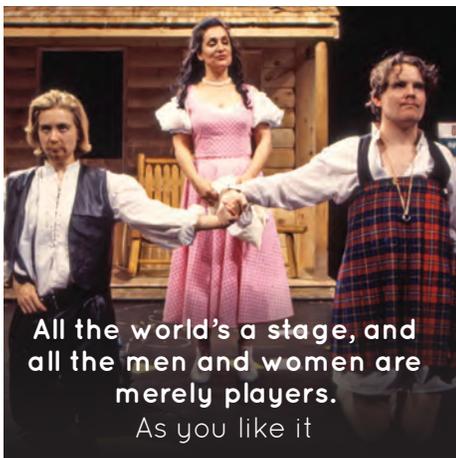
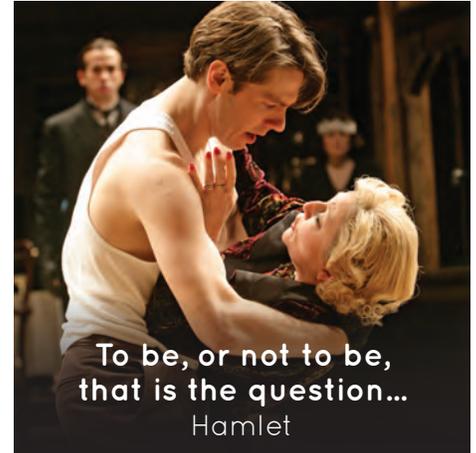
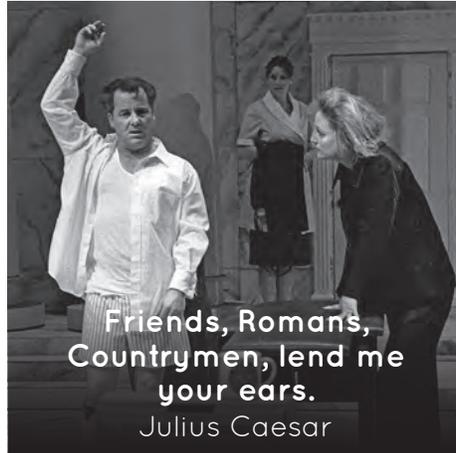
Heart of gold

Full circle

Sorry sight

# Shakespeare's lines are often referenced or parodied:

Here are a few of Shakespeare's more famous pieces of dialogue.



All photos from Trinity Rep productions.

## Unit Two: Othello



# Director Whitney White Talks Othello

Fatima Faris: How does it feel to come back and direct at the theater where you received your Masters in Fine Arts?

Whitney White: It's so fun! It's been a dream. Especially the upstairs theater—it's just so gorgeous. So, it's really a dream to come back and work with some of the people who trained me, and some of the actors I value the most. To work with a highly skilled ensemble of people in such a beautiful space with so many seats just feels like a luxury.

FF: Awesome! Jumping right in, why have you chosen to set *Othello* in the present?

WW: I love the Classics. They're my favorite kind of thing to work on now, and I love attacking them NOW because that's where I'm at—that's the period I have the most questions about. And, sadly, but also in a good way, it really holds up, you know? The same issues that are going on in this play are issues that we really have to deal with and figure out now. So, I look at [*Othello*] and it's just so resonant. It's dealing with misogyny, and racism, and the oppression of women, and conflict in the Middle East; and I'm like, "Woah!" You know, when I read the text, I can't help but think about now. It almost feels like it was supposed to be done now.

FF: You got right to my next question! Why is it important to tell this story in 2018?

WW: Why tell this story now? I'm a black female director and this is the play for me to do, and I just couldn't imagine doing it any time in any other way, which is exciting.

FF: Can you speak to why it's important for student audiences to watch this production?

