A Promptbook Study of Margaret Webster's Production of "Othello."

Janet Barton Carroll
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/3100

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or “target” for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is “Missing Page(s)”. If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in “sectioning” the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from “photographs” if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of “photographs” may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

University Microfilms International
300 North Zeib Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA
St. John’s Road, Tyler’s Green
High Wycombe, Bucks, England HP10 8HR

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
CARROLL, Janet Barton, 1947-
A PROMPTBOOK STUDY OF MARGARET WEBSTER'S
PRODUCTION OF OTHELLO.

Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College,
Ph.D., 1977
Theater

© 1977
JANET BARTON CARROLL
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
A PROMPTBOOK STUDY OF MARGARET WEBSTER'S
PRODUCTION OF OTHELLO

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by
Janet Barton Carroll
M.A., Southwest Texas State University, 1972
August, 1977
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Janet Barton Carroll

Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: "A Promptbook Study of Margaret Webster's Production of Othello"

Approved:

Date of Examination: June 15, 1977
To Donovan and Barton
This study of Margaret Webster's direction of Paul Robeson in Othello will be presented in two parts. The first chapter of Part I will discuss the production historically, revealing the backgrounds of director Margaret Webster and actor Paul Robeson, then proceed to a chronological progression of events. Chapter two of Part I provides an examination of theories of the production through the following sources: (1) Margaret Webster; (2) critics who reviewed Othello in various newspapers, books and periodicals; (3) company members who performed in the production. Part II is a promptbook study consisting of an annotated version of the Othello script as it was staged by Miss Webster. Notes from the director's promptscript are interspersed, revealing throughout the text the actors' movements, scenery, lighting, costumes and music. These notes will be further augmented by the thoughts of reviewers and company members on the various scenes as they were staged. Therefore, this important production will be discussed not only historically and theoretically, but in a step by step account as it was presented to an audience.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I will always be grateful to Hazel and James Barton, and to Vernon Carroll for their support both in this project and in all others. I would also like to express my appreciation to Armina Marshall who gave me permission to study the Theatre Guild Documents; to the Actors' Equity Association who went beyond traditional duties to assist me in locating actors who participated in Othello; and to Jose Ferrer who offered enlightening information and encouragement. I would like to express my gratitude to Gresdna Doty, Fabian Gudas, John Pennybacker, Francine Merritt, and Mary Frances Hopkins for their editorial expertise; and especially to Bill Harbin whose academic excellence and moral support made this research project a rewarding experience. I would also like to thank William Olive who, although he did not see the final project, was responsible for my interest in Paul Robeson's Othello. A great debt is also owed to Robinson Stone whose marvelous memory richly supplemented this work, and whose encouragement will always be appreciated.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART I</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE (History)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes (History)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO (Analysis)</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes (Analysis)</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART II</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROMPTBOOK STUDY</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes (Promptbook Study)</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
The evening of October 20, 1943, marked the Broadway premiere of Margaret Webster's production of *Othello*, starring Paul Robeson in the title role, Uta Hagen as Desdemona, and Jose Ferrer as Iago. Critical reviews in major newspapers and periodicals were overwhelmingly favorable, and subsequent audience attendance consistently strong. *Othello* ran for 296 performances in New York, enjoyed a well-received tour across the United States, and eventually was revived successfully in New York in May of 1945 for twelve performances. The tragedy had a longer run than any other Shakespearean production in theatrical history.

This event demonstrated the talents of several significant theatre persons. Paul Robeson, a black singer/actor, was determined that he would only perform in dramas where the Negro was portrayed honestly, and not as a stereotype or caricature. His rendition of *Othello* revealed to the American audiences that a black man is capable of performing a difficult, complex role such as Shakespeare's Moor of Venice. Furthermore, Robeson demonstrated that it is a valid interpretation for *Othello* to be "sooty black," rather than mulatto or oriental as the character had been portrayed in years past.
Another significant figure was director Margaret Webster who faced the challenge of producing this controversial Othello in times when such an interpretation was not traditional. A successful Shakespearean director, Webster brought her talents to the play and was largely responsible for its historic long run.

Two other figures, Uta Hagen and Jose Ferrer emerged from this event. Both were young performers who became outstanding figures in theatre.

This study of Margaret Webster's direction of Paul Robeson in Othello is presented in two parts. In the first chapter of Part I, the production is discussed historically, revealing the backgrounds of director Margaret Webster and actor Paul Robeson, then proceeds to a chronological progression of events. Chapter Two of Part I provides an examination of theories of the production through the following sources: (1) Margaret Webster; (2) critics who reviewed Othello in various newspapers, books and periodicals; (3) company members who performed in the production. Part II is a promptbook study consisting of an annotated version of the Othello script as it was staged by Miss Webster. Notes from the director's promptscript are interspersed, revealing throughout the text the actors' movements, scenery, lighting, costumes and music. These notes are further augmented by the thoughts of reviewers and company members on the various scenes as they were staged. Therefore, this important
production is discussed not only historically and theoretically, but in a step by step account as it was presented to audiences thirty-five years ago.
PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORY OF THE MARGARET WEBSTER PRODUCTION OF

OTHELLO
INTRODUCTION

The evening of October 20, 1943 marked the Broadway premiere of Margaret Webster's production of Othello, starring Paul Robeson in the title role, Uta Hagen as Desdemona, and Jose Ferrer as Iago. Critical reviews in major newspapers and periodicals were overwhelmingly favorable, and subsequent audience attendance consistently strong. Othello ran for 296 performances in New York, enjoyed a well-received tour across the United States, and eventually was revived successfully in New York in May of 1945 for twelve performances. The tragedy had a longer run than any other Shakespearean production in theatrical history.

Americans have enjoyed many great actors' renditions of the Moor. Performers such as Edwin Forrest, E. L. Davenport, John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett and Edwin Booth enacted the role in the nineteenth century. Early in the twentieth century (before Paul Robeson portrayed the role in 1945) actors such as William Paversham, Walter Huston and Philip Merivale portrayed Othello. All, however, interpreted the character as a mulatto or oriental with Caucasian features and light brown skin, avoiding the black Moor portrayed by traditional Shakespearean actors until the eighteenth century when player Edmund Kean first performed Othello without blackface.¹ Both European and American

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
actors followed Kean's convention of the light brown skin and this interpretation became the tradition for decades.

Although the "brown" interpretation of the Moor was to remain essentially the accepted approach to the role until Paul Robeson's performance in 1943, history provides us with a few exceptions. The nineteenth century American Negro player, Ira Aldridge, enacted Othello in Europe but believed it unwise to perform the role in the United States. A few other accounts exist of the efforts of American companies to interpret Othello as a black Moor. B. J. Ford's company enacted Othello, using a black actor to portray the title role. Early in the twentieth century, smaller organizations such as the Hedgerow Theatre in Maylan Rose Valley, Pennsylvania, and the Fine Arts Club in Denver, Colorado presented Shakespeare's tragedy with a black actor as Othello. In April, 1916, the Lafayette Players presented readings from the script, again with a black actor portraying the Moor. Until Paul Robeson played Othello in 1943, however, the idea that the Moor should be played as a black man was not a conventional interpretation in the American theatre.

Paul Robeson asked Margaret Webster to undertake the direction of the project late in the 1930's, after he decided that audiences in his native America were prepared to accept him as Othello. Background material on Paul Robeson, the leading actor and initiator of the project, and on Margaret Webster, the director and producer will contribute to the understanding of this important theatrical event.
Paul Robeson, son of a Presbyterian Minister, was born in Princeton, New Jersey, on April 8, 1898. Reverend Robeson did not hold theatrical activities in high regard, but since he believed that his children should experience Shakespeare's *Othello*, he and young Paul read passages together. Paul's first opportunity to perform the Moor on stage, however, came through his high school dramatics club. Dressed in a crimson robe tied at the middle with a large golden cord, a white turban on his head (created from napkins found in his father's parsonage) and a beard which refused to remain glued to his face, Paul Robeson performed *Othello* for the first time.

Robeson excelled as a student, but his main interest lay in football, not theatre. At the age of seventeen, he received an academic scholarship to Rutgers College where he participated in Little Theatre work, but he was most acclaimed as an All-American Football Player, an honor which he won twice. After graduating from Rutgers in 1919, he went to Harlem's Columbia Law School. While coaching a football team and studying law in Harlem, he participated in amateur productions, one of which was Ridgley Torrence's *Simon the Cyrenian*, presented in a small YMCA theatre in 1921. With this portrayal, Robeson made contacts with several members of the Provincetown Players, a major Little Theatre group in New York. The director, Dora Cole, had studied theatre with Kenneth MacGowan and Robert Edmond Jones,
founders of the Provincetown association. On the opening night, Paul's "Simon" deeply moved the audience. Furthermore, Provincetown members MacGowan and James Light discovered Paul's talent, proclaiming: "What a performance!" "A born actor!" 4

Paul Robeson's life changed drastically in the next year. He finished his law degree at Columbia University, married Eslanda Cardozo Goode, and portrayed the character of Jim in Taboo, a role which introduced him to professional theatre. Produced at the Sam H. Harris theatre in New York in 1922, the play was so successful that Paul revived the piece that summer at the Opera House in Blackpool, England, under the title The Voodoo. This experience encouraged Robeson to leave his law practice and turn to the professional theatre. But especially influential to his decision was his wife.

Eslanda Robeson realized that her husband was not satisfied with law as a future, despite the fact that he had had several offers from firms in New York after receiving his degree from Columbia in 1923. Furthermore, she was motivated to encourage Robeson's theatrical interests by the work of Charles Gilpin, a Negro actor who performed in Eugene O'Neill's The Emperor Jones (1921). Gilpin had done servant's roles for years, but received high acclaim for the first time as Brutus Jones in a production performed under the auspices of the Provincetown Players. Eslanda saw the Players as leaders of a decisive movement toward a black man's theatre. 5
Knowing Paul's discontent with law practice, she urged him to become involved in the Provincetown group. Once he began to work with the Players, Mrs. Robeson said, Paul "fell under their spell, and through them has remained under the spell of theatre ever since."\(^6\) Robeson later admitted that while his blackness restricted his advancement in law ("I could never be a Supreme Court judge"), in the theatre, "there was only the sky to hold me back."\(^7\)

In 1924, Paul Robeson himself performed the role Gilpin had created, Brutus Jones, in a revival of O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, his first association with the Provincetown Players. Except for *Othello*, this was probably the most significant role of his career. In the same year he played Jim Harris in O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. Both of these successful O'Neill productions enjoyed several revivals with Robeson in the starring role. *The Emperor Jones* re-opened at the Punch and Judy Theatre in January of 1925, and at the 52nd Street Theatre in February of the same year. *All God's Chillun Got Wings* had a second presentation at Provincetown in August, 1925. Britishers first saw Robeson's Brutus Jones at London's Ambassador's Theatre in September of 1925. In 1930 he portrayed Jones again at the Kunstler Theatre in Berlin.

Robeson's performances were enjoyed by O'Neill, who, in 1925, wrote a note to the black actor on the fly-leaf of his published collection of plays. O'Neill expressed his gratitude to Paul for providing the author complete satisfaction in *The Emperor Jones*, and in *All God's Chillun Got*...
Wings. Eslanda said that this book was one of her husband's favorite possessions. Certainly, O'Neill's black characters in these two dramas provided a springboard for Robeson's professional acting career.

Six years before he performed Othello for Margaret Webster in New York, critic Heywood Broun of The New York World saw Paul in All God's Chillun Got Wings and could foresee him as the Moor:

But must Robeson only appear as an actor when O'Neill writes a Negro play? Is it possible that he can do something else for the stage. One asks the question not caring a whoop in particular for the problems of race. One can best leave that to the anthropologists and apologists of 10,000 years hence. Solely interested in Robeson's great qualities and in the stage, one wonders if he will play Othello some day with a Desdemona as capable, say, as Miss Cowle might play it, and thirled by an Iago as sinister as the memory of John Barrymore's Richard Third can suggest. After seeing Robeson's performance in "All God's Chillun," one can imagine that Shakespeare must have thought of Robeson.

While working in New York with the Provincetown Players, the black actor expressed a desire to portray Othello, a role which he believed revealed the dignity of the Negro race:

If some day I can play Othello as Shakespeare wrote it, bring to the stage the nobility, sympathy, and understanding Shakespeare put into the play, I will make the audience know that he was not just a dark, foreign brute of three hundred years ago in far-off Venice who murdered a beautiful, innocent white girl, but that he was a fine, noble, tragic human figure ruined by the very human weakness of jealousy.

In 1926, Paul Robeson performed the title role in Tully and Dazey's Black Boy, produced at the Comedy Theatre in New York, and in 1927 he replaced Jack Carter as Crown in Dorothy and Dubose Heyward's Porgy. Also, he gave a classic performance as Joe in Kern's Show Boat, performed at the
Drury Lane in London in 1928. The renowned song, "Old Man River," rendered in Paul's operatic, bass voice, was hailed by critics as one of the finest moments in theatre. Jerome Kern, composer of the song, dedicated the piece to Robeson. During the run of Show Boat, Paul gave matinee concert performances, singing a variety of songs, particularly Negro spirituals. For the next two years he devoted most of his time to vocal concerts, presented in cities both in Europe and the United States.

In 1930, Robeson revived Brutus Jones in The Emperor Jones at the Kunstler Theatre in Berlin. That same year, he was asked to play Othello to Maurice Brown's Iago, but he initially declined. He believed that he was not ready to attempt a role of such magnitude. Mrs. Robeson encouraged her husband to reconsider his decision, emphasizing that, although it would be difficult for him to handle the language and the style of a Shakespearean work, the reward of performing this great role would be infinite. Paul, moved by his wife's urging, informed Maurice Brown that he would portray the Moor.

After the announcement that Robeson would play Othello in London, newspapers in England and America ran both skeptical and optimistic articles about the public's acceptance of a black actor as the Moor and the validity of such a venture. Did Shakespeare intend Othello to be an African black or an exotic brown? Meanwhile, Robeson began working on the role. He sought out Ira Aldrich's daughter, and
together they spent hours looking at pictures and discussing a "black" approach to the Moor, which Aldrich had courageously taken over one hundred years before.  

On the evening of May 19, 1930, Othello opened at the Savoy Theatre with Paul Robeson in the title role, Maurice Brown as Iago, Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona, and Sybil Thorndike as Emilia. Critics from The New York Times and The London Times praised the production, promoting the idea that a black actor as Othello seemed not only acceptable but right. Eight of the twelve London critics proclaimed Robeson's portrayal as successful. The London Times stated that the production had a "tranquil dignity and melancholy, infinitely sad." Edith Isaacs, writing for the Theatre Arts Monthly, said that "Probably no actor ever understood the play—or the part—better than Robeson did."

Reviewers were not entirely positive, however. Isaacs believed that the combination of Robeson, Brown, Ashcroft and Thorndike did not provide a successful ensemble. Actors seemed to perform alone, lacking interaction with other cast members. The critic expressed a desire to see Robeson again as Othello, presumably with a more compatible cast. Ashley Dukes, also writing in Theatre Arts Monthly, was more skeptical, stating that the costumes were bulky, the entire production underlit, and, reiterating Miss Isaacs' statement, the casting did not result in an effective ensemble. Ironically, Margaret Webster also viewed the performance and came away unimpressed with Robeson's acting.
Nevertheless, the London production of *Othello* represented a remarkable effort, for no black actor had attempted the role since Ira Aldrich performed the part with Edmund Kean at the Royalty Theatre in 1830. G. W. Bishop stated in *The New York Times*, "In an astute way [Robeson] had identified himself and his people with the tragedy of Othello."^22^  

In June, 1930, Robeson made a public broadcast, stating that he would like to perform *Othello* in the more enlightened portions of the United States. To the American audience he said that he hoped to "see them" in October.^23^  

Robeson became involved in other performing engagements, however, and did not portray the Moor in the United States until twelve years later, with Margaret Webster and the Theatre Guild.  

In 1931, Paul Robeson enacted Yank in O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* at the Ambassador's Theatre in London. In 1932 he visited New York to revive *Show Boat* at the Casino, then returned to London for several years. While in England he revived *All God's Chillun Got Wings* at the Embassy Theatre (1933), played Balu, the African Chief, in Garland's *Basilik* at the Arts Theatre (1935), performed the Workman and Lonnie Thompson in Peters and Sklar's *Stevedore* at the Embassy (1935), and portrayed the title role in Pierre Dominique's *Toussaint L'Ouverture* at the Westminster (1936). Between stage productions, he gave concert performances.
Two years after *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, Paul asked Margaret Webster, a young British director who had established an excellent reputation for her Shakespearean productions in America, to direct him in *Othello*. They decided that American audiences were ready to accept Shakespeare's *Othello* as a black man. The production eventually took place four years later, in 1942. Later, Robeson expressed his feelings about the significance of the event:

> When, during the war years, I had the chance to appear before American audiences in a major Shakespearean production (15 years after I had first done so in London), I was deeply gratified to know that my people felt, as Dr. Benjamine Mays put it, that I had "rendered the Negro race and the world a great service in *Othello* by demonstrating that Negroes are capable of great and enduring interpretations in the realm of theatre as over against the typical cheap performances that Hollywood and Broadway too often insist on Negroes doing."  

**MARGARET WEBSTER: BEFORE HER COLLABORATION WITH PAUL ROBESON**

Britisher Margaret Webster was born in New York on March 15, 1905, while her father was performing in that city. Since her parents and their ancestors were active in the performing arts, she was thoroughly familiar with the theatrical world. She and her family were ardent admirers of Shakespeare's tragedy, *Othello*. Benjamin Webster, Margaret's great grandfather, was an actor-manager who played the role in 1837. Her mother, Dame May Whitty, often told Margaret of witnessing Ellen Terry's Desdemona and Salvini's famed *Othello*. The evening May Whitty saw Salvini's production, she came out of the theatre so moved that she was in tears.
It was at this emotional moment that she met Ben Webster, son of the Benjamin Webster who had played Othello in the mid-1880's. Ben, an actor also, became the husband of Dame Whitty and the father of Margaret Webster. Since both sides of Margaret's family came from theatrical tradition extending back to the eighteenth century, her involvement in theatre seemed inevitable.

Margaret Webster's most valuable training came from observing and learning from her parents. As a young adult she acted in and directed several amateur productions, mostly in London at the Etlinger Drama School (1923-24). In the 1920's her career in the professional theatre blossomed with a role in The Trojan Women (1924). She performed a Lady of the Court in John Barrymore's Hamlet in 1925, and from 1926 to 1930 she worked with such notable figures as Sybil Thorndike, George Bernard Shaw, Ben Greet, and John Gielgud. While fulfilling acting engagements in the mid-1920's, she launched her directing career with several West End Productions in London.

From 1924, when Margaret began her professional career, until 1937, the year she moved to the United States, she performed in at least forty-seven productions, including Macbeth (performed several times from 1926 to 1932), The Devil's Disciple (1930), Volpone (1932), and Suppressed Desires (1933). From 1935 to 1937, she directed twelve dramas, including No Longer Mourn (1935), Lady from the Sea (1936), and Old Music (1937).
Maurice Evans, noted Shakespearean actor, became aware of Margaret's talents when she staged some of his amateur productions at the Etlinger Drama School in London, and encouraged her to direct in New York. In the winter of 1937, she came to the United States and began six of the most profitable and rewarding years of her career. Margaret Webster visited America with the explicit duty of directing Maurice Evans in Richard II, but she decided to stay and became one of America's most significant directors. Apprehensive about producing Shakespeare in New York, she compared her experience to that of a Baptist minister approaching a beach crowded with Fiji Islanders. Despite her apprehension, Margaret's Shakespearean productions were box office successes. Richard II, for example, ran 121 performances, a record for that drama.

Prior to her collaboration with Paul Robeson in 1942, she directed and acted in a variety of productions. She directed Young Mr. Disraeli (1937), As You Like It, Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Comedy of Errors (the summer of 1939), Madam, Will You Walk? (1939), The Trojan Women (1941), Evans' Macbeth (1941), and Flare Path (1942). While enlarging her directing career she acted in such dramas as The Sea Gull (1938), Family Portrait (1939) and The Trojan Women (1941). With the exception of The Sea Gull, Margaret both directed and acted in these works.

As a result of her persistent endeavors to make Shakespeare better known to the American people, Webster
became established as a fine director of classical drama. Classical works were presented to audiences in an enticing manner. For example, in the advertising campaign for her uncut Hamlet, she emphasized that the play ran eight minutes shorter than the popular movie, Gone With the Wind. She believed that audiences needed to be lured to the theatre with the same tactics a businessman would use to entice customers. Theatre is the worst run business in the world, she said, and she emphasized that the performing arts are for "best sellers only."

Although Margaret Webster's critics had mixed views on her attempts to make classical drama more palatable for American audiences, most found her work artistically rewarding. Stark Young said that she often lost the artistic flavor of a piece while attempting to make it accessible to the public using theatrical "tricks" or devices. She does not have "bad taste," he wrote, but an "absence of taste." Nevertheless, her productions possess "good breeding, a good sense, and a certain kind of literalness and a sincerity that carry them a long way both as entertainment and as box-office." Wilella Waldorf of The New York Post praised Miss Webster for avoiding the "dull classroom exercise that many classical productions become." Howard Barnes of The New York Herald Tribune called her the "high priestess of Shakespeare in our day." Brooks Atkinson wrote that "Miss Webster has had the courage to sacrifice show to action and to give the players room enough to swing a speech around
their heads." In summary, Margaret Webster solidly established her reputation as a director with New York theatre critics in her first five years in America. Her most famous production, *Othello*, was yet to come. Paul Robeson had first approached her to direct him in the role in 1938, and finally, in 1942, the two began definite steps which led to the longest running Shakespearean production in history.

**OTHELLO AT HARVARD AND PRINCETON**

Immediately after Margaret Webster completed her production of *Hamlet* in 1938, Paul Robeson conferred with her and stated that he was ready to perform Othello in America. Although she had been unimpressed with his London portrayal of the Moor, he convinced her that his further study of the role had prepared him to render a better Othello. He agreed with the director that his first portrayal of the Moor was weak: "... it wasn't a success to me," he said, "because I hadn't worked it out yet." With his additional maturity he became certain that he was ready to revive the role. "I believed in him," Margaret Webster said, and accepted the task of directing *Othello*.

Four years later, in 1942, after seeking support from several producing organizations with no success, the director and actor made serious plans to present *Othello* on a "testing" ground outside of New York. Together, they would hire a company and pay transportation expenses should a "road house" book their production. Conditions were difficult, however, because of American involvement in World
War II. Many young male actors had been drafted and gas rationing had deterred theatre attendance. Many theatrical companies were in financial ruin, and those which survived were reluctant to accept such a risky production. The solution to these difficulties came through two university theatres. John Huntington of the Brattle Theatre at Harvard University and Day Tuttle and Richard Skinner at the McCarter at Princeton accepted the challenge and offered their facilities to Margaret Webster. She saw this as an excellent opportunity, for not only were college audiences more liberal and more prone to attend the production than the general public, but both theatres were easily accessible to the critics from Boston and New York.38

After the Brattle Theatre had been obtained for the première, casting began immediately. Maurice Evans was asked to portray Iago but refused on the grounds that American audiences were not ready for a black Othello. Other actors were asked to play the villain and declined with the same argument. Eva Le Gallienne, actress, director and close friend to Margaret Webster, suggested that the young actor, Jose Ferrer, might accept the role. Ferrer had recently received critical acclaim for his lively performance in Charley's Aunt and, although the part certainly did not resemble Iago, Miss Le Gallienne believed that he had the talent to portray the villain in Othello. Le Gallienne also recommended Ferrer's wife, Uta Hagen, as Desdemona. Miss Hagen was an experienced actress who had previously worked with Le Gallienne.
Pressed for time, Margaret Webster decided to play Emilia, Iago's wife. It was not uncommon, however, for her to perform lengthy roles in the plays which she directed. Certainly she enjoyed acting, and as Jose Ferrer said, she could have relinquished the role at any time had she wanted to. In addition to the difficulty of directing and acting in a production of such magnitude, Miss Webster was involved in the radio series, Jane Eyre, which was being aired daily for fifteen minutes on CBS. Reading directly from the Bronte novel, she performed at 9:15 each morning for seventeen weeks. Due to this strain, she developed a rather severe cough which led her to "curse Jane Eyre every morning," knowing that she had to rush to Othello rehearsals after each performance. Margaret Webster had contracted to do the radio series before she began work on the Shakespearean production. Her double duties were unavoidable, Jose Ferrer believed, for in those days actors had to accept work when it was available. The radio broadcast was probably done more as a supplement to Miss Webster's income than as an artistic endeavor. Most certainly, the performances placed a great deal of physical strain on the director.

With Paul Robeson as Othello, Jose Ferrer as Iago, Uta Hagen as Desdemona and Margaret Webster as Emilia, a few New York actors were selected to portray other major roles: George Keene as Roderigo, Ernest Graves as Cassio, and Philip Huston as Lodovico. The rest of the cast was probably supplemented by the Brattle Street Company which was, at that time, an active commercial organization. Miss
Webster recalls that there were only three professional actors in the cast, not including the Ferrers, Paul Robeson and herself. Mr. Ferrer remembers that the majority of the cast members were from New York. Certainly, he said, the major roles were performed by professional actors.

Jose Ferrer remembers that when rehearsals began in New York, the group began in a small room, reading through the script. When he heard Paul Robeson's tremendous voice, his first inclination was to throw down his script and walk out. "How on earth do you act," he said, "with a sound of that magnitude?" After two or three days of reading, the small group moved to a stage and began blocking sessions where the performers were given a free hand to experiment with various movements by their director. Sessions, in line with the Actors' Equity Association limits for rehearsal time, lasted approximately seven hours per day. A great deal of time was spent off the stage, learning lines and discussing characterization with Margaret Webster. Ferrer recalls the great difficulty he had remembering the multitude of lines. (Iago has more lines than any of Shakespeare's characters, including Hamlet.) Like others, the actor often sought out the stage manager during his time off from rehearsal to help him master the script. With only two weeks of rehearsal in New York, the actors and Miss Webster devoted their time primarily to memorizing lines and blocking the movement for the production.
Approximately one more week was spent in rehearsal after the company moved to Cambridge. Webster used this time to incorporate the rest of the cast. Costumes and scenery, previously arranged by Margaret Webster and her co-producer, John Haggott, were procured from an earlier Walter Huston production of *Othello*, performed in 1934. The garments, designed by Robert Edmond Jones, were accurately Venetian. Jones had traveled to Venice especially to research the costumes for the Huston production. As it turned out, they were not suited to the Cambridge cast since they were designed for another group of actors. But Jones redesigned them for Webster's production in New York, and they proved to be effectively appropriate.

Andrew Mack executed the settings. He arranged squared platforms and arches which fitted successfully into the small Brattle Theatre. The scenery evoked excellent comments from the critics. A. E. Watts, of *The Boston Traveler*, said that Mack's scenery was "naively simple," and did not "cling to the Shakespearean tradition nor depart from it." "C. W. D." of *The Boston Globe*, wrote that the designer's "fixed arrangement of arches and platforms" created pleasant, "graphic" scene changes. Each scene evidently played well visually except for those with crowds. The stage space was limited; Margaret Webster recorded that the entire building was little more than a small "shack." But Ferrer believes that the term "shack" is not suitable for the complex. He admits, however, that the stage was small.
and Andrew Mack must have effectively overcome limitations of space.

Previous to the première of Othello at Cambridge, Boston newspapers began to publicize the production. Journalists emphasized that Othello was being portrayed by a black actor and, while seldom questioning the validity of that interpretation, they were skeptical about audiences' acceptance of that which to many was socially unacceptable. Elinor Hughes, of The Boston Herald, stated: "The event indeed is one of the greatest artistic and theatrical importance, unique in the history of the American stage and one to be greeted with respect and the deepest interest."\(^{52}\)

The weather on opening night was incredibly warm. Miss Webster described it as the hottest night she could remember.\(^ {53}\) Tickets had been sold out for the entire week at Cambridge, and a member of the management sat in the hot ticket office telling patrons for three hours that there were no more seats.\(^ {54}\) John Huntington, director of the Brattle Street Theatre, writes that two black young adults waited in line for tickets but did not reach the box office in time to purchase them. Huntington told Paul Robeson about the situation and Robeson not only had these patrons seated, but he paid for their tickets. "... you have never, repeat, NEVER seen two happier youngsters in your life," Huntington said.\(^ {55}\) The crowded audience sat and stood in the 500-seat auditorium. "The small theatre had a corrugated-iron roof," Miss Webster wrote, "and was packed to its girders with sweating humanity."\(^ {56}\) As the curtain
rose, Jose Ferrer remembers that the patrons were so close to the stage that they could almost "hang their chins on the footlights." Men were seen in short-sleeved shirts. Programs, used as fans, constantly moved back and forth as each person made some attempt to cool himself. As the play progressed, one fan stopped, then another, and by the middle of the production, there was no fanning at all. The audience, Ferrer tells us, was totally involved. Witnessing the murder of Desdemona and Emilia, they felt guilt as they helplessly watched the events unfold. They became "morally" a part of the production. They wept and they participated in the action. Jose Ferrer had never seen such involvement in the theatre before or since that initial performance of Othello. Both actors and audience endured the heat in the magic of the moment. The temperature was so oppressive that Robeson's robes had to be wrung dry between acts. When the final curtain went down, the ticket man (who finally had escaped from his office) shouted "bravo" from the back of the house. He must have seen the play in dress rehearsal, one critic said, for he was sincere in his cheer, acting in no way as a claque to "whip the audience to a proper demonstration." The ovation was so tremendous, Elinor Hughes wrote, that it was amazing that the "staid old walls didn't burst from the noise and enthusiasm." Elliott Norton, for The Boston Post, wrote:

At the final curtain last night, the students in the audience gave Othello the highest Harvard salute; they pounded their heels on the floor as they clapped their hands. At Harvard, there is no higher kind of acclaim.
Miss Webster remembered that the audience "roared" their approval, stamping their feet and expounding such boastful phrases as "Boy! That's Harvard! That's the best you can get!" Jose Ferrer remembers the moment in this way:

When the play finished and the curtain came down, there was such an explosion of sound that it was incredible in its intensity. And the staid Cambridge audience stamped their feet . . . stamped, stamped, stamped on the wooden boards and they clapped and yelled and whistled. It was pandemonium. I remember standing on the stage as we took our curtain calls and we all felt amazed because we'd been involved in performing and suddenly there was this crashing roar of approval that took us by surprise. We'd been busy doing our jobs and did not have too much time to think, "Did they like it" or "Didn't they like it." Quite an experience.

Since that first performance, Ferrer says that he never again performed Iago under such ideal conditions; the audience and actor were "tightly linked together by the magic spun by the play." The cast was to give more polished, "knowing" performances but Ferrer remembers that initial Cambridge experience with intense fondness.

After the grand ovation, cast members and the audience sang the National Anthem, perhaps because of the emotion evoked from the production, or perhaps it was a traditional event in that theatre, particularly in light of the fact that the United States was involved in a major war.

Every critic who viewed Othello offered favorable comments. Elliot Norton said that the play was "worthy and wonderful." "C. W. D." reported that this interpretation of Othello was brilliant. Louis Kronenberger, in the New York newspaper, PM, said that the production distilled the best interpretations of the past. Elinor Hughes
wrote that the ovation given by the audience to the actors was richly deserved.\textsuperscript{68}

Elliot Norton and Louis Kronenberger believed the play deserved a New York showing despite some shortcomings in the production.\textsuperscript{69} Within one week, Margaret Webster said, production organizations were "begging" for stock in the Paul Robeson \textit{Othello}.\textsuperscript{70}

Jose Ferrer recalls that, to the best of his memory, rehearsals were held daily throughout the Cambridge run for the purpose of restaging and reworking certain scenes in the play. This practice continued once the cast moved from Cambridge to the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey. Ferrer remembers that the company closed on Saturday night in Cambridge, traveled to Princeton on Sunday, held a technical rehearsal on Sunday night, a dress rehearsal on Monday afternoon, and performed Monday night.\textsuperscript{71} Records validate his memory of that demanding schedule. This must have been difficult since they were to perform not only in an unfamiliar theatre, but on a different setting with new actors portraying minor roles.\textsuperscript{72}

The Cambridge performances were so successful that Princeton natives looked forward to an exciting run. Many enthusiastic journalists encouraged their readers to see the show. Enthusiasm also came from the fact that Ferrer was a Princeton graduate.\textsuperscript{73} In addition, Princeton citizens were eager to welcome Paul Robeson home to his birthplace where his father's church still held services.\textsuperscript{74}

The production had a larger stage at the McCarter. Also, a new arrangement of scenery, designed by Johannes Larson, was mounted, although the basic groundplan of the setting was comparable to Cambridge.
When *Othello* opened in New Jersey, August 17, 1942, several important theatre persons attended the performance. Lillian Hellman, Elia Kazan, Theresa Helburn, Warren Munsell and Lawrence Langer of the Theatre Guild; Jack Kirkland, James Light and Joshua Logan were among them. In addition to these figures, one critic noticed that there was an "upper caste" of young men, presumably students from Princeton, who became so involved in the production that they forgot their prejudices. The opening night audience, the critic said, was not subjected to the usual "cap and bells of the buffoon, the part always assigned to Negroes." They were, instead, presented with a "massive black man in the garb of a Venetian chieftain" who "takes command of the stage and the audience." When the curtain fell, the journalist said, the audience, still "under the spell of the artist, applauds and applauds, until Paul Robeson appears before the curtain again and again."  

Critic John Mason Brown who also viewed the production that evening, believed the performance had enough merit to be taken to New York, but asked for improvements before this happened. He wanted more believable characterizations from all actors, better fitting costumes, more subtle lighting, and more effectively painted scenery. He believed, however, that the portrayal of a black man as Othello was valid and encouraged Margaret Webster to "polish" the production for New York.  

The company realized from the onset of rehearsals that Paul Robeson had concert commitments for the following
year. They also knew that a strong possibility existed that the group would be reunited for a Broadway run. As it turned out, some of the cast members were retained, but many were not. Jose Ferrer remembers that the first Cambridge/Princeton company was "full of smiles," compatible and hard-working. "We all believed," he said, "that we were involved in something rather important."78

THE PREPARATION FOR BROADWAY

The Cambridge and Princeton performances of Othello established an excellent reputation among theatre people. Several organizations expressed an interest in backing the production, but ultimately, the Theatre Guild was selected as the producing agent. Perhaps this was because Margaret Webster had directed plays for that organization prior to Othello. The Guild was only slowly emerging from several seasons of financial losses. The 1942-43 season had been financially disastrous and the organization hovered near extinction. To rescue the Guild from ruin, producers risked the scant remaining funds on the new Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, Away We Go, adapted from Lynn Riggs' Green Grow the Lilacs. When the musical opened in New Haven, New York's theatre critics were not impressed. Some recommended that the show be closed, but the Theatre Guild persevered. It changed the title of the musical, made several staging adjustments, and sent the play to Boston for another viewing. On opening night the production thrilled audiences and
critics alike, and the new musical, now entitled Oklahoma!, rejuvenated the Guild's producing powers. 79

With Oklahoma! enjoying a successful run in New York beginning in 1943, it became financially possible for the Guild to introduce Othello to Broadway. Although the organization realized the risks involved with the controversial production, on September 11, 1942, it presented the first of several proposals for a revival of Shakespeare's tragedy in New York.

1. Paul Robeson was to receive ten percent of the net gross, with a guaranteed salary and twenty percent of the profits.

2. Margaret Webster was to be offered a fee, no percentage of the gross, and twenty percent of the profits.

3. John Haggott (the producer) would receive ten percent of the profits.

4. The Theatre Guild would take forty-five percent of the profits.

5. Othello was to be slated for the traditional pre-Broadway tour which included:
   a. The Shubert Theatre in New Haven (December 25 and 26)
   b. The Colonial Theatre in Boston (two weeks beginning December 28)
   c. The Forrest Theatre in Philadelphia (January 11 through 25) 80

These dates were not acceptable to Paul Robeson, however, who had to work around concert commitments. 81 On October 2, he assured members of the Guild that he would personally call all of the managers involved and ask to be released from the contracted dates. 82 By October 7, the Guild decided to postpone the December opening to the third week of April, 1943.
They also offered "artistic control" of the production to Robeson, Webster and Haggott, while they assumed "financial control." Terms for salaries remained the same, except that Robeson was offered ten percent of the net gross, not less than $1500 for a week of eight performances, and twenty-five percent of the profits after investors had been paid. Margaret Webster was to receive a fee of $3000 and twenty percent of the net proceeds. The Theatre Guild began searching for a theatre in New York and for a new schedule for the pre-Broadway tour. By November 8, nothing had been settled. Margaret Webster became concerned and wrote to John Haggott:

My dear Johnny,

Now that the Mendelssohn has died away and the orange blossom is looking dead-ish, now that Hepburn is launched, and MR. SYCAMORE practically in blossom may I, without displaying any undue curiosity enquire WHAT THE BLOODY HELL GOES WITH OTHELLO?

Love,
Margaret "Peggy" Webster

At the bottom of the note, Haggott replied, "John says: 'Me too.'" The delay lay in the fact that Robeson was still trying to work around concert commitments. On December 1, however, his attorney, Robert Rockmore, wrote a note to Lawrence Langner assuring the Theatre Guild that Robeson would be free for rehearsals on April 6 for a pre-Broadway opening on April 19. The Guild was slow in offering contracts, however, and Blackmore wrote a letter to Theresa Helburn saying that if a decision on Othello were not reached within the next week, Robeson would be forced to slate a concert tour and relinquish his portrayal of the Moor. Also,
Paul Robeson asked for a seven-performance week, rather than the traditional eight. Theatre Guild members, after a lengthy discussion, decided that Robeson should act in accordance with the rules of Actors' Equity, which calls for eight performances. To add to the troubles, certain members of the producing staff decided that they did not want Jose Ferrer to portray Iago in New York. Ferrer says that this was because he and his wife were asking for a salary which the Guild was not willing to pay. This may be true, but other factors were involved. The Theatre Guild was attempting to entice Lee Shubert, a significant investor, into helping with the finances of Othello. But Shubert evidently did not believe Ferrer was known well enough to draw audiences. Furthermore, Lawrence Langner had been unimpressed with Ferrer's performance at Princeton. Ferrer tells us that he realized that Margaret Webster and "other friends" did not consider his initial portrayals well acted. Theatre Guild records indicate that the organization definitely did not want Ferrer to perform in New York. Robert Rockmore wrote a letter to Lawrence Langner explaining that Paul Robeson was still contemplating the matter, and that Robeson had "exclusive" rights when it came to cast selections. Furthermore, said Rockmore, "It is my suggestion that contracts be signed without further delay otherwise the delay might prove unfortunate." In response to Robeson's statement, Margaret Webster wrote a letter on January 25 explaining that the
actor did not have "exclusive" rights in these matters; Robeson must consult with herself and John Haggott.\textsuperscript{94}

Haggott favored the release of Ferrer and Uta Hagen. (It was understood from the beginning that the Ferrers worked as a team and both would leave if one were removed from the company.) The producer was mainly concerned about Jose Ferrer's draft status. The actor was eligible for call to military service and a strong possibility existed that he might have to leave the cast. Also, the Ferrers had asked for "star billing" and Haggott believed that the publicity, already printed, would have to be redone. Star billing for the Ferrers would also diminish Robeson's importance, he said. At the same time, Haggott was concerned that Paul Robeson might not accept such a change in casting. "I have a growing fear," he wrote, "that Paul may be feeling that Joe is essential to the play and \textit{that he} might be inclined to ditch the whole works as a result." Haggott added, "There is no doubt in my mind that we can find two actors for these roles in America, but there is growing doubt that Paul would assent to such a change."\textsuperscript{95} Robinson Stone, a member of the \textit{Othello} cast, supports this idea when he says that Robeson was intelligent enough to know that the contrast between Othello and Iago is important, and Ferrer performed the role admirably and in harmony with the portrayal of the Moor.\textsuperscript{96}

Still, by January 30, 1943, the black actor said he would consider "another candidate" for the role.\textsuperscript{97} Although Jose Ferrer believes that Margaret Webster was the major force behind his eventual replacement, one memo to Lee Shubert
from Theresa Helburn states that the director was "very keen" to keep Ferrer as Iago. Webster thought that he was simply "poorly rehearsed" and needed more tutoring. By February 12, Robeson, undecided on the matter, informed the Theatre Guild that he would not make a decision until his return from a concert tour in mid-April. By May 17, the actor said he would discuss the problem (and others) with members of the Theatre Guild. On May 27, more pressure to release Ferrer was applied to the Guild. Theresa Helburn sent a note to Langner which read, "Shubert may not wish to put up more than 5,000 when he knows that Ferrer is going to play Iago." Once it became known that the Ferrers might not be playing the two major supporting roles in Othello, several actors auditioned for the parts. Eventually, however, the Guild decided to retain them. Contracts, signed on August 16, 1943, had the following terms:

1. Uta Hagen was to receive in New York:
   - $350 if the gross weekly box office receipts were $13,000 or less.
   - $400 when the gross weekly box office receipts exceeded $13,000, but not more than $16,000.
   - $500 when the gross weekly box office receipts exceeded $16,000, but not more than $20,000.
   - $600 if the receipts exceeded $20,000.

2. On the tour, Uta Hagen was to receive:
   - $400 if the receipts were $16,000 or less.
   - $500 if the receipts exceeded $16,000, but under $20,000.
   - $600 if the receipts exceeded $20,000.

3. Uta Hagen was required to perform an eight-performance week.

4. Uta Hagen was to be "prominently featured in all display advertising," along with Jose Ferrer and Paul Robeson.
5. All publicity for the actress was to be handled by the Theatre Guild.

6. Uta Hagen had the right to cancel her contract should an "act of God or involuntary service in the armed forces" require Jose Ferrer's attention. 104

Ferrer's contract was the same as his wife's with the following exceptions:

1. In New York, he was to receive:
   $400 weekly if the gross weekly box office receipts were $13,000 or less.
   $600 when the receipts exceeded $13,000 but were no more than $16,000.
   $750 when the receipts exceeded $16,000 but did not exceed $20,000.
   $900 when the receipts exceeded $20,000.

2. On the tour, Ferrer was to receive:
   $600 when the receipts were $16,000 or less.
   $750 when the receipts exceeded $16,000 but were no more than $20,000.
   $900 when the receipts exceeded $20,000. 105

An unsigned memo, dated the same day that the Ferrers' contracts were signed, indicated that Theatre Guild members, still not pleased with the Ferrers' demands in salary, believed that the contracts could, and should be terminated. 106

This eventually happened, for Stephen Schnabel was invited to portray Iago and Virginia Gilmore was asked to portray Desdemona. Schnabel's contract is extant (although Miss Gilmore's is not among the Guild's records) showing that the actor was to be paid considerably less than Jose Ferrer at a $400 per week salary with no exceptions. 107 Ferrer tells us that this contract was carefully constructed on a nine-month term. It was customary to contract an actor for a shorter period, in order to review his contributions to the production before offering him a long-term contract. Ferrer says
that Margaret Webster and the Guild deliberately gave
Schnabel a nine-month contract to "tie Robeson's hands," the
idea being that nothing could be altered once this long-term
agreement had gone into effect.\textsuperscript{108} Paul Robeson retained a
powerful influence on the production, however, and, although
he rehearsed with Gilmore and Schnabel for several days, de-
manded the Ferrers' return. A settlement of $3950\textsuperscript{109} was
agreed upon for Schnabel, and records show that the actor
was paid by Paul Robeson (who paid fifty percent), Margaret
Webster, John Haggott, the Theatre Guild and Robert
Rockmore.\textsuperscript{110} After the incident was closed, Lawrence
Langner sent personal letters of apology to Schnabel and
Gilmore. To the actress he wrote:

Dear Virginia Gilmore:

I want to tell you personally how sorry I am over what
happened on "Othello."\textsuperscript{111}

I personally feel that you are a very fine actress, and I
want you to know that I heard no complaints over your
acting ability. The Theatre Guild, acting merely as the
business end of this venture, is a by-stander in the
matter.

I hope you will come in and see Terry [Theresa Helburn]
and myself and have a talk with us.

To Stephan Schnabel, Langner wrote:

Dear Mr. Schnabel:

On behalf of the Theatre Guild and myself personally, I
want to give you my assurance that I have heard of no
criticism of any kind regarding your performance of the
part of Iago. I heard you read myself and thought you
were magnificent.

By virtue of our contract with the other parties, the
Theatre Guild itself merely handles the business
management of this undertaking and greatly regrets the embarrassment which has been caused you.112

With these matters settled, the Guild arranged for Robert Edmond Jones to continue with his designs for the scenery, costumes and lighting. Tom Bennett was invited to arrange a score which would accompany Othello. The Shubert Theatre was selected for the New York run, and the following terms were agreed upon:

1. The Shubert Theatre would receive seventy percent of the first $15,000 and seventy-five percent of all over that amount of the gross weekly box office receipts.

2. Both the Theatre Guild and the Shubert Theatre would share in the costs of weekly advertising.

3. The Shubert would supply seventeen stage hands, including "heads of departments and operators."

4. The Guild was to control the tickets and could sell subscriptions and party tickets113 should they desire.

5. The play was guaranteed a three-week run, regardless of the gross weekly receipts. Each organization was to give one week's notice in writing should they wish the show to close, particularly if the receipts ran below $12,000.

6. The Shubert guaranteed full lighting and staff for a dress rehearsal.

6a. The Shubert was to supply an orchestra of five musicians.

7. The Theatre Guild was to pay the entire cost of moving the production into the theatre, setting it up and taking same out after the last performance.

8. A box office staff was to begin at the theatre one week before the opening. This staff was to be paid by the Guild, but designated by members of the Shubert Theatre.

9. The Shubert was allowed the right to sell souvenir programs in the lobby.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
10. The Theatre Guild was to see that taxes were collected on the tickets.\textsuperscript{114}

Once it was announced that Paul Robeson would portray Othello, the Theatre Guild was plagued with protesters. Although this letter was never sent to New York's mayor, F. H. LaGuardia, it reveals the problems the Guild had in connection with the production:

\textbf{ATT: This is a suggestion}

\begin{flushright}
His Honor the Mayor  
F. H. LaGuardia  
City of New York, N.Y.
\end{flushright}

\begin{quote}
Dear Sir:

A number of anonymous telephone calls which we have received in the past few days, and the statements contained in them lead us to believe that there is a highly organized campaign being started to prevent our production of Paul Robeson in Shakespeare's OTHELLO. Had the calls been sporadic and individual in content, we would not have bothered you, since it would then have been a matter of individual taste and opinion. However, the contrary has been true. The verbiage has been similar, reference is always made to the Harlem episode\textsuperscript{115} and statements have been made that "a prominent citizen had requested them to make a call." We think that in view of the innocence of the production, of the fact that it was presented last year in two cities with no difficulties whatsoever, and of the evidence of organizations, that you should be advised of this.

This letter was unsigned but came from John Haggott's office.\textsuperscript{116}

Once rehearsals began, Margaret Webster and Paul Robeson began to experience conflicts. Webster viewed with disdain Robeson's power to override her production decisions. "Paul flexed his muscles and always got what he wanted," she said. He seldom considered the fact that decisions should be made with the other two Othello producers (Webster and Haggott). Writing to her mother, Dame May Whitty, Miss
Webster said, "It turns out I have not been playing Svengali to his Trilby, but Frankenstein to his monster." Nothing will control Robeson, she wrote, including his lawyers, the Theatre Guild or his contract.\textsuperscript{117}

Conflicts arose over several incidents, one of which was a "mechanical gadget" (as Miss Webster termed it) which Robeson hung in the auditorium of the theatre. It reflected sound back to the actor's ears. This mechanism, she wrote, irritated not only her, but the others of the cast members as well.\textsuperscript{118} Jose Ferrer remembers the "gadget" differently. He says that Robeson had the device designed for his concert tours so he could constantly hear what sound he was producing in the audience. This "sound bath," as it was called, was much like the echo chambers used today. Use of this instrument, Ferrer said, prevented the actor from forcing his voice to its limits when confronted with a large auditorium.\textsuperscript{119} Company member Ralph Clanton also remembers Robeson's microphone system. He describes it as having a speaker directly above the actors' heads which reflected the bass notes produced by the voices back to the actors and into the auditorium. This mechanism did not affect the ladies' voices or the tenor quality of Jose Ferrer, but did augment Clanton's baritone sounds and the noise produced in the crowd scenes. The shouting which occurred during the Cassio/Montano fight was particularly effective due to Robeson's sound equipment.\textsuperscript{120}
The three week rehearsal period was smooth and professional, Jose Ferrer remembers. Actors from the initial university productions easily adjusted to the new scenery, costumes and lighting. Some changes were made in the staging, but most of the production was kept in its original state.121

In mid-September, 1943, Othello began the pre-Broadway tour, performing for a partial week in New Haven, two weeks in Philadelphia and two weeks in Boston.122 Although the play seemed successful in each of these cities, Lawrence Langner, after viewing the opening in New Haven, had these suggestions:

I thought the council scene at the beginning of Act I needed some working so far as the crowds were concerned. They have a tendency to speak very much on cue. I know it is very hard to get these interruptions to sound natural and no doubt it will be overcome. The trick is not to give them any cue and not to have an interruption unless it is really important.

The other thing has to do with scenery. I had a recollection that you opened up the permanent set between Act 1 and Act 2. At any rate I remember more spaciousness in the second half of the play at Princeton. Having the same playing space throughout from a scenic standpoint, tends to make for a certain monotony when it is shallow as at present. However, this is a pretty drastic thing to talk about so just don't mention it unless you get similar reactions from others. It would not be difficult to make a change of the center unit between Act 1 and Act 2 if you got a general reaction of this kind.

On a third point... everything was improved, especially in Jose's performance.123

In his note to producer Haggott, Langner cautioned, "Please tear this letter up after you have read it, and whatever you do, don't show it to Peggy; I am in trouble enough with her.
already." Furthermore, Langner indicates that there was still friction between the Ferrers and members of the Theatre Guild, for he added:

P.S. Will you tell Jose and Uta that I did not come around to see them last night because I thought if I had any criticisms it might upset them, and I therefore thought it was better to stay away. They may think I did this because I didn't like them or their performance.

Evidently, Lawrence Langner did pass some comments along to Margaret Webster, for he wrote a note while the company was in Philadelphia which said:

Congratulations on the splendid notices.

There is one notice which refers to the intensity of Paul's performance which I think was the most intelligent of all. Perhaps this is what I meant at the end of Act I, if it were intense and less vocal—more inner and less outer—the feeling at the end of Act I might be better. Possibly cutting may help too.124

Although Langner expressed the idea that he was in "trouble enough with Peggy," the director and producing organization must have had a compatible relationship. While Webster was in Philadelphia, the Guild again invited her to begin a Shakespearean company after the completion of Othello, and praised her work on the present production.

Our association in the present production has been very pleasant—at least on our side of the fence—and we would like to continue it with you. It is a great relief to Terry and myself, who are so overworked, to have a good job done so painlessly as was the present.125

In Philadelphia alone, the production grossed $23,000, and probably would have earned a larger sum had tickets been sold on a subscription basis. All seats in the upper and lower floors of the Locust Theatre were filled at once, and the back of the auditorium was used for the
overflow of patrons. The box office receipts in Boston amounted to $21,453.25. Othello was, one writer for Variety said, the number one "straight-play grosser" of the season. Cast members were becoming aware of the fact that their work was successful. In Philadelphia, Uta Hagen noted the long line in front of the ticket office, and exclaimed to her director, "Isn't it wonderful!"

By October 16, three days before the opening in New York, eleven "parties" had scheduled the entire Shubert Theatre so that their organizations might witness Othello. Among these were The Colored Orphan Asylum, The Auxiliary for the Society of Advancement of Psychology, and the United Federation Workers of America.

With the most severe conflicts behind them, rehearsals completed, and Othello having run successfully in New Haven, Philadelphia and Boston, the group prepared for the move to New York. Margaret Webster looked forward to this venture, but regarded the event with anxious anticipation. She had fears of a negative Broadway response, nevertheless, she rehearsed her company for their opening at the Shubert Theatre.

OPENING NIGHT IN NEW YORK

On October 20, 1943, a long line of people waited outside of the Shubert Theatre; they extended from Seventh to Eighth Avenue, and from Forty-fourth to Forty-fifth Street. Inside, the audience anxiously awaited the 8:30 curtain. Mike Gold, writing for The Daily Worker, noted
that people one ordinarily does not see at a Broadway opening mixed with the usual patrons. Present were "expensive ladies," sailors, carpenters, well-known trade union members, and European refugees. "There was a certain millionaire sitting in the midst of some dark, handsome, eager faces that came from Harlem." Critics from every major New York newspaper and national magazine were in the crowd.

Behind the curtain, Margaret Webster waited with what she called "director's nerves," the worst kind of anxiety. At 8:28, she was in "agony," feeling that the issues were larger than "theatre-size." She remembered the "years of refusal," the doubts, the obstacles and the "months of hard grinding work." It had taken, she realized, "four years to get there, in the teeth of every hostility and prediction of doom." Concentrating on her role of Emilia, she did not listen to the opening scenes. Two minutes after she went on stage, she knew that Othello was evoking a powerful response from the audience. She could feel the "electric spark." Robert Edmond Jones experienced the same sensation: "If a cat had walked across the footlights it would have been electrocuted." The "contact happened," Webster said, and grew vibrant, powerful, alive. It obliterates time and distance, welding into one entity actors and audience, the imagined passions of love and hate and hate and agony, and the living flesh and blood; fusing together the great poet-dramatist of 1600, the Negro actor lifting a standard for his race, the fictional Othello and Iago, the Broadway first nighters of 1943.

After the character, Emilia, was killed, Margaret Webster laid on the stage floor with her back to the...
audience, tears moving down her face. Audience members were "shaken," she believed, and cast members felt "humble and glorified." Jose Ferrer was not aware of the audience or the sensations that night. He said:

You know, when you are fighting for your life on stage, and the more difficult the role, the more involved you are in just doing your work, you've got certain difficult tasks set for you that live up to the terrible, monumental scale of Shakespeare. That's a full time job. You just dive in there and fight for your life. Two or three hours later, the show is over and you say, "Ahh, there. That's over!" Then, later on, you ask, "What happened that night?" Then you say, "I don't know. I was very busy working."

Ferrer's work, along with the work of the rest of the cast, must have been effective, however. Burton Rascoe, from The New York World-Telegram, said that the audience was "still, tense," and in a "spell" until the end of the play.

At 11:30 the curtain dropped. Actors lined up for the call and were greeted by a full twenty minutes of spontaneous applause. Margaret Webster likened the ovation to those received by today's pop singers. The actors were in tears, she said, and the audience on their feet, demanding a speech from Robeson. The actor fulfilled their request, then presented his director to the crowd. She uttered a "chokey thank you."

When the actors returned to their dressing rooms, the "whole world" was there to greet them, Jose Ferrer said. Lines of people offered their congratulations. Ferrer remembers that Greer Garson came backstage to greet Uta Hagen and himself, but he did not recognize her at the time and had to ask his wife who she was. Afterwards, the company...
went to Sardi's, the famous New York restaurant, and were again greeted with a standing ovation from the customers. In 1972, Margaret Webster described it as "... the most exciting evening I have ever experienced in the theatre."

Theatre critics had individual theories on the various aspects of the performance, but were agreed in their thought that Othello was a powerful production. Burton Rascoe, for example, wrote, "It is my firm, solemn and humble belief that there has never been and never will be a finer rendition of this particular tragedy than the one now offered us." He called it "One of the most memorable events in the history of the theatre." John Chapman of The New York Daily News termed the production "magnificent," "streamlined," but not "jazzed-up." He complimented an "excellent" cast. The New York Sun's Ward Morehouse predicted that the "stirring" production would surpass the record of Walter Hampden's Othello, which was also performed in the Sam S. Shubert Theatre. Fears that a Shakespearean work might not be able to compete with the lighter fare in other theatres were negated by Louis Kronenberger of PM who said, "after many months of either empty or light-hearted playgoing, it has taken Shakespeare to give one the sense of sitting once again in the theatre and watching a true and powerful drama enacted upon the stage." Howard Barnes of The New York Herald-Tribune believed that the production "gave renewed faith in the power and beauty of the theatre." Wilella Waldorf of The New York Post said it was the "... finest production of 'Othello' in years."
and Lewis Nichols, of The New York Times agreed that it was "the best Othello seen in years and will be remembered for a long time." Robert Garland of The New York Journal-American believed that he had seen the characterization of Othello which Shakespeare had in mind, and ended his review with "... a darn good show. Go see it!"  

The following night, cast members found a note posted on the callboard from their director saying, "We have set ourselves a terrific standard... but... there's nothing about it we cannot retain and surpass." Othello ran for 296 performances, playing to capacity houses, fulfilling Margaret Webster's prediction.

THE RUN IN NEW YORK

Large audiences, consisting of a variety of social classes, continued to appear throughout the long New York run of Othello. The first twenty-one performances were for "standing room only." On the evening of the forty-seventh performance, Russian journalist, Rogov, noticed the interesting composition of the audience: soldiers, members of the working class, young students, foreign people who were visiting the country, and Negroes who sat together in groups. That night, typical of previous evenings, Robeson received an applause when he entered the stage, and a tremendous ovation at the end of the play. Patrons rushed backstage to greet him. Rogov remembered two black sailors who waited with him in the long line. He watched Robeson give them an autographed picture. Rogov finally reached the actor and
explained that he was from Russia; Robeson was most pleased because he had a great deal of admiration for the political thinking of the Soviet Union. "Thanks!" he said in Rogov's language. "Thank you for coming to see our show. I know your Othello at the Maly and not so long ago, I made the acquaintance of your King Lear—Mikhoels. My dream is to play Othello in Moscow." As company member Francis Letton said, Paul Robeson usually greeted everyone who wished to see him after his performance, even though he was exhausted from the demanding role.

Margaret Webster was pleased with the thought that many audience members came to view Othello because they heard that it was an exciting show, not because they believed they were under some sort of cultural obligation to support a classical work. Many people were, in fact, totally unaware of the Othello plot. Webster, while waiting in the wings for her last entrance as Emilia, saw a young girl leaning forward in one of the orchestra seats, saying, "Please God, don't let him kill her . . . don't let him kill her." Just prior to the curtain of one performance, two "elegantly dressed" ladies sat down to watch the show and one said to the other, "Now, for heaven's sake, don't tell me what happens." Margaret Webster was also delighted that Othello appealed to the military men. She received many congratulatory letters from such admirers as a Boston teacher and a German refugee, but she valued most one note from an American soldier. It said:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Last Saturday night I saw Othello. It took a lot of coaxing to get four soldiers to spend a Saturday night of the first weekend leave in a month, in a theatre, watching something by Will Shakespeare. You didn't know what was at stake when the curtain went up—my life, practically. Well, what followed is only natural. We all of us, for those brief hours, went into a trance; we were living every emotion of the play. (One was a First Sarge, and my dear Miss Webster, that which moves a First Sergeant is almost miraculous) . . . I'm not a critic, just a soldier when I say that each night when the curtain goes up at the Shubert, each and every one of you, from prop man to extra to star, is fighting a war against our common enemy. . . . reason enough to win this war. . . . Incidentally, going back on the troop train (it's a six-hour ride), for the first time in my army career I saw five soldiers sprawled over the seats, feet in the air, sleeves rolled up, shirts open, talking not about the babe they met at the Broadway Brewery, but of all things, a thing called Othello.161

Furthermore, a Major James Y. Brame, Jr. requested that Othello be performed for the soldiers at the Army Ground Forces Replacement Depot, Fort George G. Mean, Maryland.162 Producers must have declined, for the production was never staged there.

World War II had become an intense conflict by the time Othello was playing in New York, and the emotions of the American people ran high. William Randolph Hearst, Jr. sent a telegram from the staff of The New York Journal American to ask that the Othello producers donate a portion of their box office receipts for Christmas presents which would go to wounded soldiers.163 Margaret Webster believed that the public could relate their experiences in the war to the events in the sixteenth century drama. The following comments were printed in the production programs:

As this production of Othello begins, we are in the middle of a year and in the middle of a war; and when at war, it may not be out of place to keep other wars, of
other times in mind. For by this means, patterns and directions may be clearer. We are now engaged in a war to protect a way of life which we feel offers the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people. Venice in the Sixteenth Century was fighting too: Her wars were to protect Christianity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In our conflict, all races are allied to fight for common ideals. The Negro pilot of the Army Air Corps may fly under the command of Chiang in China; just as soldiers of other races fought with Venice for the protection of Christianity.164

As previously mentioned, the war years presented problems for theatrical productions. Many actors were drafted, and gas rationing curtailed audience attendance. Othello enjoyed consistent financial success, however, grossing two million dollars in the pre-Broadway and New York runs.165 Interestingly enough, Philip Huston (Lodovico in the cast) held the Actors' Equity record for the longest unbroken employment during the war years.166 The entire company of Othello had the benefit of financial security through May of 1945, as the war was coming to an end.

On January 26, 1944, Paul Robeson, Margaret Webster and John Haggott signed an agreement with the Theatre Guild which would permit a tour of Othello for the 1944-1945 season,167 although this document was cancelled on February 24 for a revised contract. The revision was due partially to Miss Webster's bitter resignation as Emilia. Conflicts between her and Robeson had grown to such heights that she relinquished the role.168

The tour was to begin in September of 1944 and individual terms were agreed upon for Webster, Robeson and Haggott. John Haggott agreed to the following:
1. The producer was to cooperate with Margaret Webster in casting and rehearsing for the tour, and to "render such services as are usual for an associate producer who is also production manager and technical supervisor in this connection."

2. Haggott was to receive ten percent of the net gross.

3. He was to handle all "programs, display, advertising, houseboards and printed matter (other than daily newspaper copy)."

4. Should John Haggott wish to continue as stage manager for the tour (which he had done in New York) he would receive $150 per week in addition to his ten percent.

5. Haggott was also offered the opportunity to join the cast on tour if he believed that they were in need of his services as stage manager.169

Margaret Webster and the Theatre Guild agreed to these terms:

1. Miss Webster was to direct and supervise the replacement for Emilia during the month of March.

2. The director was to supervise the staging of the tour production in the latter part of August or early September of 1944, but was only obligated to one week of rehearsal.

3. Miss Webster was asked to direct and supervise all cast replacements as incidents requiring such action occurred. These were not to interfere with her other commitments, however.

4. The title, "A Margaret Webster Production" was to precede the name of the play and any actor. The director also had the right to take this billing off, should she believe that the production had fallen in quality and could not be corrected. She was obligated, however, to attempt to remedy any problems which dealt with the quality of Othello.

5. Miss Webster was to receive twenty percent of the net profits for her services. This was to continue for the life of the production.

6. The director was allowed to "visit" the company to make changes as she saw fit. The Theatre Guild would pay for these visits.

7. Miss Webster and Paul Robeson were to share the control of casting and re-casting.170
Paul Robeson's contract guaranteed the actor several items:

1. He was to receive "star-billing in all respects" and advertising was subject to his approval.

2. Robeson was to receive $1500 per week or ten percent of the weekly gross receipts (whichever was higher), and was allowed to review the manager's books to check the profits.

3. The actor was obligated only to an eight-performance week.

4. Robeson was allowed complete freedom to "appear elsewhere" as long as this did not include "night clubs, vaudeville or any other plays, musical comedies or revues," as long as it did not interfere with his rendition of Othello.

5. All cities where Othello was to perform were subject to approval from Robeson and the actor did not have to appear where audiences were segregated in the theatre.

6. Robeson was given "exclusive right" to select cast replacements. (His contract does not mention that he must have Webster's approval on such matters.)

7. The actor had "sole and complete decision and authority with respect to his own costumes."

8. Robeson was to understand that the managers of the various theatres had subscription tickets which must be recognized.

9. Should Margaret Webster not be available to direct replacements, Robeson had the right to designate a director, "providing the direction of replacements is not done by the stage manager."  

Jose Ferrer and Uta Hagen were offered a contract on March 31 which, in summary, provided the following terms:

1. Ferrer was to receive $600 to $900 per week, depending on the gross weekly box office receipts, while Uta Hagen was to receive $400 to $600.

2. Both actors had the right to cancel their performances, should Paul Robeson be unable to perform as Othello.

3. Both actors were to receive star billing under Paul Robeson.
4. It was understood that if Ferrer was called for military service, or be unable to perform, both actors could cancel their contracts.\textsuperscript{172}

In June, the Theatre Guild requested that all company members in Othello sign a binder which would guarantee their return in the fall.\textsuperscript{173} On June 30, 1944, Lawrence Langner and Theresa Helburn wrote the following note:

To the OTHHELLO company:

Goodbye and thanks to you all. We wish you a very happy holiday and look forward to seeing most of you again in the fall. You have been a swell company and we are proud to have been able to present Mr. Robeson and the OTHHELLO cast under our auspices.\textsuperscript{174}

On July 1, 1943, Othello closed in New York without going into the summer season. This was due mainly to Paul Robeson's need for a rest. He told one reporter that Shakespeare never intended an actor to portray Othello eight times a week.\textsuperscript{175} Robeson underwent a tremendous strain, losing thirty-five pounds in the course of the New York productions. He looked forward to the tour, however, and was so convinced that Othello deserved a viewing across the country that he forfeited the $2000 to $2500 per week salary which he generally earned in concert engagements, for the $1500 earned in Othello.\textsuperscript{176} Although Margaret Webster had hoped that President Roosevelt would ask for a command performance, this never occurred and Othello closed.\textsuperscript{177} One journalist said that the play's popularity was so great that Othello could have been presented another one hundred times to capacity houses.\textsuperscript{178}
THE TOUR

Upon returning for the tour rehearsals, Margaret Webster and Paul Robeson continued to experience conflicting views. Miss Webster discovered that Robeson had a new set of costumes designed for him by a friend of the Ferrers'. When Robert Edmond Jones was notified of the situation, he reported the incident to the designer's union. The matter was soon remedied, but when Miss Webster reprimanded Robeson for his actions, the actor replied, "Oh, I didn't think you would mind." Actually, Robeson's contract provided his exclusive right to control his own costumes. Furthermore, Jose Ferrer says that he not only had nothing to do with this incident, but has no memory of such an event.

Another conflicting incident arose when, during rehearsals for the tour, the stage manager informed Webster that Edith King (the new Emilia) was making a recording of Othello with the other members of the cast. Miss Webster discovered that her leading actors had made a separate contract with the Columbia Record Company. The Theatre Guild members believed that Margaret Webster had suffered an injustice since her name was not attached to the recording, and since she was not informed that the record was being made. In one letter, dated August 25, 1944, Lawrence Langner made the following statement:

I imagine that each actor working for us has a perfect right to make an individual recording, but when Columbia approaches an entire group of our actors and arranges a recording of OTHELLO, I then take it that the Theatre Guild and Margaret Webster are interested, and their work in arranging and coordinating is involved. We have no desire to prevent these recordings being published,
but feel that the Theatre Guild and Margaret Webster and the investors have to be taken care of financially in the situation, as well as given credit for the production. 182

John Haggott reveals that Paul Afelder, president of the Columbia company, when told that this was a "Margaret Webster production" replied, "Oh, I thought she was out of it." 183 Jose Ferrer says that the recording was done "sneakily, there's no question about it," but the president of Columbia and Paul Robeson did not want Margaret Webster's name attached to the billing. 184 Webster's final decision, which the Theatre Guild condoned, was to refrain from making an issue of the situation, particularly since the morale of the touring company might be damaged. 185 Her name does not appear on the record.

The recording was inferior, Miss Webster said, and it did not represent the production as it was directed. 186 Company member Robinson Stone agrees with Margaret Webster's statement. He believes that the quality of Webster's production cannot be judged by the Columbia recording. Stone recently wrote:

I listened to the Robeson recording of OTHELLO the other day, and I must beg you to erase it from your mind in trying to evaluate the production now in your attention. I had really forgotten how almost disastrous that recording is. The whole thing has an odor of the lectern about it, as though the actors were petrified by the microphone and were afraid to tear a passion to appropriate tatters where it's needed. I promise you, the stage production was NOTHING like that. On stage those same stars took off and roared like lions, whereas on record they sound like dramatizing-lecturers. Even Robeson seems subdued and quelled. And Ferrer, though somewhat more at ease, is not successful in bringing the venom and vitality which he brought across onstage. Ironically, the best recorded performance comes from Uta. I feel there is more fervor and sincerity from her
than from any of the others. It's as "studied" as always, but maybe, on records, that's what makes her the most successful of the three. And Jack Manning's Roderigo is even less effective than on stage, and the kindest word I can say for King/Edith King as Emilia/ on records is that she sounds "provincial." Mind you, all of these were much better than that, and in the case of the three stars, they were magnificent, ... Alexander Scourby (as Cassio AND Brabantio, a strange double-casting) sounds like a Bronx Greek boy who's had good elocution lessons. ... Believe me, obliterate that record from your mind and visualize the tempest that these actors COULD and DID produce on the stage. It was nothing like that soft-pedaled, almost kittenish thing on discs.  

The relationship between Margaret Webster and Paul Robeson continued to be abrasive. "It frightens me," Miss Webster wrote, "when I look back on the razor-edge between triumph and disaster along which we have walked." She was often disturbed because Robeson seldom expressed appreciation for her work. Once the production was hailed a success, the actors "beat each other on the back," while the leading actor offered no congratulations to anyone. Writing to Robeson's wife, Eslanda, Miss Webster said that he never offered good wishes, congratulations, or thanks, and never will. "He is not ungrateful," Webster told Mrs. Robeson, "just inarticulate." Webster also tells us that Paul Robeson had a "monolithic innocence" about him, and one could not dispute him because he would not argue. When the director would reprimand him for some action, his reply would be, "ugh." One conflict arose when the leftist actor arrived from a political meeting ten minutes before the curtain opened. Webster was upset and told him that "Othello needs more attention than that." "I also told him during one of
his 'big bear' spells," she wrote, "that he didn't know anything about democracy and was only a dictator out of office." "He said 'ugh' as usual."190

It is difficult to know how accurate Miss Webster's statements regarding Paul Robeson are, when held to the light of comments from other members of the company. Although Ferrer will always be grateful for the opportunity afforded him by Miss Webster, he believes she had an irritating personality, and that one should consider this when reading her comments on Robeson's failings.191 Several other members of the Othello cast present positive reports on the black actor's professional and personal qualities. At the same time, the performers also write of Margaret Webster's ability to be charming, intelligent and firm.

Locations for the tour were selected; any theatre which practiced segregation was eliminated. Paul Robeson insisted on this policy and Uta Hagen and Jose Ferrer fully supported him. This stipulation prevented the company from performing in any state south of the Mason-Dixon line. Furthermore, they did not appear in several northern cities, one of which was Washington, D.C. Company member Stockman Barner says that there was a certain amount of pressure issued to the producers that Othello be toured to the National Theatre in Washington. Since that theatre was segregated, however, the company never performed there.192

Robinson Stone has carefully recorded the dates, locations, theatres, and number of performances.193 This chart should be a useful reference as the reader is introduced to the events of the tour.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>THEATRE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944-45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 2</td>
<td>Trenton, N.J.</td>
<td>Trenton Auditorium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 4</td>
<td>Providence R.I.</td>
<td>Metropolitan Auditorum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 5</td>
<td>Worcester, Mass.</td>
<td>Memorial Auditorum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 6</td>
<td>Springfield, Mass.</td>
<td>Court Square Theatre</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 7-9</td>
<td>Hartford, Conn.</td>
<td>Bushnell Auditorium</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 11-17</td>
<td>Boston, Mass.</td>
<td>Shubert Theatre</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 18-23</td>
<td>Montreal, Canada</td>
<td>His Majesty's Theatre</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 25-30</td>
<td>Toronto, Canada</td>
<td>Royal Alexandra Theatre</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2-3</td>
<td>Rochester, N.Y.</td>
<td>Masonic Auditorium</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 4-7</td>
<td>Buffalo, N.Y.</td>
<td>Erlanger Theatre</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, Mich.</td>
<td>Michigan Theatre</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 10</td>
<td>Flint, Mich.</td>
<td>Capital Theatre</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 11</td>
<td>Saginaw, Mich.</td>
<td>Temple Theatre</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 30-Nov. 4</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
<td>Hanna Theatre</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 6-11</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, Penn.</td>
<td>Nixon Theatre</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 13-15</td>
<td>Indianapolis, Ind.</td>
<td>English Theatre</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 16-18</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
<td>Hartman Theatre</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 20-25</td>
<td>Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
<td>Taft Auditorium</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 27-Dec. 3</td>
<td>Milwaukee, Wis.</td>
<td>Davidson Theatre</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>Madison, Wis.</td>
<td>Wisconsin Union Theatre</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>Davenport, Iowa</td>
<td>Orpheum Theatre</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>Des Moines, Iowa</td>
<td>Shrine Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 7-8</td>
<td>St. Paul, Minn.</td>
<td>Municipal Auditorium</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 11-16</td>
<td>Winnipeg, Canada</td>
<td>Winnipeg Auditorium</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 25-Jan 6</td>
<td>Seattle, Wash.</td>
<td>Metropolitan Theatre</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 8</td>
<td>Tacoma, Wash.</td>
<td>Temple Theatre</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 9-11</td>
<td>Vancouver, Canada</td>
<td>Strand Theatre</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 12-13</td>
<td>Victoria, Canada</td>
<td>Royal Victoria Theatre</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 15-18</td>
<td>Portland, Ore.</td>
<td>Mayfair Theatre</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATES</td>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>THEATRE</td>
<td>NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 20</td>
<td>Sacramento, Cal.</td>
<td>Sacramento Memorial Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 22-Feb. 11</td>
<td>Los Angeles, Cal.</td>
<td>Biltmore Theatre</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 12-13</td>
<td>San Diego, Cal.</td>
<td>Russ Auditorium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>Long Beach, Cal.</td>
<td>Municipal Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>Pasadena, Cal.</td>
<td>Civic Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 17</td>
<td>Fresno, Cal.</td>
<td>Memorial Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>Stockton, Cal.</td>
<td>High School Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 19-Mar. 31</td>
<td>San Francisco, Cal.</td>
<td>Geary Theatre</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1</td>
<td>San Jose, Cal.</td>
<td>San Jose Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 4</td>
<td>Boulder, Col.</td>
<td>Macky Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 5-7</td>
<td>Denver, Col.</td>
<td>Denver Auditorium</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 10-May 19</td>
<td>Chicago, Ill.</td>
<td>Erlanger Theatre</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22-June 10</td>
<td>New York, N.Y.</td>
<td>New York City Center</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Audiences across the country were receptive to the *Othello* performances. Tickets were usually sold out in advance. Standing ovations were frequent.\textsuperscript{194} The performances were usually better in the large cities, according to Robinson Stone.\textsuperscript{195} Jose Ferrer says that each city had its own characteristics. Bostonians were sophisticated and educated, appreciating the poetry of the literature.\textsuperscript{196} Stone, on the other hand, writes that audience members from Boston were so conservative that they had a tendency to censor anything which they believed was morally unsuited for the theatre. *Othello* was left uncensored, Stone says, because Shakespeare was considered "art," and because many did not understand the more obscene portions of the play. Perhaps the "matinee ladies" would have been appalled, had they understood the immoral events which unfold in the plot.\textsuperscript{197} According to Jose Ferrer, audiences from Buffalo and Rochester, New York were unsophisticated, but appreciative of the melodrama and the story line. The San Francisco viewers, who were said to be a rather elite group, turned out to be unimpressed. The patrons in Los Angeles, a city known on the touring circuits for its unsophisticated audiences, were much more attentive. Ferrer says that he gave twenty-one "top-notch" performances of the twenty-four offered, because audiences simply demanded it of him.\textsuperscript{198} Stone tells us that another factor which made Los Angeles audiences interesting was the fact that many patrons were from the film industry which was located in that city.
In Detroit, citizens had only recently experienced a race riot. Company members were warned of the tense atmosphere before the opening. When Othello first kissed Desdemona in the "Cyprus Scene," someone in the theatre happened to sneeze. Stone writes that the company experienced a "shiver of terror" until they realized that the sound was merely a sneeze. Because Chicago was a "convention city," Ferrer says, one could not predict the characteristics of its audiences. Every night the viewers reacted differently. Stone remembers, however, that the actors were very excited while performing in that large city.

Company member Francis Letton relates that audiences at every location were "spellbound." One of his duties as assistant stage manager was to observe the patrons for potential racial disturbances, but there was never a need to report an incident.

Audiences on the tour were much like those in New York in that Othello drew a variety of people including blue collar workers and Negroes. The play appealed to all social classes, and the production was often attended by people who had never seen a Shakespearean work. One incident which emphasizes this point happened when two ladies were heard in the lobby of the Orpheum Theatre in Davenport, Iowa, saying, "It was nice, but I was waiting for him to sing 'Old Man River.'" In those days, Ferrer tells us, the theatre was considered to be for an elite group of sophisticated persons. But Robeson drew other types of patrons.

Stockman Barrier
writes that the black actor was a "folk hero," drawing a populace to the theatre which would not ordinarily at­
tend. Jose Ferrer believes that Othello was partially responsible for breaking down social and racial barriers in the theatre.

Throughout the tour, the Othello company had to re­
main flexible because the theatres which housed the produc­
tion were varied in size and in working conditions. Robert Edmond Jones' scenery was constructed so that basic units could be condensed into a smaller setting, should the the­
atre have limited facilities. Actors were generally grate­
ful when the entire setting was reincorporated. In pro­
viding designs which could be mounted in any area from a basketball court to a large theatre, Robert Edmond Jones was a "genius," Robinson Stone says. Stone learned the mecha­
nizations of the workable set when he and other actors were allowed to augment their salaries by assisting the stage crew when necessary. During the war years when stage work­
ers were scarce, actors' and stagehand unions were more leni­
ent in allowing players to perform the technical duties of the production.

The large auditoriums presented several problems for the company. Stone mentions that the view when he sat in back of the theatre for the second act was often like look­
ing through reversed opera glasses. In Denver, Colorado, for example, the tremendous audience area was enlarged by moving the side walls, allowing for more seating capacity.
Although the company used Paul Robeson's microphones to reflect their own voices, this mechanism did not place the sound in the audience to any great degree. Microphones designed to carry the sounds to the patrons were seldom used, and actors had to articulate clearly in the enormous space. Stone remembers that the large Shubert Theatre in Boston seemed intimate in comparison to some of the huge auditoriums. Jose Ferrer tells us that these enormous theatres would sometimes seat three to five thousand viewers. These "cow palaces" made the actors look like "Pygmies," and were difficult places in which to perform.

Some locations offered less-than-desirable conditions backstage as well. Dressing rooms were often inadequate, and "crossovers" behind the stage were rare. At the Geary Theatre in San Francisco, Desdemona's deathbed became infested with fleas, and Miss Hagen had to endure the creatures for at least fifteen minutes until the play ended. When the curtain closed, Stone writes, "You never saw such a maelstrom of flying skirts and itchy hands." In one city, a faulty spotlight caused Jones' beautiful Venetian curtain to catch on fire, and in Detroit, the smoke conduit backed up and the play was halted until the management had remedied the situation.

To add to these problems, costumes and scenery had become battered from the strenuous one-night performances. Costumes were beautifully restored by wardrobe mistress Meta Klinge. There was some discussion in December about
a new set. Margaret Webster had conferred with Robert Edmond Jones and together they decided that not only would the designer rebuild the scenery but that he would construct new designs as well. John Haggott suggested that this action be postponed until after the one-night performances and be considered again in Los Angeles. The contention at that time was that only the first act would be rebuilt. In the course of the early presentations, however, a door was constructed so the company could use one entrance instead of two when space did not allow for the latter. This action prevented much of the wear on the scenery which Margaret Webster had predicted would become noticeable during the run.

Haggott suggested that Jones might design a "one-set affair" which would help the production to move faster and prevent a change during one of Ferrer's soliloquies. (This change had often been distractingly "noisy" on the tour.) But he also pointed out that Jones would have to be paid a designer's fee, Margaret Webster would have to travel to California to restage, shipping costs for moving the scenery across the United States would be exorbitant, and the whole "business" would cost approximately $5000. Actually, Haggott believed the one-set arrangement would not offer enough variety, particularly when viewed by the upcoming "recalcitrant Chicago-ites." Robert Rockmore in a letter to John Haggott expressed his beliefs that a new set should not be built for several reasons. First, the cost would be closer to $8000 or $10,000, "which would hardly compensate for the sole
substantial advantage of a possible quieter change during the Ferrer soliloquy." Furthermore, Rockmore predicted that Othello would close in Chicago and would not run into the 1945-1946 season. Margaret Webster was also planning to direct The Tempest, which would leave her unavailable for Othello. To add to his reasoning, Rockmore reminded Haggott that the touring production would be subjected to several more one-night stands before reaching Chicago. As a last contention, he suggested that the scenery might not be satisfactory, workable and comfortable for the cast. No other records concerning this matter exist among the Guild documents, but it is known that a new set was not built.

Despite the technical problems of arranging scenery, performing in large auditoriums and keeping costumes in proper condition, the townspeople generally greeted the performers with hospitality. Lavish social gatherings, for example, were given by the Canadian socialites. Paul Robeson experienced some discomfort, however, in seeking hotel accommodations. When he was refused a room in Indianapolis, the hotel manager, at the Mayor's insistence, offered Robeson a basement room with an exposed bare bulb for illumination. The offended actor wished to cancel the Indianapolis performances, but the situation was remedied when the Mayor asked him to be a guest in his home. This was not the only problem in Indianapolis, however, since the theatre also refused to agree with Robeson's stipulation that audiences not be segregated. In a letter dated
October 23, 1944, Howard Newman, the public relations official for *Othello*, wrote to John Haggott. Not only does this document reveal the problems in Indianapolis, but in other cities as well:

Dear John:

Here in Indianapolis I have run into my first serious encounter in the matter of audience segregation. Once or twice in the past few weeks the situation arose but was coped with effectively. The local manager in Lansing was opposed to the mixed audiences but I brought pressure on him from his home office (the Butterfield Theatres in Detroit) and he grudgingly adhered to our wishes. In Pittsburgh, Sam Nixon, after his first statement to me about the matter some three months ago, had now coopered fully.

Indianapolis, however, is pretty much of a Jim Crow town. At this writing I have not yet found a room for Robeson and I may have to find a hotel for him about three miles from the theatre and engage a private limousine to bring him back and forth. However, I think that I can lick the hotel situation. The theatre itself presented a more serious problem.

At first Vincent Burke the local manager refused point blank to mix the audiences. He pointed out that there was absolutely nothing in the house contract to cover such a demand. I reached for the telephone to call you in order to have Gus Pitou rearrange the booking and the gesture seemed to frighten him. We had a nice picture-break in the Indianapolis paper on Sunday and the box office phone has been ringing all morning for ticket inquiries and I suppose Burke was afraid of being deprived of three solid days of sell-out business. So he promised, reluctantly, that he would sell his seats first-come-first served. He explained, however, that there were a number of yearly reservations which had to be taken care of first. This occupied the first eight or ten rows, solid, for the first and second nights of the run. There is absolutely no way of my checking the veracity of this statement. His box office crew are all pretty strongly allied with him in their anti-Negroism. After I made it very clear to them that it would entail endless lawsuits, and untold disagreeableness if a segregation policy was indulged in, he promised /sic/ to abide by our demands. He may scatter a couple of colored faces down front to avoid conflict but wherever
possible they will be shunted to the rear of the or­
chestra or the balcony.

... there are trouble spots ahead. There's Columbus, 
Cincinnati, Des Moines.220

If the theatres in the last cities mentioned did not 
cooperate, there is no record of it in the Theatre Guild 
documents. Robeson continued to experience discomfort in 
the hotels, however. It was customary for Uta Hagen, Jose 
Ferrer and Paul Robeson to use adjoining suites,221 but, in 
certain hotels, Robeson was forced to share a room with 
Ferrer. In Cincinnati, for example, the actors shared a 
room and had to walk down the stairs because Negroes were 
not allowed on the elevator.222 Incidents such as these 
were usually kept quiet. Francis Letton says that Robeson's 
dresser, "Andy," and Uta Hagen's dresser, Viola Hamilton 
(both black) seldom mentioned events which presented them 
with racial difficulties.223 For the most part, the Negro 
members of the company were treated with respect. In fact, 
Stockman Earner often went with Paul Robeson to NAACP meet­
ings throughout the country, where both black and white ac­
tors were welcomed.224

In addition to the problems presented by the facili­
ties in the various cities, actors were faced with exhaus­
tion and boredom. Jose Ferrer says that, although today he 
knows better how to endure the long run, Othello's tour was 
quite tedious for him. He rested as often as possible to 
combat the weariness, but his condition was apparent to the 
audience, he said, in the last performances.225 Some of the
understudies in the cast, to combat boredom, gathered to re­hearse Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. Ferrer volunteered to offer suggestions for the actors' characterizations, but a con­flict of temperaments and a general lack of interest pre­vented a showing of the play.  

In spite of these problems, the company seemed to enjoy many of the locations on the tour. Ralph Clanton (Cassio) tells us that, since tickets were usually sold out in advance, the actors did not have to relinquish their time to publicity appearances. This gave them the freedom to enjoy many of the local sites. The company, Clanton writes, was usually in the "right part of the country at the right time of the year." The group enjoyed New England and Eastern Canada in the fall, and experienced a beautiful train ride through the Canadian Rockies. They were in the mid-west just before the heavy snows, California during the winter months, and Chicago in the spring. Actress Barbara Anderson told one reporter that the company was en­joying its travels across the country.

As the company moved to the various locations, Margaret Webster visited to rehearse replacements in the cast, and to correct any weak areas of the production. The troupe experienced three major changes in casting. The first happened when Nan McFarland replaced Judith Wister as Bianca after the first few weeks of the run. Another re­placement seemed imminent when, early in the tour, Don Keefer (Roderigo) broke his ankle. The actor persevered,
however, and limped on stage. The audience was never aware of the handicap and, much to the chagrin of Keefer's understudy, he never missed a performance. In Denver, Colorado, Webster removed Frederic Downs from the cast as Montano, and replaced him with Angus Cairns. Downs was released, Robinson Stone says, for several reasons, one of which was that the actor had difficulty in keeping a wig on his partially bald head. Downs frequently lost his top piece during the sword fights, and he simply proved unsuitable, Stone writes, for the active and violent fight scenes staged by Miss Webster.

In Chicago, several cast changes took place. Nan McFarland temporarily replaced Edith King as Emilia, and Barbara Anderson became Bianca. Also in Chicago, Francis Compton "fell prey to a bad back" and was replaced as Brabantio by Stone, who was pleased with the opportunity to play the role in his home town.

Jose Ferrer remembers that Margaret Webster visited the production only two or three times, at two- or three-month intervals. He definitely remembers her presence at performances in Los Angeles and Chicago. Robinson Stone remembers her arrival in San Francisco, Detroit, Boston and Chicago. These recollections indicate that Miss Webster visited the production four times at one and one-half to two-month intervals. Ralph Clanton is relatively accurate, therefore, when he says that the director arrived approximately every six weeks.
When Miss Webster arrived "out of the blue," Stockman Earner says, she would usually begin rehearsals with the "Messenger" scene, then work to improve other areas of the production considered weak.235 Jose Ferrer remembers that she would call the evening after a performance or arrive early before the curtain and say, "Let's run this little scene," or "Let's fix this up."236 Barner says that at these times the director was "business-like, but charming."237 Ralph Clanton writes that she offered "cheerful suggestions" and retained a pleasant relationship with each member of the company.238

Margaret Webster frequently opposed the various "improvements" added by the cast. Robinson Stone239 and Ralph Clanton240 say that she was particularly strict with changes made by Jose Ferrer. Ferrer admits that he experimented with the role in an attempt to keep his performance fresh. On one occasion, he remembers that the director challenged his articulation. His speech had become "mannered," she said. Ferrer had tried to emphasize the final consonant sound of the words with a verbalized "uh." For example, he would say, "I hate-uh the Moor-uh." This, he believed would clarify his speech in the enormous theatres where the company performed. But at Miss Webster's suggestion, the actor looked for other ways to present articulate sounds.241 On another occasion, Margaret Webster saw Stockman Earner perform the "Messenger" scene and suggested that he was much too "pretty," and said "for heaven's sake dirty your face." From that time forward, Barner "applied smudges."242
The director's visits were appreciated by some of the actors, but Jose Ferrer, Uta Hagen and Paul Robeson viewed them with disdain. All three stars resented her arriving unannounced, Robinson Stone says, "but, of course, as a director she had the right to that prerogative." Stone says that the Ferrers avoided Margaret Webster as much as possible during the tour. Later, their relationships changed somewhat when Miss Webster directed Uta Hagen in *Saint Joan* (1951), and Ferrer in *Richard III* (1953).^243^  

It is not unusual for a company to experience difficulties in their relationships, but the *Othello* group was, for the most part, compatible. Jose Ferrer remembers that cliques formed but they were not damaging to the company. Personality problems ease, the actor says, when you are a member of a "winning team."^244^ Stockman Barner writes, however, that the company was segregated into groups consisting of Robeson and the Ferrers, the single men, the stagehands, musicians (who were most friendly),^245^ the "lesser actors," and Ralph Clanton who stayed by himself.^246^ (Clanton admits that he preferred to see the sights and museums rather than to fraternize.)^247^ According to company member Louis Lytton, the troupe was "one happy family."^248^ Virginia Mattis (Durand) supports this by saying that the group worked well together. Much of this feeling of good will stemmed from the tone set by the leading actors, Robeson, Hagen and Ferrer. Virginia Durand remembers a party which
her parents gave the cast members in San Francisco. She was honored that each of the three leading actors arrived as her guests. 249

Paul Robeson, although constantly busy making appearances in clubs and organizations across the country, generally took time to fraternize with the rest of the company. Cast members usually appreciated his sociability. Robinson Stone once offered the company a social gathering at his home in Chicago, and remembers that Robeson arrived, kicked off his shoes, drank cuba libras, and sang "Old Man River" to Stones' two small nieces, one on each knee. On another occasion, Robeson invited the cast to a concert given by Dorothy Maynor. Although exhausted from the difficult concert, she sang several encores to please Robeson's guests, including "Depuis le jour." 250 During Christmas of 1944, the Theatre Guild refused to pay the actors for the ten-day vacation. Although the Guild was within its legal rights, Robeson believed that the actors deserved a bonus and was ready to provide it himself if necessary. The Guild eventually paid salaries for those actors who earned $100 a week or less, and Christmas was much brighter for everyone concerned. Francis Letton remembers that Uta Hagen purchased and wrapped individual gifts for each actor in the company and presented them at a Christmas gathering held in a mountain home, owned by the manager of the Metropolitan Theatre in Seattle. The evening was enhanced, Letton says, with a light sprinkle of snow. 251

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
In order to clearly understand a "Peggy Webster tour," Robinson Stone suggests that various "vignettes," as he calls them, will help reveal what happens when a cast lives together for ten "long but frequently glorious months." Francis Letton tells of an incident in Los Angeles when Paul Robeson, on a very rare occasion, asked Letton to deter the patrons from coming backstage. The stage manager/actor was faced, however, with a beautifully dressed lady who insisted upon visiting with Robeson. Letton explained that the actor was very tired, and the lady replied, "Young man, I did not ask about Mr. Robeson's health—I asked to be taken to his dressing room." Letton then recognized the lady as Theresa Helburn, a founder of the Theatre Guild, and promptly escorted her to Robeson's room.

During one performance, Robert Perry and Francis Letton improvised "dreadfully," because of Robeson's late entrance. Perry exited to look for the actor, and found him in his dressing room listening to the radio as his son, Paul Jr. ran for a touchdown for Cornell University. For his ability to improvise Letton was rewarded with the position of assistant stage manager, adding ten dollars to his salary.

Ralph Clanton tells of an incident in which he was left without a handkerchief in the important scene where Cassio hands the property to Bianca. It was customary for Clanton to retrieve the handkerchief from Ferrer's dressing room after the first act, but on this occasion, Ferrer
took it to Clanton's dressing room where it remained on the make-up table. Clanton says that he reached into his dou­blet onstage, discovered that the property was not there, looked about as if to check for unwanted intruders, and ex­ited. In the wings he discovered some Kleenex kept handy for Paul Robeson. Clanton brought the tissues on stage, waved them around as if nothing were amiss, and tucked them into Bianca's cleavage. No one in the audience was aware of the mistake, Clanton says.255 Francis Letton disagrees, however, saying that nearly everyone in the theatre saw that the handkerchief was only Kleenex.256

None of these incidents were as significant, how­ever, as President Roosevelt's death, which occurred while the company was located in Chicago. Robeson felt close to the President, and cast members were asked not to speak of the event in the actor's presence.257 The cast was shaken by Roosevelt's passing,258 and several members went to memo­rial services held downtown where the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed "Death and Transfiguration." It was re­quested that there be no applause at the end of the piece, and Francis Letton remembers the moment quite well. "I still get shivers at the sound of that silence," the actor says.259

To add to the company's discomfort in Chicago, false reports were being issued that victory in Europe had been achieved. Actors and audience members experienced false hopes, then disappointment, as the untrue reports were of­fered through radio and newspapers. Finally, on May 7,
when the war actually did end in Europe, the troupe felt more at ease as they continued to perform at the Erlanger Theatre in Chicago.\textsuperscript{260}

Local critics who reviewed Othello were usually positive in their comments. Actors sometimes heeded the suggestions made by journalists in the larger cities, but, for the most part, the reviews did not influence the production.\textsuperscript{261} Clanton says that the consistent "rave" notices encouraged the actors to perform in "top form."\textsuperscript{262} Walter Monfried of The Milwaukee Journal said that Othello was a powerful production.\textsuperscript{263} Robert J. Casey of The Chicago Daily News said that Robeson's acting brought Shakespeare's work "to life."\textsuperscript{264} In The San Francisco Examiner Alexander Fried wrote that Othello, excellently staged, presented the audience with a group of fine actors.\textsuperscript{265} Hazel Bruce of The San Francisco Chronicle called the production a "stunning perfection."\textsuperscript{266} Some journalists, particularly Ashton Stevens\textsuperscript{267} and Claudia Cassidy\textsuperscript{268} in Chicago, wrote negative comments, but actors were unaffected by these reviews, Robinson Stone says, partially because Chicago was the last location before the company's return to New York.\textsuperscript{269}

When the actors returned to New York (May 20, 1945) they performed not at the more intimate Shubert, but in the large City Center where Miss Webster served as a board member. At Paul Robeson's request, Philip Huston was brought back as Lodovico\textsuperscript{270} and the actors who had "moved up" returned to their original roles.\textsuperscript{271} The facilities at the City Center presented several problems, particularly with
its acoustics. It was difficult to hear Jose Ferrer, one critic said. Ferrer says that he was simply too exhausted to perform as effectively as he would have liked those last few weeks of Othello, and the critics who noticed his weaknesses were accurate. As the tour came to a close it was announced that Othello had grossed over one million dollars while "on the road," a record for any traveling production of Shakespeare on the American stage.

In the course of the New York run, the actors were informed that they were to travel by battleship to the European countries of London, Paris and Rome to perform for the allied troops. Company members had received the necessary inoculations, and passports were in progress when the overseas tour was cancelled. Robinson Stone believes that the cancellation was due to Robeson's leftist political beliefs. Ralph Clanton writes that the incident was due to a fear that Southern soldiers would rebuke the black Othello/white Desdemona relationship. Francis Letton believes that, had President Roosevelt lived, the tour would not have been cancelled. There was also quite a bit of discussion over the possibility of making a film of the production but this never occurred. Since the company did not visit the European countries and since a film was never made, Othello closed in New York on June 10, 1945, after 307 performances on tour.
CONCLUSION

After *Othello* was presented for the last time, the three leading actors separated and never again performed together. The Ferrers' marriage dissolved in 1948 and Paul Robeson became more involved in political activities. Ties were not severed with Margaret Webster, however, since she directed Uta Hagen in Shaw's *Saint Joan* and Jose Ferrer in *Richard III*.

In the 1950's, members of the *Othello* company were gathered for questioning by the Senate Investigating Committee on Un-American Activities, chaired by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Paul Robeson had publicly let it be known that he believed the Soviet Union was a country free from the racial prejudices so prevalent in the United States. While he was performing in America, he said, "... had someone suggested that my home should be 'back home' in Jim Crow America I would have thought he was out of his mind." The Ferrers agreed with many of Robeson's opinions. While the Senate Investigating Committee was scouring the country in search of "infiltrating Communists," several people connected with *Othello* were required to prove their "mutual understanding and respect in the United States." All members of the company were absolved except Paul Robeson who was denied a passport from 1950-1958. Eventually, a Supreme Court ruling declared McCarthy's action unconstitutional (June 6, 1958, Kent-Briehl case) and Robeson left the United States that year. The actor did not return until 1963, when he decided...
to remain in America while recovering from a long illness. Upon his arrival in New York, he was asked by the current members of the House Committee on Un-American Activities why he did not remain in Russia. The actor replied, "Because my father was a slave, and I am going to stay here and have a part of it just like you." In 1956, Robeson submitted a report to the Senate Investigating Committee stating his plea for a fair hearing. The following statement summarizes the black actor's beliefs but it was never allowed to reach the committee.

My travels abroad to sing and act and speak cannot possibly harm the American people. In the past I have won friends for the real America among the millions before whom I have performed . . . not for the racists who disgrace our country's name— but friends for the American Negro, our workers, our farmers, our artists.

By continuing the struggle at home and abroad for peace and friendship with all the world's people, for an end to colonialism, for full citizenship for Negro Americans, for a world in which art and culture may abound, I intend to continue to win friends for the best in American life.

Margaret Webster remembers that she cooperated with the Investigating Committee. When they asked, "Were you the director of Othello?", Miss Webster said simply that she was and the committee released her. Webster wrote, "Senator McCarthy told me they had decided I was an OK American after all and thank you very much. . . . McCarthy held out his hand. To my eternal regret, I took it." Although the Othello experience was, in many ways, a painful period of time, Margaret Webster believed that it was worth while. In
her book, *Don't Put Your Daughter On the Stage*, published only shortly before her death in 1972, she said:

Whatever has happened since, either to Robeson, to the theatre in the United States or to the structure of American society does not, I think, vitiate or invalidate what we managed to achieve through our production. I shall always be proud of my share in it.286
There are several indications that Edmund Kean was the first to change the tradition of the black Othello, one of the most significant coming from The Life of Edmund Kean by F. W. Hawkins. When describing Kean's Othello, Hawkins says: "In his performance of Othello, Kean got rid of the difficulty arising from the supposed necessity of blackening the Moor's face, by which much of the play of the countenance on the stage was lost. He regarded it as a gross error to make Othello either a Negro or a black, and accordingly altered the conventional black to the light brown which distinguished the Moors by virtue of their descent from the Caucasian race. Although in the tragedy Othello is called an 'old black ram,' and described with a minuteness which leaves no doubt that Shakespeare intended him to be black, there is no reason to suppose that the Moors were darker than the generality of Spaniards, who indeed are half Moors, and compared with the Venetians he would even then be black. There is some variety in the colour of the Moors, but it never approaches so deep a hue as to conceal all change of colour. Betterton, Quin, Mossop, Barry, Garrick, and John Kemble all played the part with black faces, and it was reserved for Kean to innovate and Coleridge to justify the attempt to substitute a light brown for the traditional black. The alteration has been sanctioned by subsequent usage." Cited in: F. W. Hawkins, The Life of Edmund Kean, (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1969), pp. 221-222.


4 Graham, Paul Robeson: Citizen, p. 132.

5 Graham, Paul Robeson: Citizen, p. 126.

7 "Old Play in Manhattan," *Time Magazine*, 1 November 1943, p. 70.


12 Eslanda Robeson, *Paul Robeson, Negro*, pp. 154-156.


23 "Black Othello," *Literary Digest*, 5 July 1930, p. 16.

25 Robeson actually performed the role twelve years after his portrayal of Othello in London.


28 Barbara Heggie, "We," The New Yorker, 20 May 1944, p. 23.

29 Webster, Daughter, p. 37.


35 Webster, Daughter, p. 107.

36 Webster, Daughter, p. 107.

37 Webster, Daughter, p. 107.

38 Webster, Daughter, pp. 107-108.

39 Webster, Daughter, p. 108.

40 Webster, Daughter, p. 111.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
41. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


43. Webster, Daughter, p. 112.

44. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

45. Webster, Daughter, p. 111.

46. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

47. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


50. Webster, Daughter, p. 216.

51. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

52. Elinor Hughes, "Once Again 'Othello': The Recalcitrant Giant of Tragedy," The Boston Herald, 9 August 1942, clipping, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

53. Webster, Daughter, p. 112.

54. "Robeson as Othello," (no newspaper listed), clipping, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


56. Webster, Daughter, p. 112.
57. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

58. Webster, Daughter, p. 113.


62. Webster, Daughter, p. 113.

63. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


Webster, Daughter, p. 113.

Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


"A Negro Othello," (no newspaper listed), clipping, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


A proposal for the revival of Othello and other productions on September 11, 1942, Theatre Guild documents, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, hereafter referred to as "Theatre Guild Documents."

Letter from Robert Blackmore to Theresa Helburn, 1 October 1942, Theatre Guild Documents.

Unsigned Memo to Margaret Webster and John Haggott, 2 October 1942, Theatre Guild Documents.

Proposals regarding Othello, 7 October 1942, Theatre Guild Documents.

Miss Webster is referring to the closing of the 1942 season, including Without Love with Katherine Hepburn, Spring Again, and Mr. Sycamore.
85. Letter from Margaret Webster to John Haggott, 8 November 1942, Theatre Guild Documents.

86. Letter from Robert Blackmore to Lawrence Langner, 1 December 1942, Theatre Guild Documents.

87. Letter from Robert Blackmore to Theresa Helburn, 18 December 1942, Theatre Guild Documents.

88. Memo to John Haggott, regarding Paul Robeson's contract, no date, Theatre Guild Documents.

89. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

90. Letter from Lawrence Langner to Theresa Helburn, 27 May 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

91. Letter from Lawrence Langner to John Haggott, 16 September 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

92. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


94. Letter from Margaret Webster to Lawrence Langner, 25 January 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.


96. Telephone conversation between the author and Robinson Stone, 7 September 1976.


98. Letter from Lawrence Langner to Lee Shubert, 30 January 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.


100. Letter from Robert Blackmore to Lawrence Langner, 17 May 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.
101 Note from Theresa Helburn to Lawrence Langner, 27 May 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.


104 Contract for Uta Hagen for the portrayal of Desdemona, 16 August 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

105 Contract for Jose Ferrer for the portrayal of Iago, 16 August 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.


107 Contract for Stephan Schnabel to portray Iago, 19 August 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

108 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

109 Letter from Lawrence Langner to Stephan Schnabel, 28 August 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

110 Settlement which included the following parties: Margaret Webster, Paul Robeson, John Haggott, Robert Blackmore, The Theatre Guild, 28 August 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

111 Letter from Lawrence Langner to Virginia Gilmore, 30 August 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

112 Letter from Lawrence Langner to Stephan Schnabel, 30 August 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

113 "Party tickets" are tickets sold to a large group. Often these groups or organizations would fill the entire auditorium.

114 Terms agreed upon between the Theatre Guild and the Shubert Theatre, no date, Theatre Guild Documents.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
The "Harlem episode" was a series of riots occurring in New York City's Harlem. In one incident alone five were killed and hundreds wounded. Blacks were asking for civil rights in such areas as food prices. Mayor Fiorello La Guardia said that he believed the riots were due to external forces such as "hoodlums," but was still forced to order curfews and traffic restrictions. Source: *New York Times*: August 2-31, 1943.

Letter from John Haggott to Mayor F. H. LaGuardia, no date, Theatre Guild Documents.

Webster, *Daughter*, pp. 112-113.

Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


Letter from Lawrence Langner to John Haggott, 16 September 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

Letter from Lawrence Langner to Margaret Webster, 5 October 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

"Terry is Theresa Helburn;" Letter from Lawrence Langner to Margaret Webster, 25 September 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.


Financial report for Othello, week ended September 25, 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.