WW: Yeah, the most important people I want to come are students because, you know, we need young people to start looking at the theater and think about how they want to do it because they're the future. So my hope is that some students will come to *Othello* and be, like, "hey, actually, this is what this play means to me and I want to work on it." The cool thing about the theater is that it gives us an arena to work on empathy and problem solving, and to look at other people make mistakes that we shouldn't make and we don't need to make. And we can see what happens to them, and start

getting some moral playground. So I think when young people come to the theater, it's a great opportunity for them to see some very intense things play out. And the play is kind of intense and very dark, and I know those students are coming up against a lot of the issues in the play. I've worked with a lot of students this year, and I love it because their take on everything is so fresh, and that's what the theater needs. That's what politics needs, and we all need to be shaken up. Hopefully they'll come see this show and start thinking of their version of it and do it.

FF: *Othello* deals with so many themes, not the least of which include jealousy, treachery, and racism. What themes are you really driving home in this production?

WW: I'm really interested in looking at a world and a system in which taking down a black man in this way is possible. And people don't always use the same tactic—not everyone in this play is racist in the way we understand to be racist. There are many levels of racial violence and microaggressions and the oppression of the “othered” body. “Other,” not just meaning black, but female, too, or “other,” meaning someone in a lower or different economic group. There's just so many forms of oppression in this play, and the main tool that Iago—the villain for all intents and purposes—uses these systems of oppression to get what he wants. In a way, you can argue that it's only possible because the system makes it possible. So what world are we living in where it's possible to manipulate someone to this point, and what can we do about it? That's what I'm thinking about.

FF: Great! Do you consider *Othello* to be a tragic hero, as he is often depicted, or do you think there are too many layers to really feel bad for him?

WW: Ahh, it's hard! I just think it's a tragedy. The tragic hero thing was always hard for me to grasp because my idea of a hero doesn't kill. And that's very different, you know, from the times of the Greeks and the Romans, from which a lot of our Western theater is derived. The hero—and even now, the military hero, which is totally key in this play—is someone who can kill, who can fight. Now that's not my idea of a hero, you know? I think of Martin Luther King as a hero. I think of peacemakers as heroes. So you have this man, spoiler alert (laughs),

who kills a woman—his wife—and is responsible for that; and I can't view that as heroism. I do view it as tragedy. I do view the manipulation and destruction of the black male body as a tragedy. There's also a lot of funny things in the play, which is odd. We've been laughing so much during this rehearsal period, but it's definitely just a tragedy.

FF: For sure. Lastly, what has excited you most about taking on this project?

WW: There's a weird thing about this play that's just very communal because the military, and in our militaristic world—as I'm sure was the case in Shakespeare's time—is very communal. They sleep together, they eat together, it's just all these people, mostly men (there are only three women in the play), and they each have really tragic stories. And I was grappling with what to do with all these men and thinking, “how can I discover the track of the women,” you know? I don't want to leave them behind. So I got really excited about not wanting to leave the oppressed people in the play behind. The play so often becomes the Iago show. Shakespeare sets it up that way: [Iago] talks to us, makes us laugh, jokes with us. However, I always find that Othello, himself, and the women—two oppressed groups in the play—are always a little left behind for me; they're stories are always in the background of the world and of Iago. So my goal is to hopefully bring these women and Othello back into the foreground so you can weigh them more accurately against Iago. That's been the biggest thing for me: how can we discover these women and Othello and give them our attention?

FF: Thank you so much for speaking with us!

### **If you were director...**

Discuss why the director may have chosen this setting for this production. How does the play change when put in this time period? Are any themes highlighted? Is anything lost? If you were directing this play where would you set it and why?

**Activity:** Create a mood board for your own concept for the show! You can include drawings of the set or costumes, pictures of props, taglines, music, etc. Get creative! Include a description of why you chose your interpretation and how your original concept will best serve to tell the story.

# Characters

performed by the cast of Trinity Rep's 2018 production



The tragic hero and main protagonist. Othello is the general of the Venetian army.

Played by Jude Sandy



Daughter of Brabantio and secret wife of Othello.

Played by Rebecca Gibel



Othello's flag bearer in the war. He is the main antagonist in the play, angry that he has been passed up for promotions in the past.

Played by Stephen Thorne



A prostitute who is fond of Cassio.

Played by L'Oreal Lampley



Desdemona's father and a Venetian senator.