130. List of parties scheduled to see Othello in New York, 16 October 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

131. Webster, Daughter, p. 113.


133. Webster, Daughter, p. 113.


135. Webster, Daughter, p. 106.

136. Webster, Daughter, p. 114.


138. Webster, Daughter, p. 114.


140. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


143. Webster, Daughter, p. 114.

144. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

145. Webster, Daughter, p. 114.


154. Webster, Daughter, p. 114.


156. V. Rogov, "Othello In the American Theatre," Literaturatur, 2 September 1944, clipping, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


159. Webster, Daughter, p. 115.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
160 Marion Sawyer, personal letter to Margaret Webster, 28 September 1943, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

161 Webster, Daughter, p. 115.

162 James Y. Brame, Jr., Major, personal letter to Margaret Webster, 19 November 1943, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

163 Telegram from W. R. Hearst, Jr., to John Haggott, 8 December 1943, Theatre Guild Documents.

164 Souvenir program for the Othello tour, personal possession of the author.


166 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

167 Contract between Margaret Webster and the Theatre Guild, 26 January 1944, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

168 Letter of resignation from Margaret Webster to Theresa Helburn, 19 February 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.

169 Terms agreed upon between John Haggott and the Theatre Guild, 24 February 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.

170 Terms agreed upon between Margaret Webster and the Theatre Guild, 24 February 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.


173 Othello company binder for fall, 1944, 28 June 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.
Letter from Lawrence Langner and Theresa Helburn to the Othello company, 30 June 1944.


"Old Play in Manhattan," Time Magazine, 1 November 1943, p. 70.

Webster, Daughter, p. 117.


Webster, Daughter, p. 117.

Contract for Paul Robeson's portrayal of Othello for the 1944-1945 season, 28 February 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.

Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

Letter from Lawrence Langner to H. William Fitelson, 25 August 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.

Memorandum from John Haggott to Theresa Helburn, 23 August 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.

Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

Webster, Daughter, p. 117.

Webster, Daughter, p. 117.

Robinson Stone's "reservations" will be mentioned later on in this study.


Margaret Webster referred to Robeson as a "sweet, unassuming, dear, big bear of a man who could crush us all." (Webster, Daughter, pp. 112-113.); Jose Ferrer believes that this is a condescending description of a highly intelligent man who simply would not comply with Webster's demands. (Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.)
190. Webster, Daughter, pp. 117-118.

191. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


196. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


198. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


200. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


203. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


205. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


207. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


211. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


225 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


228 Helen Matheson, "Hagen, Robeson Give 'Othello' Credit to Joe," The Wisconsin State Journal, 5 December 1944, p. 4.


232 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


236 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


239 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

241 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


244 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


249 Virginia Mattis Durand, personal letter to the author, 1 June 1976.


251 Francis Letton, personal letter to the author, 26 May 1976.


255 Ralph Clanton, personal letter to the author, 20 July 1976.


Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.


Claudia Cassidy, "'Othello' Makes Erlanger Success with Robeson and Ferrer in Webster Production," The Chicago Tribune, 11 April 1945, p. 23.

Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.


Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.


Letter from John Haggott to Lawrence Langner, 28 March 1944; Letter from Lawrence Langner to H. William Fitelson, 4 April 1944; Letter from Alexander S. Ince to Lawrence Langner, 8 December 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.


Webster, Daughter, p. 117.


Webster, Daughter, p. 265.

Webster, Daughter, p. 118.
PART ONE

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS OF MARGARET WEBSTER'S PRODUCTION OF OTHELLO

FROM THE CRITICS, DIRECTOR AND ACTORS
INTRODUCTION

The following discussion will include an analysis of Margaret Webster's production of Othello from the journalists who reviewed the play in newspapers and periodicals, from Margaret Webster, and from members of the Othello company. First, the problem of Othello as performed by a black actor is examined, followed by an analysis of Paul Robeson as the Moor, Jose Ferrer as Iago, Uta Hagen as Desdemona, and Margaret Webster and Edith King as Emilia. Lastly, the designs executed by Robert Edmond Jones and Margaret Webster's direction of the production will be discussed.

OTHELLO PERFORMED BY A BLACK ACTOR

Paul Robeson was noteworthy as an actor, singer, and a social activist. His work in law school provided him with an astute ability to discover discrepancies in the judicial system, particularly those which affected the Negro. He often presented concerts on behalf of Negro liberation organizations and both he and his wife spoke out about the black man's position of servitude in America. Robeson, whose father had been a slave, consistently sought to assist the black man in his movement from slavery to total freedom within the American society. He believed that Othello revealed many of these problems. In 1930, he said:
I feel the play is so modern for the problem is the problem of my people. It is a tragedy of racial conflict. . . . I am playing Othello as a man whose tragedy lay in the fact that he was sooty black.  

In the same year, Peggy Ashcroft, who was Desdemona in the London production, attacked racial prejudices in defense of her portrayal as Othello's white wife:

Racial prejudices are foolish at the best of times, but I think it is positively absurd that they should ever come into consideration where acting is concerned.  

In June of 1930, Paul Robeson broadcast his opinions to Americans, stating that Shakespeare originally intended for Othello to be a black Moor, and that the Moors descended from Ethiopia in Africa. Robeson said further that the reason such an interpretation is not accepted in modern times is that slavery caused the world to forget the "ancient glory of the Ethiopians" which existed in Shakespeare's day.

Since the American production of Othello began when Margaret Webster accepted the challenge to direct Paul Robeson as the Moor, she faced the issue of race boldly, to make it clearly known to the public that a black actor as the Moor is right both socially and dramatically. She researched the writings of others who refuted and supported her theories. She discovered that the eighteenth century actor, Edmund Kean, first portrayed the role in "café au lait make-up" rather than blackface, offering a mulatto or oriental appearance. Critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a contemporary of Kean's, considered this approach "a most pleasant probability." Found among Miss Webster's materials
dealing with the production of *Othello* are fragments of her research on the portrayal of the Moor as a black man. The director's typed notes (which were not meant for publication), although incomplete, are reproduced here exactly as Margaret Webster wrote them, and are identified by numbers:

1. The Maurentania argument. The thick-lips argument. But Knight admits that in Shakespeare's time *Othello* probably played as Negro. In the ages of her splendour, Venice was thronged with foreigners from every climate of the earth; and nowhere else, perhaps, has the prejudice of colour been so feeble. . . . picked men whose hue might be forgotten in their accomplishments.

The "Maurentania argument" is derived from a reference in Act IV, Scene ii, line 257. Iago says, "Oh no: he *Othello* goes into Mauritania and taketh away with him the faire Desdemona. . . ." The Mauritanians lived off the coast of the Atlantic and were considered an elite race. If, as the line indicates, Othello is a member of that civilization, he would not have been black but lighter skinned.

This theory is held most strongly by such nineteenth century critics as James Orchard Halliwell and Henry Norman Hudson. The "Knight" Miss Webster mentions in her notes is Joseph Knight who, in the 1840's, also wrote that Othello came from a noble heritage, and that the reference to his "thick lips," (made by Roderigo) is simply uttered in folly. The critic believed that the English playwright was ignorant of the various civilizations which existed among the Moors. Shakespeare must have meant, Joseph Knight wrote, the Moor from the "proud children of the Ommiades and Abbasides," (highly
developed African societies which practiced Christianity) and not the "uncivilized African, the despised slave." In response to the Mauritania argument, Margaret Webster researched the historical period in which the play was set. Venice, she argued, was in the midst of a series of wars against the Turks. Portugal and Abyssinia, "the oldest Christian country in Africa," were her allies. Since Othello is obviously a Christian, and since he is fighting for the Venetians, it seems logical that he was an Abyssinian, perhaps related to the "royal 'Lion of Judah.'" She believed that those "purists" who support the Mauritania argument simply exercise "inspired guesswork," using only small bits of evidence which are in "closest alignment with their particular view."

(2) Many writers use 'Moor' for all black races. Sir Thomas Elyot calls Ethiopians Moors. Webster extracted this note from an essay written in 1845 by the Reverend Joseph Hunter. Hunter also maintains that Othello was a Mauritanian, and writes that the English authors in Shakespeare's day tended to label all civilizations with dark skin as "Moors."

(3) WILSON. North. I cannot imagine the ethnography of that age drawing the finer distinction we know between a Moor and a Blackmoor . . . the tradition of the stage seems to have made Othello jet black . . .

White and black is the utter antithesis every jot of soot you take from his complexion, you take an iota from the signified power of love.
... whether fate dare allow prosperity to a union containing so mighty an element of disruption is another question ... You see in Othello two natures combined, the moral Caucasian white and the animal tropical black ... the noblest moral nature and the hot blind rage of animal blood.

This note is derived from a dialogue written by John Wilson in an 1850 edition of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. "North" is Christopher North (Wilson's pseudonym) who is speaking with "Talboys" about the validity of portraying Othello as a black man. North does not believe that the Moor should be presented with light skin. His contention was that the black man/white woman relationship was unacceptable in polite English society, but perfectly acceptable on the stage.9

(4) LEWES. Othello is black; the very tragedy lies there; the whole force of the contrast, the whole pathos and extenuation of his doubts of Desdemona, depend on his blackness. Fechter makes him half-cast, whose mere appearance would excite no repulsion in any woman outside of America.

The "Lewes" mentioned in this note is George Henry Lewes who made the above statement in his book On Actors and the Art of Acting, published in 1875.10 "Fechter" is Charles Albert Fechter, a nineteenth-century actor who, like Kean, portrayed Othello as a man with light brown skin. Margaret Webster frequently used Lewes' argument in her public defense of a black actor as the Moor.

(5) MARY PRESTON, STUDIES IN SHAKES. MARYLAND, 1869 In studying the play of Othello I have always imagined the hero as a WHITE man. It is true the dramatist paints him black, but the shade does not suit the man. It is stage decoration, which MY TASTE discards, a fault of colour from an artistic point of view. I have, therefore, as I before stated in MY READINGS of the play, dispensed with
it. Shakespeare was too correct a delineator of human nature to have coloured Othello BLACK, if he had personally acquainted himself with the idiosyncrasies of the African race. We may regard, then, the daub of black upon Othello's visage as an EBBULLITION of fancy, a FREAK of imagination,-- the visionary conception of an ideal figure--one of the few erroneous strokes of the great masters' brush, the SINGLE blemish on a faultless work. Othello was a WHITE man!

The above passage is found in the book, Studies in Shakespeare, published in Philadelphia in 1869. Margaret Webster often quoted Mary Preston's statement to demonstrate the manner in which the tradition of a light Othello survived, particularly through this prejudiced theorist who did not use evidence to support her contentions. In her program notes, the director stated that she challenged the tradition begun by Kean and Coleridge by returning to the text as she believed it was originally conceived. Margaret Webster argued that the English world in the sixteenth century was aware of the black men, not as slaves, but as exotic men from another country. Shakespeare and his leading actor, Richard Burbage, were familiar with the blackface dancers in Elizabethan vaudeville. The name for the popular "morris dancer" was possibly derived from the word Morisco (Negro or Moor). Furthermore, she contends that the Moor consistently appears in Elizabethan literature and drama, and if the term "blackamoor" was used, it indicated that the gentleman came from Ethiopia, Egypt, the Gold Coast, or the North African Barbary Coast. All of the regions were dangerous for mariners to chart and represented the mystery of an unknown world.
Margaret Webster furthers her argument that Shakespeare intended Othello as a blackamoor by pointing out other works which demonstrate his knowledge of the African race. In *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron is specifically described with black, thick lips and wooly hair. The Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice* is described as having skin of the burnished sun. Portia recoils from his appearance, and, the Prince, thereby, excuses himself. Webster believed that Shakespeare was well aware of the Moor in his own times, and that he clearly drew upon the black races for his characters.

The director also believed that using a black actor as Othello was not only sociologically valid but dramatically imperative if the full implications of the tragic relationship of Othello and Desdemona were to be realized. Webster theorized that if the Moor looks as if he has "just got back from Palm Beach," it weakens the complexity of Othello's jealousy. Othello must contrast profoundly with those around him. He must be "dangerous," "primitive in simplicity and violence," and an alien. She theorized that the difference between the Moor and his fair wife must be obvious and must add to the complexity of their relationship. She comes from a "soft and old" civilization while he comes from "the jungle and the burning sands." Webster pointed out that Othello is not only segregated socially from the senators and his officers, but from the religion, morals and conventions of their society. In addition, Iago knows
of the Moor's paranoia regarding his alienation, and works on fears which stem from Othello's sense of insecurity. What Iago does not predict, however, is the danger which can be loosed when a primitive man is out of control. The director sought, therefore, to expose a powerful primitive man out of his natural habitat.

Margaret Webster attempted to sum up the theme of Othello in one simple statement, using the analogy of American North-South attitudes: "The General, Othello, marries the daughter of a Southern senator." Brabantio, Desdemona's father, is violently opposed to the mixed marriage. This opposition scene begins the play, and from that time forward, the Moor constantly faces the differences between his own heritage and that of those around him, particularly his wife. Therefore, the crux of motivation in Othello's action is derived from the fact that he is a "black man in an alien world." Paul Robeson agreed with his director's belief that the Moor's jealousy stems from his feeling of insecurity in a strange civilization.

Othello is not only a great man, Miss Webster concluded, a man of simplicity and strength, but also a black man. The Negroid portrayal she believed, offered insights into character which are not otherwise apparent. The strength of Desdemona is increased, for she has the tenacity to disobey her father and marry the Moor. Furthermore, Cassio's devotion seems more admirable, for Othello's race does not inhibit his loyalty to the Moor. Emilia is
distrustful of the black alien, and her scepticism prevents her from recognizing the tricks which her husband plays upon all of them. Iago, of course, uses those fears already embedded in Othello's thoughts and the scepticism of others to bring them all to a tragic end. Furthermore, in the Moor's religious world, if the wife commits adultery, dishonor comes to the husband and he must expiate his sin. Even after Othello discovers that Iago is the villain who has implanted lies, the Moor kills himself in reaction to a deep feeling of guilt.19

Once Margaret Webster became convinced that a black Othello is a plausible interpretation, she began preparations for the production. But she faced several obstacles. As previously mentioned, the director asked Maurice Evans (who had promoted her work in America and appeared in several of her successful Shakespearean productions) to portray Iago. He refused, saying that "the public would never go for it." Several other actors would not perform Iago, and actresses refused the role of Desdemona.20 The director explained to them that the London production with the black Othello/white Desdemona arrangement was most successful. The actors replied, however, that Americans would simply not accept it. To have a "white girl play love scenes with a BLACK man," they found appalling, noted Miss Webster. She pointed out further that Othello and Desdemona are alone together only in the last scene. Nevertheless, although "Everybody gave different reasons, . . . they were all plain
scared." The war had heightened the conflicts of race, Margaret Webster said, because black men were being integrated into the armed forces and into industries. "When Paul and I realized the pressures we were up against, we determined that we would do Othello ourselves, on a street corner if necessary. . . . "21

During the rehearsal periods, much of Miss Webster's time was consumed by her efforts to argue the plausibility of a black Othello. Later, writing in 1972 of the experience, it seemed ludicrous to her that she had been forced to devote so much time to defend her interpretation. In print, press interviews, and on radio, she stated her views again and again. Othello is a "black man from Africa" she said, "not a coffee-colored gentleman who has been spending the winter in Tunisia." The director returned to the text, reminding the public that such phrases as "begrimed and black," "sooty bosom," and "thick lips" reveal that Shakespeare created his Othello as an African. Diligent in her defense of Robeson's portrayal of the role, she later said, "I did [It] with conviction because I myself believed it."22

Once the production was prepared, the company faced a serious social problem. The Negro race was still only slowly emerging from a servitude class, and black performers encountered prejudiced treatment everywhere. Obstacles resulting directly from Robeson's participation in Othello became prevalent. Company members feared that their production might be the cause of unrest, perhaps violence, as they
moved from city to city. As previously mentioned, Francis Letton, the assistant stage manager, was asked to monitor audiences for signs of disorder. Actor John Gerstad remembers the audiences' "audible gasp" during the Cyprus scene when Othello kissed Desdemona. That "gasp" was present, he said, at every performance. Several members of the company remember the night when the group performed in Detroit, a city where tension had been heightened by racial riots just prior to their arrival. Although Robeson had difficulty obtaining accommodations in the hotels, audiences were receptive to the production. Nevertheless, it should be repeated that the show toured the large Northern cities only, avoiding the South entirely. Even such cities as Washington, D.C., St. Louis and Baltimore were excluded from the tour. Paul Robeson insisted that a performance of Othello in the less "enlightened" areas would only lead to difficulties. Just "try to produce this show in Memphis," he said.

As late as 1950, Margaret Webster experienced racial problems with audiences who would not accept black actors. Two black performers were to appear in her production of The Tempest at a small college in Louisiana. An administrator from the college refused to allow the presentation. The institution did not allow Negroes to perform in their auditorium, "much less" mixed groups. "We frankly feel," he said, "that the time to begin the practice in this area has not yet arrived." Although Miss Webster informed the public that
she did not believe that the entire South shared this attitude, the official's letter was printed in *The New York Times* as an example of southern prejudices.27

Even though the *Othello* company encountered obstacles, the critics and audiences who viewed the production usually approved of the interpretation. John Chapman in *The New York Daily News*, said that a Negro in the title role is "worlds apart from a theatrical trick." "There is," he added, "nothing cheap or titillating about it."28 Furthermore, the critics often reasoned that the credulity of the plot became much clearer with a black actor as Othello. Wolcott Gibbs, in *The New Yorker*, said that the Webster-Robeson production rightly sets the Moor apart as an alien to the Venetians. The questions of race raised by those around him are none that Othello has not asked himself.29 Rosamond Gilder, in *Theatre Arts Monthly* agreed with this when she said that the tragedy of Othello lies in the "... profound racial barrier between Othello and the super subtle Italians, Desdemona included." A Negro, Gilder observed, must play the part.30 "H. T. M." of *The Chicago Sun*, said that Robeson's portrayal was so right that from that time forward, a black man always should perform Othello.31 Alexander Fried wrote in *The San Francisco Examiner* that the production possessed the "primitive credulity" which Shakespeare desired.32 Samuel Sillen, in *New Masses*,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
said that Othello is acutely aware of his difference in color:

This is the element of insecurity which Iago most astutely plays upon. Iago insinuates that a white Venetian woman cannot for long be faithful to a black Moor.

In the present production this consideration is not 'scamped' but placed in its right perspective and given its right emphasis. It is a play primarily of a vast human injustice. Othello's injustice to Desdemona is only a part of the great injustice which has been done to him and in which he himself has collaborated. Iago is the evil instrument of that injustice, and pours on him constantly the epithets that we associate with the poisoned mind of racists.

"Khan," writing for Variety, also believed that Othello had been properly interpreted. He said, "A giant black man embraces clinging, virginal—and white—Desdemona!" This might revolt some audience members, the critic wrote, but "... for the first time in the history of Broadway theatre, as the Bard had written it—a black man actually played the Venetian warrior." Otis Guernsey, in The New York Herald Tribune, agreed, saying that for the first time, the role would be played as Shakespeare wrote it, and not with a white man in "phoney blackface."

Since the production raised anew the question of the validity of a black actor as Othello, several citizens wrote their comments in the editorial sections of the newspapers. In February, 1944, Kenneth W. Porter of Poughkeepsie, New York, wrote The New York Times that he was appalled that most of the commentaries on the issue were not supported with factual information. Since this letter helps to
clarify many of the theoretical issues brought forth by
Margaret Webster and the critics, it is printed in full:

In the discussions of the question, "Was Shakespeare's
Othello a Negro?" which have from time to time appeared
in the press since Oct. 19 of last year, I have not yet
chanced to notice the use of certain historical evidence
which might be brought forward in justification of the
racial appropriateness of Mr. Robeson's selection for
this role. The internal evidence of the play itself
seems all in favor of this choice, and against it the
critics bring only the indubitable fact that, narrow-
ly speaking and in modern usage, a "Moor" is a North
African Moslem of Arab and Berber stock and not, there-
fore, properly a Negro. To be sure, considering the
looseness with which the term "Negro" is used in the
United States and the amount of intermixture which has
taken place in North Africa from time immemorial and es-
pecially among the racially tolerant Moslems, it would
probably be difficult to distinguish, racially, a con-
siderable element of the Moorish population from a large
part of the Negro population, so-called, of the United
States. So competent an observer as Mr. Ernest
Hemingway is witness to this circumstance, speaking
through the lips of two of the leading characters in
"For Whom the Bell Tolls"; on page 117 Maria says "I
have never seen a Negro except in a circus. Unless the
Moors are Negroes." "Some are Negroes and some are
not," Pilar replies. "I can talk to you of the Moors!"
And—with apologies to Mr. Robeson for introducing
Franco's Moors as evidence in this connection—anyone
who has carefully observed the photographs of individual
Moorish soldiers will have noted that, while some are of
the bearded, aquiline, Arab type, others are as obvi-
ously at least mulattoes.

The question in controversy, however, is, after all,
not what twentieth-century ethnologists and novelists
mean when they use the word "Moor," but what was meant
by the word in Shakespeare's time. There is a very per-
tinent piece of English evidence on this point. When,
in 1566, John Hawkins was granted a coat of arms in rec-
ognition of his two successful slave-trading expedi-
tions, he was given "for a crest, a demi-Moor, proper in
chains." (Dictionary of National Biography.) Inasmuch
as this pious Elizabethan's slaving expeditions were
along the coast of Guinea, rather than that of Morocco,
this should abundantly demonstrate that, to the college
of heralds, at least, in the time of Queen Elizabeth,
"Moor" was considered an appropriate designation for a
Negro.37
Although critics, audiences and the director constantly brought up the issues of a black actor as Othello, Margaret Webster believed that it was important to remember that the tragedy also deals with universal themes which encompass humanistic values beyond racial acceptance. Nevertheless, she believed her production of Othello helped improve the conditions for the Negro both socially and dramatically.

PAUL ROBESON AS OTHELLO

It has been established that Margaret Webster believed strongly that her view of Othello as a black man was justified. In addition, the director believed that the audience should observe a man who is both a respected leader and foreign. Othello's dark skin offers to those around him a visual cue of his alienation. His alien character, however, must include a foreign mental attitude as well as a foreign appearance. Given these traits, Othello must be uncomfortable and suspicious among the white Venetians. Although Robeson's blackness was necessary to Webster's interpretation of the role, she was equally concerned that the actor project the idea of an alien mind. He must be a character who is foreign inside as well as out. As surely as a thin actor portraying Falstaff must "act fat," the white actor who attempts to play Othello must act black to the "very marrow of his bones." Furthermore, she insisted that the Moor be a strong man, one who has the power to command the
Venetian armies, and a man who has the self-control to retain his dignity when the Venetians suspect him as a foreigner while respecting him as a military leader.

Producer John Haggott agreed with Webster's interpretation. Othello is a "great military genius . . . urgently needed by the state for the defence of the Eastern Empire." In fact, when charges are brought against him for his marriage to Desdemona, they are quickly dropped. Furthermore, disregarding the advice of the senate, Othello brings his wife to Cyprus where the possibility of war against Venice is everpresent. Therefore, the Moor must be a man with sufficient power and strength to win the respect of the Venetian senate and military. 39

Webster's problem, of course, was to help Robeson discover ways to acquire the "alien feeling," the power, and the dignity appropriate for the character. She wanted to assist the actor to find his own meaningful characterization without forcing her theories upon him: "It is dangerous when a director stars himself." 40 When she discovered that Robeson had difficulty finding his own interpretation of the role, as a final resort, she thrust many ideas upon him. Paul Robeson, Miss Webster wrote, was not a "born player," and she felt compelled to tutor him more than she would have liked. 41

Margaret Webster realistically assessed Paul Robeson's deficiencies as an actor. The black performer understood Othello, she said, but lacked the skills of a
truly experienced actor. To his advantage, he had a great appreciation for Shakespearean verse, but used his operatic voice as a crutch, creating an artificial "sonorous" and "preachy" sound. He was at his best, Webster said, in the gentle passages when he wooed Desdemona, but his scenes of "frenzy, jealousy and rage" were delivered as though he were offering a sermon. He "never got out of the pulpit," she stated. Miss Webster finally resorted to what she termed rehearsal "tricks." She emphasized speed in Robeson's scenes, because when the pace slowed, he became "lost." Secondly, she used his heavy movements to advantage and, as Ralph Clanton says, directed his movements as if "he were a Maypole and everyone else the streamers." "We did all the moving," Clanton recalls, "and he stood there looking impressive and sounding marvelous."

Margaret Webster says that, early in the "talking stage" of rehearsal, Paul Robeson seized "upon an idea like lightening and it would blossom at once." Later, however, he became inconsistent and more difficult to direct. "It was like pushing a truck uphill," she said, and yet at times the truck would "go careening off at eighty miles an hour." Robeson had great difficulty when trying to relate to Othello's mind, particularly the Moor's thoughts of hatred and rage; therefore, as a further device to help him, the director asked him to recall the unpleasant experiences he had endured as a black man. Robeson certainly could remember.
these moments, but had difficulty in translating them into his characterization of Othello. 44

In spite of her directing devices, Webster believed that Robeson tended to be erratic in his performances. In New York the "framework" which she had offered him in rehearsal kept the actor fairly stable, but it remained a struggle, she said, to keep him within that structure. He reached a point where he could not "absorb any more acting skills." Generally, Robeson relied more upon "energy" than upon "emotional and nervous concentration." She observed that he sometimes offered the audience a rich, meaningful performance, while at other times his portrayal seemed empty and shallow. 45

It is difficult to speculate on how Paul Robeson responded to Margaret Webster's direction. In her book, Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage, she prints a letter addressed to her mother, Dame May Whitty, from the actor's wife, Eslanda, which reads:

Paul has never before enjoyed so much relaxation and confidence in work or in preparation for work... He understands Shakespeare for the first time in his life... Paul and I will always be grateful to Peggy for what she has done for him in Othello. 46

Jose Ferrer remembers, however, that Robeson responded negatively to Miss Webster's direction. The director's attempts to remind Robeson of his racial experiences were not successful, Ferrer says. "Good heavens, he was so aware of his race—twenty-four hours a day—that if anything it was a hindrance." Sometimes the black actor's acute

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
feelings of Negro oppression would "take over the artistic side for the social and racial and political side," Ferrer says. Furthermore, Margaret Webster seemed to "look down" upon Robeson as an artist. He "sensed this," because he was a very sensitive man. But he was also a realistic man and he knew that he furnished a powerful public draw for the production. Certainly he had his "moments of tremendous arrogance," Ferrer states, but the basic problem was a "conflict of temperaments." Robeson and Webster were simply not "comfortable partners." The black actor found his director's personality "irritating." Furthermore, Ferrer says that "Peggy just wanted to lead him around on a leash, and he would have none of it." 47

Although Margaret Webster lamented Robeson's weaknesses, she also praised his strengths. Physically, he possessed a superb figure for Othello. With his enormous stature (Robeson was 6'3"), one believed that "he could command the armies of Venice." 48 Too, he performed superbly in the early scenes of the play. He wooed Desdemona with "tenderness and loving humor," and the arrival scene at Cyprus was played in a "disarming and beautiful manner." Moreover, when Robeson came on stage to utter his first line, "'Tis better as it is," the director said that "he endowed the play with a stature and perspective which I have not seen before or since." 49 Although a large man, he could present moments which were "sweet and simple" projecting a vulnerability which motivated Iago's treachery. Furthermore,
Robeson possessed a beautiful voice. If it sometimes seemed self-consciously sonorous, it also endowed the character with rich, rhythmic majesty.\textsuperscript{50}

Many of Margaret Webster's observations of Paul Robeson's performance were seconded by the critics. The actor's "pulpit" voice, for example, received much attention. Some critics wrote that it enhanced the characterization while others said it detracted. Stark Young, for example, wrote that Robeson seemed vocally too aggressive in many of the scenes. The audience became concerned, the critic said, about the actor's "overworked diaphragm."\textsuperscript{51} John Chapman wrote that Robeson's lines were delivered as if they were part of a "song," distracting from the intent of the poetry.\textsuperscript{52} In the same vein, Margaret Marshall said that the performer had a tendency to "sing" his role rather than speak it.\textsuperscript{53} Frances Wayne of The Denver Post concurred, observing that the actor's voice was almost set to musical cadences.\textsuperscript{54} Paul Robeson had a magnificent vocal power, Harold Cohen stated in The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, but the actor "chanted" his lines, becoming enthralled with his own sounds. This is a natural hazard, the critic added, for a concert singer who attempts to act. Still, Cohen maintained that Robeson provided a "mighty roar" in the scenes of jealousy and rage, and a lyrical whisper in the tender scenes with Desdemona.\textsuperscript{55} Burton Rascoe stated plainly that the actor was more a "singer than a Moor." Robeson had a magnificent voice and a commanding presence, but lacked the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
naturalness in acting possessed by Jose Ferrer. The critic for Time magazine said that the black actor's musical sounds became monotonous.

In opposition to these views, Howard Barnes, in a second review of Othello, answered those critics who believed that Robeson's portrayal of the Moor was vocally distracting. He particularly attacked those reviewers who stated that the performer's "deliberate delivery" of lines was an unnecessary device to articulate to the audience. Instead, Barnes said, this method of delivery gave the production melodramatic force, and helped to clarify the meaning of a play which is not for "the library but for the theatre." Many other critics agreed with Barnes, describing Paul Robeson's vocal sounds as "unrivaled on our stage," "fabulous," versatile enough to stop a street brawl or utter soft phrases to Desdemona, a voice that can shake the theatre seats. Still others called his voice "magnificent," offering an "organ" effect, a voice with "deep sonority and musical beauty," and one which is a "perfect instrument for the conveyance" of Robeson's "poetic understanding of the part." Another said it produced "a most pleasing monotone" which made it seem as if Othello's lines had been Robeson's "daily diet from infancy." V. Rogov, the Russian writer who witnessed the production, said that the black performer had the "rich, velvet voice" required for Shakespearean acting. While watching Robeson's performance, Rogov was reminded of director Stanislavski's observation that "If you
have the occasion to play Shakespeare, remember that he requires voice—and voice, and again voice—he needs crescendoes and diminuendoes." Paul Robeson always said that he came by his vocal talent naturally since his father was a minister. "When people talk about my voice," he said, "I wish they could have heard my father preach." Several critics agreed with Margaret Webster that Paul Robeson played effectively in the tender, emotional scenes but less so in moments of jealousy and rage. Stark Young observed a "domestic and moving performance," but the actor's moments of "decision," "defeat," or "despair" faltered. Rosamond Gilder wrote that Robeson displayed a dignified power, but beneath this civilized exterior the audience should discover a "savage creature." This quality seemed "outside of Mr. Robeson's technical scope." He aroused admiration and pity, Gilder wrote, but no terror. Kappo Phelan, in Commonweal, said that Robeson failed to present the picture of a successful warrior, revealing no "splendors beyond his golden robe." He lacked decisiveness, the critic stated, and the audience experienced merely pity, without anger or "moral rage." Concurring with these critics, Mary McCarthy, in Sights and Spectacles, noted the effectiveness of Robeson's early emotional scenes but in the moments when the actor had to "crack open," he remained at a distance from such confrontations. A critic from Time magazine praised Robeson for his portrayal of Othello's "warmth, poetry, simplicity and trustingness," but observed too, that his more violent moments seemed so
Wayne selected the softer, emotional moments as the more outstanding portions of the play. When Robeson touched Desdemona, for example, it was as if he were touching glass, not flesh. This demonstrated "good taste" the critic said. Also Othello's farewell was impressive, Wayne wrote, for it "touches the heart and quickens the mind as to what follows when trust, love, ambition die."^67

Many critics did not notice a discrepancy between the scenes of soft emotion and those of rage and jealousy, but believed that Robeson handled the entire role successfully. Lewis Nichols of The New York Times wrote that Paul Robeson's performance was the finest characterization of Othello in theatrical history, and that each moment was skillfully portrayed. One could believe, the critic said, that this man could lead an army. In Othello's moments of wrath, the scenery seemed to tremble. When he sat quietly to contemplate what he had done, it was like a "sad song."^68

Robeson "passes easily" through the stages of jealousy, Nichols said. Len Shaw of The Detroit Free Press also thought that the actor adequately presented each of Othello's moods:

Robeson brings to his Othello a towering physique, marked histrionism and resonant voice that always is given effective employment. The heavy emotional demands are charged with tremendous power, without ever getting out of hand. This is particularly true where Iago uses vilely subtle suggestion to poison, with unfounded charges of infidelity with Cassio, the mind of Othello against his wife, Desdemona.
Here the swift change of feeling which makes him such a fearsome figure is accomplished with arresting facility, to provide a startling contrast with the earlier passages he phrases so melodiously.  

Audrey St.D. Johnson was enthralled with Robeson's portrayal of the Moor, writing that the performer was, in every aspect, what one should expect:

Othello is a man who, while he knows the world from a soldier's viewpoint, has traveled, fought, suffered, seen much, is at the same time guileless and defenseless in the face of intrigue; trusting and generous, judging others by his own simple heart. The seeds of his tragedy lie in his own deep-seated awareness of race barriers. An awareness that makes him all the easier victim for Iago's slow poison. By his measured speech, his splendid carriage, his movements of breathtaking tenderness, Robeson conveys all of this and much more. His approach to the madness of jealousy is gradual, but when he reaches the climax of his rage, he is destruction cataclysmic . . . In the final scene, his quiet dignity returns, but it is the stillness and the dignity of heartbreak, and he wrings the heart with pity . . .

Warm, human, underlaid with primal passion and overlaid with a soaring beauty, surely this performance has few peers in the long line of Othellos of the past.  

Most of the critics also agreed with Margaret Webster that Paul Robeson was physically suited to portray Othello. Upon meeting the actor for an interview, Otis Guernsey said he was " . . . confronted with Othello in person." Here stood, he wrote, "six feet of towering heavy-browed dignity ornamented with a war-like moustache and a close-clipped black beard." The wide Robeson smile was the only characteristic which checked the journalist's impulse to move toward self defense.  

Other critics were equally impressed with Robeson's physical suitability to portray Othello, describing his appearance as "noble," "primitive,"
"sculptured," "commanding," and "the most magnificently Moorish Moor in the pictorial history of the tragedy." Members of the Othello company had diverse views on Robeson's performance. Like the critics, most felt compelled to comment on the actor's voice. One actress says that "with his beautiful deep resonant voice and commanding presence Robeson was a very majestic Othello but I always felt he was more a singer than an actor." In the same respect, Bruce Brighton writes that the actor was "primarily a singer." "Nevertheless," Brighton says, "I think he and Jose made the best team we'll ever see." When Robinson Stone saw the production in New York, he was overwhelmed with Robeson's "gorgeous" voice which was awe-inspiring, though perhaps a little difficult to modulate in making smooth flows of nuances." Stone writes, "despite certain innate qualities which kept him from greatness Robeson possessed majesty, . . . intelligence and magnificent voice." Stockman Barner, who admired Mr. Robeson "enormously," believed that the performer had a certain "monotony of delivery." "There was not as much treble," the actor says, "as there was a concentration on bass." Several company members also remarked on Robeson's stage movements. Ralph Clanton believes that the black actor did not move well:

Mr. Robeson was a fine, intelligent man and brilliant scholar, a fine singer and athlete, but he moved badly, especially his hands; . . . . His costumes were designed to cover him from the neck down. His neck was short and thick so round necklines were used. They were all of the Moorish type with an under garment to the floor with
a wide sash, and an outer garment with bell sleeves and slits up the side to mid-thigh. These covered everything down to the feet, and any awkward movements. They had him always carry something in his hands: scroll, riding crop, sword, etc. 78

Two other members of the Othello troupe noticed that Robeson was physically successful as the Moor. William Browder says:

Paul Robeson had a tremendous voice and body which projected great physical power. These combined beautifully to make his Othello a character of tremendous strength and a kind of nobility which lacked the comprehension of Machiavellian villainy to which he became exposed. Here was a strong, open, and great soldier who became touchingly pitiable as we watched Iago's progress with him. 79

Robinson Stone remembers a specific gesture used by Robeson where dramatic points were emphasized with the actor's thumb, index and long finger extended and the ring and little fingers curled into his palm. This seemed like an inhibiting mannerism at first, Stone says, but "it also had power." 80

Without mentioning specific characteristics, two other company members remember Robeson's portrayal of the Moor as being an effective one. John Gerstad called the actor's performance "magnificent," 81 and Philip Huston writes that the major reason for the "remarkable triumph" of the production stemmed from "one thing . . . Paul Robeson!"

"His celebrity (he was probably the best known, most popular Negro in the world) and his towering performance gave this play its remarkable career," and he was "completely successful in this difficult part." 82
Although Paul Robeson received mixed comments on several aspects of his performance, he remains one of the most significant Othellos of all time. Critic Ashton Stevens predicted that the actor's performance would be forgotten, but those who viewed Robeson as an unforgettable Othello were more accurate. John Hutchens, in *Theatre Arts Monthly*, said the black actor's portrayal was quite likely the most acclaimed performance of the role within living memory. Another critic stated that "no present-day actor" could achieve the "breadth, scope and belief" accomplished by Paul Robeson. Like many of the critics, Louis Kronenberger compared Robeson with other actors who had attempted the role. Paul Robeson did not offer us a perfect performance, he said, "But—where shall we find an Othello to equal him?"

Since Robeson was respected not only as an actor but as a leader and philanthropist, much of the success of the production came from his popularity with audiences and actors alike. Francis Letton says:

Paul, of course, was magnificent. He was such a fine human being—words have been so over worked that many have lost their meaning—but when one applies the word "great" to Paul Robeson, it is meant in the sense of—"unusual importance; momentous; significant"—As a man he was all of these things. It was a privilege to know him and to work with him. His kindness to all—and his sense of humor! He had the most glorious laugh I've ever heard. Everywhere we went he was adored—every night long lines of people waited in line to speak to him—black and white—and he spoke with every one of them. He was truly a great man.
JOSE FERRER AS IAGO

Theorists are constantly pestering Shakespeare, Margaret Webster said, about the incredible actions of Iago. It is quite easy for audiences to accept the villain, however, if they realize that Shakespeare considered it enough that the man was evil. Iago is a man, Webster said, who loves "evil for evil's sake," or a man with "a superiority complex reveling in his power to destroy someone whom the world would set above him." Shakespeare wrote plainly that Iago hates the Moor. The villain's lines are venomous and chilling, and the audience does not concern itself with reasons, but accepts the "terrifying fact." He is a "full-blown" villain from the onset of the play. Audience members do not observe the deterioration of Iago's character, but must accept those "shadowy" motives which have happened before the play begins. Possibly Iago resents Cassio's promotion. Possibly he is suspicious about the relationship between Othello and Emilia, or between Emilia and Cassio. The most logical motivation, however, comes from the man's basic Machiavellian nature. He was born a villain.

Margaret Webster sought to present a bold, quick and careful Iago. For a time, the audience should believe, with Othello, that he was "honest." To achieve this fully, Iago can be no "sly Italianate villain, the insinuating, sneaking rogue from whom any sensible housewife would hide the silver spoons the minute he comes in." He must be unrecognizable as a destructive man. Othello does not recognize Iago's
villainy. Emilia, who comes closest to discovering her husband's evil intent, makes the discovery too late. Cassio and Iago's fellow officers believe the man to be honest. Roderigo, to whom Iago is direct, does not recognize the destructive mind. The audience, likewise, will trust him, and "as long as the actor does not interfere," Iago is a "dazzling" creation. He thinks quickly; he schemes; he is reckless. All of these characteristics are alien to Othello's trusting nature, and this contrast between the two provides the spine of the play.  

Webster believes Shakespeare revealed the contrast between the tragic hero and the villain in several ways, one of which was language. Iago's speeches are "light, acute, beautifully phrased," "cynical," and "unerringly directed." His language must be presented with "polish, precision, and extreme lucidity." He is exposed in his soliloquies and, as he talks to himself, the audience recognizes a flawed mind. Such a character fascinates. So much so, in fact, that he often overpowers the role of Othello. (Miss Webster claims this did not happen in her production.) He has a kind of remarkable stature of his own which often prevents hatred from the audience, for he is not an "impersonal machinery of malice," but a complex man who can skillfully mold the minds of others to his own thinking.  

Producer John Haggott differs from Margaret Webster in that he sees Iago's actions as they stem from motivations and not a basically evil nature. The villain is "a commoner
who has had long sergeant-like military service," Haggott said, and his motives lie in the fact that he detests Cassio's superior education and background. Furthermore, Iago hates Othello for recognizing Cassio's social rank. The villain believes himself superior to Othello who, although an aristocrat in Africa, comes from a land which Iago believes is barbarous and savage. His motive simply comes from the fact that the "high born" have "thwarted his ambition." In the final scene, Iago is not the Mephistophelean villain, but "as naturally human as any one of our Capone lads." In his revenge, however, he becomes "snarling, bitter, and despicable when caught, just as he was arrogant and scheming in working out his revenge" against the aristocrats.93

Jose Ferrer's assessment of the character of Iago is more in line with Haggott's interpretation than Margaret Webster's. He portrayed the villain not as a man who was born evil but as one who seeks revenge against those who have stopped him in his goals. Ferrer says that Iago has an opportunistic mind. A practical man, his thoughts are, "he got my job and I want my job back again," or "I want to be his lieutenant." In Ferrer's mind (although Margaret Webster apparently did not credit the villain with imagination) Iago is a "great improviser." "The minute he sees an opening," the actor says, "he darts in and strikes."94

Margaret Webster was never completely satisfied with Ferrer's portrayal of Iago. "Joe gave a brilliant, stimulating performance; but was never, oh never honest."95 She
wanted her villain to be "swift, mercurial, volatile, a good mixer who fools soldiers and Othello alike." To a degree Jose Ferrer reflected these characteristics, for he was "theatre-ape from his skull to his toenails." His movements around the Moor were "... like a matador flourishing the scarlet cloak, the sword blade wicked and gleaming but too quick for the victim's eye." But Webster believed Ferrer's inner characterization lacked subtlety.

Jose Ferrer remembers that Margaret Webster, Eva Le Gallienne, and "other friends" looked upon his earlier performances with reservations. They told him that Paul Robeson and Uta Hagen were playing on a "Shakespearean level, and that I was not." "I received many a barbed comment from ... Miss Webster," Ferrer says, about "Why didn't I bring my Spanish quality into play. ..." "I was fighting for my life in the long part," the actor continues, "performing in a language which was almost foreign to me; and I had no background in Shakespearean works." In retrospect, Ferrer believes that his early performances were not different, but he admits that it is difficult for him to judge. At the time, he was sufficiently concerned to ask Paul Robeson if he believed that the Iago portrayals were weak in the university productions. Robeson replied that they were not and said, "What you are now you were then, and anyone with half a brain could see what you were to become."
Nevertheless, the Iago role presented difficulties for Jose Ferrer. He had no background in Shakespearean acting and had not, in fact, been trained as an actor. He took the "usual" courses in high school which included the study of such plays as *Julius Caesar*, but in college (since he always believed that the English language would be accessible to him) he studied the written works in Spanish, Latin, German and French. Furthermore, his major concentration was in architecture, not theatre. Once he decided to be a performer, he had to use his stage experience as a training ground. In those days, Ferrer says, an actor had to learn "catch as catch can," listening to his elders and learning from the experiences gained in performance. Shakespeare was still a "foreign" language to him since his only real contact with the playwright's work came when the actor viewed a "couple" of productions of *Hamlet*, Maurice Evans' *Richard II* and *Henry IV*, part one. He believes, however, that the classical language of Shakespeare came to him quickly, since it is much like the romance languages in which he had an excellent background.98 Stage manager Elaine Scott (the former Mrs. Zachary Scott, now Mrs. John Steinbeck) told Theatre Guild administrator Lawrence Langner that "she would make him [Ferrer] go over each line and think what the meaning was and try to get that meaning over to the audience." "You have to do it line for line with him," she said, "or it's no good." Langner told Mrs. Scott that he believed Ferrer improved greatly from the university productions. Elaine
replied that this was simply because he was "rattled" in those first performances. Evidently, she believed that he simply needed time to become comfortable with the language. Margaret Webster also assured the Guild that Jose Ferrer merely needed more rehearsal for the production in New York. Ferrer says that he will always be grateful to Elaine Scott for her assistance, and to Miss Webster for providing "literal" translations of those lines which he could not understand in _Othello_.

Margaret Webster remembers that Jose Ferrer was easy to direct. In rehearsal when the actor constantly kept his hands in his pockets, Webster suggested that he begin to experiment with gestures. He did this and developed a smooth, choreographed method of gesturing for Iago which is still remembered. On another occasion, when the actor came to rehearsal in tennis shoes, Webster suggested that he should practice in boots, since Iago would wear them. Thereafter, Ferrer arrived in boots. Ferrer believes that he has always been easy to work with. It is much more comfortable, he says, "to work in harmony than in conflict." If a director makes a suggestion that "makes sense," he adopts it. The incident concerning the boots, however, he believed was rather silly. "When you rehearse," he says, "if you are a good actor, you wear in your mind the clothes which you will wear in the play." Nevertheless, in this case, he took the director's suggestion.
Jose Ferrer's portrayal of Iago was, by far, the most critically acclaimed of all the roles in the production. Although reviewers often were most impressed with the actor's interpretation of the lines, they were drawn to his physical portrayal of the villain. Ward Morehouse compared the physiques of Ferrer and Robeson (a comparison often made by the critics). Ferrer was a "mite of a figure," he said, when contrasted with the "towering Robeson." Lewis Nichols was impressed by Ferrer's movement. The actor had a light walk and touch, he stated, a "half dancing, half strutting Mephistopheles." In the same vein, the reviewer for Time magazine called him "supple, mettlesome," and "lightly Mephistophelean." Audrey St.D. Johnson commented that Ferrer's Iago was a "nimble Satan, goading and prodding his victim to madness." "His movements were lithe and panther-like," the critic said, "and exquisitely precise." In Variety, the reviewer wrote that Ferrer's "litheness of body and slyness are apt foils for the ponderousness of Robeson's Othello." The actor portraying the villain reaches "magnificence" at times, the journalist said.

Specifically, Ferrer's movement was highlighted by his gestures which punctuated and enlightened his speech. The audience became conscious of the activity of each finger. Frances Wayne said that the actor's hands were "wonderful," and added that his excellent movements overshadowed a rather weak speaking voice. Likewise, Louis
Kronenberger wrote that Ferrer's performance was not particularly a "deep" one, but that he was physically flexible. Ashton Stevens did not approve of the gestures, stating that the actor used "as many hands as Dennis King when he loosed himself on 'The Song of the Vagabonds.'" Stevens credited Ferrer, however, for having "power," and "plausibility."

Critics described Jose Ferrer's overall performance in a variety of ways. John Chapman states that his poise and quiet were a natural contrast to Robeson's "grand opera qualities." Ward Morehouse said that the actor was "striking, casual, colloquial, sly, crafty, agile, and slender," and Wilella Waldorf wrote that he seemed "too light," and "ineffectual," but a clever actor who "grows on you" and convinces you that what he does is "real." According to Burton Rascoe, Ferrer's Iago was "plainly criminal," "intelligent," "clever," "superb," "natural," and "utterly convincing." Other critics termed his portrayal as "powerful," "masculine," "passionate," and "business-like." Others said he was "a gadfly, stinging and goading his superior to madness," and "unduly sly." Another wrote, "for complete villainy, no cinematic chamber of horrors could produce so malignant and yet so logical a growth as the Iago limned by Jose Ferrer." Iago was "smoothly rotten," they said, and "markedly evil," taking "clear delight in malice." According to Jack Crockett, Jose Ferrer's portrayal of Iago was absolutely clear and direct. His characterization was a "glib and comical gadfly, rather than the
silly opportunist he has been hither-to." He is, the critic said, a great soldier, and it is an insult that Cassio, a Florentine banker's son, gets the position Iago covets. The villain works like a soldier and methodically sets out to satisfy his "Italian sense of justice." What begins as a desire to torment gets out of control. Ferrer accomplished these characteristics.117

Like Jack Crockett, many sought to explain Iago's unerring desire to destroy Othello. Wolcott Gibbs disclosed several possibilities. (The parenthetical phrases are his.)

1. Othello might have seduced Emilia (obscurely found in the lines).
2. Iago is jealous of Cassio (not to the murdering pitch).
3. Othello is black.
4. Iago is full of "purposeless malignance."

Gibbs believed that Jose Ferrer portrayed the role with "purposeless malignance" and this created a "very interesting" performance. Iago must be: 1) a "co-plotter" with Roderigo, 2) a "hearty man of the world" with Cassio, 3) "obsequious friend" to Othello. Ferrer flexibly portrayed these personalities well. Gibbs was not sure he understood the actor's motivation, but believed his performance of Iago to be credible.118

Several critics agreed with Gibbs' and Webster's idea of purposeless malignance, writing that Iago's evil nature creates a clear motivation for his actions in the play. Lewis Nichols said that Iago is evil and this is enough to know. Ferrer is consistent in portraying the wicked man.119 Mary McCarthy furthers this idea by stating that Ferrer's
soliloquies created a "dream of evil" which revealed, simply, "an evil man on earth who destroys." Harold Cohen wrote that we accept "good, evil and violence for their own sakes." Ferrer's "sardonic humor," Cohen wrote, "keeps us from questioning his motives." The "evil for evil's sake" is a plausible interpretation. Although Harold Hunt believed that Ferrer was not particularly a great actor, he called the portrayal "delightfully despicable." Several critics, including Howard Barnes and Lewis Nichols, agreed that Jose Ferrer's Iago was the first they understood and believed capable of injury to others. Evidently, Margaret Webster's theory that Iago is basically an evil man was accepted by many of the critics as defensible.

Some critics, however, found aspects of Ferrer's characterization unsatisfactory. Stark Young, for example, suggested that the role should be more "distinguished," more "intelligent," and more "Renaissance Italian." Rosamond Gilder wrote that Ferrer lacked the "fire and malignancy" that Iago should have. The reviewer for Time magazine stated that the actor was "psychologically unexciting." Ashton Stevens disliked Ferrer's gestures. Harold Hunt stated that it was just as well Jose Ferrer was not a good actor, otherwise he might overshadow Robeson. One audience member wrote to The New York Times, saying that Ferrer faced an impossible task. Iago has to confuse the other characters in the Machiavellian style with "arbitrary malignance." This was not accomplished by the actor, the writer said.
When Jose Ferrer was asked to comment upon the assessments made of his characterization, he said, "I can never quite get used to the things the critics say about artists." Stark Young, for example, said that he should have portrayed Iago with more of a "Renaissance Italian" flavor. The actor believes, however, that his background, which included an upbringing in Puerto Rico, should have provided him with as much (if not more) exposure to Renaissance ideas than the other actors. Furthermore, Ferrer states, the critic certainly had no grounding in Renaissance conditions. Jose Ferrer also asks that we "take with a grain of salt" the critics' comments about his light, quick movements around Othello. These comments were "figments of the critics' imaginations." Rather than focus upon such external details, Ferrer believes that the reviewers should have concentrated more on how the actor carried out the intent of the play. It is obvious, he says, that Robeson was 6'3", and that he was 5'11". Robeson was also heavy while Ferrer was slender; older, while Ferrer was younger. But all these things are implicit in the play. Iago's language is "slippery, eely, and rapid," while Othello's is "poetic, majestic, foreign, exotic, and has an Eastern richness of imagery." Iago, Ferrer says, is practical, agile, and opportunistic in his thinking, while Othello is trusting. Mr. Ferrer's main goal was to reflect these characteristics. It is inadequate, he states, when a critic only considers the
physiques and actions of an actor, without full consideration to the characterization which reveals the intent of the play.\textsuperscript{131}

Fellow cast members speak of Jose Ferrer's Iago in much the same manner as the critics. Robinson Stone wrote: "... I had found Ferrer delightfully diabolical, amusing, and vindictive (all of them right for the role, if you choose to play it that way) but perhaps a little unsubtle in the light of how the rest of the characters should see him."\textsuperscript{132} One actress stated: "Ferrer was magnetic, vital and had tremendous energy--an excellent actor but I disagreed with his interpretation." "He made Iago a villain from the beginning which in turn made Othello look like a bit of a fool to trust this man."\textsuperscript{133} Philip Huston writes: "Ferrer played Iago roughly--a soldier from the wrong side of the tracks; great vitality."\textsuperscript{134} Bruce Brighton says that Jose Ferrer's portrayal was like "a terrier snapping at the heels of a huge black mastiff."\textsuperscript{135} John Gerstad writes that "Ferrer was brilliant--I watched his performance many times," and "he never stopped working."\textsuperscript{136} William Browder remembers the Iago performance with great respect:

Jose Ferrer was, to me, an incredibly brilliant Iago! I never tired of watching him. His was a mechanically perfected performance and predictable almost to the position of the little finger (often an important point of focus in his characterization!) And yet it worked most excellently, and each soliloquy never failed to bring a roar of delighted applause from the audience. Generally I felt the character Othello saw was never the character the audience knew--there was an easy ponderousness in most of his dealings with the Moor while, on his own, he was almost panther-like in his quickness and energy.\textsuperscript{137}
Stockman Barner believes that Jose Ferrer never again equaled his Iago, a performance of "consummate evil." Barner remembers that Iago's hands were "nimble and fluid," much like those of a ballet dancer. He also recalls that Ferrer's voice was "wonderfully flexible." In the same respect, Francis Letton says that the actor's Iago was undoubtedly his greatest performance. The characterization was "full," "rich," and "consistent." Ferrer made evil attractive, Letton says, and the actor drew tremendous humor from the part and the audiences loved him.