Played by Brian McEleney



Othello's young lieutenant. He has a close friendship with Desdemona.

Played by Charlie Thurston



The highest office holder in Venice.

Played by Fred Sullivan, Jr.



Desdemona's attendant and Iago's wife.

Played by Angela Brazil



Brother of Brabantio and uncle of Desdemona.

Played by Brendan D. Hickey



One of Brabantio's kinsmen, and a messenger.

Played by Daniel Duque-Estrada



Former governor of Cyprus.

Played by Ryan Joseph Broussard



Othello's enemy. Roderigo is in love with Desdemona, and is willing to do anything to get her hand in marriage.

Played by Mauro Hantman



# Othello

## A Synopsis

The play begins with Iago, one of General Othello's officers, learning he has been passed over for a promotion. Othello has selected an inexperienced soldier, Cassio, to be his lieutenant instead. Angered by this rejection, Iago decides to take revenge on his boss. Iago exacts his plan via Othello's new bride, Desdemona, the beautiful daughter of a Venetian, Brabantio. Othello had married in secret. He invites Roderigo, a suitor Desdemona rejected, in on his plan to help him bring Othello down.

In his first effort to thwart Othello's happiness, Iago reveals the secret marriage to Desdemona's father, Brabantio, claiming that Desdemona was stolen in the night and married to Othello. Outraged at the idea of his daughter wedded to a Moor, Brabantio storms off to see Othello. When Brabantio arrives, he finds Othello on his way to stop the Turkish invasion of Cyprus with an assembled senate. Iago's plan backfires: As Brabantio accuses Othello of witchcraft, Othello tells the story of how he and Desdemona fell in love, warming the hearts of the senate. When Desdemona proclaims her love for her husband, Brabantio relents.

Othello leaves Venice to defend Cyprus from the Turks. As a storm disperses the Turkish offenses and Othello and Desdemona reunite, Iago schemes further by getting Cassio drunk. When Iago suggests to Roderigo that Cassio stands in the way between him and Desdemona, Roderigo is enraged and provokes Cassio into fighting with him. Cassio drunkenly kills a Governor who was trying to intervene. Disgusted by Cassio's actions, Othello fires him and promotes Iago to lieutenant. Iago goads Othello into believing that Desdemona and Cassio are lovers.

Othello becomes jealous, paranoid, and believes anything he's told about Desdemona in his deluded state. In his final trick of evidence, Iago fools his wife Emilia into stealing a special handkerchief Othello gave Desdemona during their courtship. Iago then shows it to Othello, claiming that Desdemona gave it to Cassio as a token of her love. Othello, worried, asks Desdemona to show him the handkerchief, and when she cannot produce it, he believes his suspicions of her infidelity are confirmed. Later that night, Desdemona sings "A Willow Song," as she prepares for bed, a melancholy song about a maid abandoned by her lover.

She wakes up in the middle of the night to an enraged Othello standing over her. She pleads for her life, but Othello smothers her with a pillow. Emilia enters, disgusted by what she sees, but Othello defends himself, holding the handkerchief as proof of Desdemona's wrongdoings. Emilia immediately realizes that Iago is behind what happened and she reveals it to Othello. At that moment, Iago enters and kills Emilia, and barely gets away from a murderous Othello who now understands. Othello then stabs Iago.

Othello addresses the audience, asking them to think of him "as one that lov'd not wisely but too well." He then stabs himself and kisses Desdemona as he dies.

**Moor:** a member of a northwestern African Muslim people of mixed Berber and Arab descent. In the late 15th century, they conquered much of what is now the Mediterranean.

**Fun fact:** Because of "Moorish" influence, some Catholics have named their children 'Fatima,' a name popular in Muslim religion and culture. 'Moor' is no longer a way of describing North African Muslims

# What makes *Othello* a tragedy?

Tragedy is defined as “an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress.” There are definitely many events in *Othello* that qualify this as a Shakespearean tragedy.

Overall, Iago’s power over people mentally and psychologically, even though he does not have much power in society, gives him the ability to break down Othello and expose his unstable mind and paranoia. Iago executes all of this through deceit and lies, leading to the play becoming a tragedy.

Additionally, Othello and Desdemona are both considered outsiders. From the start of the play, we see *Othello* at one of the highest ranks in the army and assimilating into the Venetian society. He is the complete opposite of Iago, where Desdemona is vocal in her thoughts and does not shy away from confrontation.

Throughout the play, we see these characters change. The change in their characters supports Othello being a tragedy because they both fail to retain the reputation they once held and their outsider status becomes quite clear, leading to both of their downfalls.

## SOME KEY ELEMENTS:

**Tragic Flaw:** Some people have said that Shakespeare’s tragedies are characterized by a “tragic flaw,” or a major imperfection in the hero that brings them down eventually.

**Hero of the story is destined to fall:** While many analyses call Othello a tragic hero, some—like director Whitney White—do not see Othello as a hero at all because he is a murderer.

**End in Death:** While not every tragedy ends in death, *Othello* certainly has a couple of fatalities. This fatal end to the play certainly supports the claim that *Othello* is a tragedy.

# Historical Context: The Role of Race and Class in Shakespeare’s Time

The play is very much concerned with race and class, especially as it relates to military rankings and social status. The issue is largely explored in the Iago and Othello’s relationship, where the play takes us into the vindictive mind of Iago after Othello promotes Cassio to lieutenant instead of him. Once the idea of revenge is sparked in Iago’s head, we see race and class affecting almost every twist and turn in the show.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How is Othello’s race important to the events of the play?
2. In 1998, Patrick Stewart, a white actor, played the title role in *Othello*, with the rest of the cast being made up of African American actors. Do you think this way of performing Othello would be practical? Would any of the themes of the play differ in this production? Which ones?
3. Othello is referred to as “The Moor” about sixty times in this play, but he is only called “Othello” about twenty times. Why do you think this is?
4. There are only three women in this play: Emilia, Desdemona, and Bianca. How do these women differ in terms of class and freedom? How are they similar?
5. In regards to the theme of “good vs. evil”, especially considering the ultimate fatal end of some of the characters, do you think Shakespeare was or wasn’t ahead of his time in consideration of racial and gender ethics?

# Othello's Dark Themes



## Racism

Othello is described as a Moor. The implications of being an African and Muslim man is not lost on any character in the play. Brabantio, Desdemona's father and former friend of Othello's, is angry that his white daughter has married Othello in secret. His anger lies in the fact that this nuptial occurred as well as the fact that she married a moor. In fact, Brabantio, upon discovering the secret marriage, states:

"She, in spite of nature,  
Of years, of country, credit, every thing,  
To fall in love with what she feared to look on!  
It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect  
That will confess perfection so could err  
Against all rules of nature,"

believing that there is no way Desdemona's love for a black man can be natural. Race also plays a big role in the perceived nature of the black man. Shakespeare's portrayal of Othello as a successful general is controversial for both the characters in the play as well as for its readers. Othello is a man who has murdered many in order to become the great general he is. This pushes people to think Othello is a violent man, a trope that has been put onto black men for centuries. The trope comes full circle when Othello does, in fact, release a darkness in him that drives him to murder Desdemona. Critics of this play condemn the outcome that makes Othello out to be what the stereotype says all black men are. The racism, fueled by Iago's jealousy, but arguably always there, continues after Othello's final misdeed when the surviving characters (like Emilia, before she is later killed) call out his act as being part of his race (Emilia calls Othello a "blacker devil" and says he was Desdemona's "filthy bargain" in marriage).

## Jealousy

Othello would not be possible without the problems incited by the main antagonist, Iago. After being passed up for a promotion, Iago's jealousy of everything Cassio and Othello have fuels his actions and the actions of many of the other characters. We mostly see jealousy play out in Iago, Roderigo, and, of course, Othello. These three men are weighed down by real or imagined threats, and they use that weight to cause pain to every character in the play. Roderigo, who loves Desdemona, is willing to go to any lengths to get her. Furthermore, in one of Iago's monologues, he reveals that one of the reasons he wants to destroy Othello is for a suspicion that Othello has slept with his own wife, Emilia. If any of these men were rooted in self assuredness, they likely would not have acted on the jealousy they felt.