Robinson Stone and Stockman Barner remember that Jose Ferrer tended to "clown" with his fellow actors while performing in the tour productions. Both company members remember Ferrer's "side comments" which were delivered on stage and had nothing to do with the role of Iago. Ralph Clanton admired Ferrer's "ease on the stage," but believed that the actor became "easily bored," so he constantly experimented with his characterization.

Ferrer admits that the long run presented him with difficulties. He has said that after six months into the tour, he sought ways to freshen his performance; hence the "experimentation." He was young, inexperienced in the profession, and did not yet fully appreciate the self-discipline which the art requires. He says that now, in his more mature years as an actor, Shakespeare has become a "second language" to him, and he has learned, too, that the actor faced with constant performances must discipline himself.
off stage as well as on, if he is to realize his full potential. Ferrer readily admits that he began to rely on "mechanics" after the six months period. "I was bored with myself," he says, and "I just ran out of creativity and invention and began to repeat." He adds, "I knew it, and I despised it," but did not, at that time, have the skills to correct the problem.  

Nevertheless, for the most part, Jose Ferrer's Iago was acclaimed as an impressive, believable, and consistent characterization. Certainly, audiences across the country were completely taken with his portrayal. Margaret Webster recalls two elderly ladies in Boston who were watching the actions of Ferrer's villain; one proclaimed, "Why he's nothing but an archfiend!"

UTA HAGEN AS DESDEMONA

Desdemona must have the power to act decisively, Margaret Webster wrote. She possesses the strength to marry a black man from a foreign country despite the objections of her father and the Venetian senate. Although she does not understand her alien husband, she remains supportive of him when others are not. She lies to Othello about her handkerchief, but it is not the lie of a "spineless little ninny, scared out of her wits," Miss Webster said. Desdemona's motivations, if not wise, are admirable. She loves her black husband and tells the lie because of her love. Certainly, Desdemona is not a woman who cringes or whimpers.
Producer John Haggott saw Desdemona as an innocent caught in a tragic web of circumstances:

Desdemona's only fault lies in the fact that she came of a class which Iago might not enter; she is always in the phrase of Wordsworth: "The gentle Lady married to the Moor." True, she champions Cassio and asks Othello to reinstate him after his groggy brawl, but why should she do otherwise? He was her friend and had often come calling with Othello during courtship days. She must have thought him an old friend much abused, and unwittingly fed Iago's plan by trying to sway her husband's decision. The tragedy of Desdemona, who cannot believe that wives could be unfaithful, is that she was honest but unworldly.148

Margaret Webster believed that Uta Hagen endowed the role with the requisite strength and courage. Hagen's classical training fortified her to meet the demands of Desdemona. "No dewy-eyed lamb-to-the-slaughter for Uta,"149 Webster wrote. But after the initial performances, Webster thought Uta Hagen's portrayal lost some of its "spontaneous simplicity."150

Although Hagen and her director worked to avoid a cowering Desdemona, many critics did not admire the role as Shakespeare wrote it. Louis Kronenberger wrote that Miss Hagen was "properly" sweet, submissive and troubled, but that the role was thankless.151 Robert Garland said he was unaffected one way or the other by Desdemona.152 Wolcott Gibbs described Hagen's performance as ineffectual, but also noted that Desdemona is one of Shakespeare's "dimmest heroines."153 Robinson Stone, who saw the production on Broadway before he joined the company on tour, was unimpressed with Uta Hagen's portrayal. "Her arched-throated swan performance," he writes, "struck me as affected, mannered, . . .
unsympathetic, and breathy." Later, when he became a member of the cast, Stone began to realize how much the actress enriched this "basically dreary female." Stone adds that one had to see Miss Hagen perform Desdemona more than once to appreciate the depth she gave to a relatively shallow role. She provided the Moor's wife with a "stature and glamor which didn't transmit itself at first glance," he writes, "but which became quite heart-rending when [one] saw the core of the character she was trying to embellish.154

Company members generally agree that Uta Hagen did not entirely succeed as Desdemona. Like others, William Browder believes that the role is difficult to portray:

... I feel the role of Desdemona is essentially un-playable. Here is a strong, self-willed young lady who turns against her father, friends and background and defies them to prevent her from marrying the Moor—a kind of early female liberationist in limitations! And yet, after her marriage she becomes completely impotent and even inadequate in dealing with her husband's jealousy and almost a weak, defenseless female in the end. These two qualities are, to me, incompatible. [Still,] Miss Hagen was a winsome and attractive Desdemona.155 Philip Huston says that Uta Hagen was not an "inspired" Desdemona.156 Stockman Barner writes: "Uta's performance was ... a stylized one, with patterned voice inflections coming at almost predictable intervals."157 Although Francis Letton believes that Miss Hagen is "the finest actress in America today," when she portrayed Desdemona she was "still searching," and "by her own words, had been 'pushed to improve her technique.'" Consequently, he says, Uta Hagen did not have the "fire and illumination" which she expressed in subsequent roles.158 Although Jose Ferrer
states that he cannot be objective about Miss Hagen's performance, he believes that Margaret Webster was inaccurate in her assessment of Uta's Desdemona. (Evidently he is referring to Webster's statement that Hagen's characterization deteriorated as the run progressed.) "Uta was and is a very, very fine actress," Ferrer says, and to be on stage with her was a "fulfilling experience." 159

While Uta Hagen and Margaret Webster attempted to create a Desdemona of strength, conviction, and integrity, on the whole critics observed the portrayal as being merely delicate, submissive and emotionally touching to the audience. Stark Young wrote that Miss Hagen, "without in herself seeming blind or innocuous, . . . gives that pearl-like quality that Shakespeare intended." 160 John Chapman said that Hagen's Desdemona was "altogether appealing," using a slight, husky voice which was almost a whisper when compared to Paul Robeson's enormous sounds. She portrayed the role, the critic added, in a feminine and submissive manner, more "resigned to her violent end than terrified of it." 161 Len Shaw saw Miss Hagen's portrayal of Othello's wife as a thing of beauty and emotion. She provided a "poignantly appealing Desdemona," he writes, "a portrait shot through with qualities that grip the onlooker." "One could," he added, "ask for nothing better." 162 Although Audrey St.D. Johnson admitted that Uta Hagen provided strength to her role, most impressive was the delicacy of her portrayal: she enacted a "fragile, pitiable figure, succeeding at the same time in a suggestion of the unexpected strength of character the
fragile so often possess." Miss Hagen had a "fluid" movement, the critic said, which one could never tire of watching. Her portrayal of courage, fear, and all-transcending love, "was exactly as Shakespeare would have it." 163 Ward Morehouse said she was "lovely," "tormented," and that she read her verse beautifully. 164 In the same respect, Wilella Waldorf termed her Desdemona as "lovely," "simple," "unaffected," and "beautifully spoken." 165 Burton Rascoe said that she was "beautiful," "sweet," and "trusting" and that this produced a "glorious and heart-gripping performance." 166 Howard Barnes also used the word "beautiful" to describe her performance. 167 Cast member John Gerstad said, "Uta was lovely--like a bird." 168 Lewis Nichols described her as "pretty" and "soft spoken." 169 Frances Wayne wrote that she was a "delicately lovely blonde," who moved with "grace and beauty." 170 For the most part, critics apparently considered Uta Hagen's portrayal as a beautifully executed example of the delicate, submissive female. It lacked, perhaps, the firm strength and resolution of a woman who has a strong will of her own, precisely the qualities that Webster and Hagen had hoped to capture.

Some critics believed that her performance gathered strength as the play progressed. "H. T. M." noticed what he called a "forced breath" quality in her voice in the beginning scenes, but later her characterization "grows upon the heart and mind with its grace and wit and pitiful finale." 171 In the same vein, Alexander Fried said that
although she was too forced in her opening speeches, she moved quickly into a "girlish charm" which ultimately becomes "totally touching."\textsuperscript{172}

On the whole, reviewers tended to slight Uta Hagen's Desdemona, dwelling primarily upon the performances of Jose Ferrer and Paul Robeson. It is difficult to know whether it was Miss Hagen's characterization, or the role itself which left some critics unimpressed. Nevertheless, many reviewers thought that her performance beautifully complemented the intended structure of \textit{Othello}, even if it did not stand out among the more vigorous characterizations.

MARGARET WEBSTER AND EDITH KING AS EMILIA

Emilia, Iago's wife and Desdemona's handmaiden, was portrayed by Margaret Webster in the university and New York productions. To facilitate this, some of the character's speeches were trimmed so that Miss Webster would be free for directing. The strain of performing the dual roles of director and actress led her to relinquish Emilia to Edith King in March of 1944.

Margaret Webster believed that Emilia should be portrayed as a warm, witty woman. The only character who is suspicious of Iago's actions, she is also deeply in love with him, and this blinds her to his villainy.\textsuperscript{173} John Haggott writes that Shakespeare uses Emilia "both as a character, and as a device to wind up the plot in the final scene." He agrees with Webster that Iago's wife is witty.
He also agrees that it is Emilia's love for her husband that causes her to keep the handkerchief a secret. Furthermore, she is a "commoner who fears her lord," Othello. According to Haggott, "Were it not for the terror which she feels at watching the almost epileptic fits that jealousy rouses in Othello, she might have told him the truth of the little napkin and saved the lives of both master and mistress." 174

Critics were generally favorable in their appraisal of Webster's portrayal of Emilia. Margaret Marshall wrote the performance was "interesting and right." Furthermore, the actress made it logical that Emilia and Iago might be attracted to one another, thereby providing a motive for her blindness to his faults. 175 Stark Young stated that Webster was intelligent and competent in the role, except for the final scene which he believed should have been more bawdy as she puts Desdemona to bed, and more frantic as the discoveries of her husband's villainy are revealed to her. 176 John Chapman disagreed, saying that Miss Webster performed from beginning to end with effective dramatic intensity. 177 Ward Morehouse, in support, states that Emilia, in a "fiery" performance, takes the stage as the production comes to a close. 178 Wolcott Gibbs appreciated Webster's portrayal because she made Emilia's dilemma between loyalty to her husband and to Desdemona quite clear; the role was played with "brisk intelligence." 179

Other critics, brief in their attention to Emilia, were nonetheless favorable. Burton Rascoe said Webster was
"wonderful," and Howard Barnes noted it as a "knowing performance." Lewis Nichols credited Webster's excellent use of "good humor and farce."

Although witnesses were, for the most part, complimentary, some were less favorable. Louis Kronenberger wrote that Emilia was "lively but not lusty" as she should be. Along the same line, Stark Young said: "The crudest actress from a Sicilian company traveling in a cart" would know how to perform the "bawdy," "noisy," and "frantic" Emilia. Wilella Waldorf, called it the least effective characterization portrayed in the production. These critics seemed to desire a wench-like quality in Emilia which Miss Webster avoided.

Members of the company tended to agree with the less favorable critics. Robinson Stone found Webster's performance on Broadway a disillusionment. "Peggy would have given up all her directing awards, you know, if she could have been received as a great actress, she just didn't have it in that department." It is said, Stone notes, that her mother, Dame May Whitty, said as much within "embarrassed earshot" of the New York cast the evening she saw Othello. Stockman Barner tells us that Whitty's actual words were, "Daughter, you're a fine director but you'll never make an actress!" Philip Huston adds: "Webster is essentially a director, not at home as an actress." Edith King, he said, was "the more convincing Emilia." John Gerstad writes that "all things considered," when Margaret Webster
watched the performance from the audience as a director, and
Edith King was Emilia, "it was a better arrangement."\[^{189}\]
Another company member compared Webster's performance with
that of Miss King's, saying that the latter was more "earthy,
sexy, and gusty," \[^{sic}\] as Emilia should be.\[^{190}\] In the same
respect, Stockman Barner says that King's Emilia was more
"earthy than Peggy's ... and her humor was drawn with a
broader stroke." Barner continued, "Peggy was too cultivat­
ed and played the role as a companion to Desdemona \[^{while}\]
Edith played it like somebody's cook, which it should have
been."\[^{191}\] Jose Ferrer says, "If Margaret Webster was harsh
on her own performance of Emilia, she should have been."
But the actor believes that her double duties of director
and actress did not make a difference in her performance be­
because, "She was as good as she would have been under any
circumstances." Ferrer "saw her perform many different
times in many different roles, and she was never quite as
good as she thought she was." Every aspect of her perform­
ance, Jose Ferrer states, "smacked of a cliché; it had been
seen before and there was nothing truly emotional or crea­
tive about her."\[^{192}\]

Margaret Webster soon realized that the task of di­
recting and acting had become too burdensome. On March 3,
1944, it was announced in The New York Times that Edith King
would take over the role of Emilia.\[^{193}\] Although Webster re­
mained flexible while rehearsing with her understudy, she
viewed the transition with disdain. This was partially
because she did not believe that Edith King had the necessary qualifications to enact Emilia, and because Webster thought that, in some degree, she was losing control over the production. In her letter resigning the role, addressed to Theresa Helburn, administrator for the Theatre Guild, Margaret Webster wrote:

My dear Terry,

This is to place in your hands my resignation of the part of EMILIA in OTHÉLLO, the two week's notice to commence from the date on which the new advertising demanded by Mr. Robeson first appears, as per the stipulations of my memorandum to him and yourselves.

The matter of my replacement is, however, one on which I should be grateful for the benefit of your advice, although I know you are not contractually concerned in it. It is a little hard for me to make an exact judgement in this particular case, and Mr. Robeson has conclusively demonstrated that the real good of the show, in this, as in greater matters, is of supreme indifference to him.

It is my opinion that to let Miss King replace me, and Miss Kearse play Bianca would be to leave the show with a commonplace Emilia and a greatly inferior Bianca. I should have liked to invite someone of the calibre of Barbara O'Neill to replace me, though this is made more difficult by the fact that she would have to accept billing supporting Miss Hagen. I do not think, however, that Miss King would agree to remain in the cast and be superseded by anyone of less distinction. So long as the show is supposedly my production I do not wish it to suffer because of what I take to be Mr. Robeson's extreme arbitrary actions in our recent controversy, and I would be glad if you would give this matter some thought and let me know your conclusions.

As regards my contract and obligations for next season and on the tour, I am inviting my lawyer's opinion as to the terms of the various existant contracts and will be in touch with you again shortly.

Sincerely and regretfully,

Peggy

P.S. I have given a copy of this letter to Paul.
Despite Margaret Webster's reservations about Edith King's Emilia, critics "on the road" offered favorable comments. Alexander Fried wrote that Emilia's babbling silliness demonstrated why she is so very unaware of Iago's treachery. Hazel Bruce praised Miss King, saying that she "raises a stylized role to a rounded and whole concept." Ashton Stevens said that she is "more Emilia than I have ever known before." He furthers this by complimenting her "jaunty way with comedy and inflection." Harold Cohen, after reminding his readers that Miss King was a "stock company favorite," (she had successfully performed in Pittsburgh before) noted she "turns in a superb performance." Jack Crocket called her "excellent." Harold Hunt described her as a "comfortable Emilia," who is "not above causing a laugh now and then." Audrey St.D. Johnson found the actress impressive; she presented Emilia as a vibrant, lively personality, playing with a "robust tempo" which provided an excellent contrast to Desdemona's smooth characterization. In general, critics were overwhelmingly favorable in their comments on Edith King's Emilia.

DESIGNS FOR OTHELLO BY ROBERT EDMOND JONES

"There seems to be a wide divergence of opinion today as to what the theatre really is," Robert Edmond Jones has said. Some describe it as a "brothel," or as a "laboratory," a "workshop," an "art," a "plaything," or a
"corporation." Whatever the terms, Jones believed that, in 1944, the theatre suffered from incompetence. It should be a "school," he wrote, where only craftsmen who know that the learning process never ends, practice to free themselves from their own limitations. In this freedom, these skilled workers may begin to "dream," and this is the birth of real creativity in the theatre.204

Robert Edmond Jones, prior to his association with Margaret Webster, designed and directed Othello in 1934 with Walter Huston in the title role, Kenneth MacKenna as Iago, Nan Sunderland as Desdemona, and Helen Freeman as Emilia. The performance was staged at the Central City Opera House in Central City, Colorado. The success of this production led to a New York booking of Jones' production of Othello, presented in 1937 at the New Amsterdam Theatre for producer Max Gordon. (The costumes designed for this production were the ones rented for the initial university performances of Margaret Webster's Othello.) In New York, Brian Aherne portrayed Iago, and Natalie Hall played Emilia.

For research on his production of Othello, the designer traveled to Venice and remained for several months to study the streets, the architecture, and the people. Jones directed the tragedy as a modification of the Edwin Booth portrayal in the nineteenth century, in which "dignity" was the essence of the play. Costumes and scenery must reinforce this dignity, being as "beautiful as possible because the play demands that they be so."205 Evidently his designs

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
were successful in this 1937 presentation for they received vigorous praise from the critics, even though the production otherwise was not well received in New York.

In August of 1942, while Jones was preparing the new designs for Margaret Webster's New York revival of *Othello*, his wife, Margaret Carrington Jones, died following a lengthy illness. Jones' grief may have limited his creativity, for several critics believed his work for the 1943 production was less effective than his initial designs in 1937. In fact, some considered the more recent designs the poorest of his career.

**SCENERY**

Jones' scenery consisted of a basic unit which changed slightly from one locale to another. He sought to satisfy the director's desire to maintain fluency, moving unit pieces quickly and efficiently as the scenes changed. Margaret Webster, satisfied with his scenery, wrote that Jones "is the greatest designer in the theatre today." His basic, simple groundplan and his "extraordinary sense of color and vivid dramatic suggestion" suited *Othello*, she said. Although this Shakespearean tragedy does not shift locale as markedly as the author's other plays, fluency, speed, and versatility of geographical location must be maintained. Although Webster apparently had some reservations about Jones' designs, she particularly praised their flexibility.206

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Several observers believed that the scenic designs enhanced Margaret Webster's direction, but views of their quality varied. "Robert Edmond Jones has given the play a setting that fits Miss Webster's conception most faithfully," critic Herbert Whittaker wrote, "and manages to find space for added beauty and excitement." On the other hand, Robinson Stone writes that Jones "gave Peggy space and a feeling of atmospheric background on which to work," but his design was not one of his "most memorable achievements." The settings were effectively sparse, suggestive and moody, however, and (for touring purposes) very workable. Stark Young noted that one sculptured set became a palace, the seaport, a street, castle or bedroom. One critic described the scenery as "simple and easily worked." Others termed it "masterful," "beautiful," "brilliant," "simple and striking," "atmospheric and practical," and "splendidly contrasting to fit the play's moods." Actor Stockman Barner wrote that Jones' set was a "superb example of economy both in design and practicality for touring." Francis Letton remembers the scenery as "more suggestive than realistic—with a bit of the German impressionistic influence." Margaret Webster wrote that the setting offered Othello "harmony and beauty with simple lines." Critic Margaret Marshall said the scenery was desirably "unobtrusive," a quality which Jones must have appreciated for he wrote that:
The designer creates an environment in which all noble emotions are possible. Then he retires. The actor enters. If the designer's work has been good, it disappears from our consciousness at that moment.216

The major controversy among critics revolved around Jones' choice to thrust the actors close to the audience, and to surround these performers with walls in close proximity to the central working space. In semi-circular fashion, the arched walls curved around a low platform which was located up-stage center. Although this was a flexible arrangement, some critics believed it to be restrictive. Stark Young thought the scenery presented serious limitations, presenting confining obstacles within the walls that did not allow for freedom of movement, particularly the bed in the death scene. It would have been better, he said, had the actors worked against a black curtain, rather than faced with the limitations of the stage properties.217 Kappo Phelan wrote that the designs complimented Webster's direction, but hampered the actors. Settings were much too narrow, he said, offering little opportunity for action.218

In opposition to these views, Rosamond Gilder said that the intimacy of the palace rooms and "walled-in streets" was quite effective. Actors were close to the audience, particularly Iago, whose "evil game" was clearly observed.219 In the same vein, Margaret Marshall praised the shallow setting which allowed Iago to take the audience into his confidence.220 Herbert Whitaker wrote that the scenery brought the audience into the "close confines of the castle
apartments, stressing the fact that this tragedy is in essence a domestic one."221

Jose Ferrer, disappointed in the designs, reminds us that the Theatre Guild was close to extinction shortly before Othello. Oklahoma! had reinforced them financially but the administrators had no way of knowing that Othello would run successfully in New York. Jones' "hands were probably tied," Ferrer says. The funds were limited and the designer had to conform to the monies available.222 A budget notice from the Theatre Guild records supports Ferrer's view. Robert Edmond Jones was paid $1750 for his design. Construction and purchases ran to $6000. For painting, the Guild paid $4500, and for labor, $250.223 Jones received $50 a week for "designer's royalty."224 If Jones' scenery was not entirely successful, the lack of funds from the Theatre Guild and the recent death of his wife might have been mitigating factors.

COSTUMES

Robert Edmond Jones' costumes for Othello were bold and simple in design, carefully piped with lines to present a clear image of shape and color. Rosamond Gilder praised the garments, reporting that they offered moments of "splendor to the production."225 Jack Crockett said that the "costumed profiles" were "authentic enough to step out of the portraits of Pollafuolo."226 Robert J. Casey simply called them "beautiful."227 Virginia Mattis (Durand)
believed that the garments "blended with the action, presenting no physical problems" to the movements of the actors. They were "rich" and "authentic" to period and place. But critic Frances Wayne admonished Jones for his overuse of lines:

If a single value of this cyclonic drama was lost, it must have happened when the producers, assisted by designer Robert Edmond Jones, were searching for a place for just one more stripe, just another piece of startling brocade. Stark Young believed that some costumes had unique style, but most were as limited in design as the scenery. They were also inaccurate, being more Bronzino or Florentine than Venetian, Young wrote. Although the costumes seemed to fare better than the scenery, usually critics chose to say nothing about them. These garments are described in detail in the appendix of this study.

LIGHTING

The lighting, also designed by Robert Edmond Jones, was based upon a philosophy of artistic simplicity. He refers to the German designer, Max Reinhardt, who said early in the twentieth century, "put light where you want it and take it away where you don't want it." The creative effort comes, Jones said, when an artist can know where to delete or add when working with lights. Jones also believed that illumination had nothing to do with "harmony and beauty." It must provide "energy, contrast, violence, struggle, shock." Lighting must be alive; must be an "image of poetry."
Stark Young, unimpressed with Jones' scenery and costumes, was also dissatisfied with the designer's lighting:

An artist like Mr. Robert Edmond Jones, working completely on his own, might have it within his power to give this tragedy of Shakespeare's a full splendor, an audacity and texture of Venetian Renaissance and wonder. . . . Such scope was not to happen in this Margaret Webster production of Othello. . . .

Kappo Phelan stated that Jones' lighting design had a lack of variety about it, using the "same diffused lighting" throughout.

But actor Francis Letton disagrees, believing that Jones effectively placed "cross lighting" from the first wings "casting shadows—yet illuminating the actor's faces."

Letton thinks that "smoke gels" were used to offer a haze effect to the scenery and costumes. Actress Virginia Mattis (Durand) and critic Lewis Nichols agree that the lighting was "excellent," while critic Herbert Whittaker called it "eloquent." The same "overall beauty" which Burton Rascoe attributed to the scenery, he also credited to the lighting. Howard Barnes labeled the scenery and the lighting as "brilliant."

Jones was often praised for coordinating colors which worked well together in scenery, costumes and lighting. Margaret Webster believed that he successfully blended "color and costume and the richness of texture to suggest the appropriate background for the play." According to Hazel Bruce,

. . . the color cannot be too highly praised for its value as dramatic contrast and suggestion. Venetian
crimsons and stately tones of brown and olive were tremendous in their ocular effect.\textsuperscript{240}

Although critics differed in their reactions to Robert Edmond Jones' designs for \textit{Othello}, most agreed that the fluency of the modular set was workable, the costumes bold, simple and appropriate, and the lighting effective. More importantly, the consensus was that all elements of design merged to create a unified visual depiction of sixteenth century Venice.

MARGARET WEBSTER'S DIRECTING TECHNIQUES AS REVEALED IN \textit{OTHELLO}

Margaret Webster was a very practical artist whose world revolved around the theatre. Columnist Barbara Heggie once described her appearance: "... her clothes are dowdy, her shoes sensible, and her hair cut is mannish, her voice--full, resonant, and glossy--is as theatrical as her eyelashes."\textsuperscript{241} Fashion was unimportant to her. She wore little or no make-up and an abundance of costume jewelry.\textsuperscript{242} Augmenting her appearance was "the thick screen of her chain-smoking which," as Robinson Stone says, "always kept [one] at a distance."\textsuperscript{243} She had a deliberate speech, for she carefully constructed thoughts into sentences before speaking them aloud.\textsuperscript{244} Jose Ferrer remembers that Miss Webster had an "abrasive" personality; one moment "all smiles," which were gone the next. Although he remains grateful to her and respected her talents, he was not
particularly fond of her, and does not believe that she was well liked by others. Actor John Gerstad, who also respected Margaret Webster, says that she "could be sarcastic on occasion." She disliked parties. For entertainment she enjoyed a drive in her automobile, but could not indulge in this pastime during her production of _Othello_ because the gas rationing of World War II forbade it. Instead, she remained in her Greenwich Village home (her living quarters while in New York) and liked to "dig, clean and cook."

While working, Miss Webster was forever active, seldom allowing time for rest. She prided herself on her industry. "I probably have as much energy," she said, "as anybody I know except my mother, and perhaps Orson Welles and Billy Rose." Involved totally in the world of theatre, she found little time either to participate in or appreciate other activities. Nor could she understand others who had not her complete devotion. Company member Francis Letton remembers that when Miss Webster contacted him to perform a role in _The Tempest_ after the long _Othello_ tour, he refused, for he did not wish to leave his family again. To turn down an acting job for this reason was incomprehensible to her. Although she remained always courteous, Webster never asked Letton to perform in another of her productions.

Margaret Webster, a woman with much energy, a practical dresser, a chain-smoker, and a lady whose entire life was devoted to the theatre, was also one of the world's most
significant Shakespearean directors. The techniques she used to accomplish such artistic successes as *Othello* will be the topic for the following discussion. Since the primary purpose of this study is to reveal Miss Webster's directing methods, many specific examples of her techniques will be presented in other chapters as well.

Beginning with *Richard II* in 1937, Margaret Webster presented four additional Shakespearean productions in New York before *Othello: Hamlet, Henry IV (part 1), Twelfth Night, and Macbeth*. Each succeeded critically and financially due to the director's efforts to activate the literature through 1) the editing of scripts (with the exception of *Hamlet*); 2) the creation of quickly paced, choreographed scenes; and 3) the arrangement of scenery, costumes and music in an effective integration of all theatrical elements. In addition, she encouraged her cast to strive for individually realized characterizations. These methods were essential to Margaret Webster's unique directing style. She placed much emphasis on the visual qualities of a play, and upon rapid pacing. This approach, she believed, was in harmony with Shakespeare's intent. Shakespeare, well aware of the needs of his public, wrote his scripts to satisfy them, she said. His scenes lend themselves to robust, dynamic staging. Furthermore, the director believed that modern audiences require entertainment which communicates visual excitement. After studying the script carefully, Webster proceeded to stage it in a manner which would revive the
literature for twentieth century audiences. As critic Robert Garland wrote, Miss Webster walked boldly up to the hallowed manuscript and said, "Bill, I know you're a poet, a philosopher and a historian. But first of all, you're a showman. So am I. Let's go." 250

Margaret Webster provided visual cues in her staging to let audiences know precisely how they should react during a given moment. George Jean Nathan illustrated this point when he said Miss Webster dressed "her intelligence in floppy pants and a red undershirt." Then she stuck "a loaded cigar in its mouth." This method is what Nathan called "intellectual vaudeville," offering the audience such theatricalities as a popular Negro singer as Othello, a Negro ex-prize fighter as Caliban, and a beautiful ballet dancer as Ariel. Sometimes these show business techniques "get the best of her," the critic wrote, but, in the interest of the popular box office, she used them effectively to turn Shakespearean classics into Broadway hits. 251

With few exceptions, actors in the company and the critics single out for praise Margaret Webster's choreographed staging. Her artistry clarified scenes and provided arresting visual pictures. Few directors surpassed her in this capacity. Webster carefully worked out the stage movements at home. Both Theresa Helburn and John Haggott mention Margaret Webster's pre-rehearsal planning. Before the first rehearsal, "all the business is mapped out, lighting effects planned, music cues set," and the scenery is
"stacked against the wall." Robinson Stone writes that there never was a wasted moment in Webster's production schedule. "Inefficiency galls her," columnist Jean Meegen wrote. Actor William Browder remembers how carefully she planned the "traffic problems" in his own scenes in Othello. Actor Don Keefer writes that before production all of the blocking and movement had been thought out using a cardboard miniature box set. Miss Webster used chess pieces on this unit to represent the characters.

Although flexible with actors in their creation of characterization, Webster became more dictatorial when dealing with movement. In fact, Robinson Stone believes that, for her, staging took precedence over characterization. Webster worked not so much on building believable roles, he said, as on "making things excitingly theatrical," particularly in stage movements and pictorial effects. She gave audiences spectacle, and they responded with pleasure. "She was a magnificent STAGER," he says. Another company member of Othello believes that Webster was one of the first in her field to "make Shakespeare as exciting as it is—concentrating mainly on action." Columnist Harold Cohen said that Margaret Webster's direction quickened and sharpened the action in Othello. The result, he wrote, was "stirring eloquence." John Chapman credited her for a smoothly run production, and another critic called her work quick and inventive. Webster's staging of Othello, writes Kappo Phelan, was "fast, neat, breathtaking at times." She
created a production, another critic added, which mounted in
suspense, and sustained that suspense throughout the last
scene. Jack Crockett mentions her convincing staging of
various tableaus, and Hazel Bruce also praises Webster's
ability to create impressive groupings on stage.

Jose Ferrer notes one directorial technique which
Webster used to help actors locate themselves in space.
Since Jones' abstract scenery used merely steps and levels,
Miss Webster not only specified what a particular on-stage
space represented in any given scene, but also precisely
identified off-stage locales so that they were clear in the
actor's mind. The upstage right exit, for example, might
lead to the courtyard, while a downstage exit would lead to
the town. Audiences might not be conscious of the worlds
beyond each exit, but the actors knew where they were going,
and, because of this, they felt confident and motivated when
they left or entered the stage. Ferrer says that this tech­
nique was so valid that he uses it when possible in his own
directing. Ralph Clanton writes that another of
Webster's directorial techniques in Shakespearean produc­
tions was to keep the action moving rapidly. Usually the
pace started slowly, allowing the audience to "get its ears
tuned to the speech," then the tempo was heightened to what
Webster considered a "normal" speed that was "brisk" and
"non-stop." She wanted the plot developed with such abso­
lute clarity and the characters so well defined that the au­
dience could follow the storyline with ease and thus become
"caught up" in the action. If the audience did not become involved in the action, the director believed remedies were called for. Webster kept "coughing charts" which registered the number of coughs heard in the auditorium during each scene. If she discovered through this method that some scenes received more "coughs" than others, she posted the information on the callboard for the actors to note where they were not holding the audience's attention. Following is a portion of Miss Webster's "cough" chart for Wednesday evening, December 8, 1943. ("Bra" is Brabantio, "Oth" is Othello, and "Rod" is Roderigo.)

**SCENES**

12. Iago's "A maiden never bold"
   Oth's "Her Father loved me . . ."
   Iago-Rod sequence
   "Virtue, a fig . . ."

13. Iago's post fight speech:
   "Touch me not so near . . ."
   Reputation scene
   Iago's "What's he that says I play the villain?"

14. 2nd, Jealousy scene: Iago's recovery from fall thru
   "Would I were satisfied"

At the bottom of this chart, the director placed notes to members of the cast in fragmentary phrases (which the cast understood) such as:

Paul Farewell sp & foll sequence. Jo & Paul "are you man!
Paul see tis true
Paul-Uta-Cassio whole opening Act II
Paul-Uta My Lord what is your will268
Furthermore, Webster demanded a tight production which ran a strict three hours. A sheet was constantly kept by the stage manager, recording the time for every act, intermission and call so that the director could check on the various times for the production. Following is a portion of one of those records taken for January 12 through January 29:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT I Mins.</th>
<th>ACT II Mins.</th>
<th>INTERMISSION Mins.</th>
<th>CALLS Mins.</th>
<th>FINAL CURTAIN FELL AT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th-Eve. 94</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8 1/2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th &quot; 92 1/2</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8 1/2</td>
<td>3 1/2</td>
<td>11:24 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th &quot; 89 3/4</td>
<td>67 1/2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1 1/2</td>
<td>11:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th-Mat. 91</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1 1/2</td>
<td>5:20 1/2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once, when the actors performed past 11:30, the director placed a note on the callboard saying, "Do you want to stay here all night?"

Along with Margaret Webster's use of theatrical staging and heightened pace, she sought to coordinate the technical elements of scenery and lighting. To achieve a fast moving production which also offered arresting visual pictures, Webster encouraged Robert Edmond Jones to design a modular set of simple steps and levels. With lighting, the director was able to change locale and time, and integrate actors and scenery into a unified whole. In fact, some believe that Webster's most extraordinary talent lay in her ability to orchestrate superbly the various arts of the theatre into one design. This, says Robinson Stone, was her "great secret."

Although Miss Webster may have practiced what George Jean Nathan called "intellectual vaudeville," she had an
abiding respect for Shakespeare's text. It would be foolish, she wrote, for a producer who is going to direct the work of an author who has written some thirty-seven plays ("a dozen or so smash hits"), not to "listen with respect to what he has to say, and take some trouble to appreciate the workings of his mind."\textsuperscript{272} Webster carefully studied and analyzed the text before early rehearsals. Company members noticed her industry. Jose Ferrer praises her ability to "translate the words into the most literal terms" for him, almost to the point of using slang. This provided the actor with a very clear understanding of the lines.\textsuperscript{273} Actor Stockman Barner writes that she considered "every word of the text . . . of utmost importance."\textsuperscript{274} Robinson Stone describes her as an "awesomely intelligent scholar," with an analytical brilliance.\textsuperscript{275}

Some say that Webster became so familiar with the Shakespearean texts that she believed herself the ultimate authority on the subject. Columnist Barbara Heggie fondly wrote that the director became so utterly convinced that she was Shakespeare's spokesman that she boldly declared such statements as "Shakespeare wrote it that way," or "that's the way he meant it and that's the way it's going to be." Furthermore, her familiarity with the texts made Shakespeare her favorite topic of conversation. John Haggott remembers a conversation among friends concerning a "routine dispute" on characterization, having nothing to do with Shakespeare. "Peggy hadn't opened her mouth until then" he said, "but
bang, there was the voice of the Bard at my elbow." Once the director gained a firm footage in a discussion on William Shakespeare, she would not surrender it. On one occasion, she became so engrossed in a conversation with a young actor concerning the characterization of Iago, that she ignored an important radio announcement from President Roosevelt about the state of the war. Although nearly every home in the country tuned in to the President's message, Webster continued her discussion. "I knew I should listen to it," she said. "But did I? I did not." 276

Margaret Webster believed strongly that Shakespeare had much to offer twentieth century audiences and devoted much of her life trying to prove it. She studied Shakespeare's works in a scholarly manner, then proceeded to translate them into creative and living dramas. Critic R. J. Casey believed that she succeeded in fleshing out Othello. He wrote: "Here is a tragedy as convincing as a coroner's report, as starkly real as a murder in the Drake Hotel and less fantastic." 277 In the same respect, Howard Barnes said that Margaret Webster had created a "thriller" in an exciting melodramatic form. 278 Jean Meegen wrote that Miss Webster had a "facility for pruning sixteenth century Shakespeare for twentieth century consumption." Shakespeare becomes, Meegen said, "as plausible to modern theatre goers as a radio announcer." 279 A reviewer for Time magazine noted that she gave a "story-must-come-first" treatment to her production. 280 She did not present the traditional "musty
classic," columnist Seymour Peck said in PM; even those familiar with the plot of Othello were held in suspense. Margaret Webster never doubted that Shakespearean drama could be brought alive for any audience in any time. Robert Speaight used her words in the preface to his book, Shakespeare on the Stage: "If people do not trust Shakespeare, I do not see why they bother to produce him." Although Webster was grateful to those scholars who sought to discover and preserve the accuracy of the texts, she believed that the task of the director was more artistic than scholarly; he or she must transmute the scripts "in terms of the living theatre today." Thus she freely edited the text and attempted to translate it into a theatrically viable experience for twentieth century consumption. Jose Ferrer believes that Webster's editorial skills provided her greatest contribution to American theatre.

With the script thoroughly understood, Margaret Webster selected a company. Possibly some of the cast were selected for her by the producing organizations (the Brattle Street Theatre or the Theatre Guild), but she chose most of them. Many of her actors remember vividly the moments when Webster auditioned them personally for Othello. Robinson Stone recalls reading for her in August of 1943. Miss Webster "could not have been more gracious and more final in saying "thanks but no thanks," he writes. A year later, the Theatre Guild informed him that he was to report on August 21 to portray minor roles and be available as an
understudy. Stone "leapt at the chance" to be a member of the company.285 Stockman Barner (who competed with Stone and won the Messenger role) remembers clearly the day he was cast. The actor, called in Connecticut on the morning of August 19, 1944, rode into New York on the one o'clock train, and within two days was cast in the extraordinary production.286 William Browder's audition experience sheds some light on Miss Webster's casting techniques. It began with Browder walking into her office for an initial interview. (Perhaps this was routine before auditions.) "Tell me about yourself," Miss Webster said. "All I know is that Miss Van Cleve [Browder's agent] thinks you are a brilliant actor!"

William Browder remembers this moment quite well since Van Cleve had never seen him act. "But," he writes, "I was learning the machinations of the theatre." Browder originally auditioned for Cassio. Paul Robeson was present for the readings and Webster was concerned that, on stage, William Browder (who was 6'1" and 155 pounds) would not look massive enough when compared with the imposing Robeson. "I seemed a mere schoolboy" beside him, the performer says. Offered the opportunity to understudy the role, he was thrilled to work with the famed Othello cast.287

Unlike those actors portraying minor roles, Jose Ferrer did not have to audition, for he had established an excellent reputation for his performance in Charley's Aunt. Ferrer recalls that he was asked to perform Iago in a letter from Miss Webster. He replied to her that "if she was
willing to risk it," so was he. He had never portrayed a Shakespearean role prior to that date. Evidently, Miss Webster was pleased with Ferrer and the other members of her company for she wrote, "I never could or did undertake a production which I thought seriously miscast. Although she apparently had some doubts about a few of the cast members following the Cambridge and Princeton productions, she later says, in retrospect, that there were no major problems in casting selections. The reputation she had achieved from her American première of Richard II brought to her new production actors with proven skills, according to Robinson Stone. She allowed these experienced actors to be "brilliant in their own way, helping them of course, where her own acting technique could do so." But with ordinary performers, Ferrer says, Margaret Webster was not a great director. He believes her success with Shakespearean productions came largely from her ability to clarify the texts and from her astuteness in surrounding herself with creative performers who could "direct" themselves. In the same respect, Philip Huston writes that Margaret Webster directed on the "honor system," selecting skilled actors who could "find their own way." She was, says Huston, only an "adequate" director. But in her defense, John Gerstad writes that this is the way it should be: "The director does not achieve a characterization—the actor does that."
Miss Webster's rehearsal techniques for Othello must be pieced together from the sparse information given by actors attempting to recall moments of thirty-five years ago. With the major actors, she held initial readings of the script. Soon she had performers on their feet, and together, director and actors explored appropriate movements. Different methods were tried, such as sitting, standing, or walking. She tried to create an atmosphere at rehearsals which encouraged actors to feel free to experiment. But for the minor characters, presumably played by less experienced actors, she was more precise, even dictatorial, in her direction.

During the practice sessions, most company members apparently regarded Miss Webster with awe. Several actors recollect moments when they were noticed by their famous director. Francis Letton remembers being scolded for a late entrance. Although the lights were out and the actor had to go through two sets of curtains, he was impressed enough with Miss Webster's admonishment that the incident never happened again under any circumstances.²⁹⁵ Although Jose Ferrer has said that Miss Webster was not particularly well liked, others have fond memories of her. William Browder remembers one practice session when the actors were rehearsing the arrival at Cyprus. The director, impressed with Browder's stage presence, called to the others, "Why can't you all take the stage like Mr. Browder does." The actor writes, "I have always felt that was one of my greatest
compliments and I keep it fondly." Stockman Barner says, "Peggy was a quiet, reasonable director," and "we became good friends during the run." Ralph Clanton also remembers that rehearsals were pleasant. Margaret Webster, he says,

was the most considerate of actors I have ever worked for. She planned things so one didn't exit on one side of the stage and enter from another two minutes later. The technical things of the production were taken care of after the actors were sent home to rest or relax; the dress rehearsals were always over for the actors by midnight. She would then proceed to spend the rest of the night with the crew correcting everything that went wrong with the run through. She was a joy to work for, as everything was planned and well thought out before rehearsals started. She used colored pins on a model of the set, as well as all movement throughout each scene. She was ORGANIZED!

Through the whole tour, she was always delightful in her dealings with all actors; she understood them and knew what a delicate thing an ego is and how not to damage it. She had a very pleasant relationship with all of us, and she kept a sense of humor about most things, with suggestions often made with a twinkle. They were also often couched as a request, such as, "Do you suppose you could get a sense of urgency in there, maybe by picking up the tempo from the middle of the speech on?" She was quite rigid about where you were to be at any given moment, but one could always ask her to explain or discuss anything in the text, and you would always find that she had read all the prompt copies . . . available, and could give you a most reasonable answer to ANY problem you might have.

John Huntington, manager of the Brattle Theatre where Othello was first produced, agrees with Clanton:

Peg Webster was a simply magnificent director in every sense of the word. Careful, painstaking, highly sensitive to the feelings and abilities of the actors who were working for her, and meticulous in her imagery. Her work with Paul Robeson was a real eye-opener. He was struggling and she was so darn patient and understanding with him.
Actor Don Keefer offers a summary of ideas which seem to encompass most of the thoughts presented thus far on Margaret Webster's directing techniques:

Her forte was pageant and spectacle. Speaking personally, there was never any psychological character discussions as to motivations, . . . so dear to a later type of director. Her notes were technical; move here, pick up the pace, don't be self-conscious about the beautiful pineapple-green satin cape Robert Edmond Jones designed for you, use it! By the end of the run, you'll be so in love with it, I'll probably have to say, 'Leave that cape alone!' One time she said to me, "I simply don't believe you in that scene.", leaving me at a total loss as to how to make her believe me. . . . I was in awe of her and that prevented me from getting to know her personally. She was rather formidable looking, but I think a marshmallow inside. . . . In conclusion, I shall give you another quote of Peggy's. "I love actors!". She did. She was gentle with them and I think it had a great deal to do with her success as a director. 300

Perhaps the most vivid description of Margaret Webster's rehearsal sessions for Othello comes from director and writer John Gerstad:

Initial rehearsals were like any (almost) rehearsal of a Broadway show—reading the play—stop and go—questions—looking at the model of the set—taping "the set" on the stage—(arches, platforms etc.)—doing scenes over and over—and one more time—"but my way"—and sitting on the sidelines—watching it take shape—trying to learn one's lines (some actors never study at home—only in the theatre—they usually have small parts)—coffee break—a tea and Danish—go for costume fittings—under studies assigned (if not done already). Gradually the actors start to put their parts aside—oops—nope—too soon—carry the "book" a little longer—every day—tiny sections take sudden life—then fall back to blocking—"You weren't there until your next speech." "It felt good."—"keep going."301

Most of the minor actors agree that Margaret Webster was less flexible with them than with the leading actors. She gave much of her time to the stars, and did not provide detailed characterizations for the minor players. Gerstad
remembers Webster engaging in many conversations in the major actors' dressing rooms or in the auditorium, where they would "talk and talk." Most of the performers remember her working with them on stage movement, but she offered little assistance on characterization. Burton Rascoe, upon seeing the revival of Othello in New York, noticed that Miss Webster had not carefully guided the newer talents who had been added in the course of the run, and these actors seemed less effective than the experienced members of the cast. Although Webster perhaps gave scanty help to the minor players, she nevertheless insisted that each create an individual character. Robinson Stone says that no "chorus effect" was permitted; rather, "every actor had a characterization of his own." 

It can be safely stated, therefore, that Margaret Webster emphasized spectacle, orchestrated staging, and a theatrical approach to the Shakespearean text. She might have sacrificed a more profound interpretation, but Othello's success demonstrated her ability to entice modern audiences to a classical work, without sacrificing the dignity of the literature. Uta Hagen says:

Margaret Webster's work was lucid, simple, intelligent. A cab driver who had seen the production asked me who had rewritten the play because he had understood all of it.
FOOTNOTES

ANALYSIS CHAPTER


3 Graham, Paul Robeson: Citizen, p. 209.

4 Margaret Webster, "Othello Extracts," Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


6 Abyssinia is an older name for Ethiopia. If Othello were descended from the "royal Lion of Judah," his ancestors would be Ethiopian leaders. He would also have practiced Coptic Christianity, an ancient form of Christianity which resisted the strong Islam movement practiced by many of the Moors.

7 Souvenir program for the Othello tour, personal possession of the author.

8 Furness, Othello, p. 390.

9 John Wilson, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, April, 1850, p. 484.


11 Furness, Othello, p. 395.
Souvenir Program for the Othello tour, personal possession of the author.


Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 234.


Souvenir program for the Othello tour, personal possession of the author.


Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 236.

Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, pp. 234-237

Miss Webster does not list the actors' and actresses' names.


Webster, Daughter, p. 112.


Webster, Daughter, p. 117.


34. Kahn, "Othello," Variety, 27 October 1943, p. 44.


36. By "critics" Porter probably meant those citizens who wrote letters to The New York Times regarding the validity of a black actor as Othello, since all of the major journalists believed that such an interpretation was right.


38. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 235.


40. Webster, Daughter, p. 89.
41. Webster, Daughter, p. 110.
42. Webster, Daughter, pp. 109-111.
44. Webster, Daughter, p. 110.
47. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.
48. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 236.
49. Webster, Daughter, p. 106.
57. "Old Play in Manhattan," Time Magazine, 1 November 1943, pp. 70,72.


61."Old Play in Manhattan," Time Magazine, 1 November 1943, pp. 70, 72.


64. Kappo Phelan, "Othello: Margaret Webster Production," Commonweal, 5 November 1943, p. 72.


74. This actress wishes to remain anonymous in her comments on the quality of acting in Othello.


85 Kahn, "Othello," Variety, 27 October 1943, p. 44.


87 Francis Letton, personal letter to the author, 26 May 1976.

88 Webster, Daughter, p. 109.

89 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, pp. 131-132.

90 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 232.

91 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 232.

92 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 98.


94 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

95 Webster, Daughter, pp. 108-109.

96 Webster, Daughter, p. 108.

97 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

98 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.
Letter from Lawrence Langner to John Haggott, 16 September 1943, Theatre Guild Documents, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven Connecticut, hereon referred to as "Theatre Guild Documents."

Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

Webster, Daughter, p. 108.

Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


"Old Play in Manhattan," Time Magazine, 1 November 1943, pp. 70, 72.


Kahn, "Othello," Variety, 27 October 1943, p. 44.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


120. McCarthy, Sights and Spectacles, p. 74.

121. Harold V. Cohen, "Robeson's 'Othello' at Nixon," The Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 7 November 1944, p. 22.


125 Stark Young, Immortal Shadows, p. 233.


131 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


133 This cast member wishes to remain anonymous.


Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.


Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

Webster, Daughter, p. 108.

Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, pp. 102-103.

Helen Ormsbee, "'Othello' Success a Triumph for Miss Webster," The New York Herald Tribune, Sec. IV, 31 October 1943, p. 2.

Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, pp. 102-103.


Webster, Daughter, p. 108.

Webster, Daughter, p. 113.


159 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

160 Stark Young, Immortal Shadows, p. 234.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


173. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 232.


190. This company member wishes to remain anonymous.


192. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


194. Edith King was portraying Bianca, and was promoted to Emilia. Lynn Kearse was portraying one of the citizens, and was promoted to the role of Bianca.

195. Jose Ferrer says that the "recent controversy" mentioned in Margaret Webster's resignation letter was over Miss Webster's insistence that she receive the same billing as Ferrer and Hagen. Paul Robeson would not allow it and
this incident, along with the others mentioned, caused the resignation. This was relayed to the author in a personal interview with Jose Ferrer, 19 February 1977.

196 Letter from Margaret Webster to Theresa Helburn, 19 February 1944, Theatre Guild Documents.


199 Ashton Stevens, "Stevens Finds 'Othello' Spectacular, but--," The Chicago Herald American, 11 April 1945, p. 12.

200 Harold Cohen, "Robeson's 'Othello' at Nixon," The Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 7 November 1944, p. 22.

201 Jack Crockett, "Othello Applauded by Large Audience," The Hartford Times, 8 September 1944, p. 24.


206 Margaret Webster, Shakespeare and the Modern Theatre, the fifth lecture on the Helen Kenyon Lectureship, Vassar College, Arlington, Mass.

207 Herbert Whitaker, "Robeson 'Othello' Is Magnificent," The Gazette-Montreal, 19 September 1944, p. 3.
Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

Young, Immortal Shadows, p. 230.


Webster, Daughter, p. 113.


Young, Immortal Shadows, p. 230.

Kappo Phelan, "Othello: Margaret Webster Production," Commonweal, 5 November 1943, p. 72.


221 Herbert Whitaker, "Robeson 'Othello' Is Magnificent," The Gazette–Montreal, 19 September 1944, p. 3.

222 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

223 Budget for Othello, 18 May 1942, Theatre Guild Documents.

224 Budget for Othello, the first ten weeks in New York, no date, Theatre Guild Documents.


226 Jack Crockett, "Othello Applauded by Large Audience," The Hartford Times, 8 September 1944, p. 24.


228 Virginia Mattis (Durand), personal letter to the author, 1 June 1976.


230 Young, Immortal Shadows, p. 230.


232 Young, Immortal Shadows, p. 230.

233 Kappo Phelan, "Othello: Margaret Webster Production, Commonweal, 5 November 1943, p. 72.


236 Herbert Whitaker, "Robeson 'Othello' Is Magnificent," The Gazette-Montreal, 19 September 1944, p. 3.


239 Margaret Webster, Shakespeare and the Modern Theatre, the fifth Lecture on the Helen Kenyon Lectureship, Vassar College, Arlington, Mass.


241 Barbara Heggie, "We," The New Yorker, 20 May 1944, p. 33.

242 Jean Meegan, "Margaret Webster Has Right to Call Shakespeare 'Bill,'" The Dallas Morning News, 28 November 1943, p. 10.


244 Helen Ormsbee, "'Othello' Success a Triumph for Miss Webster," The New York Herald Tribune, Sec. IV, 31 October 1943, p. 2.

245 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


247 Jean Meegan, "Margaret Webster Has Right to Call Shakespeare 'Bill,'" The Dallas Morning News, 28 November 1943, p. 10.

248 Jean Meegan, "Margaret Webster Has Right to Call Shakespeare 'Bill,'" The Dallas Morning News, 28 November 1943, p. 10.


Jean Meegan, "Margaret Webster Has Right to Call Shakespeare 'Bill,'" The Dallas Morning News, 28 November 1943, p. 2.

Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

Jean Meegan, "Margaret Webster Has Right to Call Shakespeare 'Bill,'" The Dallas Morning News, 28 November 1943, p. 10.


Don Keefer, personal letter to the author, 28 September 1976.

Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

This company member wishes to remain anonymous.