## Treachery

Iago's treachery against his wife, Emilia, Roderigo, and his commander, Othello, go hand in hand with manipulation. He uses their trust in him to twist the truth and cause further pain. Though Emilia knows Desdemona to be faithful, she still manages to be manipulated by Iago in implicating Desdemona in a cheating scandal. Iago also tricks Roderigo, a man in love with Desdemona, into hurting a perceived threat, "Cassio," in order to get Cassio out of the way so he could take his rank in the army. Lastly, and most importantly, Iago's manipulation of his general, Othello, is layered within racism and Othello's own insecurities of how people see him as a black man married to a white woman. This selfish trickery pushes Othello to the brink to the point of a murder-suicide. What makes these instances more tragic is the fact that Iago believes that he is justified in doing what he does to each of these characters.



## Sexism

There are only three women in *Othello*. Shakespeare is actually notorious for not having many female roles. The three women are on the receiving end of sexism and misogyny. Bianca, a side character who is in love with Cassio, is being entertained by him, but being belittled and made a fool of behind her back. She is not deemed worthy of him because of her status, but that does not stop Cassio from using her and immediately forgetting about her, showing his misogyny. The other two central women in the play are accused of infidelity. The infidelity accusations are not due to the women's characters, as shown by the men's statements, but are attributed to their sex. Desdemona, when crying to Othello in self defense, is called out for what her husband calls "crocodile tears." Her loyalty is even called into question by her father, who states that she had betrayed him (by marrying Othello in secret), so there is no question that she will betray her husband. Iago also has his suspicions of Emilia's fidelity. Once Emilia reveals to Othello Iago's manipulation of them both—a truth Iago previously stated women do not have the ability to do—she is killed by Iago, furthering the normalcy of violence toward women. Both women are killed by the men to whom they've been loyal.



## Violence

*Othello* is rooted in violence. As one of Shakespeare's tragedies, most of the central characters end up dying by the end of the play. Two of the three women in this play end up dead (66%!), making violence against women a major theme and major issue. As a testament that violence goes beyond the physical, all three of the women, Bianca, Emilia, and Desdemona are subject to emotional, mental, and verbal violence by the men in their lives. The culmination of the mental abuse is physical with the deaths of Emilia and Desdemona by their respective husbands. As part of the military, the men of the play are also applauded for being victorious in battles. This violence is celebrated, but it is then seen as a tragedy when these men end up killing each other and themselves.

## Unit Three:

# Enter the Text

## I'm not bad, I'm just drawn that way

One of the most important jobs for an actor is to figure out why their character does what they do. Even if an actor is playing a villain, it is important that the actor not judge or criticize their character's actions—instead, they must play them truthfully.

1. Assign each student (or depending on the class, a group of students) one character from the play. They must take an in-depth look at that character. Great examples from this play are Othello, Iago, Cassio, and Desdemona.
2. Have them come up with things that the character says about themselves and lines that other characters say to describe them.
3. Each student or group of students must then make a presentation as to why their character is not so bad after all. Whether or not they actually believe it, encourage students to think about their character's motivations for their actions in the play.
4. Discuss with your students how actors, writers and directors must always ask why people behave the way they do.

## Letters in Character

The first part of the following activity gives students the opportunity to interact with the characters and plot points of the story. The second half of this activity allows students to get inside the character's head and understand the story from their perspective.

1. Have your students choose a character from the play and, using any of the following prompts, write a letter to that character: What advice would you give the character at this point in the story? What is something important that you want this character to know right now? Tell this character about an event in the story that hasn't happened yet.
2. Once everyone has finished, collect the letters and redistribute them to other students in the class.
3. Now, each student must imagine that they are the character that the letter is addressed to, and respond to it from their perspective.

4. Optional performance opportunity: your students could also write their responses in the form of a monologue and perform them for the class.
5. Afterwards, take a moment to debrief with your students: which part of the activity did they like the best?