Harold Cohen, "Robeson's 'Othello' at Nixon," The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 7 November 1944, p. 22.


Ward Morehouse, "'Othello,' as Done by Guild and Miss Webster Provides Exciting Evening," The New York Sun, 20 October 1943, p. 28.

Kappo Phelan, "Othello: Margaret Webster Production," Commonweal, 5 November 1943, p. 72.


266. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


270. Note to the Othello Cast, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


273. Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


279 Jean Meegan, "Margaret Webster Has Right to Call Shakespeare 'Bill,'" The Dallas Morning News, 28 November 1943, p. 2.


281 Seymour Peck, "Iago Plots His Evil at Bargain Prices," FM, 23 May 1945, p. 16.


283 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 29.

284 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


288 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.

289 Webster, Daughter, p. 88.

290 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

291 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


PART II

A PROMPTBOOK STUDY OF OTHELLO
INTRODUCTION

The following discussion reconstructs Margaret Webster's production of Othello. First, the director's editing techniques applied to Shakespeare's tragedy are considered. Also, the Othello text is examined historically, and, thereafter, a step by step account of the play follows with the textual interpretation and staging as found in Margaret Webster's promptbooks. It can be assumed that all information offered in this examination is derived from these promptscripts, unless otherwise indicated.

THE TEXT

Most scholars contend that William Shakespeare's Othello (first performed in 1604) originated from the novels of the sixteenth century writer Giraldi Cinthio, entitled The Hecatommithi. The particular story which involved the Moor was designed for "young ladies," to be warned against "disproportionate marriages." Shakespeare used Cinthio's basic plot, but Othello is not a reconstruction of The Hecatommithi tale.

John Haggott, in his article, "The Story of the Play," contrasts between the Italian narrative and Shakespeare's tragedy. In Cinthio's novel, the Moor has recently been appointed a high officer for the Cyprus garrison, but unlike the play, no war impends between Venice and Turkey.
The newly appointed officer and his bride arrive safely in Cyprus together; in the play they are separated by a storm at sea. (In Othello this storm is so great that an enemy fleet is destroyed before it reaches Cyprus.) Also, in the novel, the Ensign's (Iago) hatred for the Moor stems from the fact that the villain is in love with Disdemona (Desdemona) and jealous of her alleged favor for the Captain (Cassio). In conjunction with Shakespeare's tragedy, the Ensign encouraged the Captain's drunken state and instigates a brawl in which the higher officer draws his sword upon one of the guards. This action, the villain believes, will cause the Moor to send "Cassio" to another post away from Cyprus. The scheme works in that the Captain is deprived of his rank, but Disdemona intercedes, and he is allowed to remain at his post. Thus far, the Shakespearean plot and Cinthio's novel remain relatively parallel. They differ, however, when in the Cinthio piece, "Iago" immediately seeks to rouse the Moor's jealousy over an alleged affair between the Captain and Disdemona. From that time forward, the Ensign and his commanding officer plot to kill the "lovers." The Moor encourages the villain to murder "Cassio," then strikes his bride upon the head with a sandbag so as to leave no mark. The murderers would then see to it that the bedroom ceiling fell on Disdemona's body to cover their deed. Their plot is exposed, however, when the wounded Captain (who has been left in the street) musters enough strength to reveal the story to the Venetian senate. Both
villains are brought to trial and the Moor is absolved but later killed by one of his wife's kinsmen, and the Ensign is tortured to death. Thus, Cinthio says, "did heaven avenge the innocence of Disdemona."

In Shakespeare's play, Othello is a military genius who, in the midst of the Turkish wars, has earned the respect of the Venetian aristocracy. Furthermore, the Moor is Christian rather than Mohammedan (as he is in Cinthio's story). This difference was important to Elizabethan audiences who believed that a marriage of mixed religions was less desirable than one of mixed races. Thus they would have considered Shakespeare's Desdemona/Othello arrangement acceptable. Also, Othello does not easily succumb to Iago's poisonous words, and when he does, his murder is more of an execution than an act of "blind rage." He doubts his actions but carries them out with "high tragedy of purpose," rather than in Cinthio's piece, commit the undignified act of watching the Ensign beat his wife to death with a sandbag.²

Although Margaret Webster certainly believed Shakespeare's sixteenth century plot could communicate to a twentieth century audience, she also thought that the Othello text needed editing for modern consumption. In her research on the play, Webster referred to the Folio and Quarto editions of the tragedy. She discovered that the Folio version came presumably from another source, possibly an original manuscript, but it agreed substantially with the Quarto.³
Therefore, the director used the Quarto for her actors and referred to the Folio only if it conflicted with the earlier edition. The Folio was more detailed, she believed, and much like a stage manager's promptbook. In her use of both editions, Webster freely added lines where she thought it was necessary and deleted those she believed would not project the intent of the production as she saw it.

According to Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. LaMar, editors for the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Quarto version was printed in 1622 (one year before the Folio) by Nicholas Oakes for Thomas Walkly. The title page declared that the play had "been diverse times acted at the Globe, and at the Blackfriars." Therefore, these editors contend that the Quarto and the first Folio are equally authoritative. Both appear to have been taken from original playhouse texts. There are approximately 160 lines in the Folio which do not exist in the earlier version, but Wright and LaMar believe that the Quarto "provides better reading." Neither editions offer a description of settings for the various scenes, and stage directions are scarce. These were added later as scholars sought to illuminate the action by adapting the Folio and Quarto with directions from original texts.

Margaret Webster did not consider the editions sacrosanct. If we wish to stage the classical works so that they are visually clear to the modern eye, she said, why should we not be able to clarify the script as well? In fact, in
the editing of the text, she was following a long tradition. Actors who portrayed Othello commonly deleted lines from the script. Of the 3650 lines in the Folio edition, Tomasso Salvini cut 975; Edwin Forrest, 100, and Lawrence Olivier, 150. Margaret Webster deleted approximately 925 lines from the text. Rather than omit whole speeches, the director deleted words and phrases. With the exception of the Clown and the Herald, she made no major changes which would affect the plot. She claimed that her production of Othello was as "full" as any other rendition thus far on the American stage. Webster believed that her deletions were fully justified. Although Othello is difficult to edit, since it has no subplots and only two extraneous characters (the Clown and Herald) who do not belong in the mainstream of the story line, Webster thought it was not "advisable" to present the entire play for three major reasons. First, production costs could be kept within a reasonable and workable budget if the text were judiciously trimmed. Secondly, editing became necessary when certain lines seemed incongruous with the text or intent of the play as the director saw it. (Examples of these will be revealed in the promptbook study.) Thirdly, editing was justified if it aided a performer in more effectively communicating the sense of the text. Sometimes Webster deleted phrases during the run of Othello, because an actor could not convey it properly. Although she admitted that Shakespeare's rhythm sometimes had been
damaged, the director thought it more important in some in­stances that a performer be comfortable with his speeches. Margaret Webster's promptscript often reveals the manner in which the actors spoke the lines, through the use of punctuation and the arrangement of the phrasing. For example, a comparison between a portion of Iago's first lengthy speech found in the traditional text and the same speech as written in the promptbook follows. The traditional script reads thusly:

Iago
Despise me if I do not. Three great ones of the city, in personal suit to make me his lieutenant, off-capp'd 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 stuff'd with epithets of war; And, in conclusion, nonsuits my mediators; for, "Certes," says he, And what was he? Forsooth, a great arithmetician, One Michael Cassio, A Florentine.

The promptbook reveals that all of Iago's speeches were arranged in a more prosaic manner:

Iago
Despise me if I do not. Three great ones of the city, in personal suit to make me his lieutenant, oft, capp'd to him, and, by 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 horrible stuffed with epithets of war; (and, in conclusion) nonsuits my mediators; for, "Certes," says he, "I have already chosen my officer."

And what was he? Forsooth, a great arithmetician, one Michael Cassio, a Florentine.

Webster often took lines contained in the text and placed them elsewhere in what she considered to be a more
appropriate moment in the play. In the first scene, for example, Roderigo is heard off stage saying, "But in the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor!" She uses this phrase to clarify Iago's and Roderigo's first conversation, but the traditional script has it later in the scene. Another editing device Webster used was to break up the longer speeches with inserted lines, again from the textual material used later on in the play. For example, Iago issues his long "farewell" to Roderigo but this lengthy speech is interrupted from time to time by fragments of Brabantio's lines which consist of shouted orders to his servants. This heightens a sense of action as Desdemona's father searches through the house for his missing daughter. In addition to these methods, the director simply added or deleted lines altogether. As Brabantio searches his house for Desdemona, the servants are heard calling for more light, asking if their mistress is at home, and discovering that she is not in her chamber. At other times, a simple "yes," "no," "aye," "Cassio," or any other word which might clarify the intent of the scene was interjected into a speech.

Some say that Margaret Webster deleted lines ruthlessly. Stark Young deplored the editing she executed on Iago's lines in the first act.12 The director believed, however, that the cuts were necessary to aid the inexperienced Ferrer in his mastery of a classical language. The following is Iago's "farewell to Roderigo" speech as it is written in the traditional text:
Iago

Farewell, for I must leave you.
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
To be produced (as, if I stay I shall)
Against the Moor. For I do know, the state,
However this may gait him with some check,
Cannot with safety cast him; for he's embarked
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
Which even now stand in act, that for their souls
Another of his fathom they have none
To lead their business; in which regard
Though I do hate him as I do hell's pains,
Yet for necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find
him,
Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;
And there will I be with him. So farewell.

This speech, as Webster edited it, was quite different:

Iago

Farewell, for I must leave thee. For it seems not meet,
nor wholesome to my place, to be pronounced, as if I
stay I shall, against the Moor.

Brabantio

Call my brother. First call Signior Gratiano, ho,
quickly.

Iago

In which regard, though I do hate him as I do hell's
pains, yet for necessity of present life, I must throw
out a flag and sign of love, which is indeed but sign—

Brabantio

Get more tapers.

Servant One

Lights for the master, lights for the master quickly.

Iago

— that you shall surely find him, lead to the Sagittary
the raised search, and there will I be with him—

Brabantio

Raise all my kindred.

Iago

— so farewell.

Although Margaret Webster admits that her re-working
of the script was not "perfect," she believed also that "no
great violence" had been done to the text. Stark Young disagreed. He wrote that, even though the director made Shakespeare's language more accessible for American audiences, the public left the theatre mistakenly believing that they had heard the Bard's work. Webster's simplifications did not offer a service, the critic said, because Othello demands a cerebral response rather than an emotional one. Twentieth century witnesses should be able to study sixteenth century mores from authentic, untampered sources in order to become aware of the ideals of the past. They need to learn, for example, that an affair between a wife and a man other than her husband was a much more severe offense three hundred years ago than today. It is not wise to contemnporize a piece so much that it loses its historic charm. Furthermore, although jealousy is the least attractive of the sexual emotions, it should have been Othello's primary motivation for his actions. Several of the changes in Robeson's lines diminished the impact of the Moor's jealousy. A director cannot be "expedient," Young said, when producing this tragedy. Margaret Webster resented such accusations that she "streamlined" the play, and said that she "did nothing of the sort." Nevertheless, Stark Young and other critics believed that some of the deletions damaged the production. These will be specified in the prompt-book study.

On the other hand, some critics asked for more editing. Alexander Fried said that the production seemed long
enough to demand two intermissions, rather than the one that Miss Webster provided.\textsuperscript{16} Ashton Stevens invited the director to omit more lines, since the "Parsifal-like length was more instructive than exciting."\textsuperscript{17}

Still other critics praised the appropriateness of Webster's editing. The reviewer for \textit{Time} magazine said the revised script was as "perceptive as it can be."\textsuperscript{18} Lewis Nichols wrote that Margaret Webster's version of \textit{Othello} adapted well to the modern audience. With unnecessary lines and characters edited, he stated, what remained was a "solid material which never has been surpassed."\textsuperscript{19} "Without taking anything out of the original drama," Robert Casey wrote, Miss Webster gave the production enough speed to make it seem an hour shorter than it actually was. Casey said he was left "limp" from the experience.\textsuperscript{20} H. T. M. also praised the editing which had created a "psychological murder story," a "melodrama as modern as anything by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer."\textsuperscript{21} Hazel Bruce agreed, saying the text had been "cut so suavely and fitted so neatly that it runs like a modern play," with "clear psychological patterns." For the first time, Bruce stated, audiences could understand and scholars could appreciate \textit{Othello}.\textsuperscript{22} Kahn also agreed that the editing helped build suspense and quicken the action.\textsuperscript{23}

In order to create a fluid production which moved smoothly from one scene to another, Margaret Webster consolidated \textit{Othello} into two acts of four scenes each. Walter Monfried believed the division of the play into movements
clarified the action, since, in the first act Iago spins his web, and in the second, Othello "bursts forth to scatter his antagonists around him like ninepins." Although Shakespeare probably did not divide the script at all, Othello traditionally became sectioned into five acts and fifteen scenes. A comparison between Margaret Webster's arrangement and the traditional follows:

THE TRADITIONAL DIVISIONS

ACT I
Scene 1-Venice. A street
Scene 2-Venice. Before the sagittary
Scene 3-Venice. A chamber in the Senate House

ACT II
Scene 1-A seaport in Cyprus
Scene 2-Cyprus. Before the Castle
Scene 3-Within the Castle

ACT III
Scene 1-Cyprus. Before the Castle
Scene 2-Within the Castle
Scene 3-Another room in the Castle
Scene 4-Before the Castle

ACT IV
Scene 1-Cyprus. Before the Castle
Scene 2-A room in the Castle
Scene 3-Another room in the Castle

ACT V
Scene 1-Cyprus. A street
Scene 2-Cyprus. A bed-chamber in the Castle
Scene 3-A street in Cyprus
Scene 4-The bedroom

MARGARET WEBSTER'S DIVISIONS

ACT I
Scene 1-A street in Venice
Scene 2-The Council Chamber

ACT II
Scene 3-A seaport in Cyprus
Scene 4-The Castle in Cyprus

ACT III
Scene 1-The Castle in Cyprus
Scene 2-A bedroom in the Castle (Desdemona's dressing room)

ACT IV
Scene 1-The Castle in Cyprus

ACT V
Scene 3-A street in Cyprus
Scene 4-The bedroom

These divisions further demonstrate Margaret Webster's attempt to simplify traditional Shakespearean material for modern audiences. The viewer could follow the scene locales.
in the program with ease, and without confusion. Webster's consolidation of scenes, and her other devices used to make the Othello text come alive are revealed as the following promptbook study unfolds.
THE PROMPTBOOK STUDY

In order to project a clear image of how Othello was presented, Webster's stage directions will be placed in parentheses within Shakespeare's text. Statements made about particular moments in the play by the director, critics, or company members will be presented in brackets in the course of the study. Some comments noted previously in this work may be repeated in order to clarify production methods as they occur in the script.

ACT I

When the audience came into the theatre to witness Margaret Webster's Othello, they faced an enormous "act" curtain which, according to Herbert Whitaker, was "great," "glowing," and "emblazed with the Lions of St. Mark." The gold inwrought material on a black background presented a tremendous brocaded Venetian lion in gold, green and red. The curtain was flooded with light as the audience listened to Verdi's "Tuba Mirum." On a minor phrase in the music, the lights brightened, then faded as the traveler drew apart. At this moment, Audrey Johnson said that the "gold enriched curtains with the heraldic lions" opened to reveal a street in Venice and a "spell" was cast which even

205
the final curtain could not dissipate. Framing the stage was a proscenium decorated with ornate, baroque designs. Inside that were two arches which remained stationary, and a center piece which changed with the scenes. Behind the arches, more arch-like structures were used for masking. Two benches on either side of the stage also remained stationary. The center unit, which is Brabantio's house in the first scene, has a bench below it and a high window at the top. This window has practical shutters which are closed.

A stairway runs behind the center unit where the actors who will portray Brabantio and his servant can climb for their appearance at the window. A mallet was placed on the steps for Roderigo to create a knocking sound later on in the scene. Two maces and a practical lantern were under the stairs, awaiting the entrance of the servants. Another lantern is located off stage right and will be used by the Red Guard. The setting is empty. The lighting includes a green haze, and a brighter illumination is seen shining through the stage left archway. But, overall, the lights suggest Venetian crimsons and tones of brown and olive.

The setting, "rigid," and "simple," says Frances Wayne, had "no economy in color."

(Off right, Iago and Roderigo are heard talking.)

Iago

I say there is no remedy.

Roderigo

But in the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor!
When these two characters walked on stage, Frances Wayne says there was an immediate sense of action and excitement. Kappo Phelan has noted that Ferrer entered the stage with a business-like quality, "throwing away" these first lines as if it were a job to be done. Margaret Webster wrote that Iago's lines here are "light, acute," and "beautifully phrased."

Roderigo
Tush, never tell me, I take it much unkindly that thou, Iago, who has had my purse, as if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

Iago
'Sblood, but you will not hear me. If ever I did dream of such a matter, abhor me.

Roderigo
(Roderigo turns center stage.) Thou told'st me, thou didst hold him in thy hate.

Iago
Despise me if I do not. Three great ones of the city, in personal suit to make me his lieutenant, oft capp'd to him, and, by the faith of man, (He turns away from Roderigo.) I know my price, I am worth no worse a place. (Iago turns back to Roderigo as the latter reacts to the statement just made.) 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 chosen my officer." (Roderigo crosses up stage left.) And what was he? Forsooth, a great arithmetician, one Michael Cassio, a Florentine. (Iago moves up left to Roderigo.)

Roderigo
Cassio? This word was added; an example of the technique used to break the long speech.

Iago
That never set a squadron in the field, nor the division of a battle knows more than a spinster. Mere prattle, without practice is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election, and I, of whom his eyes had seen the
Iago (continued)

proof, at Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds, Christian and heathen, must be-lee'd and calm'd by debitor and creditor. (Roderigo turns left and shrugs.) This counter caster, he in good time, must his lieuten-ant be, and I, God bless the mark! --His Moorship's an-cient. /Margaret Webster explained the word "ancient" in the souvenir program as "aide de camp."/39

Roderigo

(Roderigo crosses to the stage left bench and sits on the far side of it.) By heaven, I would have been his hangman. (He is really not interested.)

Iago

(Iago turns.) Now sir, be judge yourself, whether I in any just term am affin'd to love the Moor.

Roderigo

(Roderigo turns to look at Iago, then turns away again.) I would not follow him then.

Iago

(Iago moves center.) O, sir, content you. (Roderigo takes out his candy box.) I follow him to serve my turn upon him. We cannot all be masters, nor all masters cannot be truly followed. (He crosses to Roderigo on the bench and places his left foot on the piece of furniture. Iago then takes the candy box from his friend.) You shall mark many a duteous and knee-crooking knave, that doting on his own obsequious bondage wears out his time much like his master's ass, (Iago selects a candy and returns the box to Roderigo.) for nought but provender and when he's old (He sneers.) cashier'd. Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are who trimmed in forms and visages of duty, (Roderigo selects a candy.) keep yet their hearts attending on themselves, and throwing but shows of service on their lords do well thrive by 'em and when they have lined their coats do themselves homage. Those fellows have some soul, and such a one do I profess myself. (He turns his back to Roderigo, fac-ing right.) For when my outward action does demonstrate the native act and figure of my heart in compliment ex-tern, 'tis not long after but I will wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peck at. (Iago crosses up stage left.) I am not what I am. (He moves into the up left archway with his back to Roderigo. Roderigo closes the candy box and places it in his pocket.)

Roderigo

What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe, if he can carry it thus!
Iago
Call up her father. (He crosses to Roderigo and pulls him to his feet.) Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight, proclaim him in the streets, incense her kinsmen and, though he in fertile climate dwell, plague him with flies.

Roderigo
Here is her father's house—(He moves to Brabantio's window.)

Aye.

Roderigo
I'll call aloud? [This is not a question in the traditional script.]

Iago
(He pushes Roderigo up right toward Brabantio's home.) Do, with like timorous accent, and dire yell, as when by night and negligence, the fire is spied in populous cities. (Iago runs down left, leaving Roderigo to face the window.)

Roderigo
(He exits through the stage right archway and bangs on the backstage step unit with a mallet, as though he were knocking loudly on Brabantio's door. The next line is heard behind the scenery.) What ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

Iago
(Iago moves quickly up center, jumps on the bench below the window and on each of the three "thieves," stamps his foot.) Awake! What ho, Brabantio! Thieves! Thieves! THIEVES! Look to your house, your daughter and your bags! Thieves, thieves! (He jumps off the bench and moves into the stage right archway to hide.)

Brabantio
(A servant appears at the window as the shutters open. Brabantio's voice is heard behind the center unit.) What is the reason of this terrible summons? What is the matter here. (Roderigo re-enters past Iago who is still in the right archway, and faces the window. Brabantio appears at the window to the right of his servant.)

Roderigo
Signior, is all your family within?

Iago
(Iago remains hidden on the right side of the stage.) Are all doors locked?
Brabantio
Why, wherefore ask you this?

Iago
(Iago grabs Roderigo by the shoulders and places himself behind his friend.) 'Zounds, sir, you are robbed. Oh for shame, put on your gown. (Roderigo and Iago laugh and Brabantio sends his servant for the gown.) Your heart is burst, you've lost half your soul. Even now, an old black ram is tupping your white ewe. (Brabantio closes the right shutter.) Arise, I say.

Brabantio
What, have you lost your wits?

Roderigo
(Roderigo crosses to beneath the window.) Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

Brabantio
Not I, what are you. (Iago pushes Roderigo a step left.)

Roderigo
My name is Roderigo.

Brabantio
The worser welcome. (The right shutter opens and the servant helps Brabantio put on a robe, then stands to his master's left.) I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors. In honest plainness thou hast heard me say my daughter is not for thee.

Roderigo
(Roderigo answers pleadingly.) Sir... /[In the traditional script, Brabantio is not finished with his speech. In the middle of his long admonishment to Roderigo, the suitor says "sir, sir, sir." Margaret Webster chose to separate these words and interject them into Brabantio's lines.]

Brabantio
And now, in madness, being full of supper, and distempering draughts--

Roderigo
(Protestingly) Sir--

Brabantio
Upon malicious bravery dost thou come to start my quiet?

Roderigo
(Angrily) Sir!
Brabantio
But thou must needs be sure my spirit and my place have
in them power to make this bitter to thee.

Roderigo
Patience, good sir.

Brabantio
What tell'st thou me of robbing? (Roderigo turns to
Iago for instruction. Iago whispers to him then turns
him back to face Brabantio.) This is Venice, my house
is not a grange.

Roderigo
Most grave Brabantio, in simple and pure soul I come to
you. (Roderigo moves quickly up stage to Brabantio,
Iago pulls him back.)

Iago
'Zounds sir, you are one of those that will not serve
God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you
service, you think we are ruffians. You'll have your
daughter covered with a Barbary horse.

Brabantio
(Brabantio leans out of the window in an attempt to see
who is speaking.) What profane wretch art thou?

Iago
(Iago backs up a bit.) I am one, sir, that come to tell
you your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast
with two backs.

Brabantio
Thou art a villain.

Iago
You are a (He sneers.)—senator. (Iago crosses into the
right archway, again to hide.)

Brabantio
This thou shalt answer, I know thee Roderigo.

Roderigo
Sir, I will answer anything. Your daughter (if you have
not given her leave) I say again hath made a gross re-
volt, tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes, in an
extravagant and wheeling stranger of here, and every-
where. (Roderigo crosses from the right to the left side
of the window.) Straight satisfy yourself, if she be in
her chamber, or your house, let loose on me the justice
of the state for thus deluding you.
Brabantio
Strike on the tender, ho! (The servant closes the shutter.) Give me a taper, call up all my people! (Brabantio pushes the servant off.) Light I say, light! (He leaves the window.)

Servants
These lines are heard behind the center unit and were added to the traditional script.
Second: Light, light ho!
First: Is my mistress not in her chamber?
Second: No, nor anywhere about the house.

Iago
(Iago moves out of the archway now that Brabantio is gone, and crosses to Roderigo who is still center stage.) Farewell, for I must leave thee. For it seems not meet, not wholesome to my place, to be pronounced, as if I stay I shall, against the Moor.

Brabantio
The following lines spoken by Brabantio are heard behind the center unit, or from the "house." Some of these phrases were extracted from a later speech and break into Iago's lengthy farewell to Roderigo. Call my brother. First call Signior Gratiano, ho, quickly.

Iago
In which regard, though I do hate him as I do hell's pains, yet for necessity of present life, I must throw out a flag and sign of love, which is indeed but sign--

Brabantio
(He is still heard off stage.) Get more tapers.

Servant
This line was interpolated by Webster. Lights for the master, lights for the master quickly.

Iago
--that you shall surely find him, lead to the Sagittary the raised search, and there will I be with him--

Brabantio
Raise all my kindred.

Iago
--so farewell. (Iago exits up stage left.)

Brabantio
(Brabantio and two servants enter from the up stage archway. The Second Servant carries a lighted lantern and moves down stage right. The First Servant remains

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Brabantio (continued)
in the up right area close to his master.) It is too
true an evil, gone she is, and what's to come of my de-
spised time, is nought but bitterness. Now Roderigo,
(He moves to Roderigo.) where didst thou see her, O un-
happy girl. With the Moor, say'st thou?

Roderigo
Yes. \( ^/\)The "yes" was added\( ^/\) \( \) (The servants react to
Roderigo's reply.)

Brabantio
O, she deceives me past thought! Are they married,
think you?

Roderigo
Truly, I think they are.

Brabantio
O heavens! Would that you had had her! \( ^/\)It might be
well to note here Margaret Webster's comparison between
Desdemona's father and a southern senator. Brabantio
would rather his daughter marry an unsuitable Venetian
than the Moor. \( ^/\) Do you know where we may apprehend her
and the Moor?

Roderigo
(Roderigo crosses to Brabantio.) I think I can discover
him, if you please to get good guard and go along with
me.

Brabantio
(The First Servant exits through the right archway to
get two maces and a sword. The Second crosses up right
also and waits on stage, then signals for the First to
come along.) And raise some special officers of night.
On good Roderigo, I'll deserve your pains. (Roderigo,
Brabantio and the two servants exit down left.)

\( ^/\)In the traditional script, the next scene is locat-
ed in another street in Venice. Margaret Webster chose to
empty the stage, then bring in the next characters as if
they were arriving in front of Brabantio's house. Drums are
heard, executed either by a small percussion instrument or a
recording of such. \( ^/\) The lights begin a slow change from
the green haze to a reddish hue.\( ^/\)
The first observation of Paul Robeson as Othello was most impressive. He appeared in a soldier's uniform, brocaded and intricately worked with dark colors. The brown and black jacket had a breast plate and black velvet and rose striped sleeves. The trousers matched the sleeves. Lions' heads adorned the front of the chest, a design which was carried out on many of the costumes. Over Robeson's torso was a rust metallic robe edged with fur, the sleeves of which reached to the elbow. The lions' heads held this outer garment open to reveal a silk lining underneath. Over the breast plate was a large pendant with three lions' heads hanging one on top of the other. Brenda Ueland, of the Minneapolis Daily Times, said that Robeson's armour looked like football padding on his huge shoulders. Frances Wayne wrote that the uniform was magnificent with its reds, gold and bronze brocade, "flowery" robe and "flashing arms." When Paul Robeson entered the stage, Lewis Nichols noted, there was no question that he could lead an army. He presented a huge, muscular, mighty figure which projected strength. Margaret Webster agreed that the black actor's appearance immediately established the picture of a commanding officer. Other critics supported the observation that Paul Robeson's physique, stature and costume revealed a man with the presence to command the Venetian armies. One
witness said the actor looked like an African "chieftain" when he entered the stage. According to Margaret Webster, Robert Edmond Jones took infinite care to select fabrics and cuts which would flatter Robeson's physique. But Stark Young believed that the performer did not move well in any of his costumes. He simply lacked the "instinct and phrasing for wearing" his garments, Young stated.

Nevertheless, Paul Robeson was generally impressive in this first scene. The Russian writer, Rogov, said that the black actor was usually greeted with applause as he entered the stage, and Jack Crockett observed that Robeson's first appearance incited the most enormous applause he had heard in years. A. E. Watts believed that these first scenes were, by far, the best moments in the performer's characterization, and Margaret Webster thought that Paul Robeson's delivery of the first line, "'Tis better as it is," gave the scene a stature and perspective which she had never seen before or since.

---

Iago

(Iago and Othello face one another.) Though in the trade of war I have slain men, yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience to do no contrived murder. I lack iniquity sometimes to do me service. Nine or ten times I thought to have yerked him here under his ribs.

Othello

Robeson spoke this line quietly. 'Tis better as it is.

Iago

(Iago moves again to check the right archway, then back to face Othello who is situated up left center.) Nay, but he prated and spoke such scurvy and provoking terms against your honour, that with the little godliness I have, I did full hard forbear him. But, pray, sir,
Iago (continued)

(Altemo crosses further up left.) Are you fast married?
(The Moor turns to Iago.) For be assured of this, the
magnificence is much belov'd. (Othello is angry.) He
will divorce you, or put upon you what restraint and
grievance the law, with all his might to enforce it on,
will give him cable.

Othello

Let him do his spite. My services, which I have done
the signiory, shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet
to know. (He crosses down stage.) I fetch my life and
being from men of royal siege, and my demerits may speak
unbonneted to as proud a fortune as this that I have
reached. For know, Iago, but that I love the gentle
Desdemona. I would not my unhoused free condition put
into circumscription and confine for the sea's worth.
(Iago turns right, away from Othello.) But look! What
lights come yonder? (He moves toward Iago.)

Iago

These are the raised father and his friends. You were
best go in. (Iago tries to draw Othello up right.)

Othello

Not I. I must be found. My parts, my title, and my
perfect soul shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago

By Janus, I think so. (Iago moves down right and looks
off in the distance. He and Othello await as a red
guard enters with a lighted lantern.)

(After the first red guard has entered, he turns to mo-
tion to Cassio and a second red guard, both of whom en-
ter at once. The guards stand at attention below the
down right bench and Cassio moves swiftly to Othello.)

Cassio's costume is much like the guards in contour
but not in color. Constructed of silver lamé with heavy
black and white braid applied diagonally for stripes, the
material had no "give," says Clanton (who played the role on
the tour) since the lamé was much the same as the fabric
used in a lady's handbag. Consequently, the actor was con-
stantly tearing his costume in the right armpit and the
crotch. James Monks, who performed the role in New York,
was less active than Clanton, so the garment had to be altered for the tour. The jacket received new crescent-shaped black velvet armpits, and the pants became a grey "cavalry twill" adorned with braid. Clanton apparently "had no trouble" with this new design.

(Cassio faces Othello.)

Othello
The servants of the Duke and my lieutenant. The goodness of the night upon you, friends! What is the news?

This statement is an excellent example of the manner in which punctuation was altered to suit the actor's interpretation. Here, the phrase is stated. In the traditional script, it is written as a question: "The servants of the Duke? And my lieutenant? The goodness of the night upon you, friends!"

Cassio
The Duke does greet you, general, and he requires your haste-post-haste appearance, even on the instance.

Othello
What is the matter, think you?

Cassio
Something from Cyprus, as I may divine. It is a business of some heat. You have been hotly called for, when, being not at your lodging to be found, the senate sent about three several quests to search you out.

Othello
'Tis well I am found by you. I will but spend a word here in the house, and go with you. (He exits up left, as if to find Brabantio in his house.)

Cassio
(Cassio moves up center.) Ancient, what makes he here?

Iago
(Iago crosses to Cassio.) Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack. If it prove a lawful prize, he's made forever.

Cassio
I do not understand.

Iago
He's married.
To who?

Cassio

Iago

Marry to— (Othello re-enters from the up left area and crosses down right.) --come, Captain, will you go?

Othello

Ha' with you. (Cassio and Othello begin to exit, while Iago moves up stage behind them.)

Cassio

Here comes another troop to seek for you.

Iago

It is Brabantio. General, be advised, he comes to bad intent.

Roderigo

(Roderigo enters first, followed by Brabantio, the two servants and the First Brown Guard. The Second Servant, with a mace and lighted lantern, moves quickly to the Second Red Guard, who is still at attention on stage right. Then, the servant crosses back to the left. The following scene moves with a heightened pace of a threatened fight.) Signior, it is the Moor.

Othello

Holla! Stand there!

Brabantio

Down with him, thief! (Simultaneously, swords are drawn. The Second Servant engages the Second Red Guard in the down stage right area. The First Guard rushes to Othello to protect him from the First Servant who, by leaping on a bench, is preparing to attack the Moor. Roderigo and Iago "stage" a duel down stage left, and Brabantio crosses to Othello, but Cassio intervenes.)

Iago

You, Roderigo, come, sir, I am for you.

Othello

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust 'em. (The fighting stops.)

\[When Margaret Webster spoke of her dueling scenes, she said that a director cannot stage them in a "Cecil B. De Mille" fashion for the live theatre. Shakespeare offers\]
isolated duels in his verse "which we can supplement with heraldic trappings," and a sense of chivalry.\(^57^\)

Othello

(After the fighting stops, the First Servant who has jumped on the center bench in the midst of the duel, steps down. Cassio moves just above Brabantio, and Iago moves upstage of Roderigo.) Good Signior, you shall more command with years than with your weapons.

Brabantio

O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter? Damn'd 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, so opposite to marriage that she shunn'd the wealthy curled darlings (He looks to Roderigo.) of our nation, would ever incur a general mock, run from her guardage to the sooty bosom of such a thing as thou? To fear, not to delight. /Paul Robeson said that this speech helps to make Othello seem more credible. What Brabantio questions, the Moor also asks later on in the play.\(^58^\) I therefore apprehend and do attack thee for an abuser of the world, a practiser of arts inhibited, and out of warrant. Lay hold upon him. If he do resist, subdue him at his peril. (The fighting begins again. The First Servant jumps back on the up center bench and engages Cassio. Iago moves quickly down stage center to engage the officer and the Second Servant.)

Othello

Hold your hands. Both you of my inclining and the rest. Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it without a prompter. (The First Servant steps off the bench and stands to the right of it. All sheathe their swords, and Othello turns to Brabantio.) Where will you that I go, to answer this your charge?

Brabantio

To prison, till fit time of law, and course of direct session call thee to answer.

Othello

What if I do obey? How may the duke be therewith satisfied whose messengers are here about my side. (He indicates Cassio.) Upon some present business of the state to bring me to him?

Cassio

'Tis true, most worthy signior. The duke's in council, and your noble self, I am sure, is sent for. /This line is said by the officer in the traditional script./
Brabantio

How? The duke in council in this time of night?
(Othello turns right and Cassio sends the Red Guards off stage through the down right opening.) Bring him away,
(The officer takes the lantern from the Servant and ex- its up left.) --mine's not an idle cause.-- (Roderigo crosses to Brabantio.) --the duke himself, or any of my brothers of the state, cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own. (He crosses down right.) For if such actions may have passage free, bond-slaves, and pagans, shall our statesmen be.

(Brabantio exits through the down right passageway. Roderigo turns to Iago, but the villain motions for him to follow Brabantio. Desdemona's father returns to collect Roderigo and all, including Othello, Iago, and Cassio follow the enraged father as he exits down right. The servants move through the up right arch, presumably to return to Brabantio's home. At this point there is a blackout, and both the traveler and the act curtain close quickly. The audience then hears a fanfare and the act curtain opens. Music from "Appian Way" is played until the characters enter in front of the traveler. A "Black and Gold" officer moves in from down left, carrying a lantern.)

As this scene progressed, more and more "royal" colors were added to the stage. The Black and Gold officer wore a jacket and trousers made of black velvet with gold braid trim. The senators were in red "plush" under-robines with red velvet coats, lined with brown fur and matching hats. Their coats had a "sweeping" line\(^59\) which added splendor to the scene. The Duke wore a plush under-robe with a long, circular cape made of rich, red velvet. Lions' head ornaments adorned the shoulder pieces which were made of white velvet and draped down across the chest over the red robe. This capelet was edged with brown fur. On the Duke's head was a white, fitted head bonnet, worn under a rust and gold brocaded hat. Francis Letton compares the
design of this scene and the up-coming senate scene to the portrait of Holbein's Sir Henry Wyat.67

(The Black and Gold Guard is followed by the First Senator, the Duke, and Lodovico. The officer bows to the Duke and exits through the traveler. The Second and Third Senators enter with a Red Guard from the down right area. The Red Guard travels to center stage. The First Senator bows, and the Duke crosses in front of him to center stage.)

Duke
There is no composition in these news that gives him credit.

Lodovico
(Lodovico bows and crosses to center stage.) Indeed they are disproportioned. (The Second Servant moves in from down right and crosses to the Duke.)

First Senator
The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes.

Second Senator
This cannot be by no assay of reason.

Lodovico
It is a pageant to keep us in false gaze.

Second Senator
When we consider the importance of Cyprus to the Turk—

[At this point, the scenery must have been changed for the senate scene. There is an indication in the prompt-book to "kill" the work lights. Margaret Webster, in an effort to pace the production evenly, staged this first scene in front of the traveler to give the stagehands time to make alterations in the set.]

Duke
Nay, in all confidence he's not for Rhodes.

Third Senator
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

Duke
And mine, a hundred and forty.

Lodovico
And mine, two hundred. But though they jump not on a just account, —yet do they all confirm a Turkish fleet and bearing up to Cyprus.
The traveler is opened by two Red Guards who exit with the curtain; one then returns down right and stands at attention for the duration of the scene. The guard on stage left returns with a stool which he places to his right, then takes an "attention" stance to the left."

\[\text{The bench which was up center has been "struck."}\]

An enormous plaque covers Brabantio's window. Both archways are covered with sheer curtains, and those on stage right are practical. An elaborate throne chair is placed on a low platform in front of the left archway, and two stools on each side of the throne are placed for the senators.\

(The Duke crosses in front of Lodovico and all move upstage.)

Duke

Nay, it is possible enough to judgement. I do not so secure me to the error, but the main article I do approve in fearful sense.

Messenger

(Heard off stage.) What ho! What ho! What ho!

(The Duke moves to his throne and Lodovico crosses to a position to the left of his lord. The Black and Gold guard opens the right archway curtains and the Messenger enters and travels quickly to center stage. Stockman Barner, who played the Messenger on the tour, was asked by his director to "apply smudges" to his face for this scene. The Fourth Senator is behind him. The Black and Gold Guard closes the curtain and stands to the right of the arch. The Fifth Senator enters from down right. The Messenger crosses to the Duke and kneels before him.)

Fourth Senator

Here is more news.

Third Senator

A messenger from the galleys.

Duke

Now, the business?

Messenger

The Ottomites, reverend and gracious, steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes, have there injoined with an after fleet.
(The traveler is opened by two Red Guards who exit with the curtain; one then returns down right and stands at attention for the duration of the scene. The guard on stage left returns with a stool which he places to his right, then takes an "attention" stance to the left.)

The bench which was up center has been "struck."

An enormous plaque covers Brabantio's window. Both archways are covered with sheer curtains, and those on stage right are practical. An elaborate throne chair is placed on a low platform in front of the left archway, and two stools on each side of the throne are placed for the senators.

(The Duke crosses in front of Lodovico and all move up-stage.)

Duke

Nay, it is possible enough to judgement. I do not so secure me to the error, but the main article I do approve in fearful sense.

Messenger

(Heard off stage.) What ho! What ho! What ho!

(The Duke moves to his throne and Lodovico crosses to a position to the left of his lord. The Black and Gold guard opens the right archway curtains and the Messenger enters and travels quickly to center stage. Stockman Barner, who played the Messenger on the tour, was asked by his director to "apply smudges" to his face for this scene. The Fourth Senator is behind him. The Black and Gold Guard closes the curtain and stands to the right of the arch. The Fifth Senator enters from down right. The Messenger crosses to the Duke and kneels before him.)

Fourth Senator

Here is more news.

Third Senator

A messenger from the galleys.

Duke

Now, the business?

Messenger

The Ottomites, reverend and gracious, steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes, have there injoined with an after fleet.
Ay, so I thought. Of how many, as you guess?

Of thirty sail, and now they do re-stem their backward course, bearing with frank appearance their purposes towards Cyprus. The Messenger rises and the group on stage begin to participate in what Margaret Webster called "hubbub." They moved to one another, speaking as they traveled, supposedly about the situation revealed by the Messenger. Actors were allowed to create blocking patterns of their own within general areas.

(To the Duke.) So I feared your Grace.

Signior Montano, your trusty and most valiant servitor, with his free duty recommends you thus, and prays you to believe him.

'Tis certain then for Cyprus.

Aye your Grace. Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

(The right archway curtain opens again and Othello, Brabantio, Iago, Cassio and the two servants enter. The servants split and wait on either side of the arch. Iago and Roderigo remain back by the right archway and Brabantio moves down right. Othello crosses immediately to center stage to face the Duke.)

In this scene, the colors which filled the stage were "magnificent," Hazel Bruce wrote. Scenery, costumes, and lighting blended to create a "shrewd scale of umber, dull orange and gold." The focus was placed upon Paul Robeson who presented "six feet of majesty in dulled purple and rich gold."  

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you against the general enemy Ottoman.

Indeed we need you.
(To Brabantio.) I did not see you. Welcome, gentle signior. We lacked your counsel and your help tonight.

Brabantio
(To the Third Senator who is further down stage right.) My daughter, O, my daughter!

Lodovico
Dead? (The group begins to ad lib murmurs which begin slowly in subdued tones and build during Brabantio's speech.)

Brabantio
Ay, to me. She is abus'd, stol'n from me and corrupted by spells and medicines, bought of mountebanks. (He crosses to the Duke.) For nature so preposterously to err, being not deficient, blind, nor lame of sense, sans witchcraft could not. (The Fourth Senator moves to Brabantio.)

Duke
Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself, and you of her, the bloody book of law you shall yourself read in the bitter letter, after its own sense, yea though our proper son stood in your action. (The sounds from the senators becomes louder.)

Elinor Hughes points out that the fact that witchcraft is so quickly accepted by Brabantio, the senators, and the Duke as a motivation for Desdemona's actions indicates that the Venetians believed in the mystery of an unknown world. All concede that sorcery is possible until the testimonies from Othello and Desdemona change their minds.

Brabantio
Humbly I thank your grace. Here is the man, this Moor. (Brabantio, who has been glaring at Othello, now points to him. The Third Senator moves quickly toward the Moor, but the Fourth stops him.) Who now it seems your special mandate for the state affairs hath hither brought.

Lodovico
We are very sorry for it. (He crosses down left to the Senators located in that area. The murmurs continue.)
Duke
(To Othello.) What in your own part can you say to this?

Brabantio
Nothing, but this is so. (The Third Senator crosses to Brabantio while Roderigo crosses down right. Cassio travels up right above Othello.)

Othello
(The senators, loud at this point, continue to talk as Othello delivers his first line to the court.) Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors, my very noble and approv'd good masters--

Lodovico
(He overrides the senators in a loud voice.) Let him speak! (The senators stop talking.)

Othello
One critic wrote that Robeson demanded respect when he began his defense to the senate. They hushed immediately to hear what the Moor had to say. Margaret Webster said that Othello's first lines to the counsel begin the language which will run a full "orchestral gamut" from the controlled testimony to passion and sorrow. Robeson was not "suave," or "dignified" in this scene, but unlike many of his predecessors in the role, he delivered his lines abruptly—that I have ta'en away this old man's daughter, it is most true.—true, I have married her--(The angry murmurs become louder.) The very head and front of my offending hath this extent, no more.

Brabantio
You see? (The senators begin to murmur again.)

Othello
Rude I am in speech, Margaret Webster indicates that this phrase projects Othello's foreign nature, and little blest with the soft phrase of peace; for since these arms of mine had seven years' pith, till now some nine moons wasted, they have used their dearest action in the tented field, and little of this great world can I speak, more than pertains to feats of broil and battle; and therefore little shall I grace my cause in speaking for myself. (The senators begin to talk again. The Fourth sits on the down left bench.) Yet, by your gracious patience, I will a round unvarnished tale deliver of my whole course of love, what drugs, what charms, what conjuration, and what mighty magic (for such proceedings I am charged withal) I won his daughter.
Lodovico
(Lodovico sits on the stool to the left of the Duke's throne.) Say it Othello. (The Fifth Senator moves to Othello's right side.)

Brabantio
A maiden never bold; of spirit so still and quiet that her motion blush'd at herself; (Brabantio turns down center to face the senators in the left corner.) And she in spite of nature, of years, of country, credit, every thing, to fall in love with what she fear'd to look on? Paul Robeson said that this line also motivated Othello's suspicions of his wife in the later scenes. (Brabantio delivers the next line to the Fifth Senator who is sympathetic with his words.) I therefore couch again, that with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood, or with some dram conjur'd to this effect, he wrought upon her. (He turns right to face Othello. The Second Senator sits on the down left stool and the First crosses to him. The Fifth travels behind the Fourth.)

Duke
To vouch this is no proof, without more certain and more overt test. (The senators begin to murmur again.)

Lodovico
(He rises and crosses to Othello who is still center stage.) But Othello, speak. Did you by indirect and forced courses subdue and poison this young maid's affections? Or came it by request, and such fair question as soul to soul affordeth?

Othello
I do beseech you, send for the lady to the Sagittary and let her speak of me before her father. (The senators begin to talk.) If you do find me foul in her report, (the trust, the office I do hold of you) not only take away, but let your sentence even fall upon my life. (This creates a commotion among the group and the noise is heightened.)

Lodovico
(He turns to the Duke.) Your Grace.

Duke
Fetch Desdemona hither.

Lodovico
(Lodovico crosses down left to speak to the First Senator and gives a scroll to the Second.) Ay reason enough. Take this yourself to the emissary.
Othello
(Othello turns to Iago.) Ancient, conduct them, you
best know the place. (Iago salutes and exits up right
through the curtains which are still closed. Brabantio’s
servants follow him.)

Lodovico
We will hear you good Othello. (The senators talk to
one another.)

Duke
Say it, Othello. (He sits on the throne. Roderigo sits
on the down right bench. Lodovico takes the down left
stool, while Brabantio sits on the up stage stool.)

The following segment of this scene elicited criti-
cical response. Visually, the grouping was staged so that
all characters but Othello were scattered to the left and
right of the stage, allowing a large open area in the center
for the Moor to present his defense. More importantly,
however, Othello delivers lines which establish his intelli-
gence, his wit, and his foreign nature. Elliot Norton wrote
that the language in this speech is "lofty and spicery," cre-
at ing an exotic atmosphere. Paul Robeson was at his best
in this scene, Louis Kronenberger said, and L. A. Sloper
agreed, saying:

These lines profited not only by the resonance of his
voice and expertness of his tone production, but also by
the subtlety of his change of pace and of volume in de-

delivery. Here the intelligent actor came to the aid of
the cultured musician.

In this scene, Othello lets it be known that he was once an
honored guest in Brabantio's home, where he told stories of
his exotic homeland. Margaret Webster notes this speech as
one of the best examples of his alien quality. Elliot
Norton wrote that Desdemona must have thought the Moor was a
"wonderful heroic figure out of a storybook." Brabantio
was also interested in Othello's tales, Robert Whittington said, and once held the stranger in high regard.\textsuperscript{74} Elinor Hughes stated that the Moor faced the august Venetian senate with a childlike characteristic.\textsuperscript{75}

Othello

Her father loved me, oft invited me, still questioned me the story of my life, from year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes, that I have passed. I ran it through, even from my boyish days to the very moment that he bade me tell it. Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances, of moving accidents by flood and field of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach; and being taken by the insolent foe; and sold to slavery; of my redemption thence, and portents in my travels' history; wherein of antres vast, and deserts idle, rough- quarries, rocks and hills, whose heads touch heaven, it was my hint to speak,-- such was the process; and of the Cannibals, that each other eat, the Anthropephagi; and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders. (This motivates a general laughter from the group except for Brabantio.) This to hear would Desdemona seriously incline; but still the house affairs would draw her hence, whichever as she could with haste dispatch, she'd come again, and with a greedy ear devour up my discourse. My story being done, she gave me for my pains a world of sighs. She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange, 'twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful. She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished that heaven had made her such a man. She thanked me, and bade me, if I had a friend that loved her, I should but teach him how to tell my story, and that would woo her. Upon this hint I spoke. She loved me for the dangers I had passed, and I loved her that she did pity them. (Murmurs are heard from all.) This only is the witchcraft I have used.

\textsuperscript{76}

When Paul Robeson had finished this speech, Edith Isaacs said the interpretation seemed so right, that one could easily believe that here was an Othello as Shakespeare created him.\textsuperscript{76}

(The senators begin to speak to one another. As they engage in conversation, Othello turns right to see Iago as the villain opens the curtains of the right archway. Cassio moves quickly to the area to assist with the curtains. Desdemona enters and the draperies are closed behind her.)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Uta Hagen's first lines were said to have come from a "forced breath," but became more natural as the play progressed. Alexander Fried said she was too "framed of speech—all too perfect in expression." In the same respect, Herbert Whitaker wrote that her first lines were delivered in an "artificial" manner. All of these critics agreed, however, that the beginning scene was not a fair indication of the excellent characterization which Miss Hagen was to portray later in the play.

Othello
Here's the lady, let her witness it.

Duke
I think this tale would win my daughter too . . .

Margaret Webster said that the audience agreed with the Duke on this statement. (Iago crosses to Roderigo who is down right.) Good Brabantio, take up this mangled matter at the best. (Othello moves to Desdemona to help her remove a blue velvet wrap. He gives it to Iago who holds the cape throughout the scene.) This is the first time the Moor touches his bride, and Frances Wayne said that each time this happened, it was as if Othello were touching glass.

Brabantio
(He is standing since Desdemona arrived.) I pray you hear her speak. If she confess that she was half the wooer, destruction on my head, if my bad blame light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress . . . (Desdemona crosses center to Brabantio. Othello escorts her.) Do you perceive in all this noble company where most you owe obedience?

Desdemona
My noble father, I do perceive here a divided duty. To you I am bound for life and education. My life and education both do learn me how to respect you. You are the lord of duty, I am hitherto your daughter. (She turns over her right shoulder to Othello.) But here's my husband and so much duty as my mother show'd to you, preferring you before her father, so much I challenge that I may profess due to the Moor, my lord.

Lodovico
Well spoken, Desdemona. (He sits on the down left stool and the senators talk among themselves.)
Brabantio

God be with you. I ha' done. (He turns to the Duke.)
Please it your grace, on then to the state-affairs.
(The noises from the senators becomes more pronounced.
Brabantio turns and places his hand on the Third Senator's shoulder.) I had rather to adopt a child than get it. Come hither Moor. (Brabantio crosses between Othello and his daughter, so the Moor is on his right, and Desdemona on his left.) I here do give thee that, with all my heart which, but thou hast already, with all my heart I would keep from thee. (He pushes Desdemona into Othello's arms.) For your sake, jewel, I am glad at soul I have no other child; for thy escape would teach me tyranny, to hang clogs upon 'em. (Brabantio turns to the Duke and crosses to him on the next line.) I have done, my lord. Beseech you now to the affairs of state.

(Brabantio sits on the stool which is located up center.
The Second Senator rises to cross down left, and the Fourth sits on the far down left stool. Desdemona moves down right, bows to Iago, then reservedly bows to Roderigo. She then turns to Cassio who smiles and kisses her hand. Cassio then travels up stage and stands. Desdemona remains down right.)

Duke

The Turk with most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you. You must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

Othello

The tyrant custom, most grave senators, has made the flinty and steel couch of war my thrice-driven bed of down. I do agonize a natural and prompt alacrity I find in harness, and do undertake these present wars against the Ottomites. (The entire group cheers at this news.)

Lodovico

Bravo! Othello, that is it, we can use your arm. (He rises to cross to Othello and they shake hands center stage. Lodovico then moves down right to kiss Desdemona's hand, then turns to stand between Cassio and Desdemona. The Second Senator sits on the vacated down left stool.)

Othello

Most humbly therefore, bending to your state, I crave fit disposition for my wife, due reference of place and exhibition, with such accommodation and resort as levels with her breeding. (Othello and Desdemona nod at one another.)
If you please, be it at her father's.

I will not have it so.

Nor I.

Nor I. (She crosses to Othello.) I would not there reside, to put my father in impatient thoughts my being in his eye. (Murmurs are heard from the senators. Desdemona crosses to the left side of the Moor to kneel before the Duke.) Most gracious duke, to my unfolding, lend a prosperous ear, and let me find a charter in your voice to assist my simpleness.