## “Othering”

Have your students discuss gender, what it means in the context of the play, and in the context of the world they know. Broaden the discussion to include non-gender othering, which happens all the time but does not get as much attention.

1. Have each student think of a group that they consider themselves to be a part of. The students may choose any sort of group except for gender. The more unique the choice, the better—they may consider themselves to be jocks, or vegetarians, or introverts, or believers in the flying spaghetti monster—anything they want.
2. Have them prepare a presentation (either a short oral presentation, a written piece to be read to the class, or even a short scene with another one of the students) that answers the following:
  - What are some of the characteristics that define your group? Why do you consider yourself to be a part of it?
  - What is a group that you would consider to be “opposite” yours?
  - How would you feel if members of this opposite group were to be assigned to work on a project with you? Sit at your lunch table? Move into your house?
  - What have your real-life interactions been like with this other group? Have you ever felt you were the target of discrimination by them or by some other group because of the group with which you associate yourself? (If the presentation is taking the form of a scene, it might be easier to answer this question in the post-scene discussion.)

## Mock Trial

For your mock trial, Othello has been detained for the murder of Desdemona (he is still alive for the purposes of this activity). Assign one of your students as the titular character, Othello, and have another student act as Iago, who is still alive at the end of the play. Split your classroom into three groups: one group acts as the jurors, one group acts as the defense lawyers for Othello, and the last group the prosecution.

Questions the lawyers in the defense and prosecution should think about:

1. What was Othello’s motive for murdering Desdemona?
2. What was Othello’s mental state at the time of the murder?
3. Was the crime premeditated?

The lawyers are free to ask any other questions they feel are pertinent to the case. They can even call on witnesses (Emilia and Desdemona can even have posthumous interviews in your trial). Have fun with it! Which group of lawyers makes a more convincing argument to you, the judge?

## Playing with Status

*Courtesy of Vivienne Vermes of Educational Drama Association in Romania, [www.drama.ro](http://www.drama.ro)*

In your classroom, discuss the difference between “high status” and “low status”. It may mean social status, but not necessarily. A king can be of low status and a beggar of high status. It’s to do with inner confidence, how you feel about yourself and your place in the world around you. People’s status can change according to the situation they find themselves in. Status is at the core of nearly all drama.

1. Tell students to walk around the room with “high” status. Have them notice how they hold their head, their spine, how their clothes feel, how their feet move, how they breathe, whether they move quickly or slowly, evenly, or with jerks. Now have them walk with low status. Afterwards, discuss (briefly) what they noticed about high and low status.

2. Have students choose either high or low status and walk around the room. When they cross someone's path, they should acknowledge, with a gesture or a sound, or both, the other person, according to their status. Have them repeat the exercise, reversing their status. *Note: all of the examples so far should be done fairly rapidly, i.e., no more than a few minutes of walking for each status.*
3. Divide students into groups of four. Give them each a status from 1 to 4, 4 being very high status (not the 4 of the previous ex., which was fairly low) and 1 low status. It is important that only each student knows his or her status. Have them improvise a scene (give them a specific location and reason for being in the scene, and let them figure out the rest). Afterwards, have the rest of the class guess who had what status. Ask the improvisers how their experience was.

### The Language of Status

In Shakespeare, characters that belong to the lower classes, like Bianca, spoke in prose, whereas characters who were part of the nobility usually spoke in verse, most commonly in iambic pentameter. Characters like gods and fairies, on the other hand, often spoke in rhyming verse.

Encourage your students to think about the way they speak during this exercise and what that says about their status.

### This Play is About...

Break students up into groups of 4 – 6. Give each student a piece of paper that says “This play is about” with a major themes/ideas/motifs underneath it (examples from this play are jealousy, truth, power, racism, justice, religious discrimination, self interest, and love). Let students find textual support for their theme and then present their work to the class in a creative way.

## Tableaux

Creating a tableau is a simple yet active way to approach a lesson. The following are a few tableau-centric activities.

1. Have the students split up into groups of 3 or 4 to create tableaux based on Othello. You can assign each of them one word (greed, revenge) or contrasting ideas (human vs. animal) or just themes: intolerance, love, loyalty, etc...
2. You could also tell them to pick the scene they find the most important and have their classmates guess which scene they are portraying.
3. Finally, you could have the students do a series of tableaux to follow the arc of a character (like Othello or Iago). Feel free to add lines of text or series of movement to these tableaux!

## Generic Scenes

For students who have not read the play, creating two minute scenes based on plot points from the play can make the story accessible to them. Below are some examples. Give them a short amount of time (5 – 7 minutes) to create/improvise through the scenario. Afterwards, discuss what really happens in the play with each plot point.

1. A rival coworker gets a promotion you really wanted
2. A forbidden romantic relationship must be kept private
3. Someone seeks revenge because they feel they have been wronged
4. Someone lies and tells another person that their partner is being unfaithful

## Make it Modern

Give the students short (1-2 page) scenes from Othello. Have them write line by line “translations” into modern English. You can have them perform both scenes, just the modern scene, or have the team split up and do both. Encourage the students to be creative with settings, to connect to their own lives, or to use modern-day conveniences. Explain that Shakespeare's plays include many outdated traditions and thus had many inside jokes with his audiences. Be bold!

# 101 Ways to Read A Monologue

A monologue, or soliloquy, is a long speech made by one person. Sometimes it can be a challenge for a young actor to take on a piece of text and perform it on his or her own, so this activity is a way to get your students to forget their inhibitions and have fun with it.

- Pick one or more of the monologues below, and hand them out to your students. You can assign or let them choose which monologue they want to do, and give them a few minutes to read it over a few times and familiarize themselves with it.
- In partners, let them read it out loud to one another a few times in whichever way they want to.
- After this, using your own suggestions and those of your students, throw out different ways to read the monologue. Feel free to be as wacky as you want—this is supposed to be fun. You can filter the suggestions, and pick one that you think would work and let them do it that way. Some examples of different ways to read it include (but are definitely not limited to): an aerobics instructor, an army general, a drunk, someone who desperately has to go to the bathroom, a squirrel, the laziest person in the world, singing it, whispering it, telling it like it's a scary story, like an interpretive dancer, like they are in a musical, like a President, or a King...you can even use celebrity names and have them imitate them using the monologue.
- This can be done with all of the students working in partners or on their own at the same time. If this is a particularly brave group, you can challenge them to take your suggestions and perform individually in front of the class.
- After every willing student has performed, take some time to talk about what they got from it. Did it help them understand the monologue better? If so, how? Did they find that any of the interpretations, as silly as they may have been, actually worked and made some sense? Which ones, and why? How does this help them as actors?

# Monologues

## Act 1, Scene 1

### IAGO

Three great ones of the city,  
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,  
Off-capped to him; and, by the faith of man,  
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.  
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,  
Evades them with a bombast circumstance,  
Horribly stuffed with epithets of war,  
And in conclusion,  
Nonsuits my mediators. For "Certes," says he,  
"I have already chose my officer."  
And what was he?  
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,  
That never set a squadron in the field,  
Nor the division of a battle knows

More than a spinster—but he, sir, had th'election  
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof  
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds  
Christian and heathen, must be be-leed and calmed  
By debtor and creditor. This counter-caster,

He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,  
And I, God bless the mark, his Moorship's ensign.

## Act 1, Scene 2

### BRABANTIO

O, thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my  
daughter?  
Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her!  
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,  
If she in chains of magic were not bound,  
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,  
Would ever have, t' incur a general mock,  
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom  
Of such a thing as thou—to fear, not to delight!  
Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense  
That thou hast practiced on her with foul charms,  
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals  
That weakens motion: I'll have 't disputed on;  
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee  
For an abuser of the world—  
Lay hold upon him.