(The Duke motions for Desdemona to rise.) What would you Desdemona.

(She rises and Othello moves forward.) That I did love the Moor, to live with him, my downright violence, and storm of fortunes may trumpet to the world. My heart's subdued even to the very quality of my lord, I saw Othello's visage in his mind,— (She turns to look at Othello, then back to the Duke,) --and to his honours and most valiant parts did I my soul and fortunes consecrate. And so, dear lords,— (She moves forward to address the senators who are located down left.) --if I be left behind, a moth of peace, and he go to the wars, the rites for which I love him are bereft me, and I a heavy interim shall support by his dear absence. (She moves again to the senators, appealing to them.) Let me go with him. (The senators voice their surprise with such ad libbed phrases as "we send no maidens into battle," and "what have we here.")

Let her have your voices. (He crosses to Desdemona, placing his left arm around her shoulders.) Vouch with me heaven, I therefore beg it not to please the palate of my appetite, but to be free and bounteous to her mind. (The senators react.) And heaven defend your good soul that you think I will your serious and great business scant, for she is with me. (Murmurs are heard again.)

(The Duke rises and steps down off the low platform. Brabantio and the other senators rise.) Be it as you
Duke (continued)
shall privately determine, either for stay or going.
The affair cries haste, and speed must answer it. You
must hence to-night.

To-night, my lord?

Duke
This night.

Othello
(He bows to the Duke.) With all my heart.

Duke
(He turns to the senators in the down left area.) At
nine in the morning here we'll meet again.

"At nine in the morning then, etc."

Duke
(To Othello.) Othello, leave some office behind, and he
shall our commission bring to you, with such things else
of quality or respect as doth import you.

Othello
So please your grace, my ancient. (He turns to Iago who
has remained down right. The "ancient" comes forward
and salutes.) A man he is of honesty and trust. To his
conveyance I assign my wife, with what else needful your
good grace shall think to be sent after me.

Duke
Let it be so. Good night to everyone.

(The right archway curtains open and "good nights" are
heard from the senators. The Second Senator crosses to
Iago to give him instructions on a scroll, then exits
down right. The Fifth leaves through the down left pas-
sageway. The Duke crosses to the right side of the stage
then turns back to Brabantio.)

Duke
And, noble signior, if virtue no delighted beauty lack,
your son-in-law is far more fair than black. (He exits
through the archway, while the First Senator exits down
left.)

Lodovico
Adieu, brave Moor, use Desdemona well. (He follows the
Duke, and Cassio follows after also. The Third and
Fourth Senators exit down left.)
Brabantio
(He crosses from the left to the right side of the stage, down stage of Desdemona and Othello. Desdemona appeals to him as he passes, but he does not acknowledge her. He then turns to Othello.) Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see. She has deceived her father, and may thee. (He exits up right, following the Duke. Roderigo trails after him.)

Othello
(The Moor places his arm around his wife to comfort her.) My life upon her faith.

(The husband and wife remain in this position as the Red Guards slowly close the traveler behind them, then exit through the center once it is shut. Iago moves to Desdemona, draping her cloak about her shoulders.)

Othello
Honest Iago, my Desdemona must I leave thee. I prithee, let thy wife attend on her, and bring her after in the best advantage. Come Desdemona, I have but an hour of love, of worldly matters, and direction to spend with thee. We must obey the time.

(Othello places his arm around his wife and they exit down right, Desdemona taking the lead. Iago remains center, looking after them, then slowly crosses stage left. Roderigo enters through the center of the traveler.)

Roderigo
Iago!

Iago
(He turns to face Roderigo.) What sayest thou, noble heart? (Bells and chimes are heard at intervals.)

Roderigo
What will I do, thinkest thou?

Iago
Why, go to bed, and—sleep.

Roderigo
I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago
If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why thou silly gentleman?

Roderigo
It is silliness to live when to live is a torment, and then we have a prescription to die, when death is our physician.
Iago
O villainous! I have looked upon the world four times seven years, and since I could distinguish between a benefit and an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would change my humanity with a baboon. (He turns left, pulls the stool around with his right foot and sits. He picks his teeth.)

Roderigo
What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond, but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

Iago
Virtue? a fig! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus, or thus; our bodies are gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners, so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce, either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry, why, the power, and corrigible authority of this, lies in our wills.

Roderigo
Ah. (He shrugs, then turns down right. Iago rises to follow him.)

Iago
If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions. But we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbittered lusts; whereof I take this, that you call love, to be a sect or scion.

Roderigo
It cannot be.

Iago
It is merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will.

Roderigo
No. (He turns to cross further right. Iago pursues him.)

Iago's following "put money in thy purse" speech was said to have been much too casual, according to journalist "C. W. D." At the same time, however, the critic wrote that Jose Ferrer used a very colloquial approach which was altogether appealing. Ferrer says that the speech is a
"practical piece of advice" and reinforces Iago's business-like nature. Robinson Stone writes that Jose Ferrer was "hypnotic" in this scene, using his hands eloquently, making him seem "bewitchingly evil."

Iago

Come, be a man. Drown thyself. Drown cats and blind puppies. (He crosses further to Roderigo.) I profess me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving, with cables of perdurable toughness. I could never better stead thee than now. (He slaps Roderigo on the shoulder.) Put money in thy purse. Follow these wars, defeat thy favour with an usurped beard. I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love unto the Moor. . . put money in thy purse . . . nor he his to her. It was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an unanswerable sequester; put money in thy purse. (He pushes Roderigo, then turns center.) She must change for youth. When she is sated with his body she will find the terror of her choice. She must have change, she must. (Roderigo steps toward Iago.) Therefore, put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. (Roderigo reacts to this.) Make all the money thou can'st. If sanctimony, and a frail vow, betwixt an erring barbarian and a super-subtle Venetian, be not too much for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her. Therefore make— (He pauses and rubs his fingers together.) —money.

Roderigo

Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend upon the issue?

Iago

Thou art sure of me. Go, make money, oh. (He turns Roderigo around with his right hand and starts him off down right.) I have told thee often and I tell thee again, and again, I hate the Moor. Margaret Webster said that these venomous lines indicate Iago's sheer villainy. The audience is not interested in a motive here, but in the "terrifying fact" that he is evil. (Roderigo stops.) If thou canst cuckold him, thou doest thyself a pleasure, and me a sport. Eh. Traverse, go to, provide thy money. We will have more of this tomorrow. Adieu. (He pats Roderigo, then turns left and begins to cross the stage.)
Roderigo
(He begins to move off right, then stops, pauses, and turns back to Iago.) Pst! (Iago turns and Roderigo whispers to him.) Where shall we meet i' the morning.

Iago
(Iago also whispers.) At my lodging.

Roderigo
(He continues to whisper.) I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago
Go to, farewell. (Roderigo exits.) Eh, do you hear Roderigo?

Roderigo
(He re-enters, whispering again.) What say you?

Iago
(Iago delivers this line quietly.) No more of drowning, do you hear?

Roderigo
(Roderigo delivers this line in a loud voice.) Oh, I am changed. (Iago shushes him, then Roderigo whispers the next line.) I'll go sell all my land. (He exits.)

Iago
(Iago waves after his friend.) Put money in thy purse! Thus do I ever make my fool my purse. (He crosses down left, sits on the stool and prepares for his first soliloquy.)

When Jose Ferrer was alone with the audience, Mary McCarthy said, he created a "dream of evil." Rather than speak the lines to himself, the actor directed his speech to the audience, sharing his thoughts with them. Margaret Webster wrote that this is the first moment the audience has a chance to recognize fully the villain's flawed mind.

Iago
For I mine own gained knowledge should profane, if I would time expend with such a snipe but for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor, and 'tis thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets he's done mine office. I know not if it be true . . . Yet I, for mere suspicion in that kind, will do as if for surety. He holds me well. The better shall my purpose work upon him. Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now. To get his place, and to plume up my

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Iago (continued)

will, in double knavery . . . How, how? Let me see. After some time, to abuse Othello's ear that he is too familiar with his wife. He hath a person and a smooth dispose to be suspected, fram'd to make women false. The Moor's of a free and open nature too, that thinks men honest that but seem to be so, and will as tenderly be led by the nose as asses are. (Iago rises.) --it is engendered. Hell and night must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

(A blackout follows. A bell is heard in the distance, accompanied by the wind. The down stage left stool is removed in the dark. While Iago and Roderigo were conversing, the scenery was shifted.)

(The center unit now has two small archways facing diagonally to the left and right. Two steps lead to these entrances. The large, permanent right arch has two steps added, leading to a low platform which lies inside the entrance and extends into the backstage area. In the center, the left archway is filled with lattice work, but the right is practical and can be used as a passageway. The up left arch is open and has a wall behind with a wooden structure which holds several spears.}

(When the traveler opens, the stage is empty. Montano and the Second Cyprian Gentleman enter from up left. A trumpet fanfare is heard, and the bells continue over the dialogue. Montano crosses up right center, followed by the Gentleman.)

Montano
What from the cape can you discern at sea?

First Gentleman
(The First Gentleman enters through the center unit, coming down the steps.) Nothing at all. It is a high-wrought flood, I cannot 'twixt the heaven and the main descry a sail.

Montano
(He looks off, then turns back center.) Methinks the wind does speak aloud at land. A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements. What shall we hear of this.
If that the Turkish fleet be not ensheltered and embayed, they are drowned. It is impossible they bear it out.

(Two shots are heard as the Third Gentleman rushes on stage from up right. The First crosses to meet him.) News, lads! Our wars are done. The desperate tempest hath so banged the Turks that their designment halts. A noble ship of Venice— (He crosses to Montano who is still center.) —hath seen a grievous wreck and suffering on most part of their fleet. (The bell stops.)

Now, is this true?

The ship is here put in, (The Second Gentleman starts to cross to the Third.) —a Veronese— (The Second continues and exits up right.)—Michael Cassio, Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello, is come ashore. The Moor himself at sea, and is in full commission here for Cyprus.

I am glad of it. 'Tis a worthy governor.

But this same Cassio, though he speaks of comfort touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly and prays the Moor be safe, for they were parted with foul and violent tempest.

(Noises are heard from the crowd backstage. Actors speak phrases which concern the Turkish loss, then begin to cheer for Cassio's landing.) Pray heaven he be, oft I have served him, and the man commands like a full soldier.

Thanks, you the valiant of this war-like isle, that so approve the Moor, and let the heavens give him defense against the elements, for I have lost him on a dangerous sea.

(The Third Gentleman moves to introduce Cassio to Montano and Cassio steps off the platform to center.) Signior Montano.
Montano
(He shakes hands with Cassio.) Is he well shipped.

Cassio
(Several Arabs attempt to move into the scene through the right archway, but the Brown Guards stop them. This "crowd" consists of the Cyprian Woman and the Arab previously mentioned, and three Cyprian men and another woman.) His bark is stoutly timbered, and his pilot of very expert and approved allowance. Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death, stand in bold cure.

Two Red Guards
(The Guards' voices are heard backstage.) A sail, a sail, a sail! (Two of the Arabs exit through the up right archway. Another Arab and Cyprian woman enter down right. The Second Gentleman enters up right and the two Brown Guards stand at attention to the left and right side of the left archway.)

Cassio
(He turns to the Second Gentleman.) What noise?

Second Gentleman
(He has remained on the up right platform.) The town is empty, on the brow o' the sea stand ranks of people, and they cry "A sail!" (The Cyprian Woman and Arab exit down right, and the rest of the Arabs leave up right. Another shot is heard.)

Cassio
My hopes do shape him for the governor.

Second Gentleman
They do discharge the shot of courtesy. Our friend, at least.

Cassio
I pray you sir, go forth, and give us truth, who 'tis that is arrived.

First Gentleman
I shall. (He salutes to Cassio, then turns to motion to the Brown Guards who follow him off through the right archway.)

Montano
But, good lieutenant, is your general wived? (The Third Gentleman crosses down left of Montano.)

Cassio
Most fortunately; he hath achieved a maid that paragons description and wild fame; one that excels the quirks of blazoning pens, and in the essential vesture of creation,
Cassio (continued)
does tire the engineer. (Another shot is heard and Cassio turns quickly to the sound. The Third Gentleman has moved up stage of Cassio, and the First enters up right.) How now, who has put in?

Second Gentleman
'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general. (Montano crosses to the up right steps and the First Gentleman makes room for him. Montano looks off into the distance, then turns back to the Second Gentleman. Both cross to the down right area.)

Cassio
He has had most favourable and happy speed. Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds, the guttered rocks, and congregated sands, traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel, as having sense of beauty, do omit their mortal natures, letting go safely by the divine Desdemona. (Noises are heard off right and build as Desdemona "arrives on the island." An Arab enters down right and turns to motion to the Cyprian woman to follow him. He moves up to the right archway and exits.)

Montano
(He crosses to Cassio.) What is she?

Cassio
She that I speak of. Our great Captain's captain, left in the conduct of bold Iago, whose footing here anticipates our thoughts a se'nnight's speed. (A trumpet is heard.)

(Bianca enters from the down right area accompanied by a Venetian Citizen. She chucks Cassio under the chin as she passes, and the Citizen pulls her away from the officer. Then the couple move to the down left area of the stage. The two Brown Guards enter and stand to the left and right of the up right archway. Desdemona walks through the right arch, followed by Iago, Emilia and two citizens. A man and woman enter from down right. Iago moves up stage of Desdemona, steps off the platform, and takes her left hand. Other members of the crowd enter from various passageways on the stage.)

Cassio
Oh behold, the riches of the ship is come ashore. (The noises, which have continued since Desdemona's arrival, stop.) Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees. (All kneel except Bianca. Two men exit up right.) Hail to the lady, and the grace of heaven before, behind thee, and on every hand enwheel thee 'round.
Desdemona
I thank you valiant Cassio. (She moves down the steps and crosses to Cassio. Both continue to travel down left. The Second Gentleman kisses Emilia's hand as she moves center.) What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

Cassio
He is not yet arrived. Nor know I aught, but that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Desdemona
O, but I fear--(The Second Gentleman moves to Iago and they shake hands up right center.) How lost you company?

Cassio
The great contention of the sea and skies parted our fellowship.

Two Red Guards
(The voices are heard only.) "A sail, a sail!" (A shot is heard.)

Cassio
But hark, a sail.

Second Gentleman
(He crosses up onto the right platform.) They give their greeting to the citadel. This likewise is a friend.

Cassio
See for the news. (The Second Gentleman exits up right. The two Brown Guards exit to get their banners. Cassio moves to Iago to shake hands and two Arabs enter up right.) Good ancient, you are welcome. (He crosses down right to Emilia and kisses her.) Welcome mistress. Let it not gall your patience, good lago, that I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding that gives me this bold show of courtesy. (He kisses Emilia again. The Second Gentleman crosses to kiss Desdemona's hand. Montano also crosses to greet her and the two stand to the side of center stage.)

Iago
Sir, would she give you so much of her lips as of her tongue she has bestow'd on me, you'd have enough. (He moves forward.)

Desdemona
Alas, she has no speech.
Iago
In faith too much. I find it still—when I ha' list to
sleep. Marry, before your ladyship, I grant, she puts
her tongue a little in her heart, and chides with think-
ing. (General laughter from all.)

Emilia
(She moves to Iago.) You have little cause to say so.

Iago
Come on, come on. (Cassio travels down right to speak
with two citizens.) You are pictures out of doors,
bells in your parlours; wild-cats in your kitchens;--
(Desdemona crosses up right to look beyond the entrance-
way. The Arabs on the platform bow to her.) --saints in
your injuries; devils being offended; players in your
housewifery, and housewives in your beds. (He places
his arm around Emilia and the crowd laughs.) Margaret
Marshall said that the attraction between Iago and his
wife made it more credible that she would be blind to
his faults later on in the play.  

Desdemona
(She moves down right.) O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

Iago
Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk. You rise to play,
and to bed to—work.

Emilia
You shall not write my praise. (She crosses to
Desdemona.)

Iago
No, let me not.

Desdemona
What wouldst thou write of me, if thou should'st praise
me.

Iago
O gentle lady, do not put me to it, for I am nothing if
not critical. (He crosses to Bianca and the Gentleman
beside her.)

Desdemona
(Appealing to Iago.) Come on, assay . . . (She turns to
Cassio.) There's one gone to the harbour. (Iago cross-
es to the Third Gentleman, then to Emilia who is still
down right.)

Cassio
Ay, Madam. (Cassio motions for Montano to go and check
the harbour for Othello. Montano salutes and exits up

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
right. As the officer passes, a citizen bows. Iago moves to Bianca who is still down left and speaks with her.)

Desdemona
I am not merry, but I do beguile the thing I am by seem­ing otherwise. (She moves to Iago but stops center stage.) Come, how would'st thou praise me?

Iago
(He crosses down center.) I am about it, but my Muse labours. Ah, and thus she is delivered. If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit, the one's for use, the other useth it. (Bianca laughs and moves to Iago to flirt with him.)

Desdemona
Well praised!

Emilia
How if fair and foolish? (She moves to Desdemona and the two embrace. Bianca crosses further down stage.)

Iago
She never yet was foolish that was fair, for even her folly helped her to an heir. (Bianca hears the couplet, laughs, realizes the implication, then tosses her head angrily and moves to the Venetian Citizen. Emilia leaves Desdemona and crosses up center to a Gentleman. Iago crosses down left.) Ah, Bianca! (Bianca turns her eyes to Cassio and flirts with him across the stage.)

Desdemona
What praise could'st thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed? One that in the authority of her merits did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?

Iago
She that was ever fair, and never proud, had tongue at will, and yet was never loud,— (Emilia crosses back to Desdemona. Bianca, who has moved down right to have a better look at Cassio, travels back to the Venetian Citizen on stage left.) She that being angered, her revenge being nigh, bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly; she that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind, see suitors following and not look behind— (All laugh. Iago looks at Bianca who leaves the Venetian Citizen and moves down left.) She was a wight, if ever such wight were,—

Desdemona
To do what?
Iago
To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer. (General laughter from all. Two citizens exit down right. Iago crosses down left to speak to Bianca and the Venetian Citizen.)

Desdemona
O most lame and impotent conclusion! Do not learn of him Emilia, though he be thy husband. (Emilia crosses up center to the Second Gentleman, then to the First and Third.) How say you, Cassio? Is he not most profane and liberal counsellor.

Cassio
He speaks home, madam. You may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.

Iago
(He leaves Bianca and the citizen and stands alone down left.) Now he takes her by the palm. Ay, well said, whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do. I will catch you in your own courtesies. You say true, 'tis so indeed. If such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kiss'd your three fingers so oft. (A trumpet is heard.) The Moor! I know his trumpet. (He crosses quickly up right. The two Red Guards enter up left with arquebusses, and the Brown Guards enter down right with banners. An Arab looks off up right for Othello, then turns back again.)

Cassio
(He crosses up right.) 'Tis truly so.

Desdemona
(He runs across to the down left area then walks back center.) Let's meet him, and receive him.

Othello
(Othello enters through the up right archway, stopping on the platform.) Music from the "Capriol Suite" is heard as the crowd cheers loudly.92 The property sheet for Othello suggests that crowd noises were augmented with a recording.93 Robinson Stone says that he remembers no such added sounds, however.94 (Behind Othello are Montano, Arabs and citizens.) O my fair warrior:

Desdemona
My dear Othello.

Othello
It gives me wonder great as my content to see you here before me. (He gives his helmet to Montano, then crosses to Desdemona.) The company is staged close to the
open center space where husband and wife greet one another. Margaret Webster said that Robeson's entrance and his first speech to Desdemona was "disarming and beautiful." O my soul's joy, if after every tempest come such calms. May the winds blow til they have waken'd death, and let the labouring bark climb hills of seas Olympus-high, and duck again as low as hell's from heaven! If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy, for I fear my soul hath her content so absolute, that not another comfort like to this succeeds in unknown fate.

The heavens forbid but that our loves and comforts should increase even as our days do grow!

Amen to that, sweet powers! I cannot speak enough of this content; it stops me here, it is too much of joy. And this,— (He kisses her left cheek.) --and this,— (He kisses her right cheek.) the greatest discords be that e'er our hearts shall make!

This moment, when Othello kisses his wife, elicited comments from the critics and reactions from the audience. As previously mentioned, John Gerstad says there was an "audible gasp" at each performance when the black actor kissed Miss Hagen. One critic said, however, that he was pleased to observe an audience so caught in the spell of the moment that they forgot their prejudices while the Moor kissed Desdemona. Another reviewer wrote that Robeson presented a most dignified Othello who kept his passions under control as the contact is made with his wife. At the same time, the journalist stated, an "unbridled passion is not absent," but the Moor, a proud Ethiopian chieftain, will not reveal his emotions to Desdemona while they are in public.

(Emilia and Montano cross down right. The crowd begins to murmur.)
Iago
(Down left.) O, you are well tun'd now, but I'll set down the pegs that make the music, as honest as I am. (He turns up left to Bianca and the Venetian Citizen.)

Othello
Come, let us to the castle. News, friends, our wars are done. (The crowd cheers.) The Turks are drown'd. (The cheers become louder. Montano moves quickly to shake hands with Othello, then he crosses to the Second Gentleman to do the same. Both soldiers remove their right gauntlet for the gesture.) How does my old acquaintance of the isle? (Montano and the Second Gentleman move back and Othello turns to Desdemona.) Honey, you shall be well desir'd in Cyprus. He places his hands on her upper arms, while she grasps his elbows. He looks above her head after he has spoken, and she looks into his eyes. I have found great love among'st them. (Montano and the Second Gentleman back up further.) O my sweet, I prattle out of fashion, and I dote in mine own comforts. Good Michael, (He turns to Cassio who has remained on the right. The lieutenant crosses to Othello and salutes.) --look you to the guard tonight. Let's teach ourselves that honorable stop, not to out-sport discretion. (Othello looks toward Iago as the crowd laughs.) Come Desdemona. (He bows his head to the assembled company.) Once more well met at Cyprus.

(The company bows and Iago, Montano and the Second Gentleman salute. Emilia curtsies and exits up left with Cassio. As Desdemona, Othello, the two Red Guards, the First and Third Gentlemen move to the up left exit, two Arabs carry Othello's trunk across the stage to follow. Bianca calls to Cassio as he would follow the crowd and throws him a kiss. The Venetian Citizen pulls her around and off through the up right archway.) The trumpets are heard again as the company exits.

Iago
(Iago calls to Montano and the Gentlemen who have exited through the down right passageway.) Signior Montano, do thou meet me presently. There is full liberty of feasting from this time 'till the bell tolls eleven. (He turns, crosses up right to look off, then calls to Roderigo who has been behind the lattice work in the up center unit.) Psst, come hither, if thou be'st valiant as they say base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them. List me, the lieutenant to-night watches on the court of guard. But first, I will tell thee this, Desdemona is directly in love with him.
Roderigo
With him? Why, tis not possible. (Roderigo starts to move down right but Iago grabs his cloak and pulls him left, then pushes him to the up right steps.)

Iago
Sshh! Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed. (He pushes Roderigo down on the steps in a sitting position. Iago places his right foot on the platform and leans in toward Roderigo, placing his elbow on his right knee.) Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies; and will she love him still for prating? Let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed, and what delight shall she have to look upon the devil, eh? (Iago straightens and moves to center stage.) When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be again to inflame it and give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in. Now, for want of these required conveniences— (Both laugh.)—her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor. Very nature will compel her to some second choice. (Roderigo rises and crosses to Iago.) Now sir, this granted, who stands so eminently in the degree of this fortune as— (He slaps Roderigo on the shoulder. Roderigo looks forward toward the audience, expecting his own name.)—Cassio does, eh?

Roderigo
(He is disappointed when Iago does not say "Roderigo.")

Cassio?

Iago
Why the knave is handsome, young and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after; a pestilent complete knave, and the woman has found him already.

Roderigo
I cannot believe that in her,—

Iago
Ah. (He shrugs.)

Roderigo
—she is full of most blest condition. (He crosses to the left of Iago.)

Iago
(He follows Roderigo.) Blest fig's end! The wine she drinks is made of grapes. If she had been blest she would never have loved the Moor. Blest pudding. (He
Iago (continued)
takes Roderigo's hand.) Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? Didst not mark that? (He throws Roderigo's hand from him.)

Roderigo
Yes, that I did. But that was but courtesy.

Iago
Lechery, by this hand. An index and obscure prologue, (He places both hands on Roderigo's arms.) --to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together. (He pushes Roderigo roughly down left.) But sir, be you ruled by me, I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for your command, I'll lay it upon you. Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you. Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline, or from what other cause you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Roderigo
Well.

Iago
Sir, he is rash, and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you. (Iago strikes at Roderigo who pulls back.) Provoke him that he may, for even out of that will I cause the displanting of Cassio.

Roderigo
(He waits for a few seconds, then moves toward Iago and places a hand on the villain's shoulder.) I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago
I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel. Farewell.

Roderigo
(Roderigo crosses up stage of Iago and moves to the up right steps then turns.) Er--Iago.

Iago
(He turns to Roderigo.) Eh?

Roderigo
Adieu. (He waves to Iago, then runs through the up right archway.)

Iago
(He looks after Roderigo then turns back.) That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it. That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit. (He crosses to the up
In the traditional script, a Herald enters the stage at this moment in the play, reading a proclamation to a crowd in the street. He tells the group that Othello wishes them all to dance, "make bonfires," and each man is to participate in whatever "sport and revels his addiction leads him." This was in celebration of the Moor's wedding. Margaret Webster deleted this role and simply gave Iago the line, "Signior Montano, do thou meet me presently. There is full liberty of feasting from this time 'till the bell tolls eleven." This statement is extracted from the Herald's speech.

Also deleted from the original script is an exchange between Cassio and Othello. The Moor, Desdemona, and the attendants enter and Othello asks Cassio to guard carefully at his post. The lieutenant replies that "Iago hath directions what to do," and Othello answers that Iago is "most honest" and bids Cassio good night. Margaret Webster chose
to use only those lines where the Moor orders his lieutenant to guard the post. Furthermore, this moment is inserted when Othello leaves with his wife at the end of the "Cyprus arrival" scene.

(Laughter and singing are heard off right. Iago removes his cape. From the up left archway a Brown Guard enters with a lantern and places it on a hook in the right arch of the center unit and exits up right. The two Red Guards enter the up left passageway, salute Iago, then the First exits through the center unit while the Second follows the Brown Guard. Cassio enters through the left arch and crosses to Iago.)

Cassio
Welcome, Iago, we must to the watch.

(As Cassio and Iago speak, Iago beckons to the First Arab who enters from down right and takes the villain's cape. The Arab exits with Iago's garment then re-enters immediately, beckoning the Second and Third Arabs who bring in a table and place it center stage. The Second exits down right to get a stool and, upon returning, the First instructs him to place it down left of the table. The Third Arab has exited down right and re-enters with a pitcher of wine and two mugs which he places on the table at the First's bidding. The Third asks for money but is pushed away by the First. The Second leaves again and procures another stool which the First asks to be placed down right of the table. The Second asks for money but is also pushed away. This action is continuous throughout the next seven speeches.)

Iago
Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o'clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; who let us not therefore blame; he hath not yet made wanton the night with her; and she is sport for Jove, eh?

Cassio
She is a most exquisite lady.

Iago
And I'll warrant her full of game. What an eye she has!

Cassio
An inviting eye.

Iago
And when she speaks, 'tis an alarum to love?
Cassio
She is indeed perfection.

Iago
Well, happiness to their sheets . . . Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine, and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello. (The First Arab taps Iago on the shoulder for money which is given to him. The Arab then exits down right.)

Cassio
Not to-night, good Iago. I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago
O, they are our friends . . . but one cup. I'll drink for you.

Cassio
I ha' drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too, and behold what innovation it makes here. I am unfortunate in the infirmity, (Iago picks up the pitcher then puts it down.) and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago
What, man, 'tis a night of revels, the gallants desire it.

Cassio
Where are they?

Iago
Here at the door. I pray you, call them in.

Cassio
I'll do't, but it dislikes me. (He crosses down stage of Iago, moving to the down right exit. Three Gentlemen wait for him off stage and Cassio joins them behind the scenery. The four are heard laughing.)

Iago
(Iago crosses down right.) If I can fasten but one cup upon him, with that which he hath drunk to-night already, he'll be as full of quarrel and offence as my young mistress' dog. (He places his sword on the down right bench, then crosses to the table. Loud laughter is heard.) But here they come. If consequence do but approve my dream, my boat sails freely, both with wind and stream. (Iago speaks to the group off right.)
Iago (continued)

boys, wine. (He picks up the pitcher and pours some wine into a mug. Cassio enters with Montano and the three Gentlemen, then moves to the table. The others follow.)

Cassio

'Fore God, they have given me a rouse already. (He crosses to sit at the stool which is left of the table.)

Montano

Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier. (He stands down left of the table.)

Iago

Some wine, ho! (He sings.)

And let me the canakin clink, clink, clink,
(He sings.

(The others join him on the rest of the song.)

And let the canakin clink, clink, clink.
A soldier's a man;
A life's but a span;
Why then let a soldier drink,
Why then let a soldier drink.

(The First Gentleman crosses left of the table and the Second crosses to the First.) Some wine boys. (Iago picks up the pitcher and gives it to the Second Gentleman who pours for the First.)

Cassio

'Fore God, an excellent song.

Iago

I learn'd it in England, where they are indeed most potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander, --Drink, ho! --are nothing to your English.

Cassio

(He rises with a mug in his hand.) To the health of our general.

Montano

I am for it lieutenant, and I will do you justice.

Montano and the Gentlemen

OTHELLO!
Iago

(He sings, moving down right.)

King Stephen was a worthy peer,
    His breeches cost him half a crown.

(The Third Gentleman sits on the stage right stool.)

He held them sixpence all too dear,
    With that he call'd his tailor lown.

(All laugh. The Second Gentleman applauds and sits on the up stage side of the table.)

He was a wight of high renown, (He crosses to table.)
    And thou art but of low degree,

(He points to Cassio who tries to rise angrily. Iago pushes him down and Montano holds Cassio back. Iago moves quickly back from the table down right.)

'Tis pride that pulls the country down;
    So take thine auld cloak about thee.

All

Bravo! (They all laugh and applaud.)

Several critics said that Ralph Clanton and Ernest Graves were excellent in this scene. L. A. Sloper wrote that Graves (Cassio at Cambridge and Princeton) was at his best in the drinking segment of the play. Here the true nature of the soldier was revealed. He is trusting, honest and simple. Both Jack Crockett and Audrey St.D. Johnson said that Ralph Clanton, who performed the role on tour, also excelled in this scene.

Cassio

'Fore God, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago

Will you hear it again?

All

Aye.

Iago

(He sings.) King Stephen was a worthy peer—
(Cassio bangs his mug on the table, interrupting the song.) No, for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. (He drinks.)

Second Gentleman
(He leans over the table to Cassio.) "For thou art but of low degree"— (All laugh.)

Cassio
Well, God's above all. And there be souls that must be saved,— (The group agrees.) --and there be souls must not be saved. (They all say "no!" Then the Gentlemen continue to drink.)

Iago
'Tis true, good lieutenant.

Cassio
For mine own part, no offense to the general, nor any man of quality-- (He turns to Montano who bows. The others talk among themselves.) --I hope to be saved. (He nearly falls off his stool. Montano and Iago help him back on to the furniture.)

Iago
And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cassio
Ay, but, by your leave, not before me. (The talking stops. Cassio pushes Iago away from him down right.) The lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this, let's to our affairs. (He leans over the table.) God forgive us our sins! (The Second Gentleman crosses left of the table to speak to the First.) Do not think, gentlemen, that I am drunk. (He picks up a sword and points it to Iago.) This is my ancient-- (Iago turns to face him.) --this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk now. I can stand well enough and speak well enough.

Third Gentleman
(He comes around the table to face Cassio.) Ay, excellent well.

All Gentlemen
(The gentlemen ad lib, saying such phrases as "well enough indeed," and "very well.")

Cassio
(He rebukes the Third Gentleman on this line; so much so that the Third moves back.) Why very well then; you must not think then that I am drunk. (He shifts his sword from the right to the left hand and attempts twice
Cassio (continued)
to execute a military turn. He then faces Iago who sa­
lutes Cassio scornfully. The lieutenant sneers at his
ancient then exits up right. All three gentlemen laugh
following Cassio; the Second and Third together, and the
First behind them.)

Montano
(He places his mug on the table and picks up the sword.)
To the platform, masters. Come, let's set the watch.

Iago
(As Montano crosses down right to him.) You see this
fellow that is gone before. He is a soldier fit to
stand by Caesar, and give direction, and do but see his
vice. Eh, 'tis pity in him. I fear the trust Othello
put him in at some odd time of his infirmity will shake
this island.

Montano
But is he often thus?

Iago
'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep.

Margaret Webster sought to clarify the action in
the next scene. In the original script, Roderigo enters the
stage to speak with Iago. The villain sends him off to an­
tagorize Cassio, as the two had schemed in the previous
scene. After a short speech from Iago, Roderigo runs back
on stage pursued by the lieutenant. This incident is so in­
credible, since Roderigo barely has time during Iago's speech
to anger Cassio before the latter chases him on stage, that
the director decided to simplify the moment by deleting
Roderigo's entrance entirely. The audience must presume
that he has been with the lieutenant since Cassio's exit.
Since Iago and Roderigo discussed the scheme earlier,
Roderigo's first entrance here is not necessary. Margaret
Webster often restructured the text to create more
believable moments, either alternating lines or deleting them altogether. This action in the play represents one of the better examples of her technique. The original text reads as follows:

Montano

It were well
The General were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio
And looks not on his evils. Is not this true?

Enter Roderigo

Iago

(Aside to him) How now, Roderigo?
I pray you after the Lieutenant, go! Exit Roderigo

Montano

And 'tis a great pity that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place as his own second
With one of an engraffed infirmity.
It were an honest action to say
So to the Moor.

Iago

Not I, for this fair island!
I do love Cassio well and would do much
To cure him of this evil. (Within) Help! Help!

The changes made are seen in the next three speeches.7

Montano

It were well the general were put in mind of it. Perh­haps he sees it not. And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor should hazard such a place as his own second with one of an engraffed infirmity. (He goes to Iago and pats him on the back.) It were an honest action to say so to the Moor.

Iago

Not I, for this fair island. I do love Cassio well, and would do much to cure him of this evil.

Roderigo

(He rushes in from up right, stopping on the platform.) Help, help. (Iago runs to the down left area.)

Cassio

(He chases Roderigo, coming in from up right also.) 'Zounds! You rogue! You rascal! (He grabs Roderigo.)
Montano
(Montano turns up right where the conflict is taking place.) What's the matter, lieutenant?

Cassio
(Holding Roderigo, he speaks.) A knave teach me my duty! But I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.

Roderigo
Beat me?

Cassio
Dost thou prate, rogue! (He pushes Roderigo violently which sends him to Iago.)

Montano
(Montano crosses quickly to try to hold Cassio.) Good lieutenant; pray, sir, hold your hand.

Cassio
Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

Montano
Come, come, you're drunk.

Cassio
(Cassio draws his sword.) Drunk? (Montano and Cassio engage in a duel which continues as Iago speaks.)

Iago
(Iago moves quickly to Roderigo, pushing him off to the up right area.) Away, I say; go out and cry mutiny. (Roderigo exits crying "mutiny." Iago looks after him then moves up left. A bell is heard.) Nay, good lieutenant! God's will gentlemen! Help, ho! Lieutenant, --sir--Montano--sir--help, masters. Here's a goodly watch indeed. Who's that that rings the bell. Diablo, ho! The town will rise. (Loud noises are heard from all on stage. Iago rushes from up left to down left, snapping his fingers, asking the Venetian Citizen to yell "mutiny" through the down left passageway.)

Venetian Citizen
(Exits down left crying "mutiny, mutiny," then re-enters as Iago speeds by him.)

(Iago continues across the stage from down right through the crowd to up right, then arrives at the up right area just as Montano is wounded down left. The crowd has been rushing on to the stage since the fight began; all speak loudly to one another, commenting on the action. After Cassio wounds Montano, he engages the Second Soldier. Iago and the Venetian Citizen quickly help Montano to the down left bench, then Iago moves to
separate Cassio and the Soldier. From the up left archway, the Second Brown Guard enters and picks up the sword which Montano has dropped. The First Brown Guard engages in the fighting. Othello enters from the up left archway.

Othello is dressed in a costume which was often photographed since it flattered the actor's physique. It consisted of a long beige corded robe gathered at the waist with a studded, wide brown belt. Over the under garment was a large "A" shaped robe with enormous bell sleeves. It too was corded but of a sage green, and it loosely covered the beige underneath it. Both garments were trimmed around every exposed edge, outlining the simple contours of the costume. The under dress wrapped around and over-lapped across the actor's torso, and the outer robe slipped over the arms and hung loosely from the shoulders to the feet. He carried a curved sword in his hands.\footnote{103}

Othello
What is the matter here? Hold for your lives. (Some of the fighting stops.)

Iago
Hold, hold! Lieutenant, sir, Montano--gentlemen--Hold! The general speaks to you, hold, hold, for shame! (The Red and Brown Guards try to hold back the Arabs who have also engaged in the fighting.)

Othello
\footnote{The following outbursts of fighting during this speech were "pure hell" to stage, Robinson Stone says.\footnote{104} Why, now, now, ho! From whence ariseth this. For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl. He that stirs next, dies upon his motion. Silence that dreadful bell. (Most of the fighting stops. Iago motions to the First Red Guard to stop the bell which has been ringing continually throughout the fight. The Red Guard moves quickly to the down right exit and runs off the stage. The bell stops and the Guard re-enters from the same area, moving in to hold back the Arabs who have been fighting. The Second Red Guard holds back the Arabs and a soldier on the up right platform. The First Brown

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Guard moves to the Gentleman's left. Othello crosses down stage of the table. Iago holds Cassio to the right of the table. These actions occur as Othello continues to speak.) It frights the isle from her propriety. What's the matter, masters? Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving, speak, who began this?

Iago
I do not know; friends all but now, even now, in quarter, and in terms like bride and groom devesting them to bed; and then, but now, swords out, and tilting one at others throats in opposition bloody. I cannot speak any begining to this peevish odds.

Othello
(He speaks to Cassio who has been released and has moved down right.) How comes it Michael, you were thus forgot?

Cassio
I pray you, pardon me, I cannot speak.

Othello
(He moves to Montano who is still sitting on the bench down left.) Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil. What's the matter, that you unlace your reputation thus, and spend your rich opinion for the name of a night-brawler. Give me answer to 't.

Montano
Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger. Your officer, Iago, can inform you—while I spare speech, which something now offends me—of all that I do know.

Othello
Now, by heaven, my blood begins my safer guides to rule, and passion, having my best judgement collied, assays to lead the way. What, in a town of war,— (He turns to the right.) --yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear, to manage private and domestic quarrel, in night, and on the court and guard of safety! 'Tis monstrous. (He moves to Iago who is down right.) Iago, who began it?

Montano
If partially affin'd, or leagu'd in office, thou dost deliver more or less than truth, thou art no soldier.

Iago
Touch me not so near. I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth than it should do offense to Michael Cassio. Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, general. Montano
and myself, being in speech, there comes a fellow, crying out for help, and Cassio following him with determin'd sword, to execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman, Montano, steps into Cassio, and entreats his pause; myself the crying fellow did pursue, lest by his clamor, as it so fell out, the town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot, outran my purpose. When I came back—for this was brief—I found them close together at blow and thrust, even as again they were when you yourself did part them. More of this matter can I not report. But men are men, the best sometimes forget. Though Cassio did some little wrong to him, as men in rage strike those that wish them best, yet surely Cassio, I believe, receiv'd from him that fled some strange indignity, which patience could not pass.

Othello

I know, Iago, thy honesty and love doth mine this matter, making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee, but never more be officer of mine. (Desdemona and Emilia enter from the up left archway. Othello turns to go, sees his wife as she moves to him. He puts his arms around her.) Look if my gentle love be not raised up. (He crosses to Cassio who is still down right.) I'll make thee an example. (Iago motions to the Second Brown Guard to take Cassio's sword. The Guard carries out his orders then turns and stands at attention by the center unit.)

Desdemona

What's the matter?

Othello

All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed. (Othello moves to Montano.) Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon. Lead him off. (The Venetian Citizen, Emilia and the First Brown Guard help Montano off through the up left archway.) Iago, look with care about the town, and silence those whom this vile brawl distracted. Come Desdemona, 'tis the soldiers' life to have their balmy slumbers wak'd with strife. (Othello and Desdemona exit up left. The rest of the crowd disperses through the various passageways, leaving Cassio and Iago on stage.)

Cassio

Oh.

Iago

(He is center stage, looking at Cassio who has not moved from his down right position.) What are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cassio

Ay, past all surgery.
Iago
Marry, God forbid!

Cassio
Reputation, reputation, reputation! (He covers his face with his hands, then removes them after a pause.) O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. (Iago crosses to Cassio.) My reputation, Iago, my reputation. (Cassio moves to the table.)

Iago
As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound. There is more sense in that than in reputation. (He picks up the sword from the down right bench.) What, man, there are ways to recover the general again. You are but now cast in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice. Sue to him again, and he's yours. (Iago sheathes his sword.)

Cassio
(Cassio moves quickly from the table to the up stage left area.) I would rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. (He rips the insignia from his left shoulder and throws it to the floor close to Iago's feet.)

Iago
What was he that you followed with your sword? What had he done to you?

Cassio
(He moves above the table.) I know not.

Iago
(Iago stoops to pick up the insignia.) Is't possible?

Cassio
I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. (He walks to the left side of the table and picks up a mug.) O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains; that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts! (He bangs the mug on the table, leaving it there.)

Iago
Why, but you are now well enough. How came you thus recovered?

Cassio
It hath pleas'd the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath. One unperfectness shows me another, to
Cassio (continued)

make me frankly despise myself. (He sits on the stool which is left of the table.)

Iago

(Iago crosses to the table and sits on the stool on the right side.) Come, you are too severe a moraler; as the time, the place and the condition of this country now stands, I could heartily wish this had not so befallen; but since it is as it is, mend it, for your own good.

Cassio

I will ask him for a place again. He shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast. (He rises, crossing in front of Iago to the up right steps.) O strange! Every inordinate cup is unblest, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago

Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well us'd. Exclaim no more against it. But good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

Cassio

(He turns to face Iago.) I have well approv'd it, sit. (He sits on the steps.) I drunk!

Iago

You, or any man living may be drunk at some time. I'll tell you what you shall do— (Iago turns from left to right, checking for listeners.) Our general's wife is now the general. Confess yourself freely to her; she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her own goodness not to do more than she is requested. This broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter, and my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love will grow stronger than 't was before.

Cassio

You advise me well.

Iago

I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

Cassio

(Cassio rises and crosses to Iago at the table.) I think it freely, and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes, if they check me here.
Iago
You are right. (He rises.) Well, good night, lieutenant. I must to the watch. (He turns left and starts to leave.)

Cassio
Good night—(Iago turns back, taking Cassio's outstretched hand.)—honest Iago. (They shake hands. Cassio exits through the up right archway.)

Iago
(Iago watches Cassio leave, then sits on the table.) And what's he then that says I play the villain, when this advice is free I give and honest, probal to thinking and indeed the course to win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy the inclining Desdemona to subdue in any honest suit. How then am I a villain to counsel Cassio to this parallel course, directly to his good, eh? Divinity of hell! When devils will their blackest sins put on, they do suggest at first with heavenly shows, as I do now. For whilst this honest fool plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes, and she for him pleads strongly to the Moor, I'll pour this pestilence into his ear, that she repeals him for her body's lust. And by how much she strives to do him good, she shall undo her credit with the Moor. (He rises, moving quickly forward, twisting the insignia which he has never put down.) So will I turn her virtue into pitch, and out of her own goodness make the net that shall enmesh them all. (Roderigo enters from up right. His garments are torn; he is bleeding, and has one black eye. He drags his cape and leans against the upstage side of the arch. Iago turns and sees him.) Ahh. How now, Roderigo?

Roderigo
(Roderigo crosses in back of the table and down left. Iago throws the insignia on the table and follows him as the traveler closes very slowly behind them.) I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent. I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgell'd. (He crosses from left to right, dragging his cape. Iago watches, then motions to Roderigo to pick up the garment.) I think the issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains. And so with no money at all, and a little more wit return again to Venice.

Iago
How poor are they that have not patience! What wound did ever heal, but by degrees? Thou know'st we work by wit, and not by witchcraft, and wit depends on dilatory time. Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee—
Roderigo

Aye.

Iago

--and thou, by that small hurt, hath cashier'd Cassio. Content thyself awhile. By the mass, 'tis morning. Pleasure and action make the hours seem short. Retire thee, go where thou art billeted. Away, I say, thou shalt know more hereafter.

Roderigo

I want to know now. I pray you tell me.

Iago

Nay, get thee gone. (Roderigo straightens his jacket and marches off down right.) Two things are to be done. My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress. I'll set her on. Myself the while to draw the Moor apart, and bring him jump when he may Cassio find soliciting his wife. Ay, that's the way. Dull not device by coldness and delay. (He exits down left.)

In the traditional script, the next scene takes place between the musicians and the clown. Margaret Webster believed that this "comic relief" did nothing to enhance the play and deleted the entire segment from the text. At least two critics agreed that this was a wise decision. Wolcott Gibbs wrote that he was pleased that the director "amputated" one of Shakespeare's more "gruesome clowns." Lewis Nichols said the clown was an "unnecessary" character who added nothing to the plot. The deleted scene opens as Cassio speaks with the Jester, then with Iago, and it ends with Cassio's saying of Iago, "I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest." Margaret Webster's rendition of the script, however, has Iago exit after his soliloquy, and Cassio enters down right as music is heard from that area. The lieutenant calls to the unseen musicians.
Cassio
Masters, play here, I will content your pains. Some­thing that's brief, and bid "Good morrow, general." (He turns left and sees Emilia who has just entered from the down left area.) In happy time.

Emilia
(She crosses center to Cassio.) Good morrow, good lieu­tenant, I am sorry for your displeasure, but all will soon be well. The general and his wife are talking of it, and she speaks for you stoutly. The Moor replies, that he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus and great affinity, and in wholesome wisdom he might not but re­fuse you. (Cassio turns away from her, but she contin­ues speaking to his back.) But he protests he loves you and needs no other suitor but his likings to bring you in again.

Cassio
Yet, I beseech you, if you think fit, or that it may be done, give me advantage of some brief discourse with Desdemona alone.

Emilia
(She crosses down stage of Cassio.) Pray you, come in, I will bestow you where you shall have time to speak your bosom freely.

Cassio
(He crosses to her.) I am much bound to you. (They both exit through the center of the traveler.)

Othello
(Iago, Othello, the Second and First Gentlemen enter from the down left passageway, moving across the stage to the down right exit as they speak. Othello reads his letters and maps.) These letters give, Iago, to the pilot, and by him do my duties to the Senate. That done, I will be walking on the works. Repair there to me.

Iago
Well, my good lord, I'll do it.

Othello
This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see it?

Second Gentleman
We wait upon your lordship. (The First Gentleman fol­lows the Second as the last line is spoken and the com­pany exits.)

(The traveler opens to reveal a courtyard in the castle. The center has been altered to create a "box" or
small alcove, framed on all sides by three arched openings, each with lattice work behind it. A sheer silk material covers the lattice work and light is seen shining through the fabric. A platform unit has been added to the left area so that all archways have two low steps and a landing which extends off stage. An ornate chair is placed diagonally on the left platform, and just in front of the right archway stands a baroque table with a large chair to the right of it. Covering the table is a velvet cloth with ornate trim. A small stool sits to the left of this arrangement. Two banners hang on the left side of the alcove.

(Desdemona is seated in the chair by the table. She carries an embroidered strawberry silk handkerchief. Cassio is seated on the stool to the left of the table. Emilia is between them upstage. An Arab is seen near the right archway with a tray, decanter, and two glasses filled with wine.)

Robinson Stone, who performed the role of the Arab, said he wore a white and red striped, floor-length "Moorish" robe, tied with a green lamé sash, with a skull cap on his head. The costume appeared on stage for only fifteen seconds, Stone says, but offered the proper splash of exotic color, a characteristic "part of Peggy's staging success."

Desdemona
Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do all my abilities in thy behalf.

Emilia
Good madam, do. I'll warrant it grieves my husband as if the cause were his. (Emilia takes the glasses from the Arab and he moves to the left archway and stands on the platform.)
Desdemona
O, that's an honest fellow. (Emilia crosses up stage of the table.) Do you not doubt, Cassio, but I will have my lord and you again as friendly as you were. (She takes the glasses from Emilia and gives one to Cassio.)

Cassio
Bounteous madam, whatever shall become of Michael Cassio, he's never anything but your true servant.

Desdemona
O sir, I thank you. (They both drink and return their glasses to the table.) You do love my lord, you have known him long, and be you well assured he shall in strangeness stand no farther off than in a politic distance.

Cassio
Ay, but, lady, the policy may either last so long, (Desdemona drinks and returns the glass to the table.) or feed upon such nice and waterish diet, or breed itself so out of circumstance, that, I being absent, and my place supplied, my general will forget my love and service.

Desdemona
Do not doubt that. (Emilia steps toward her mistress and Desdemona takes Emilia's right hand in her two hands.) Before Emilia here I give thee warrant of thy place. My lord shall never rest. I'll watch him tame, and talk him out of patience. His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift. (Emilia and Desdemona laugh. Desdemona releases Emilia's hand, then takes Cassio's glass and gives it to her handmaiden.) For thy solicitor shall rather die than give thy cause away.

Emilia
(Her attention is turned to the activity in the off right area.) Madam, here comes my lord. (She crosses to the Arab, giving him the glasses, then follows him as they exit up left.)

Cassio
(He rises.) Madam, I'll take my leave.

Desdemona
(She also rises.) Why, stay and hear me speak.

Cassio
(He is in front of the table to the right of Desdemona. Cassio turns to her.) Madam, not now, I am very ill at ease, unfit for mine own purpose.
Desdemona
(She moves to Cassio, taking his left arm. On her line, they exit through the down right passageway.) Well, do your discretion.

Iago
(Iago enters, followed by Othello through the right archway. He has a scroll and the Moor has both a scroll and a map. Iago looks after Desdemona and Cassio, moving to the down right area.) Ha, I like not that.

Othello
(He moves to the left side of the table, standing in front of it.) What dost thou say?

Iago
Nothing, my lord, or if— I know not what.

Othello
(He moves down stage.) Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

Iago
(Emilia returns with her needlework and sits on the chair situated in the left archway.) Cassio, my lord? (He turns right.) No, sure, I cannot think it, that he would sneak away so guilty-like, seeing you coming. (Iago crosses up left to speak with Emilia.)

Othello
I do believe 'twas he. (He turns, placing the scroll on the table, then moves quickly forward.)

Desdemona
(He enters from the down right area and crosses to Othello.) How now, my lord, if I have any grace or power to move you, his present reconciliation take; for if he be not one that truly loves you, that errs in ignorance, and not in cunning, I have no judgement of an honest face. I prithee, call him back.

Othello
Went he hence now?

Desdemona
Yes, faith, so humbled that he has left part of his griefs with me. I suffered with him. Good love, call him back.

Othello
(He moves to the stool and sits.) Not now, sweet Desdemona, some other time.
Desdemona
(She moves behind her husband and leans on his shoulder.) But shall't be shortly?

Othello
(He begins looking at his maps on the table.) The sooner, sweet, for you.

Desdemona
Shall't be to-night at supper?

Othello
No, not to-night.

Desdemona
To-morrow dinner then?

Othello
I shall not dine at home, we meet the captains at the citadel.

Desdemona
Why then to-morrow night, or Tuesday more, on Tuesday noon or night, or Wednesday more. I prithee name the time, (She leans further over his shoulder,) but let it not exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent. When shall he come? (She crosses in front of Othello, taking the scroll out of his hand and laughs. Iago and Emilia laugh with her.) Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul what you would ask that I would deny, or stand so mammersing on. (She kneels in front of him and he smiles at her.) What, Michael Cassio? That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time when I have spoke of you dispraisingly, hath ta'en your part. (She taps Othello on the knee with the scroll.) To have so much to do to bring him in? By'r lady, I could do much—

Othello
(He interrupts her.) Prithee, no more. Let him come when he will, I will deny thee nothing.

Desdemona
(She rises.) 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— (She pauses.) --poise and difficult weight and fearful to be granted.

Othello
I will deny thee nothing. (He rises.) Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this, to leave me but a little to myself.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Shall I deny you? (She gives the scroll to Othello.)
No, farewell, my lord. (She crosses to the left archway. Iago counter-crosses to the upstage side of the table.)

Othello
Farewell, my Desdemona, I'll come to thee straight.

Desdemona
(She has moved to the left platform and, standing upon it, turns to Othello.) Emilia, come. (Emilia rises. Desdemona looks at her husband.) Be it as your fancies teach you, whate'er you be, I am obedient. (She curtseys and exits up left followed by Emilia. Iago begins to look at the maps on the table.)

The next line evoked two opposing views from the critics. Margaret Marshall said that Robeson's voice offered no emotion to the words. The line was meaningless, she said, and Robeson simply was not "fit to declaim" such phrases.108 H. T. M., however, wrote that the actor offered the speech an appropriate rhythm, carefully manipulating the language.109 Excellent wretch. Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee, and when I love thee not, chaos is come again.

Iago
My noble lord,—

Othello
(The Moor crosses in front of the table.) What dost thou say, Iago?

Iago
Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady, know of your love?

This scene begins the first of several moments in which Othello remains in a stationary position and Iago moves around him. Kappo Phelan said this staging seemed static and artificial since it was centered around the same table and chair.110 (Othello sits in the chair to the right of the table.) He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?

Iago
But for a satisfaction of my thought . . . no further harm.

Othello
Why of thy thought, Iago?
(Iago sits on the stool.) I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

Othello

O, yes, and went between us very often.

Iago

Indeed!

Othello

Indeed! Ay, indeed. Discern'st thou aught in that? Is he not honest?

Iago

Honest, my lord?

Othello

Honest! Ay, honest.

Iago

My lord, for aught I know.

Othello

(He begins to look at the maps and papers on the table.)

What dost thou think?

Iago

(He pauses.) Think, my lord?

Othello

(He looks up from the maps.) Think, my lord! By heaven he echoes me, as if there were some monster in his thought too hideous to be shown. (Iago turns to the front of the stage with a scroll in his hands. He opens it, then rolls it back up.) Thou did'st mean something. I heard thee say even now, thou lik'st not that, when Cassio left my wife. What did'st not like? And when I told thee he was of my counsel in my whole course of wooing, thou cried'st "Indeed?" And did'st contract and purse thy brow together, as if thou then had'st shut up in thy brain some horrible conceit. (Iago places the scroll on the table and rises to cross to the left side of the stage.) If thou dost love me, show me thy thought.

Iago

(He turns to Othello.) My lord, you know I love you.

Othello

I think thou dost; and for all I know thou art full of love and honesty and weigh'st thy words before thou give'st them breath, therefore these stops of thine fright me the more.
Iago
(He continues to look at Othello.) For Michael Cassio, I dare be sworn—(he pauses.)—I think he's honest.

Othello
I think so too.

Iago
Men should be what they seem. (He crosses back to the stool, sits and picks up the scroll.) And those that be not, would they might seem none!

Othello
Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago
Why then I think Cassio's an honest man.

Othello
Nay, yet there's more in this. I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinking, as thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts the worst of words.

Iago
(He places the scroll back on the table.) Good my lord, pardon me. Though I am bound to every act of duty, I am not bound to that all slaves are free to. Utter my thoughts?

Othello
Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago, if thou but think'st him wrong'd, and make his ear a stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago
I do beseech you though I perchance am vicious in my guess, (He rises and pushes the stool up stage.) as, I confess, it is my nature's plague to spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy shapes faults that are not—I entreat you then, from one that so imperfectly conjects, you'd take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble out of my scattering and unsure observance. It were not for your quiet, nor your good, nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom, to let you know my thoughts. (He moves down center.)

Othello
What dost thou mean?

Iago
(Iago crosses to the down left area.) Good name in man and woman, dear my lord, is the immediate jewel of their souls. Who steals my purse steals trash, 'tis something,
Iago (continued)

nothing; 'twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands. But he that filches from me my good name, robs me of that which not enriches him and makes me poor indeed.

Othello

By heaven, I'll know thy thought.

Iago

You cannot, if my heart were in your hand, nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

Othello

(He rises.) What!

Iago and Iago now move into what is called the "jealousy" scene. Margaret Webster believed that Paul Robeson could not effectively project the Moor's emotions when confronted with Iago's suspicions. In opposition to this view, A. E. Watts, critic for The Boston Traveler, wrote that as Iago "fed the fires" the audience could see the jealousy as it worked on Othello's mind. As the villain's words began to "dawn" on the Moor, the "workings of Othello's naked soul" became exposed.

Iago

O, beware, my lord—of jealousy. (The word "jealousy" stops Othello who looks at Iago, then turns away.) It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock that meat it feeds on; that cuckold lives in bliss who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger. But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er—who dotes,—yet—doubts,—suspects,—yet,—strongly loves!

Othello

Misery, Iago!

Iago

Poor and content is rich, and rich enough, but riches fineless is as poor as winter to him that ever fears he shall be poor. Good God, the souls of all my tribe defend him from jealousy!
Othello
(He turns back to Iago.) Why, why is this? (Iago crosses to the table and picks up a quill.) Think'st thou I'd made a life of jealousy, to follow still the changes of the moon with fresh suspicions? No, to be once in doubt is once to be resolv'd. Exchange me for a goat, when I shall turn the business of my soul to such exsufflicate and blown surmises matching thy interference. (He moves to the left of the center unit, then turns back to Iago.) 'Tis not to make me jealous to say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company, is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well. Where virtue is, these are more virtuous. (He pauses and looks forward.) Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw the smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt for she had eyes, and chose me. (He looks back to Iago.) No, Iago. I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove, and on the proof, there is no more but this. Away at once with love of jealousy. (He removes the gold coat and crosses to the left archway to place the garment on the chair.)

Iago
(He returns the quill to the table.) I am glad of it, for now I shall have reason to show the love and duty that I bear you with framer spirit. Therefore, as I am bound, receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof. (Othello crosses to the table.) Look to your wife. (Othello stops at the up right edge of the table.) Observe her well with—Cassio. Wear your eye thus, not jealous, nor secure. I would not have your free and noble nature out of self-bounty be abus'd; look to it. (The Moor comes forward around the chair with his hand on the table.) I know our country disposition well. In Venice they do let God see the pranks they dare not show their husbands. Their best conscience is not to leave undone, but to keep unknown.

Othello
Dost thou say so?

Iago
She did deceive her father, marrying you, and when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks, she lov'd them most.

Othello
(He moves quickly forward.) And so she did.

Iago
(Iago crosses in front of the stool.) Ha! Go to then, she that so young could give out such a seeming to seal her father's eyes up, close as oak—he thought 'twas witchcraft—but I am much to blame. I humbly do beseech you of your pardon for too much loving you.
Othello
(Othello crosses to Iago and places his left hand on the villain's shoulder, then continues on to the up left platform.) I am bound to thee forever.

Iago
I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

Othello
(He continues to move up left.) Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago
I' faith, I fear it has. I hope you will consider what is spoke comes from my love; but I do see you're moved. (Iago moves up stage so he is on the same level as Othello.) I am to pray you, not to strain my speech to grosser issues, nor to larger reach than to suspicion.

Othello
(He places his foot on the steps.) I will not.

Iago
Should you do so, my lord, my speech should fall into such vile success as my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my trusty friend—my lord, I see you are mov'd. (He crosses up center.)

Othello
(Othello turns off the step and crosses down left.) No, not much mov'd. I do not think but Desdemona's honest!

Iago
Long live she so, and long live you to think so!

Othello
(He turns right to look at Iago.) And yet, how nature erring from itself--

Iago
Ay, there's the point. As, to be bold with you, (He crosses to Othello.) not to affect many proposed matches of her own clime, complexion and degree, whereto we see in all things nature tends. Fie! One may smell in such a will most rank, foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural. (Othello crosses to the front of the table, stops, then turns to look back to Iago.) But pardon me. I do not in position distinctly speak of her, though I may fear her will, recoiling to her better judgement, may fall to match you with her country forms and-- (He pauses and sneers.) --happily repent.

Othello
Farewell. Farewell. (Iago crosses to the table and picks up the scroll.) If more thou dost perceive, let

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Othello (continued)

me know more. (Iago moves to the left of the center unit.) Set on thy wife to observe— (Iago turns quickly to Othello who stops short.) Leave me, Iago.

Iago

My lord, I take my leave. (He exits down left.)

Othello

Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds. (He sits in the chair by the table.)

Iago

(He returns from the down left area where he exited.) My lord, I would I might entreat your honour to scan this thing no further, leave it to time. (Iago crosses to Othello.) Though it be fit that Cassio have his place, (He crosses to the stool.) for sure he fills it up with great ability, yet, if you please to hold him off awhile, you shall by that perceive him and his means. (He kneels on the stool and leans on the table toward Othello.) Note if your lady strain his entertainment with any strong or vehement importunity. Much will be seen in that. In the mean time, (He begins to move left center.) let me be thought too busy in my fear, as worthy cause I have to fear I am, and hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

Othello

Fear not my government.

Iago

I once more take my leave. (He bows to Othello and exits down left.)

Othello

This fellow's of exceeding honesty, and knows all qualities with a learned spirit of human dealing. If I do prove her haggar'd, though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings, I'ld whistle her off and let her down the wind to prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black and have not those soft parts of conversation that chamberers have, or for I am declin'd into the vale of years, —yet that's not much—she's gone! I am abus'd, and my relief must be to loathe her. 0 curse of marriage, that we can call these delicate creatures ours, and not their appetites. (Othello rises, turns to the right and walks around the table to the upstage side of it.) I had rather be a toad, and live upon the vapour of a dungeon than keep a corner in a thing I love for another's uses. Desdemona comes. (He continues around the table and sits on the stool.) If she be false, then heaven mocks itself! I'll not believe it.
Desdemona

(Desdemona enters from the left archway and Emilia follows her. Othello's wife stops on the platform, but her handmaiden continues to the right. The audience sees that Desdemona carries a large square handkerchief with strawberries embroidered on it. Alexander Fried wrote that when Uta Hagen moved into these scenes of "ill luck," she was "totally touching."

How now, my dear Othello? Your dinner, and the generous islanders by you invited, do attend your presence.

Othello

(The Moor is barely audible on this line.) I am to blame.

Desdemona

(She moves down the steps to Othello. Emilia crosses center.) Why do you speak so faintly? Are you not well?

Othello

I have a pain, upon my forehead, here.

Desdemona

(She folds her handkerchief into a headband.) Faith, that's with watching. "Twill away again. (Emilia crosses to above the table.) Let me but bind your head, within this hour it will be well again. (She tries to place the handkerchief around her husband's forehead. Emilia watches this action approvingly, leaning in to the action.)

Othello

(He pushes the handkerchief away roughly and Desdemona drops it slightly behind her. Emilia immediately straightens, perplexed.) Your napkin is too little. (He rises.) Let it alone. (He crosses down stage of Desdemona to the up left area.) Come, I'll go in with you.

Desdemona

(Desdemona moves to him, takes his right arm. Both exit through the left archway, Othello allowing his wife to take the lead.) I am very sorry that you are not well.

Emilia

(He looks puzzled. Emilia begins to leave but sees the handkerchief and bends to pick it up.) I'm glad I found this napkin. This was her first remembrance from the Moor. (She crosses to the up left steps and stands on the platform.) My wayward husband hath a hundred times woo'd me to steal it, but she so loves the token that she reserves it evermore about her to kiss and talk to. (She holds the handkerchief up in her right hand, looking at it. Emilia then moves down the steps to the down
Emilia (continued) right area in a quick action.) I'll have the work copied and give it Iago. What he will do with it heaven knows, not I. I nothing but to please his fantasy.

Iago
(Iago enters from the down left area, moves to the left archway and looks off.) How now, what do you here alone?

Emilia
(She looks over her shoulder and tucks the handkerchief under her bodice at the waistline.) Do not you chide, I have a thing for you.

Iago
A thing. It is a common thing--

Emilia
(She turns left.) What?

Iago
(He laughs and moves down the steps to Emilia.) To have a foolish wife.

Emilia
O, is that all? (They kiss and embrace. Emilia's arms are around his neck.) What would you give me now for that same handkerchief?

Iago
(He takes her arms from around his neck.) What handkerchief?

Emilia
(Emilia steps back.) What handkerchief? Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona, that which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago
Hast stolen it from her?

Emilia
No, faith. She let it drop by negligence, and, to the advantage I being here took it up. (She takes the handkerchief from her bodice and holds it up in her right hand.) Look, here it is.

Iago
A good wench. Give it me.

Emilia
(She puts it behind her.) What will you do with it, that you have been so earnest to have me filch it?
Iago

Why, what's that to you? (He embraces Emilia with his left hand in back of her and snatches the handkerchief.) Be not known on't. (He twists her arm behind her, making her almost kneel.) I have use for it. Go, leave me. (He embraces Emilia once again. She starts to leave but Iago catches her and kisses her. She starts to leave again, turns back, then exits up left with a puzzled look. Iago moves to center stage, takes a long pause, looking at the handkerchief.) I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin, and let him find it. Trifles light as air are to the jealous confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ. This may do something. The Moor already changes with my poison. (He folds the handkerchief.) Dangerous conceits are in their nature poisons, which at the first are scarce found to distaste, but with a little act upon the blood burn like the mines of sulphur. (He conceals the handkerchief in his blouse, then looks off left through the archway.) I did say so. Look where he comes! (Iago crosses to the steps leading to the alcove.) Not poppy nor mandragora nor all the drowsy syrups of the world, shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep which thou ow'dst yesterday.

Othello

(Othello enters from the left archway and Iago salutes him.) Ha! Ha! False to me.

Iago

Why, how now, general? No more of that. (Iago remains on the center steps.)

Othello

(Othello crosses down left.) Avaunt, be gone, thou hast set me on the rack. I swear 'tis better to be much abus'd than but to know it a little.

Iago

(He crosses to Othello.) How now, my lord.

Othello

What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust? I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me. (Othello moves up center.) I slept the next night well, was free and merry. I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips. He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n, let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all. (Othello travels around the table to the right side.)

Iago

(He turns to face Othello as the Moor crosses, then Iago moves quickly forward.) I am sorry to hear this.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
In the following speech, one critic said that Paul Robeson presented a controlled chieftain who, at the hands of Iago, disintegrates "before your very eyes" into a "slobbering animal." I had been happy, if the general camp, pioneers, and all, had tasted her sweet body, so I had nothing known. (He moves around the chair to the right side of the table.) Now forever farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content. (Othello sits in the chair.) Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars that make ambition virtue! O, farewell. Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump, the spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife, the royal banner, and all quality, pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war! And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats the immortal Jove's dread clamourous counterfeit, farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

Iago

Is't possible, my lord?

As Margaret Webster directed Robeson in the next speech, she encouraged him to use his black experience as helpful motivation for the interpretation of the lines. The actor remembered one incident when, as a football player, someone on the opposing team yelled, "You black bastard!" Robeson said, "I smashed his face into the ground." "Of all people," said Webster, Robeson must have experienced "injustice, hatred," and "fury," but he simply could not transfer those experiences to this scene. Several critics agreed.

L. A. Sloper wrote that the actor needed more artistic control in the rage scenes. Restraint would have made them more credible, he said. These early moments of rage were so "overdone" that they became "grotesque," another critic noted. Louis Kronenberger observed that Robeson portrayed a "tortured" Moor, almost an "animal victim wracked

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
with violence," which seemed too strong for the stage. But the actor remained powerful even if these scenes were "clumsy."

Othello
Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore, be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof, or, by the worth of man's eternal soul, thou had'st been better have been born a dog than answer my naked wrath!

Iago
Is't come to this?

Othello
Make me to see it, or at the least so prove it, that the probation bear no hinge nor loop to hang a doubt on, or woe upon thy life!

Iago
(Iago backs up down left center.) My noble lord,—

Othello
If thou dost slander her, and torture me, never pray more. Abandon all remorse. On horror's head horrors accumulate. (Othello rises and quickly crosses to Iago, grabs him by the throat, then throws him to the floor, standing above him.) Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amaz'd. For nothing can'st thou to damnation add greater than that.

Iago
(He rises.) O grace! O heaven defend me! Are you a man? Have you a soul or sense? (He crosses to Othello who is moving left and grabs his arm to turn the Moor around.) God by you, take mine office. O wretched fool that liv' st to make thine honest a vice. (Iago moves down right.) O monstrous world, take note, take note, O world, to be direct, and honest is not safe. I thank you for this profit, and from hence I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence. (He starts to exit down right.)

Othello
Nay, stay. (Iago stops and turns.) Thou should'st be honest.

Iago
I should be wise, for honesty's a fool, that loses that it works for. (He moves into the right archway and leans on the down stage side.)
Othello

By the world, I think my wife be honest, and think she is not. I think thou are just, and think thou art not. I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh as Diane's visage, is now begrim'd and black, as mine own face. (He moves down left center.) If there be cords, or knives, poison, or fire, or suffocating streams, I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied. (He crosses center.)

Iago

(Iago has been looking down during the last speech and now raises his head.) You would be satisfied?

Othello

Would, nay, I will.

Iago

And may, but how, my lord, how satisfied. (Iago crosses upstage of the table then to Othello who is center.) Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on? Behold her topped?

Othello

Ah, death and damnation. (He moves quickly to the stool, his head in his hands.)

Iago

What then? How then? What shall I say? Where's satisfaction? (Iago crosses behind the table to the chair, then pushes the piece of furniture down right. Othello sits on the stool.) It is impossible you should see this were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys, as salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross as ignorance made drunk. But yet I say, if imputation and strong circumstances, which leads (He leans over the table to Othello) directly to the door of truth, will give you satisfaction, you may have it.

Othello

Give me living reason she's disloyal.

Iago

I do not like the office, but sith I am enter'd into this cause so far, prick'd to it by foolish honesty and love, I will go on. (He pauses, leans over the table and touches Othello's arm.) I lay with Cassio lately, and being troubled with a raging tooth, I could not sleep. There are a kind of men so loose of soul, that in their sleeps will mutter their affairs. One of this kind is Cassio. In sleep I heard him say, "Sweet Desdemona, let us be wary, let us hide our loves." (Iago circles the table around Othello as he delivers these lines.) And then, sir, would he grip and wring my
Iago (continued)
hand, cry out "Sweet creature!", then lay his leg over
my thigh, and sigh'd, and kissed and then cried "Cursed
fate, that gave thee to the Moor!"

Othello
(Othello rises violently, pushing the table back, then
moves down right.) O monstrous, monstrous!

Iago
Nay, this was but his dream.

Othello
But this denoted a foregone conclusion.

Iago
'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

Othello
(He moves far enough to grab Iago's arm.) I'll tear her
all to pieces.

Iago
(Iago quickly takes Othello's shoulders in his hands.)
Nay, but be wise, yet we see nothing done, she may be
honest yet. Tell me but this, have you not sometimes
seen a handkerchief, spotted with strawberries, in your
wife's hand?

Othello
I gave her such a one, 'twas my first gift.

Iago
I know not that, but such a handkerchief (I am sure it
was your wife's) did I to-day see Cassio wipe his beard
with. If it be that, or any that was hers, it speaks
against her with the other proofs.

Othello
O, that the slave had forty thousand lives! (He moves
to the left archway.) One is too poor, too weak for my
revenge. Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago. All
my fond love thus do I blow to heaven, 'tis gone. (He
crosses quickly forward.) Arise, black vengeance, from
thy hollow cell. Yield up, O love, thy crown and heart-
ed throne to tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy
fraught for 'tis of aspices' tongues! (Othello moves up
to the platform with his back to the audience.)

Iago
Pray be content. (He crosses in front of the table to
up center.)
Othello
(He is still on the platform, speaking over his shoulder.) O, blood, blood, blood!

Iago
Patience, I say, your mind perhaps may change.

Othello
Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea, whose icy current, and compulsive course, ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on to the Propontic and Hellespont, even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace, shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love, til that a capable and wide revenge swallow them up. (Othello crosses down stage left and kneels with his arms outstretched.) Now, by yond marble heaven in the due reverence of a sacred vow I here engage my words.

Iago
(He moves behind Othello, leaning over his shoulders. Both face the audience.) Do not rise yet. Witness, you ever-burning lights above, you elements that clip us round about, witness that here Iago doth give up the execution of his wit, hand, heart, to wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command, and to obey shall be in me remorse, what bloody work soever.

Othello
(Othello rises and takes Iago's hand.) I greet thy love. Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous, and will upon the instant put thee to't. Within these three days let me hear thee say that Cassio's not alive.

Iago
My friend is dead. 'Tis done as you request. But let her live.

Othello
Damn her, lewd minx. O, damn her! (He crosses up the left steps on the platform then turns to Iago.) Come, go with me apart, I will withdraw, to furnish me with some swift means of death for the fair devil. (Iago crosses to Othello who puts his hand on the villain's arm.) Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago
I am your own forever. (They shake hands.)

Music from the "Capriol Suit" is heard as the main act curtain closes. As the house lights come on for intermission, the music fades.
ACT II

The audience faces the Venetian curtain as the lights dim. Music from the Walford David Fanfare\textsuperscript{121} is heard as the curtain opens. Since Act II begins in the courtyard, the scenery is altered only slightly. The two banners have been removed and the maps, inkwells and quills have been cleared from the table. The stool left of the table is gone and a chair now takes its place. As the curtain opens, the stage is empty. In the traditional script, the Clown exchanges witty comments with Desdemona and Emilia, but Margaret Webster chose to begin later when the women talk together\textsuperscript{7}

(Desdemona enters from the left archway with Emilia behind her. Desdemona carries a large white handkerchief in her hand.)

Desdemona

(She moves down the steps and crosses to the table.) Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

Emilia

(She follows her mistress down the steps but stops just left of center stage.) I know not, madam.

Desdemona

Believe me, I had rather lose my purse full of crusados, (She crosses to the back of the chair.) and, but my noble Moor is true of mind, and made of no such baseness as jealous creatures are, it were enough to put him to ill thinking. (She moves above the table.)

Is he not jealous?

Emilia

(She looks under the table, then crosses up to the center of the right archway.) Who, he? I think the sun where he was born drew all such humours from him. (She leans on the upstage side of the arch and looks off left.)
Emilia
(Emilia crosses below the table to Desdemona, then looks off left.) Look, where he comes.

Desdemona
I will not leave him now til Cassio be called to him. (Othello enters from the up left archway.) How is't with you, my lord? (She crosses to him.)

Othello
Well, my good lady. (Emilia exits through the up right archway. Othello delivers this next line aside, away from Desdemona.) O, hardness to dissemble! (He looks at his wife.) How do you, Desdemona?

Desdemona
(She imitates him, curtsying as she mimics his tone of voice.) Well, my good lord.

Othello
Give me your hand. (She moves to him and offers her hand.) This hand is moist, my lady.

Desdemona
It has yet felt no age, nor known no sorrow.

Othello
This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart. Hot, hot and moist. This hand of yours requires a sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer, much castigation, exercise devout. For here's a young and swearing devil here that commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand, a frank one.

Desdemona
You may, indeed say so, for 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Othello
A liberal hand. (He puts her hand away from him.)

Desdemona
(She crosses to the table and sits in the chair.) I cannot speak of this. Come, come, your promise.

Othello
What promise, chuck?

Desdemona
I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Othello
I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me. (He moves to Desdemona.) Lend me thy handkerchief.
(She offers him the plain, white handkerchief.) Here, my lord.

Othello

That which I gave you.

Desdemona

I have it not about me.

Othello

(He is center stage.) Not?

Desdemona

No, faith, my lord.

Othello

That's a fault. That handkerchief did an Egyptian to my mother give. She was a charmer, and could almost read the thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it 'twould make her amiable, and subdue my father entirely to her love. But if she lost it or made a gift of it, my father's eye should hold her loathed, and his spirits should hunt after new fancies. She dying gave it me, and bid me, when my fate would have me wive, to give it her. I did so. And take heed on't, make it a darling like your precious eye. To lose't, or give it away, were such perdition as nothing else could match. (He moves toward her on the last line and leans over her.)

Desdemona

I' faith, is't true?

Othello

(He turns left.) Most veritable, therefore look to it well.

Desdemona

(She rises and moves down right.) Then would to God that I had never seen't.

Othello

Ha! Wherefore!

Desdemona

(She turns to her husband.) Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

Othello

Is't lost? Is't gone? Speak, is it out o' the way? (He crosses center.)

Desdemona

Heaven bless us!
Desdemona

It is not lost, but what an if it were? Margaret Webster believed that Desdemona must speak this line with great courage. It is a positive statement, the director said, which may not be wise, but is admirable. It must be stated while Desdemona looks directly into her husband's eyes.

How?

Othello

I say, it is not lost.

Othello

Fetch it, let me see it.

Othello

Fetch me the handkerchief. My mind misgives.

Desdemona

Come, come. You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

Othello

The handkerchief!

Desdemona

A man that all his time hath founded his good fortunes on your love, shared dangers with you,—

Othello

(Othello moves quickly to Desdemona.) The handkerchief!

Desdemona

I' faith, you are to blame.

Othello

Oh, away. (He pushes Desdemona aside, then exits through the up left archway. She follows him to the steps.)

Emilia

(He moves above the table.) Is not this man jealous?
Desdemona
I ne'er saw this before. Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief. (She crosses to the left side of the table and sits in the chair.) I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emilia
'Tis not a year or two show us a man. They are all but stomachs, and we're all but food. (Emilia moves to center stage.) They eat us hungrily, and when they are full they belch us. (She crosses down left.)

Iago
(Iago enters, pulling Cassio on stage.) There is no other way. 'Tis she must do it. And, lo, the happiness! Go and importune her.

Desdemona
How now, good Cassio, what's the news with you?

Cassio
(Cassio crosses to Desdemona, and Iago and Emilia meet and kiss.) Madam, my former suit. I do beseech you that by your virtuous means I may again exist, and be a member of his love, whom I with all the office of my heart entirely honour. I would not be delay'd. (Iago moves to the up left archway.)

Desdemona
Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio! My advocation is not now in tune. My lord is not my lord, nor would I know him were he in favour as in humour alter'd. (Cassio glances at Iago who is moving down right. Iago shrugs, feigning ignorance.) You must awhile be patient.

Iago
Is my lord angry?

Emilia
He went hence but now, and certainly in strange unquietness. (Iago begins to move to the up left archway. Emilia crosses to him, trying to stop him as he crosses.

Iago
And can he be angry? Something of moment then. I'll go meet him. There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry. (He ignores Emilia and exits through the left archway.)

Desdemona
I prithee, do so. Something sure of state, hath puddled his clear spirit. In such cases men's natures wrangle with inferior things, though great ones are the objects. 'Tis even so.
Emilia
(Emilia crosses to the left of Desdemona.) Pray heaven it be state-matters, as you think, and no conception, nor no jealous toy concerning you.

Desdemona
Alas the day, I never gave him cause!

Emilia
But jealous souls will not be answer'd so. They are not ever jealous for the cause, but jealous—for they are jealous. It is a monster begot itself, born on itself.

(Emilia moves to the left platform.)

Desdemona
(Desdemona rises quickly and moves forward.) Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

Lady, amen.

Emilia
(Desdemona rises up left then mounts the steps, while Cassio follows her.) I will go seek him. (Emilia exits down left. Desdemona turns to Cassio and places her left hand on his arm.) Cassio, walk hereabout. If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit, and seek to effect it to my uttermost. (Bianca appears in the up right archway, watching as Cassio and Desdemona exchange the last greeting.)

Cassio
(He is still looking where Desdemona has left.) I humbly thank your ladyship.

Bianca
(Bianca moves to the center of the stage and curtsies to Cassio.) Save you, friend Cassio.

Cassio
(Cassio moves off the steps to Bianca and helps her to rise.) My fair Bianca! What make you from home? I' faith sweet maid, I was coming to your house. (He turns to look through the left archway.)

Bianca
And I was going to your lodging, Cassio. (Cassio moves up the steps again, looks off, then turns to look at Bianca. He comes down the steps and she runs to meet him, placing her arms around his neck.) What, keep a week away? Seven days and nights? Eight score eight hours, O weary reckoning! (She kisses him.)
Cassio
(He takes her arms from around his neck, crossing back up left and looking off.) Pardon me, Bianca, I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd.

Bianca
(Bianca turns left, much concerned.) OH!

Cassio
(He laughs and turns back to her.) But I shall in a more continuate time strike off this score of absence. (He crosses down left.)

Bianca
AHAAAAH. (She crosses to Cassio, They embrace then break away. She crosses to center with a great sigh, straightening her clothing.) Oh, Cassio.

Cassio
(He takes the strawberry handkerchief from his blouse to mop his forehead, takes a second look at the property and moves quickly forward.) Sweet Bianca, take me this work out. Margaret Webster felt it necessary to explain this line in the program, telling the patrons that Cassio was asking her to copy the embroidery work.123

Bianca
(She crosses to Cassio, taking the handkerchief.) Cassio, whence came this. (She moves center, smells the perfume in the handkerchief, notices that it is not hers and becomes angry.) This is some token from a newer friend. (She turns angrily to Cassio.) To the felt absence now I feel a cause. Is't come to this? Well, well. Ha. (She crosses to the table and sits on it.)

Cassio
(He moves to Bianca and takes the handkerchief from her.) Go to, woman! You are jealous now that this is from some mistress, some remembrance. No by my faith, Bianca.

Bianca
Well, whose is it?

Cassio
I know not, sweet. (He puts his arms around her.) I found it in my chamber.

Bianca
Ha!
Cassio
I like the work well, ere it be demanded, as like enough it will I'd have it copied. (He stuffs the handkerchief into the front of Bianca's dress, embracing her.) Take it, and do it, and leave me for this time. (He straightens, pulling Bianca to her feet.)

Bianca
Leave you? Wherefore?

Cassio
Not that I love you not.

Bianca
But that you do not love me. (Cassio shrugs and walks away from her. She runs after him, taking him by the hand.) I pray you, bring me on the way a little (Cassio puts his arms around her.) And say if I shall see you soon—at night.

Cassio
'Tis but a little way that I can bring you, for I attend here.

Bianca
(She is disappointed.) Oh.

Cassio
But I'll see you soon.

Bianca
'Tis very good. (She kisses Cassio, picks up her skirts and runs out the down right exit.) I must be circumstanced. (Cassio laughs and follows her off the stage.)

Iago
(Othello enters from the left archway followed by Iago. The Moor moves down center.) Will you think so?

Othello
Think so, Iago!

Iago
What, to kiss in private?

Othello
An unauthorized kiss.

Iago
Or to be naked with her friend abed.

Othello
Naked abed, Iago.
Iago
So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip. But if I give
my wife a handkerchief—

Othello
(He moves to the right of the table.) What then?

Iago
Why, then, 'tis hers, my lord, and being hers, she may,
I think, bestow't on any man.

Othello
She is protectress of her honour too, may she give that?

Iago
Her honour is an essence that's not seen. But for the
handkerchief—

Othello
By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it. (He
moves left.) Thou said'st (it comes o'er my memory, as
doth the raven o'er the infected house, boding to all)
he had my handkerchief.

Iago
(Iago sits on the arm of the chair.) Ay, what of that?

Othello
That's not so good now.

Iago
What if I had said I had seen him do you wrong? Or
heard him say—

Othello
Hath he said anything?

Iago
He hath, my lord, but be you well assur'd, no more than
he'll unswear.

Othello
What hath he said?

Iago
Faith, that he did (He rises.) --I know not what he did.

Margaret Webster said that Othello's following lines
show the disintegration of his lofty speech. His words are
a "passionate agony of tumbling phrases" which almost reach
the point of being unintelligible ravings.  

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
What, what?  

Othello

(He backs up around the table.) Lie--

Iago

(He follows Iago.) With her?

Othello

With her.

Iago

Lie with her!

Othello

On her.

Iago

Lie on her!

Othello

What you will.

Iago

(He sits in the chair.) We say lie on her, when they belie her. Lie with her! That's fulsome! Handkerchief, confession—handkerchief—To confess, and be hang'd for his labour; though to be hanged, and then to confess. I tremble at it. It's not words that shakes me thus. Oh, pish! Noses, ears, lips,—(He falls to the floor in a trance.) This point, Paul Robeson actually did collapse in Boulder, Colorado. The change of altitude from California to Colorado made this very intense scene difficult to perform.

Iago

(He moves to Othello, leaning over his body.) Work on, my medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught, and many worthy and chaste dames, even thus all guiltless, meet reproach. (Cassio's footsteps are heard.) What ho! My lord! I say! Othello!

Cassio

(Cassio enters through the down right passageway and pauses.) What--

Iago

(He looks up at Cassio.) How now, Cassio.

Cassio

(He moves to Othello quickly.) What's the matter? (he leans over the Moor.)
Iago
My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy.

Cassio
Rub him about the temples.

Iago
Nay, forbear. The lethargy must have his quiet course. (Othello moves.) Look you, he stirs. (Iago takes Cassio by the arm and steps over Othello's body.) Do you withdraw yourself a while apart. He will recover straight. When he is gone, I would on great occasion speak with you. (He pulls Cassio to the right archway and ushers him off stage, then returns to Othello.) How is it, general. Have you hurt your head?

Othello
Dost thou mock me?

Iago
(He helps Othello to rise and sit in the chair.) I mock you? No, by heaven. Would you would bear your fortunes like a man!

Othello
Did he confess?

Iago
Good sir, be a man. Stand you a while apart. Confine yourself but in a patient list. Whilst you were here o'erwhelmed with your grief, a passion most unsuiting such a man, Cassio came hither. I shifted him away, laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy; bade him anon return and here speak with me, the which he promised. (He pulls Othello up across the stage to the down left area.) But encave yourself, for I will make him tell the tale again to cope your wife. (Othello stops suddenly.) I say, but mark his gesture. Marry patience, or I shall say you are all in all in spleen, and nothing of a man.

Othello
(He grasps Iago's shoulders.) Dost thou hear, Iago? I will be found most cunning in my patience. But—dost thou hear?—most bloody.

Iago
That's not amiss. But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw. (Othello exits down left, while Iago crosses up center.) Now will I question Cassio of Bianca. He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain from the excess of laughter. Here he comes. As he shall smile, Othello

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Iago (continued)
shall go mad. (Cassio enters through the right archway and moves to Iago who is down left.) How do you now, lieutenant.

Cassio
(Othello carefully returns to the stage and sits on a bench placed far in the down left corner. He is visible to Iago's eye but not Cassio's.) The worser that you give me the addition whose want even kills me. (He places a hand on Iago's shoulder where the lieutenant insignia has been mounted. Then Cassio places his hand on his own shoulder where the insignia is missing.)

Iago
Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't. (He whispers so Othello will not hear.) Now if this suit lay in Bianca's power, how quickly should you speed. (Othello believes that the two men are still speaking of Desdemona.)

Cassio
Alas, poor caitiff.

Othello
Look, how he laughs already!

Iago
I never knew woman love man so.

Cassio
Alas, poor rogue, I think i' faith, she loves me. (He laughs and moves to the left side of the table.)

Othello
Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

Iago
(Iago sits on the table.) Do you hear, Cassio? (Cassio leans over Iago and Iago whispers in his ear. Iago laughs and gestures, attempting to make Othello believe he is speaking of Desdemona.)

Othello
Now he importunes him to tell it o'er. Go to. Well said, well said.

Iago
She gives it out that you shall marry her. Do you intend it?

Cassio
Ha, ha, ha!
Othello

Do you triumph, Roman, do you triumph?

Cassio

(He moves to the chair and sits.) I marry her? What, a customer? I prithee, bear some charity to my wit. Do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

Othello

So, so. They laugh that win.

Iago

Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

Cassio

This is the monkey's own giving out. She is persuaded I will marry her out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise. (Iago rises, crossing back of the table. Moving down left, he gestures to Othello to listen.)

Othello

Iago beckons me. Now he begins the story.

Cassio

She was here even now.

Iago

(He returns to Cassio.) Here!

Cassio

She haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians, and, (He rises.) thither comes the bauble, by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck— (He pushes Iago to the table, forcing him to sit, placing his arms around Iago's neck and laughing.)

Othello

Crying 'O dear Cassio!' As it were. His gesture imports it.

Cassio

So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me. So shakes, and pulls me. Ha, ha, ha! (He pushes Iago off the table and crosses to stage left.)

Othello

Now he tells how she pluck'd him to my chamber. (Othello moves carefully to the up left unit and hides behind the chair.) //Robinson Stone does not remember this "hiding" action as it is noted in the prompt-script.//
Iago
(He looks off down right.) Before me! Look, where she comes.

Cassio
'Tis such another fitchew!

Iago
Fitchew!

Cassio
Marry, a perfum'd one.

Iago
(Bianca enters angrily. Overwhelmed by her perfume, Iago backs away from her and to the left of Cassio.) Phew!

Cassio
What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bianca
Let the devil and his dam haunt you. (She crosses to Cassio and waves the handkerchief in his face.) What did you mean by this same handkerchief you gave me even now. I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work. (She crosses around the table, stopping on the left side. Iago moves to Cassio.) A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! (Iago and Cassio exchange glances. Bianca quickly moves forward to Cassio.) This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There— (She throws the handkerchief on the floor by Iago's feet.) --give it your hobby horse; wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't. (She crosses just to the right of center stage. Iago picks up the handkerchief.)

Cassio
(He moves to Bianca.) Now now, sweet Bianca— (He kisses her on the shoulder.)

Othello
(Iago moves to Othello and shows him the handkerchief. The Moor leans forward from behind the chair.) By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

Cassio
(Cassio and Bianca do not see the exchange up left.) --How now, how now. (He places his arms around her and they remain in an embrace.)
Bianca
(She relents to him, sweetly.) And you'll come to supper tonight, you may-- (Cassio turns to Iago laughing.)--and you will not-- (She pushes Cassio away from her.)--come when you're next prepar'd for. (She picks up her skirts and exits down right angrily.)

Iago
(Iago crosses to Cassio, pushing him off the stage after Bianca.) After her, after her.

Cassio
Faith, I must, she'll rail in the street else. (He crosses down right, taking the handkerchief from Iago.)

Iago
Will you sup there?

Cassio
Yes, I intend so.

Iago
Well, I may chance to see you, for I would fain speak with you.

Cassio
Prithee, come, will you?

Iago
Go to, say no more. (He pushes Cassio off down right, then crosses to the left side of the stage.)

At least two critics highly praised Robeson's performance of the next scene. Audrey Johnson wrote that the actor's moves through the stages of jealousy were gradual, but by the time he reached the line, "Ay, let her rot and perish, and be damn'd to-night, for she shall not live," the effect was cataclysmic. Burton Rascoe stated that, in this moment, when Iago finally gets "Othello's mind up in the air," Robeson reached a magnificent "height of emotional projection," producing "a pathetic and terrible scene."

Also, Jose Ferrer beautifully presented the "clever scoundrel's self-satisfaction at such an easy success at a slight exercise in duplicity."
Othello
(He still lingers beneath the archway.) How shall I murder him.

Iago
Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice? (Iago crosses up center.)

Othello
Oh, Iago.

Iago
Did you see the handkerchief?

Othello
Was it mine?

Iago
Yours by this hand. And to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and he hath given it to his whore!

Othello
(Othello moves across the stage to the down stage side of the table, then stops.) I would have him nine years a-killing! A fine woman! A fair woman! A sweet woman!

Iago
Nay, you must forget.

Othello
(He sits in the chair.) Ay, let her rot and perish and be damn'd to-night, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turn'd to stone. I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature; she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

Iago
(Iago moves toward Othello.) She's the worse for all this.

Othello
A thousand, thousand times. And then, of so gentle a condition.

Iago
Ay, too gentle.

Othello
Elinor Hughes wrote that Othello's next line indicates that the Moor is finally convinced of the falsity of his wife and, as a result, her soul is dead. That idea, coupled with the "savage masculine rage" projected by
Othello (continued)

Robeson, created a tragic moment of great propor-
tion. Nay, that's certain. But yet the pity of it, Iago! O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago. (He bows his head.)

Iago

If you be so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend, for, if it touches not you, it comes near nobody.

Othello

(Othello raises his head to look at Iago.) I'll chop her into messes... cuckold me!

Iago

O, 'tis foul in her.

Othello

(He turns to Iago.) With mine officer.

Iago

That's fouler.

Othello

Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again. This night, Iago.

Iago

Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated. (He moves quickly to Othello and pounds the arm of the chair with his fist.)

Othello

Good, good, the justice of it pleases,— (He rises.) --very good.

Iago

And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker. You shall hear more by midnight.

Othello

Excellent good. (A trumpet is heard from the right area.) What trumpet is that same? (He crosses to the alcove.)

Iago

(Iago moves up to the right archway, looking through it.) Something from Venice, sure. (Two Red Guards enter and stand at attention on either side of the right arch.) 'Tis Lodovico come from the Duke. (Entering the right archway, Lodovico escorts Desdemona on his right arm. He is in his military costume, with matching jacket.
Iago (continued)

and trousers of rust velvet with gold braid stripes. His long velvet robe is sleeveless and of the same rust color, as are the plumed hat, gauntlets, and suede hip boots. At his waist is a sword belt and sword. The Second Gentleman and Montano enter behind and stop in the middle of the archway. Lodovico carries a scroll.) And see, your wife is with him. (Iago moves to the down stage left area.)

Lodovico

(He bows to Montano and the Gentleman, then crosses to Othello. Desdemona then turns to the Gentleman and Montano and bows.) God save you, worthy general.

Othello

With all my heart, sir.

Lodovico

The duke and senators of Venice greet you. (He gives Othello the scroll. Desdemona moves down the steps to the back of the chair. Montano, the Gentleman, and the Guards exit through the archway.)

Othello

I kiss the instrument of their pleasures. (He crosses down stage, takes a moment to exchange a look with Desdemona, then continues to the down right area. He opens the scroll and reads it to himself. Iago moves further up left. Lodovico watches Othello, puzzled, then looks to Desdemona to question her about her husband's actions. She is also confused, and moves to Lodovico.)

Desdemona

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico? (She places her arm around his.)

Iago

(Iago crosses to Lodovico's left side.) I am very glad to see you, signior; welcome to Cyprus.

Lodovico

(He turns to Iago.) I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

Iago

Lives, sir. (Iago puts his hand on the insignia, sneers, then crosses down left.)

Desdemona

Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord an unkind breach, but you shall make all well.
Othello
(He does not turn, but delivers this line facing forward.) Are you sure of that?

Desdemona
(She turns toward her husband.) My lord?

Othello
(He reads from the scroll.) "This fail you not to do, as you will . . ."

Lodovico
(He interrupts Othello's reading.) He did not call, he's busy in the paper. (He brings Desdemona to the down left area and turns her to face him.) Is there division betwixt thy lord and Cassio?

Desdemona
A most unhappy one. I would do much to atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

Othello
Fire and brimstone!

Desdemona
(She turns to Othello.) My lord?

Are you wise?

Desdemona
(She turns to Lodovico.) What, is he angry?

Lodovico
May be the letter mov'd him, for, as I think they do command him home, deputing Cassio in his government.

Desdemona
By my troth, I am glad on 't.

Indeed!

Othello
My lord?

Desdemona
(Othello abruptly rolls up the scroll and crosses to Desdemona.) I am glad to see you mad.

How, sweet Othello.
Othello

(Othello strikes his wife in the face with his scroll. Lodovico quickly places his hand on his sword.) Devil!

Desdemona
I have not deserv'd this. (She falls into Lodovico's arms, crying.)

Lodovico
(Lodovico is angry.) My lord, this would not be believed in Venice, though I should swear I saw it. 'Tis very much. Make her amends, she weeps.

Othello
O devil, devil! If that the earth could teem with woman's tears, each drop she falls would prove a crocodile. Out of my sight!

Desdemona
(Desdemona moves to the up left archway.) I will not stay to offend you.

Lodovico
(He watches her go, then follows to the edge of the platform. He stops her.) Truly an obedient lady. (He turns to Othello.) I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Othello
(He turns to his wife.) Mistress!

Desdemona
My lord?

Othello
(He directs this line to Lodovico.) What would you with her, sir?

Lodovico
(He turns to Othello, surprised.) Who, I, my lord?

Othello
Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn. Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on and turn again. (Desdemona begins to weep.) And she can weep, sir, weep. And she's obedient, as you say, obedient; very obedient. Proceed you in your tears. (He points to the scroll in his hand.) Concerning this, sir, --O well-painted passion! I am commanded home. (He crosses in front by the steps and Lodovico moves down stage.) Get you away, I'll send for you anon. (Desdemona begins a slow curtsy and Othello turns to Lodovico.) Sir, I obey the mandate, and will return to Venice. (He turns back to Desdemona who completes her curtsy. She rises and
Othello (continued)

exits through the archway.) Hence, avaunt! (He turns back to Lodovico.) Cassio shall have my place, and, sir, to-night, I do entreat that we may sup together, you are welcome, sir to Cyprus . . . goats and monkeys. (Othello exits up left. Lodovico moves up one step after the Moor, then stops. Iago crosses up to the left archway to look after Othello.)

Lodovico

The following statement by Lodovico describes the Moor as he once was. Edith Isaacs wrote that it also describes Paul Robeson's performance of the role when the actor projected the dignity of Othello. Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate call all in all sufficient? This the nature whom passion could not shake? Whose solid virtue the shot of accident nor dart of chance could neither graze nor pierce?

Iago

Ah, he is much changed.

Lodovico

Are his wits safe? Is he not light of brain?

Iago

He's that he is, I may not breathe my censure.

Lodovico

What, strike his wife?

Iago

Alas, alas! It is not honesty in me to speak what I have seen and known.

Lodovico

But . . .

Iago

You shall observe him, and his own courses will denote him so that I may save my speech. (Iago bows, puts his left hand out as a gesture for Lodovico to exit through the down left passageway.)

Lodovico

I am sorry that I am deceiv'd in him. (He crosses in front of Iago, exiting down left. Iago follows him.)

Othello

(Othello enters from the left archway, followed by Emilia.) You have seen nothing, then?
Emilia
(She moves down the steps.) Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

Othello
(Othello crosses to the table.) Yes, and you have seen Cassio and she together.

Emilia
But then I saw no harm, and then I heard each syllable that breath made up between them.

Othello
What, did they never whisper?

Emilia
Never, my lord.

Othello
Nor send you out o' the way?

Emilia
Never.

Othello
To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

Emilia
Never, my lord.

Othello
That's strange. (He moves to the left side of the table.)

Emilia
(She moves down left.) I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest; lay down my soul at stake. If you think other, remove your thoughts, it doth abuse your bosom. If any wretch hath put this in your head, let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse, for if she be not honest, chaste, and true, there's no man happy. The purest of their wives is foul as slander.

Othello
Bid her come hither. (Emilia hesitates.) Go. (She exits up left.) She says enough, yet she's a simple bawd that cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore, a closet, lock and key, of villainous secrets, and yet she'll kneel and pray, I have seen her do it.

Desdemona
(Desdemona enters through the left archway, followed by Emilia.) My lord, what is your will.
Othello
(He rises and crosses center stage.) Let me see your eyes . . . (She drops her eyes. Emilia moves to Desdemona's side.) . . . look into my face. (He moves to her, turns her face to him, then pushes her slowly to her knees.)

Desdemona
(Emilia moves quickly to her and takes Desdemona in her arms.) What horrible fancy's this?

Othello
(He delivers this line to Emilia.) Some of your function, mistress, leave procreants alone, and shut the door, cough, or cry hem, if anybody come. Your mystery, your mystery. (Emilia hesitates, not wishing to leave Desdemona.) Nay dispatch. (Desdemona signals for Emilia to leave, which she does, moving through the left archway.)

Desdemona
(Othello moves to the chair as Desdemona remains on her knees.) Upon my knees, what doth your speech import. I understand the fury in your words, but not the words.

Othello
Why, what art thou?

Desdemona
Your wife, my lord, your true and loyal wife.

Othello
Come, swear it, damn thyself, lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves should fear to seize thee. Therefore be double-damn'd. Swear thou art honest. (He sits in the chair.)

Desdemona
Heaven doth truly know it.

Othello
Heaven truly, that thou art false as hell.

Desdemona
(She rises.) To whom, my lord, with whom? How am I false?

Othello
(He bows his head.) O Desdemona! Away! Away! Away!

Margaret Webster often encouraged her actors to paraphrase lines in their own words in order to understand
the words better. Webster paraphrased Desdemona's following speech as "Look, if you're bothered about Pop..."  

Desdemona

Alas the heavy day! (She crosses to Othello.) Why do you weep? Am I the occasion of those tears, my lord? If haply you my father do suspect an instrument of this your calling back, lay not your blame on me. If you have lost him, why, I have lost him too.

Othello

(He turns to his wife.) Had it pleas'd heaven to try me with affliction, had they rain'd all kinds of sores and shames on my bare head, steep'd me in poverty, to the very lips, given to captivity me and my utmost hopes, I should have found in some place of my soul a drop of patience. (Desdemona steps back, turning away from him.) But, alas, to make me a fixed figure for the time of scorn to point his slow unmov'ng finger at, yet could I bear that too, well, very well. (Desdemona turns to face him again.) But there, where I have garner'd up my heart, where either I must love or bear no life, the fountain from which my current runs, or else dries up, to be discarded thence! Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads to know and gender in! (Desdemona steps back left.) Turn thy complexion there, patience thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin, I there look grim as hell!

Desdemona

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

Othello

O, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles that quicken even with blowing. (He rises and moves to Desdemona in a quick action which causes her to protect her face with her arm. Othello grasps her arms.) O thou weed, who art so lovely fair. And smell' st so sweet that the sense aches at thee. Would thou had' st ne'er been born! (He pushes her away from him down right beyond the table.)

Desdemona

(She faces him.) Alas, what ignorant sin have I committ'd?

Othello

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book made to write "whore" upon? What committed? Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks, the bawdy wind, that (He moves quickly forward.) kisses all it meets, is hush' d within the hollow mine of earth, and will not hear' t ... what committed? Impudent strumpet! (He backs up about two steps.)
Desdemona
(She moves to the chair.) By heaven, you do me wrong.

Othello
(He crosses to the right side of the chair. Desdemona moves in front of it.) Are you not a strumpet?

Desdemona
(She leans on the chair.) No, as I am a Christian.

What, not a whore?

Desdemona
No, as I shall be sav'd.

Is't possible?

Othello

Desdemona
(She leans further over the chair, her back to the audience.) O, heaven, forgiveness!

Othello
I cry you mercy then. I took you for that cunning whore of Venice that married with Othello. (Desdemona falls onto the chair, her head in her hands. Othello crosses up left, raising his voice, calling off stage.) You, mistress, that have the office opposite to Saint Peter and keeps the gates in Hell! (Emilia enters through the left archway, and stands on the platform.) You, you, ay, you! We have done our course. (He gives Emilia a money bag.) Here's money for your pains, I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel.

Emilia
(She throws the bag angrily at Othello's feet.) Alas, what does this gentleman conceive? (She crosses to Desdemona, kneels beside her and folds her in an embrace.) How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady? (Othello exits up left.)

Desdemona
(Her head is on Emilia's shoulder, facing down stage.) Faith, half asleep.

Emilia
Good, madam, what's the matter with my lord?

With who?

Desdemona

Emilia
Why, with my lord, madam.
Desdemona

Who is thy lord?

Emilia

Why, he that is yours, sweet lady.

Desdemona

I have none. (She lifts her head, straightening her body, but remains in the chair.) Do not talk to me, Emilia. I cannot weep, nor answer have I none but what should go by water. Prithee, to-night lay on my bed my wedding sheets, remember, and call thy husband hither.

Emilia

(She rises, crosses to the up left archway. As she leaves she delivers this line.) Here's a change indeed.

Desdemona

'Tis meet I should be us'd so, very meet. How have I been behav'ed, that he might stick the small'st opinion on my least misuse. (She leans on the arm of the chair and breaks into sobs.)

Iago

(Iago enters from the left archway, followed by Emilia.) What is your pleasure, madam? How is't with you? (He moves down left. Emilia crosses above the chair to Desdemona.)

Desdemona

I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes do it with gentle means, and easy tasks. He might have chid me so, for, in good faith, I am a child at chiding.

Iago

What is the matter, lady? (He moves further down stage and center.)