## Act 3, Scene 3

### DESDEMONA

Why then tomorrow night, or Tuesday morn,  
On Tuesday noon or night; on Wednesday morn.  
I prithee name the time, but let it not  
Exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent;  
And yet his trespass, is not almost a fault  
T' incur a private check. When shall he come?  
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul  
What you would ask me that I should deny,  
Or stand so mamm'ring on? What? Michael  
Cassio,  
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time,  
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,  
Hath taken your part—to have so much to do  
To bring him in! By 'r Lady, I could do much—  
Why, this is not a boon!  
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,  
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,  
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit  
To your own person. Nay, when I have a suit  
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,  
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,  
And fearful to be granted.

## Act 4, Scene 3

### EMILIA

Yes, a dozen; and as many to th' vantage as would  
store the world they played for.  
But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties,  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps;  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,  
Throwing restraint upon us. Or say they strike us,  
Or scant our former having in despite.  
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know  
Their wives have sense like them. They see, and  
smell,  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
As husbands have. What is it that they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth. Is 't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so too. And have not we affections,  
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?  
Then let them use us well. Else let them know,  
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

## Act 5, Scene 2

(Enter Othello with a light, and Desdemona in her bed)

### OTHELLO

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.  
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars,  
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,  
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,  
And smooth as monumental alabaster.  
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.  
Put out the light, and then put out the light.  
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
I can again thy former light restore  
Should I repent me. But once put out thy light,  
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,  
I know not where is that Promethean heat  
That can thy light relume. When I have plucked the  
Rose, I cannot give it vital growth again,  
It needs must wither. I'll smell it on the tree.  
O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword! Once more, once more:  
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee  
And love thee after. Once more, and that's the last.  
(He smells, then kisses her)  
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,  
But they are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly:  
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

## Selected Scenes

### Act 4, Scene 3

(Enter Desdemona and Emilia)

#### EMILIA

How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did.

#### DESDEMONA

He says he will return incontinent,  
And hath commanded me to go to bed,  
And bid me to dismiss you.

#### EMILIA

Dismiss me?

#### DESDEMONA

It was his bidding. Therefore, good Emilia,  
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu.  
We must not now displease him.

#### EMILIA

Ay.—Would you had never seen him!

#### DESDEMONA

So would not I. My love doth so approve him  
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns—  
Prithee, unpin me—have grace and favor.

#### EMILIA

I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

#### DESDEMONA

All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!  
If I do die before thee, prithee, shroud me  
In one of those same sheets.

#### EMILIA

Come, come, you talk.

#### DESDEMONA

My mother had a maid called Barbary.  
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad  
And did forsake her. She had a song of willow,  
An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune,  
And she died singing it. That song tonight  
Will not go from my mind. I have much to do  
But to go hang my head all at one side  
And sing it like poor Barbary. Prithee, dispatch.  
No, unpin me here.

#### EMILIA

This Lodovico is a proper man.  
A very handsome man.

#### DESDEMONA

He speaks well.

#### EMILIA

I know a lady in Venice would have walked  
barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

#### DESDEMONA

Prithee hie thee! He'll come anon.  
Hark, who is 't that knocks?

#### EMILIA

It's the wind.

#### DESDEMONA

So, get thee gone. Good night. Mine eyes do itch;  
Doth that bode weeping?

#### EMILIA

'Tis neither here nor there.

#### DESDEMONA

I have heard it said so. O these men, these men!  
Dost thou in conscience think—tell me, Emilia—  
That there be women do abuse their husbands  
In such gross kind?

#### EMILIA

There be some such, no question.

#### DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

#### EMILIA

Why, would not you?

#### DESDEMONA

No, by this heavenly light!

#### EMILIA

Nor I neither, by this heavenly light.  
I might do 't as well i' th' dark.

#### DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

#### EMILIA

The world's a huge thing; it is a great price  
For a small vice.

#### DESDEMONA

Good troth, I think thou wouldst not.

#### EMILIA

By my troth, I think I should, and undo 't when I  
had done it. Marry, I would not do such a thing for  
a joint ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns,  
petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition. But for  
all the whole world—'ud's pity! Who would not make  
her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I  
should venture purgatory for 't.



Jennifer Mudge Tucker and John Douglas Thompson in Trinity Rep's 2000 production of *Othello*.

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