Emilia

Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhor'd her, thrown such despite, and heavy terms upon her, as true hearts cannot bear. (She crosses behind the table.)

Desdemona

Am I that name, Iago?

Iago

What name, fair lady?

Desdemona

Such as she says my lord did say I was.
Emilia
He call'd her whore. A beggar in his drink could not have laid such terms upon his callet. (She moves down right.)

Iago
Why did he so?

Desdemona
I do not know. (Emilia crosses to Desdemona and leans over her.) I am sure I am none such.

Iago
(lago crosses to the chair.) Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day! (Desdemona leans on the arm of the chair with her large handkerchief in her hand which touches her forehead. Emilia touches the other hand and Iago touches Desdemona's shoulder.)

Emilia
(Emilia moves from Desdemona, quickly stepping back.) Hath she forsook so many noble matches, her father, and her country, and her friends, to be called whore? Would it not make one weep. (She crosses down right.)

Iago
Beshrew him for't! How comes this trick upon him?

Emilia
(She crosses further down stage and Iago moves left.) I'll be hang'd if some eternal villain . . . (She moves up left.) . . . some busy and insinuating rogue, some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office, hath not devised this slander, I'll be hang'd else. (She moves down left.)

Iago
(He turns to Desdemona.) Fie, there is no such man, it is impossible.

Desdemona
(Emilia moves on to the up left area.) If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

Emilia
(He is pacing up and down the stage.) A halter pardon him, and hell gnaw his bones! (Iago turns to face her.) Why should he call her whore? Who keeps her company? What place? What time? What form? What likelihood? The Moor's abus'd by some most villainous knave, some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.

Iago
(He crosses to Emilia who is now down left.) Speak within doors.
(She speaks softly so Desdemona will not hear. Desdemona is leaning against the back of the chair, weeping.) O, fie upon him! Some such squire he was that turn'd your wit, the seamy side without, and made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago

(He kisses Emilia.) You are a fool, go to.

Desdemona

(She turns to Iago.) O good Iago. (He turns back to Desdemona.) What shall I do to win my lord again. (Iago moves to her and she takes his left hand in her left hand.) Good friend, go to him, for, by this light of heaven, I know not how I lost him. (She kneels in front of the chair, letting go of Iago's hand. Emilia crosses to them.) Here I kneel. If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love either in discourse of thought or actual deed, or that I do not yet, and ever did, and ever will, though he do shake me off to beggarly divorcement, love him dearly, comfort forswear me! (Iago helps her to rise. Emilia steps center stage.) Unkindness may do much! And his unkindness may defeat my life, but never taint my love.

Iago

I pray you, be content, 'tis but his humour. The business of the state does him offence, and he does chide with you. (He turns to Emilia.)

Desdemona

If 'twere no other--

Iago

(Tis but so, I warrant you. (A trumpet is heard.) Hark, how these instruments summon you to supper! (Emilia puts her arms around Desdemona. Iago helps his wife lead Desdemona slowly off through the up left exit.) And the great messengers of Venice stay. Go in, and weep not. (He watches them go, then turns front, moving down stage about two steps.) All things shall be well. (He moves forward as the traveler closes quickly. Roderigo enters from the down right area.) How now, Roderigo?

Roderigo

(Roderigo crosses angrily to Iago.) I do not find that thou deal'st justly with me.

Iago

What in the contrary?
Roderigo
Every day thou daff'st me with some device, Iago. And rather, as it seems to me, now keep'st from me all convieniency that suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will indeed no longer endure it, nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffered. (Iago mimics Roderigo's gestures throughout the latter's speech.)

Iago
Will you hear me, Roderigo?

Roderigo
Faith, I have heard too much. For your words and performances are no kin together.

Iago
You charge me most unjustly.

Roderigo
With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of means. The jewels you have had from me, to deliver to Desdemona, would half have corrupted a votarist. (He turns from Iago, then moves back to him.) You have told me she hath received them, and returned me expectation and comforts, of sudden respect and acquaintance. But I find none. (He moves quickly to the right.)

Iago
Well, go to. Very well.

Roderigo
(He turns to Iago angrily.) Very well? Go to? I cannot go to, man, nor 'tis not very well.

Iago
(Iago sneers.) Very well.

Roderigo
(Roderigo crosses to Iago who has moved further down left.) By this hand, I say 'tis very scurvy, and begin to find myself fopp'd in it.

Iago
(He pushes Roderigo away.) Very well.

Roderigo
I tell you it is not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona. (Iago reacts to this.) If she'll return me my jewels, I shall give over my suit, and repent my unlawful solicitation. (He moves back to Iago.) If not, assure yourself I'll seek satisfaction of you. (He places his hand on his sword.)
Iago
You have said now.

Roderigo
Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of
doing. (The two draw their swords, Iago just slightly
before Roderigo.)

Iago
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Why, now I see there's mettle
in thee. (They engage in fighting.) And even from this
time do build on thee a better opinion than before.
(Iago sheathes his sword.) Give me thy hand, Roderigo.
(Roderigo sheathes his sword, then starts to shake hands
with Iago, then, realizing what he is about to do, pulls
it away and becomes more angry.) Thou hast taken
against me a most just exception, but yet, I protest, I
have dealt most directly in thy affairs.

Roderigo
(He turns to the right.) It hath not appear'd.

Iago
I grant indeed it hath not appear'd, and your suspicion
is not without wit and judgement. (He follows Roderigo
as they move down right, Iago's hand on his shoulder.)
But, Roderigo, if thou hast that within thee indeed,
which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, I
mean purpose, courage, and valour, this night show it.
(Roderigo shrugs off Iago's hand.) If thou the next
night following enjoyest not Desdemona, take me from
this world with treachery, and devise engines for my
life. There.

Roderigo
(He pauses, then turns to Iago.) Well, what is it. Is
it within reason and compass?

Iago
Sir, there is especial command come from Venice to
depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Roderigo
(He faces Iago.) Is that true? Why then Othello and
Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago
O, no, he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him
the fair Desdemona,—

Roderigo
Oh. (He turns away from Iago.)
Iago
(Iago turns Roderigo back.) --unless his abode be linger'd here by some accident, wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

Roderigo
How do you mean, removing of him?

Iago
Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place. By knocking out his brains. (He places his left hand on Roderigo's left shoulder.)

Roderigo
(Roderigo turns left to Iago, not able to believe what he has heard.) And that you would have me do?

Iago
(He crosses down stage of Roderigo to his right side.) Ay, and if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me, I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. (Chimes are heard.)

Roderigo
(He protests.) No, Iago.

Iago
It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste. About it. (He pulls Roderigo.)

Roderigo
(He resists.) I will hear further reason for this.

Iago
(Iago pulls Roderigo more forcibly down right.) And you shall be satisfied.

Roderigo
(The lights go out entirely on the stage. Roderigo's voice is heard in the dark.) No, Iago, no!

As the traveler opens, the audience sees a dressing room in the castle. The right and left archways are covered with a sheer curtain. An ornate dressing table with a large mirror and brocaded skirt is placed on the right side of the stage in an angle facing the down left corner. A bench or "X" chair is placed in front of it. On the table are two
candlesticks, a small jewel box, comb, brush, mirror and a vase of flowers. On stage left stands a smaller table with a jewel box on top of it. A chair is next to it. The center unit has been altered to resemble the same arrangement used in Act I, Scene iii. The walls extend on a diagonal with small archways facing left and right. The arches are filled with a "plug" which resembles stone. Within each center arch is a wooden sconce for candles. A prieu dieu is situated in the middle of the left archway. The traveler has not opened to the full width of the stage, increasing the intimacy of the scene. Desdemona sits at the dressing table, humming. The assistant stage manager gives the actress a note from a pitch pipe to start her song. Her peach satin slippers are on the floor by the dressing table.

(Emilia enters. She waits politely for Desdemona to finish her song before speaking. The handmaiden carries her mistress's rose-pink satin robe. She moves to Desdemona and leans over her.)

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

Desdemona
(She looks at Emilia, then forward.) He says he will return incontinent. (Emilia crosses to the chair, placing the satin robe across it.) He hath commanded me to go to bed, and bade me to dismiss you.

Emilia
(She turns to Desdemona, much surprised.) Dismiss me?

Desdemona
(She rises and moves to Emilia center stage.) It was his bidding, therefore, good Emilia, give me my nightly wearing, and adieu. (Emilia protests.) We must not now displease him.

Emilia
I would you had never seen him.
Desdemona
So would not I. My love doth so approve him, but even
his stubborness, his checks, frowns (prithee, unpin
me)—(Emilia crosses to unpin Desdemona's blue robe.)
—have grace and favour in them.

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 hums as Emilia removes
her blue robe. Emilia then crosses to the chair, picks
up the pink robe and replaces it with the blue. She
brings the pink to her mistress and helps her to put it
on.)

Desdemona
My mother had a maid called Barbara. 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 ex­
pressed her fortune, and she died singing it. (Emilia
kneels in front of Desdemona to fasten her robe.) That
song to-night will not go from my mind, and I have much
to do but to go hang my head all at one side—(She
hangs her head to the left side.)—and sing it like
poor Barbara. Prithee, dispatch.

Emilia
(Emilia rises from her kneeling position.) Shall I go
fetch your nightgown?

Desdemona
No, unpin me here. (Desdemona begins to unpin her head­
piece, Emilia moves behind her to help.) This Lodovico
is a proper man.

Emilia
(She removes the pearls from Desdemona's neck.) A very
handsome man. (She places the pearls on the dressing
table.)

Desdemona
He speaks well. (Emilia helps her remove the head­
dress.)

Emilia
I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot to
Palestine for a touch of his nether lip. (Both laugh.)
Desdemona begins to sing the "willow song" at this point. Robinson Stone said, "God knows Uta Hagen can't sing," but this was one of the finer moments in her performance. Herbert Whitaker agreed that this scene was "most affecting."

Desdemona

(As Desdemona sings, Emilia picks up her slippers, shows them to her mistress for approval, then seeing that the lady is not watching, begins to place the slippers on her feet.)

"The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree. Sing all a green willow; Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee, Sing willow, willow, sing willow, willow."

(Emilia raises her head to Desdemona who smiles sadly but sweetly. She then continues to put her mistress's slippers on.)

"The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her moans; The salt tears ran from her, and softened the stones;"

(She directs the next line to Emilia.) Prithee, hie thee. He'll come anon. (Emilia rises and crosses to the left table to get the jewel box, then returns to the dressing table to put Desdemona's pearls inside it. She watches her mistress.)

"Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve,—"

Nay, that's not next. (She hears a noise off right and turns, startled.) Hark! Who is't that knocks?

Emilia

(Emilia continues to place the pearls and headdress in the jewel box. She listens.) It is the wind.

Desdemona

Oh. (She sings.)

"I called my love false love, but what said he then? If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men."

(Emilia closes the jewel box and moves closer to Desdemona to smooth her hair. Desdemona hums the next line.)

"Sing willow, willow, sing willow, willow."

(Emilia turns quickly to Emilia's arms, weeping.) So, get thee gone. Goodnight. (Emilia kisses her mistress on the top of her head, picks up the jewel box and crosses to center stage. Desdemona rubs her eyes.) Mine eyes do itch, doth that bode weeping?
Emilia
(She turns to Desdemona.) 'Tis neither here nor there.

Desdemona
I've 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
Would' st 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 it well in the dark. @Stark Young said that Margaret Webster should have delivered these lines in a more "bawdy" fashion.135

Desdemona
Would' st thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emilia
The world's a huge thing. 'Tis a great price for a small vice.

Desdemona
By my troth, I think thou would' st not.

Emilia
By my troth, I think I would, and undo' t again when I had done ' t. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, not for measures of lawn, nor 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 it. (She crosses to the left table and places the jewel box on top of it.)

Desdemona
I do not think there is any such woman.

Emilia
(She turns back and moves center stage.) Yes, a dozen. But I do think it is their husbands' faults if wives do fall. Say that they strike us, or else break out in
peevish jealousies. Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace, yet have we some revenge. (She crosses down stage of Desdemona, picking up the slippers which she has removed from her mistress's feet.) 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. (She crosses to the chair, placing the slippers on top of it.) And have not we affections? Desires for sports? And frailty as men have? Then let them use us well. (She moves back center stage.) Else let them know, the ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

Desdemona

Good night. (She rises.) Good night. (She crosses center and kisses Emilia, then moves up center to the prieu dieu and kneels.) Heaven me such uses send, not to pick bad from bad, but bad mend!

(Emilia watches Desdemona until she starts to pray, then the handmaiden crosses to the dressing table, picks up the candle, blows it out, then moves to pick up a second candle on the down stage side of the table. She looks at Desdemona once more and exits between the traveler and the right archway.)

The lights dim quickly as the traveler closes. The music, "Appian Way," is heard, continuing until the traveler re-opens. The curtains over the right and left archways have been opened. The stone "plugs" used to close the center arches are gone and a transparent drop replaces them. A green light shines through the drop so that it spills diagonally in two directions to the right and left of the stage. Also, a dim light shines through the large right archway. Francis Letton says that this illumination threw enormous shadows on the wall, occasionally catching the actors' faces, producing the most effective lighting in the production. It "beautifully established" the appropriate mood. Another observer stated that this scene's illumination seemed "frightening." Actor Stockman Barner says that
the lights were so dim that it was difficult to find
Roderigo's corpse to carry it off the stage.\footnote{1387}

(As the traveler opens, there are no actors, but laughter is heard stage right. Then Iago enters from the
donw right area, looks around him, and beckons to
Roderigo, who follows the villain from the same en-
trance.)

Iago
Here, stand behind this bulk, straight will he come. Wear thy good rapier bare and put it home. (Roderigo
crosses to the left archway, looking through it into the
light.) Quick, quick, fear nothing. I'll be at thy el-
bow. It makes us or it mars us, think of that, and fix
most firm thy resolution.

Roderigo
Be near at hand, I may miscarry in it.

Iago
Here, at thy hand, be bold, and take thy sword. (He ex-
its up right.)

Roderigo
I have no great devotion to the deed. And yet he hath
given me satisfying reasons. 'Tis but a man gone. (He
draws his sword.) Forth, my sword, he dies. (He exits
up left to hide behind the right side of the archway.)

Iago
(Iago re-enters to lean against the left side of the
donw right arch.) I have rubbed this young quat almost
to the sense, and he grows angry. Now, whether he kill
Cassio, or Cassio him, or each do each other, every way
works my gain. Live Roderigo, he calls me to restitu-
tion large of gold and jewels, that I bobbed from him as
gifts to Desdemona. It must not be. (Iago shakes his
head "no," and the laughter heard off right increases.)
If Cassio do remain, he has a daily beauty in his life
that makes me ugly. And besides, the Moor may unfold me
to him; there stand I in peril. No, he must die. (He
clenches his fist. The laughter becomes even louder.)
Be it so. I hear him coming. (He exits down right.
Cassio is heard off stage, saying "goodbyes.")

Roderigo
(He enters carefully from up left.) I know his gait,
'tis he. (He hides in the shadows just to the left of
the center unit.)

Bianca
(Her voice is heard from off right.) Farewell, Cassio!
Cassio

(Cassio appears in the up right archway.) Farewell Bianca. (Men's voices are heard saying their "good-byes." Cassio starts to cross the stage.)

Roderigo

(Roderigo moves quickly out of the shadows with his drawn sword.) Villain, thou dieth!

Cassio

(He catches the first blow in his cloak.) That trust had been mine enemy indeed, but that my coat is better than thou think'st. I will make proof of thine. (Cassio throws off his cloak and draws his sword to engage Roderigo. Roderigo backs to the left, defending himself. They clash swords then exchange sides. Cassio fences with Roderigo, moving him back to the right. Roderigo trips and falls, then trips Cassio who falls down stage. Roderigo runs quickly and hides to the left side of the center unit. Cassio rises with his sword, looking off through the right archway. As he turns, he sees Roderigo's sword which has been left on the ground. A slight noise makes Roderigo turn and Cassio moves up the steps of the right side of the center unit. He beats his sword on the floor to draw Roderigo out. Roderigo makes a forward lunge and Cassio catches his right wrist in his left hand and turns Roderigo around to the right, then stabs him in his left side.)

Roderigo

(He drops his sword, falling on the right side of the center unit.) O, I am slain!

(Cassio leans over Roderigo, facing center stage. Iago re-enters down right, sneaking up on Cassio. Just as Cassio bends to look at Roderigo more closely, putting his sword on the floor, Iago stabs him in the leg. Cassio gasps, stumbling to the down left area, falling on the floor. Iago picks up Cassio's cape and the two swords and exits up right. He quickly gets a lighted lantern and crosses the stage from the up right to the up left area, swinging the lantern to see what has happened.)

Cassio

Oh, I am maimed forever. Help, help. Murder! Murder!

Gratiano

(Lodovico and Gratiano enter from the down right area, moving well into the stage, but barely seen in the shadows.) 'Tis some mischance, the cry is very direful.
0, help!  

Lodovico  

Hark!  

Gratiano  

(He sees someone off left with a lantern.) Here comes one with light and weapons. (Lodovico and Gratiano withdraw off down right.)  

Iago  

(Iago enters from the up left archway with the lantern, moves to Cassio and places the lantern on the floor.) What are you here that cry so grievously?  

Cassio  

Iago, O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains! Give me some help.  

Iago  

O me, lieutenant! What villains have done this?  

Cassio  

I think that one of them is hereabout, and cannot make away.  

Roderigo  

(Roderigo struggles to his feet and leans against the center unit.) O, help me here!  

Cassio  

(Unable to move.) That's one of them.  

Roderigo  

(Roderigo straightens his body and holds out his hand to Iago for help. Iago crosses to him and stabs him.) Damned Iago! O inhuman dog! (He falls to the floor, dead.)  

Iago  

(He moves back a bit, just to the side of the center unit where Roderigo lies.) Where be those bloody thieves? How silent is the town! (He moves stealthily to Cassio, raises his dagger to stab him, and is stopped when he hears Lodovico's voice.)  

Lodovico  

(Returning from the down left area with Gratiano at his heels.) Nay ho!  

Iago  

(Iago tries to hide the dagger.) Ho! Murder! Murder! What may you be? Are you of good or evil?
Lodovico

(Lodovico and Gratiano come to center stage. The lights have brightened just enough so all can be seen.) As you shall prove us, prise us.

Iago

Signior Lodovico?

Lodovico

He, sir.

Iago

I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.

Lodovico

(He crosses to Cassio, picking up the lantern to illuminate his body.) Cassio! (Lodovico moves behind the wounded man.)

Gratiano

(Gratiano moves toward Lodovico about two steps.) Cassio?

Bianca

(Bianca enters from the up left archway, standing in the center of the frame.) What is the matter, ho? (She moves down right.) Who is't that cried?

Iago

Who is't that cried?

Bianca

(She crosses from down right to down left where Cassio lies.) O my dear Cassio! O my sweet Cassio! Cassio! Cassio! (She kneels by his side, placing his head in her arms, weeping over his body.)

Iago

Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash to bear a part in this.

Lodovico

(He points to Bianca.) This?

Iago

(He moves up center to Roderigo.) Aye. Lend me a light. Know you his face or no? (Lodovico and Gratiano cross up stage to Roderigo's head and shoulders. Lodovico moves to his feet, giving the lantern to Gratiano.) Alas, my friend, and my dear countryman, Roderigo.

Gratiano

What, of Venice?
Iago

Even he, sir, did you know him?

Gratiano

Know him? Ay.

Iago

Signior Gratiano? (A Brown Guard enters and moves through the up right archway, travels down right, then, at Iago's signal, crosses down left to help Cassio.) I cry you gentle pardon. These bloody accidents must excuse my manners, that so neglected you.

Gratiano

(The Second Guard and the Venetian Citizen enter from the up right archway and cross to Roderigo. Gratiano holds the lantern high.) Roderigo! (He moves down stage right as the traveler closes slowly. Lodovico and the First Guard help Cassio to rise and the guard takes him off left. The Second Guard and the Venetian Citizen carry Roderigo off through the up right archway. Bianca rises and Iago looks at her. These actions take place as the traveler moves together.)

Iago

Some good man bear him carefully from hence; I'll fetch the general's surgeon. (He speaks to Bianca.) For you, mistress, save you your labour.

Emilia

(Emilia rushes on from the down right area.) Alas, what's the matter? What's the matter, husband?

Iago

Cassio has here been set on in the dark, by Roderigo, and fellows that are escaped. He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

Emilia

Alas, good gentlemen, alas, poor Cassio!

Iago

This is the fruit of whoring. Emilia, go know of Cassio, (The First Guard re-enters from down left.) where he supped to-night. (He moves to Bianca and takes her arm.) What, do you shake at that?

Bianca

He supped at my house, but I therefore shake not.

Iago

Oho, did he so? I charge you, go with me.
Emilia
Fie upon thee, strumpet!

Bianca
(She crosses angrily in front of Iago to confront Emilia. Iago grabs her, holding her from attacking his wife.) I am no strumpet, but of life as honest as you that thus abuse me.

Emilia
(Bianca is still struggling in Iago's hands.) As I! Fie upon thee!

Iago
Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dressed. Come, mistress, you must tell us another tale. (He pushes Bianca to the left into Lodovico's arms, who pushes her to the First Guard. The guard carries her off down left.) Emilia, run you to the citadel, and tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd! (Emilia crosses down stage of Gratiano and exits quickly through the down left passageway.) Will you go on, I pray. (Gratiano and Lodovico exit down left. Gratiano still carries the lantern.) This is the night that either makes me or fordoes me quite. (He exits quickly down left.)

The lights go out suddenly. Music from "Appian Way" is heard and fades into the sound of chimes. The traveler opens to reveal an ornate bed in the up left archway. The sheer curtains in the arch are closed. The bed, raised on a platform with a step on either side, is covered with two white pillows, sheets, and a large brocaded spread, fringed along the hem. A small night table, covered with a red velvet cloth, stands to the right of the bed. A candle burns on top of it. The two wooden candle sconces seen in Scene ii of this act are placed on the walls of the center unit, which have been plugged with a stone-like facade. A large chair sits stage right of the bedroom. Stockman Barner believes that this setting, and that used for the senate scene, could have been more elaborately Venetian.
Stark Young observed that the pieces of furniture became obstacles, prohibiting free-flowing action. He suggested that the scene would have been better played against black draperies. Critics commented on this scene more than on any other. Paul Robeson's performance in it was discussed at length. Margaret Webster always believed that Robeson failed to project the appropriate emotions needed for the scene. She admitted that he was occasionally "moving," but more often he performed as if he were offering a sermon. Harold Cohen said, however, that Paul Robeson "soared" the heights in this "electrifying" final scene. Margaret Webster wrote that the lines in Othello's "It is the cause" speech show the cyclic manner in which the Moor's language moves: first, poetic phrases, then unintelligible ones, then a return to the poetic. The words reflect a change which "under the sway of a great and noble sorrow far transcending the initial passion of jealousy" projects "sacred majesty." She recalled what George Bernard Shaw said about Othello's language: "Tested by the brain it is ridiculous; tested by the ear it is sublime." Of Robeson's delivery of the famous line, "Put out the light and then put out the light," Wolcott Gibbs said the actor emphasized each word as if it were a "tombstone," creating an effect almost humorous. But Hazel Bruce stated that Robeson delivered the line like a "sigh," which seemed remarkably moving. Uta Hagen as Desdemona also received praise for this last scene. John Chapman admired her portrayal of a Desdemona
who was "more resigned to her violent end than terrified of it." H. T. M. considered Miss Hagen's "pitiful finale" most effective, and Howard Barnes wrote that the actress in this scene "wrenches the heart." On the other hand, John Mason Brown was dissatisfied with the scene; it was much too slow, he said. But Brown saw the production at Princeton University, and perhaps the pace of the scene altered in New York. At any rate, Lewis Nichols, who saw Othello on Broadway, agreed with others that the final scene was the finest moment in the play.

Othello

(Othello crosses to the center of the stage, looking at Desdemona, who sleeps. He has a sword in his hands.)

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. (He turns, and places his sword to the right of the center unit.) Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men. (He moves to the candle on the bed table, picking it up.)

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. (He returns the candle to the table.)

When I have plucked the rose, I cannot give it vital growth again. It needs must wither. I'll smell it on the tree. (He kneels on the right side of the bed.) Ah a balmy breath, thou dost almost persuade Justice to break her sword! (He kisses her.) One more, one more, be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee, and love thee after. One more and this the last so sweet was ne'er so fatal. (He rises.) I must weep, but they are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly. It strikes where it doth love. (Desdemona stirs, turning her face to the left side of the stage. Othello steps back.) She wakes.

Desdemona

(She awakens.) Who's there? (She pauses and turns her face to the right.) Othello?
Ay, Desdemona.

Desdemona
Will you come to bed, my lord?

Othello
Have you prayed to-night, Desdemona.

Desdemona
Ay, my lord.

Othello
If you bethink yourself of any crime unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace, solicit for it straight.

Desdemona
(She rises in the bed.) Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?

Othello
Well do it, and be brief, I will walk by. (He sits in the chair, looking forward.) I would not kill thy unprepared spirit. No heaven forfend. I would not kill thy soul. Elinor Hughes wrote that this line is the strongest indication that Othello is a Christian, rather than a Moslem.  

Desdemona
Talk you of killing?

Othello
Ay, I do.

Desdemona
Then heaven have mercy on me!

Othello
Amen, with all my heart!

Desdemona
(She throws the covers off her body and swings her feet to the floor.) If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Othello
(He turns and looks at Desdemona from over his shoulder.) Hum!

Desdemona
(She draws back.) And yet I fear you, for you are fatal then when your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know not, since guiltiness I know not, and yet I— (She gets out of bed, moves around the edge and backs up to the down left area.) —I feel I fear.
Think on thy sins.

They are loves I bear to you.

Ay, and for that thou diest.

That death's unnatural that kills for loving. Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip? (She moves three steps to center stage.) Some bloody passion shakes your very frame. These are portents. And yet, I hope, I hope they do not point on me.

Peace, and be still.

(She moves to the center unit and leans on it.) I will so. (She turns to Othello appealingly.) What's the matter?

That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee thou gav'est to Cassio.

No, by my life and soul! (She turns to the right archway, pointing off.) Send for the man and ask him!

Sweet soul, take heed, take heed of perjury, thou art to die.

Then heaven have mercy on me!

I say, amen.

And have you mercy too! I never did offend you in my life ... Never loved Cassio, but with such general warranty of heaven as I might love. (She moves to Othello and kneels at his feet.) I never gave him token. (She falls to the floor, weeping.)

By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand. O perjured woman! Thou dost stone my heart, and makes me call what I intend to do a murder, which I thought a sacrifice. I saw the handkerchief.
Desdemona
(She rises, taking a step back.) He found it then, I
never gave it to him. Send for him hither, let him con-
fess truth.

Othello
He has confessed.

Desdemona
What, my lord?

Othello
That he hath . . . used thee.

(Desdemona takes about three steps back, then moves to
the down stage right side of the bed.) How? Unlaw-
fully?

Othello
Ay.

Desdemona
He will not say so.

Othello
No, his mouth is stopped. Honest Iago hath ta'en order
for it.

Desdemona
My fear interprets then . . . What, is he dead?

Othello
Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge had stom-
ach for them all.

Desdemona
(She turns, sitting on the edge of the bed.) Alas, he
is betrayed, and I undone!

Othello
(He rises, crossing to the bed.) Out, strumpet!
Weep'st thou for him to my face?

Desdemona
(Desdemona rises, throwing her arms around Othello,
clinging to him.) Banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

Othello
(Othello throws her on the bed so her head is at the
bottom of it.) Down, strumpet!
Othello's strangulation of Desdemona elicited much critical response. Wilella Waldorf said the audience stopped believing that the action was credible at this point. Mary McCarthy wrote that Robeson was much too "courteous and dignified." Margaret Webster believed that Robeson sometimes could not capture the Moor's emotions at this moment in the play. But Herbert Whitaker considered Robeson magnificent in the final scene. Another critic said the actor displayed a "tenderness that is terrible in its very silence and suppression of passion." This is superior, the critic goes on to say, to Salvini's Othello, who gripped his wife in his arms, carried her across the stage, and hurled her onto the bed. Robeson projected an "infinitely grimmer horror."

Desdemona
(Othello holds her down.) Kill me tomorrow, let me live to-night!

Othello
(He begins to strangle her.) Nay, if you strive,--

Desdemona
But half an hour!

Othello
Being done, there is no pause.

Desdemona
(Becoming weak, gasping for breath.) But while I--say one prayer!

Othello
It is too late.

Emilia
(With a mallet, Emilia knocks on the backstage side of the right archway.) My lord, my lord! What, ho! My lord, my lord!
333

Othello

(He looks up.) What noise is this? (He turns to
Desdemona to complete his task.) Oh not dead? Not
quite dead? I that am cruel am yet merciful, I would
not have thee linger in thy pain, . . . so, so. (She is
still.)

Emilia

(Emilia continues to knock.) What, ho! My lord, my
lord!

Othello

(Othello still leans over the bed.) Who's there?

Emilia

O, good my lord, I'd speak a word with you!

Othello

Yes, 'tis Emilia. (Emilia continues to knock.) By and
by. She's dead. 'Tis like she comes to speak of
Cassio's death. The noise was here. No more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were it good?
I think she stirs again. What's best to do? (He crosses
to center stage.) If she comes in, she'll sure speak
to my wife. My wife, my wife, what wife. I have no
wife. 159

Audrey Johnson wrote that this line, delivered
by Paul Robeson, "wrings the heart with pity." O
insupportable! O heavy hour! Methinks it should be now
a huge eclipse of sun and moon, and that the affrighted
globe should yawn at alteration.

Emilia

(No more knocking.) I do beseech you I may speak
with you, my good lord!

Othello

I had forgotten thee. Come in Emilia. (Othello takes
his red velvet cloak and lays it over Desdemona. The
promptscript does not indicate when he removes this gar-
ment, but it must have occurred earlier in the scene.
Also, in the Broadway production, Othello removed his
outer robe so that when he strangles his wife, it is
done with his bare, muscular arms. Robinson Stone says
that this was never done on the tour and that Robeson
kept the black and brown outer robe on for the entire
scene. Stone does not remember Robeson's covering Uta
Hagen with the red cloak, but Rosamond Gilder wrote
that this action of placing the "blood red" garment over
the body was most effective. Soft, by and by. (He
crosses to the right archway, moving through the cur-
tains to look out.) Where art thou? (He re-enters,
then moves to center stage.) What's the matter with
thee now?
Emilia
(Emilia enters from the right archway. Othello moves to the down right area and Emilia follows him.) O, good my lord, yonder foul murders done!

Othello
What, now?

Emilia
But now, my lord.

Othello
It is the very error of the moon. She comes more nearer earth than she was wont and makes men mad.

Emilia
Cassio, my lord, hath killed a young Venetian called Roderigo.

Othello
Roderigo killed? And Cassio killed?

Emilia
No, Cassio's not killed.

Othello
Not Cassio? Then murder's out of tune, and sweet revenge grows harsh.

Desdemona
(She stirs slightly.) O, falsely, falsely murdered!

Emilia
Alas what cry was that?

Othello
That?

Emilia
(She turns and crosses to the bed.) Out, and alas, that was my lady's voice. (She removes the robe, exposing Desdemona.) Help, help, ho, help! O lady speak again. Sweet Desdemona, O sweet Mistress, speak!

Desdemona
(She speaks with great difficulty.) A guiltless death I die.

Emilia
(Emilia looks toward Othello.) Who hath done this deed?
(She rises slowly, looking toward Othello.) Nobody, I myself, farewell. Commend me to my kind lord. Farewell, farewell. (She falls to the bed. She is dead. Emilia gently places Desdemona's head and arms in a more becoming and comfortable position.

Othello
Why, how should she be murdered?

Emilia
Alas, who knows?

Othello
You heard her say, herself, it was not I.

Emilia
She said so, I must needs report the truth.

Othello
She's like a liar gone to burning hell. 'Twas I that killed her.

Emilia
O, the more angel she, and you the blacker devil!

Othello
She turned to folly, and she was a whore.

Emilia
Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

Othello
She was false as water.

Emilia
(Emilia crosses to Othello's right side.) Thou art rash as fire, to say that she was false. She was heavenly true. (She turns back to the bed and kneels.)

Othello
(Othello crosses to the bed.) Cassio did top her, ask thy husband else. O, I were damned beneath all depth in hell, but that I did proceed, upon just grounds, to this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

Emilia
(She turns toward Othello.) My husband?

Othello
Thy husband.

Emilia
That she was false to wedlock?
Othello
Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true, if heaven
would make me another world of one entire and perfect
chrysolite, I'd not have sold her for it. (Emilia
rises.)

Emilia
My husband?

Othello
Ay, 'twas he that told me first. An honest man he is,
and hates the slime that sticks on filthy deeds. (He
crosses up to the center unit.)

Emilia
(Emilia moves to the left side of the chair.) My hus-
band say that she was false!

Othello
He woman. (He moves quickly forward to the down stage
area.) I say thy husband. Dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

Emilia
(She turns toward Othello.) If he say so, may his per-
nicious soul rot half a grain a day! He lies to the
heart. She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.
(He crosses to Othello.)

Othello
Hal! (He turns to Emilia, angrily.)

Emilia
(She boldly faces him.) Do thy worst. This deed of
thine is no more worthy heaven than thou wast worthy
her.

Othello
Peace, you were best.

Emilia
Thou hast not half that power to do me harm as I have to
be hurt. (She raises her arms over her head in vexa-
tion.) O gull, O dolt, as ignorant as dirt! Thou hast
done a deed-- (Othello crosses quickly to get his sword
which is leaning on the center unit. He threatens
Emilia.) --I care not for thy sword. I'll make thee
known though I lost twenty lives. (She runs quickly
through the right archway.) Help! Help! Help! Ho,
help! The Moor hath killed my mistress! Murder! Mur-
der! (She re-enters quickly into the room. Montano,
Iago, Gratiano, and two Gentlemen are behind her.
Montano pushes Iago aside. The villain crosses to his
wife.)
Montano
What's the matter. (He looks at Othello.) How now, general? (He moves to the chair.)

Emilia
O, you are come, Iago? You have done well that men must lay their murders on your neck.

Gratiano
What's the matter?

Emilia
(She places her hand beseechingly on Iago's shoulder.) Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man. He says thou told'st him his wife was false. (Gratiano, Montano, and the two Gentlemen are shocked and speak to one another.) I know thou didst not, thou art not such a villain. Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago
(He pushes his wife away from him.) I told him what I thought, and told no more than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emilia
But did you ever tell him she was false?

Iago
I did. (Gratiano, Montano and the two Gentlemen react verbally.)

Emilia
You told a lie, an odious, damned lie. (Iago crosses down right. Emilia turns to Othello.) Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie! (She crosses to Iago.) She false with Cassio. (Montano, Gratiano, and the Gentlemen react again.) Did you say with Cassio?

Iago
With Cassio, Mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.

Emilia
(She moves up right.) I will not charm my tongue. I am bound to speak. My mistress lies murdered on her bed--

Gratiano
Heaven forfend!

Emilia
— and your report hath set the murder on.

Montano
(He steps forward, then moves back quickly.) O monstrous act.
Othello

(Othello crosses to the down left area.) Nay, stare not masters, it is true indeed.

Gratiano

'Tis a strange truth. (He crosses to the bed and kneels.)

Emilia


Iago

(He crosses to his wife and grabs her wrists, turning her body right and left until she is forced to the floor.) What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

Emilia

(Montano rushes to Emilia and helps her to rise. Iago crosses quickly to down left center.) Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak. 'Tis proper I obey him, but not now. (She addresses the next line to Iago.) Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home. (Iago crosses up center, sneering at his wife.)

Othello

(He falls at the foot of the bed.) O! O! O!

Emilia

(She crosses to Othello.) Nay, let thee down and roar, O, O! for thou hast killed the sweetest innocent that e'er did lift up eye. (She turns appealing to Montano who helps her to sit in the chair.)

Othello

(He rises.) O, she was foul!

Gratiano

(Gratiano rises quickly from his kneeling position.) No!

Othello

I scarce did know thee, uncle. There lies your niece, whose breath indeed these hands have newly stopped. (Montano, Gratiano and the Gentlemen react.)

Gratiano

Thine.

Othello

I know this act shows horrible and grim.
Gratiano

Poor Desdemona!

Othello

'Tis pitiful, but yet Iago knows that she with Cassio hath the act of shame a thousand times committed. (Iago moves forward suddenly. Gratiano says "no" again, then looks at Iago. Montano and the Gentlemen also speak several "noes," "nays," and "nevers." Emilia rise in her chair as if she were going to protest, then sinks again.)

Othello

Cassio confessed it, and she did gratify his amorous works with that recognizance and pledge of love which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand, it was a handkerchief, an antique token my father gave my mother. (Emilia begins to raise her head as she realizes the implication of Othello's words. The other men, with the exception of Iago, react to Othello's accusation.)

Emilia

O God! O heavenly God!

Iago

(Iago moves suddenly to Emilia menacingly. Montano crosses to her to protect her.) 'Zounds! Hold your peace.

Emilia

'Twill out, 'twill out. I peace. No! I'll speak as liberal as the air. (She rises.) Let heaven, and men, and devils, let them all, all, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago

Be wise and get you home.

Emilia

I will not. (She crosses to Othello down left. Iago tries to stab her as she passes him. Montano and one of the Gentlemen try to stop the villain but he struggles free.)

Gratiano

Fie! Your sword upon a woman!

Emilia

O thou dull Moor, that handkerchief thou speak'st of I found by fortune, and did give my husband. He begged of me to steal it. (She beats Othello violently on the back. He turns sadly to her.)
Villainous whore!

Iago

She give it Cassio? No, alas, I found it and I did give it my husband.

Emilia

(He breaks forward.) Filth, thou liest! (Montano manages to grab Iago again. The villain struggles.)

Iago

(She speaks to all of the company.) By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen. (She turns back to Othello.) O murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool do with so good a wife. (She begins to weep, crossing to the foot of the bed.)

Othello

Are there no stones in heaven but what serve for the thunder? Precious villain! (He crosses to Iago who is down right. Othello prepares to attack the villain with his sword. Montano releases Iago to restrain Othello. Gratiano and the Gentlemen assist him, taking the sword out of the Moor's hand. Iago, upon being released, moves backwards, then crosses in a semi-circular fashion around the up stage area to Emilia. Emilia is still weeping, her back to the action. Iago stabs her and runs out the right archway before the others see him. Gratiano turns and sees that Emilia is falling. He crosses quickly to help her.

Gratiano

The woman falls.

Montano

Sure, he hath killed his wife. After him.

Emilia

Ay, O, lay me by mis mistress's side. (Gratiano helps her to the left side of the bed. She manages to place her arm on the bed but cannot get up from the floor.)

Montano

(He hands Gratiano Othello's sword.) Take you this weapon, which I have here recovered from the Moor. (Gratiano crosses to Montano, taking the sword.) Come, guard the door without, let him not pass, but kill him rather. I'll after that same villain, for 'tis a damned slave. (Gratiano crosses down stage of Montano to the right archway and exits. One of the Gentlemen exits after him. Then Montano rushes out in the same direction.)
Othello
I am not valiant neither, but that every puny whipster
gets my sword. Why should honour outlive honest? Let
it go all.

Emilia
What did thy song bode, lady? Hark, can'st thou hear
me? I will play the swan, and die in music. "Sing
willow." (She tries to sing, but has no strength left.)
Moor! (Othello turns, crosses to Emilia and kneels at
the foot of the bed.) She was chaste, she loved thee,
cruel Moor. So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true.
So speaking as I think, alas, I die. (She is dead.)

Othello
(He rises, crossing down left.) The promptscript in-
dicates that Robeson exited at this point to get a
sword. Robinson Stone says, however, that the actor
merely reached offstage for the property, making the ac-
tion more smooth. I have another weapon in this
chamber, it's a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper.
(He puts the sword in his right hand.) Ah, here it is.
(He calls up right to Gratiano.) Uncle, I must come
forth.

Gratiano
(His voice is heard from the right archway.) If thou
attempt it, it will cost thee dear. Thou hast no weap-
on and perforce must suffer.

Othello
(Othello moves right.) Look in upon me then, and speak
with me, or naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Gratiano
(He enters through the right archway.) What's the mat-
ter.

Margaret Webster said that the following speech is
so well-written that the audience takes "refuge in the melo-
dy" and is swept beyond logical analysis." Othello's analy-
sis of death is something modern man can understand, when
faced with the constant threat of nuclear war.

Othello
Behold, I have a weapon. (Gratiano draws his sword,
backing against the curtain in preparation for Othello's
attack.) A better never did itself sustain upon a sol-
dier's thigh. I have seen the day that with this little
arm, and this good sword, I have made my way through
Othello (continued)

more impediments than twenty times your stop. (He starts toward Gratiano who again defends himself.) But, O vain boast! Who can control his fate? 'Tis not so now. Be not afraid, though you do see me weaponed. Here is my journey's end, here is my butt and very seaword of my utmost sail. (Gratiano retreats further.) Do you go back dismayed? 'Tis a lost fear. Man but a rush against Othello's breast, and he returns. (Othello turns left.) Where should Othello go? (He crosses to the bed and kneels beside it.) Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starred wench! Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at court, this look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven, and fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl, even like thy chastity. O cursed slave! Whip me, ye devils, from the possession of this heavenly sight! Blow me about in winds. Roast me in sulphur, wash me in the steep-down gulfs of liquid fire! (He drops the sword to the ground.) O Desdemona, dead! Dead!

Lodovico

(His voice is heard off right.) Where is this rash and most unfortunate man? (Gratiano exits through the archway. The curtain opens in the right arch and Lodovico crosses to center stage, stopping when he sees that Othello is speaking. Gratiano enters and stands by the arch.)

Othello

(Othello picks up his sword, rises, and moves to the down left area.) That's he that was Othello. Here I am. (Montano enters with Cassio who is supported by two Gentlemen. They come on to the stage from the down right passageway. The Gentlemen help Cassio to the chair.)

Lodovico

(Lodovico turns to the Gentlemen.) Where is this viper? Bring the villain forth. (Two Brown Guards enter from the right archway with Iago, whose hands are tied behind his back. The villain is jacketless, revealing his grey blouse. He is bleeding at the temple. The guards drag him down center stage.)

Othello

I look down towards his feet, but that's a fable. If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee. (He crosses to Iago with his sword in the air.)

Lodovico

Wrench his sword from him. (Lodovico draws his sword and clashes with Othello, knocking the Moor's weapon out of his hand. Then he moves to the down left area of the bed.)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Iago
I bleed, sir, but not killed. (Gratiano picks up the sword and gives it to one of the Gentlemen.)

Othello
I am not sorry neither, I'd have thee live, for, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die. (The two Brown Guards drag Iago to the down right area of the stage.)

Lodovico
O thou Othello, that wert once so good, fallen in the practice of a damned slave, what shall be said to thee?

Othello
Why, anything, an honourable murderer, if you will. For nought did I in hate, but all in honour.

Lodovico
(He addresses this line to Iago.) This wretch hath part confessed his villainy. (To Othello he directs the next phrase.) Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

Othello
Ay.

Cassio
Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Othello
I do believe it, and I ask your pardon. Will you, I pray, demand this demi-devil why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body. (They all turn to Iago who is kneeling down right.)

Iago
Demand me nothing. What you know, you know. From this time forth I never will speak word. Hazel Bruce wrote that Iago mocks Othello on this line. Burton Rascoe said that Ferrer delivered this speech so effectively that it had the profound validity of a criminal without fear or regret. He is a defiant egotist to the end.

Gratiano
Torment will ope your lips. (Iago sneers and the Brown Guards drag him further right and push his head down, holding him in that position.)

Othello
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief that was my wife's?
Cassio

I found it in my chamber, and he himself confessed but even now that there he dropped it for a special purpose which wrought to his desire. (He is pointing to lago.)

Othello

(Othello turns up stage, his back to the audience.) O fool, fool, fool!

Lodovico

(Lodovico delivers this line to Othello.) You must for­sake this room and go with us. Your power and your com­mand is taken off and Cassio rules in Cyprus. (He turns to Iago.) For this slave, if there be any cunning cru­eity that can torment him much and hold him long, it shall be his. (He turns back to Othello.) You shall close prisoner rest, till that the nature of your fault be known to bring him away. (Montano motions to his men. The two Red Guards and one Gentleman move to take Othello.)

Othello's next speech was termed "magnificent" by Lewis Nichols, and Frances Wayne wrote that Robeson's performance of the "framed farewell" touches the "heart and quickens the mind as to what follows when trust, love, ambi­tion die." Joyce Dana of The Boston American believed that, for the first time, the nobility and passion of jeal­ousy seemed credible, evoking sympathy for Othello in the final segment of the play.

Othello

(Othello stops the soldiers and guards.) Soft you. A word or two before you go. I have done the state some service, and they know it. No more of that. I pray you, in your letters when you shall those unlucky deeds re­late, speak of me as I am nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice, then must you speak of one that loved not wisely but too well. Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought, perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand, like the base Indian, threw a pearl away richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes, albeit unused to the melting mood, drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees their medicinable gum. Set you down this, and say besides, that in Aleppo once, where a malignant and turbaned Turk beat a Venetian and traduced the state, I took by the throat the circumcised dog and smote him,
Othello (continued)

thus. (Othello stabs himself with a "trick" dagger hidden in his belt, falling to the right side of the bed. Lodovico and the others rush to stop him, realize that it is too late, then resume their positions. Cassio rises.)

Lodovico

O bloody period!

Gratiano

All that's spoke is marred.

Othello

(He kneels by Desdemona where he has fallen.) I kissed thee ere I killed thee, no way but this, killing myself to die upon a kiss. (He kisses her and dies.)

Cassio

(The First Gentleman supports Cassio.) This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon for he was great of heart.

Lodovico

(Lodovico turns to Iago.) O Spartan dog, more fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea! Look on the tragic loading of this bed. (The two guards drag Iago forward on his knees.) This is thy work, the object poisons sight, let it be hid. (Montano crosses to the down left area, while the Third Gentleman moves to the right. Lodovico crosses to Gratiano who is up center stage.) Gratiano, keep the house. (He turns to Cassio.) To you, lord governor, remains the censure of this hellish villain; (He turns to Iago.) the time, the place, the torture. O enforce it! (Lodovico moves forward.) Myself will straight aboard, and to the state, with heavy heart relate. (The company on stage hold positions as Montano and the Third Gentleman close the traveler slowly.)

Music from the "Tuba Mirum" heard in the beginning of the first act, is played again.
1. The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. has two promptbooks in Margaret Webster's theatre collection. One is a typed copy offered to the Library as the final rendition of the production as it was staged. A second is a copy of the Othello text with the director's hand-written notes in the margins. This author has relied mainly on the typed edition, using the second only when the first is not clear on some aspect of the staging. It should also be noted that since Othello was staged and rehearsed on several occasions, the blocking probably changed during the run of the presentation. It is impossible to document all such changes. But the author has recreated the staging as accurately as possible from the two promptscripts, comments from critics and memories of the cast members.


6. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 114.


23. Kahn, "Othello," Variety, 27 October 1943, p. 44.


26. Herbert Whitaker, "Robeson 'Othello' is Magnificent," The Gazette-Montreal, 19 September 1944, p. 3.


30. Photographs, souvenir program for the Othello tour, personal possession of the author.


32. Othello property plot, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


37 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 233.

38 At times, phrases from the Othello text appear in parentheses. These lines are so obvious that the reader should be able to distinguish between them and the stage directions, which also appear in parentheses.

39 Souvenir program for the Othello tour, personal possession of the author.

40 Othello property plot, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

41 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

42 Costume inventory list, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

43 "Actor Meets Mayor," (photograph), The Hartford Times, 8 September 1944, p. 24.


47 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 236.

49. Webster, Daughter, p. 113.


54. Webster, Daughter, p. 107.
55. Webster, Daughter, p. 107.

57. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 120.


63. Souvenir program for the Othello tour (photograph), personal possession of the author.
64. R. E. P. Sensender, "Men and Things," the signature on this clipping is torn, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

65. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 333.

66. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 233.


68. Souvenir program for the Othello tour (photograph), personal possession of the author.


70. Louis Kronenberger, "Boston Applauds Robeson's 'Othello,'" PM, clipping, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


72. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 235.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

79 Herbert Whitaker, "Robeson 'Othello' Is Magnificent," The Gazette-Montreal, 19 September 1944, p. 3.

80 Webster, Daughter, p. 109.


82 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 18 September 1976.


84 Jose Ferrer, personal recorded tape to the author.


86 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 231.


89 Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 98.

90 Souvenir program for the Othello tour (photograph), personal possession of the author.

91 Margaret Marshall, "Drama: Margaret Webster's Othello," Nation, 30 October 1943, p. 508.

92 Othello music cue sheet, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

93 Othello property plot, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 18 September 1976.

Souvenir program for the Othello tour (photograph), personal possession of the author.

Webster, Daughter, p. 109.


Sensender, "Men and Things," the signature on this clipping is torn, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Souvenir program for the Othello tour (photograph), personal possession of the author.

Othello music cue sheet, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

"This Is B.I.," (photograph), The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 6 November 1944, p. 21.


Webster, Daughter, p. 109.


Sensender, "Men and Things," the signature on this clipping is torn, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Webster, Daughter, p. 110.


*Othello* music cue sheet, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

*Othello* music cue sheet, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
122 Webster, *Shakespeare Without Tears*, pp. 102-103.

123 Souvenir program for the Othello tour, personal possession of the author.

124 Webster, *Shakespeare Without Tears*, p. 233.

125 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 18 September 1976.

126 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 18 September 1976.


132 Othello property plot, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


140. Souvenir program for the Othello tour, personal possession of the author.


143. Webster, Daughter, pp. 109-110.

144. Harold V. Cohen, "Robeson's 'Othello' at Nixon," The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 7 November 1944, p. 22.

145. Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears, p. 233.


Elinor Hughes, "The Robeson 'Othello' a Memorable Experience," clipping, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


Herbert Whitaker, "Robeson 'Othello' Is Magnificent," The Gazette-Montreal, 19 September 1944, p. 3.

Sensender Jer, "Men and Things," the signature on this clipping is torn, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976; Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 18 September 1976.


Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 18 September 1976.

Webster, Daughter, p. 252.


CONCLUSION

The Margaret Webster/Paul Robeson production of Othello was both daring and controversial in 1943. Since then, however, views have altered and, as bold as it once was to use a black actor as the Moor, it is equally bold today to use a white one. Within the thirty-three years since Webster's Othello was on Broadway, the American theatre has undergone many changes. As a result of social gains made for racial equality, black actors now have more opportunity to perform in plays designed to represent their race realistically, avoiding the stereotypes which were prominent in the theatre for many years. The American film industry has also begun to present the Negro realistically, but this has only been after a long period of presenting black caricatures. Margaret Webster's production was instrumental in this transition. The popularity of the performances encouraged American audiences to review their attitudes toward the black actor's position in the theatre. Also, since Othello was always performed in front of a large audience, and since the company refused to play to segregated houses, many people sat in an integrated theatre for the first time. Although many artistic achievements can be attributed to the 1943 production of Othello, perhaps its single most
significant contribution lies in the influence it had on the position of the black actor in serious drama and in its encouragement to road houses across the country to offer each patron a seat, regardless of race.

In an artistic vein, American audiences saw at least three great actors at work. Paul Robeson was at the height of his career and audiences saw him as a powerful figure which helped dispel the falsity of the traditional Negro stereotypes presented in theatre and in film productions. Jose Ferrer's Iago was, with the exception of Cyrano de Bergerac, probably his most significant role. Uta Hagen was not as much acclaimed as Ferrer in her role as Desdemona but both began a very extensive career in the theatre due directly to their experiences in Othello.

Culturally, Othello offered American audiences a vivid representation of Shakespeare's drama with clarity and dramatic effectiveness. This is Margaret Webster's greatest contribution. In Othello, her most popular production, she presented a classical work which attracted and entertained people who had never seen a theatrical piece of any sort. Although some critics believe that Webster sacrificed quality for clarity and theatricalism, thousands of Americans were culturally and socially enriched by Miss Webster's efforts in Othello.

Lastly, the Margaret Webster/Paul Robeson production of Othello was and is the longest running Shakespearean production ever in the history of the theatre. Furthermore, it
is the longest running Shakespearean tour ever in America. Performing during troubled times, when World War II kept the American public in constant turmoil, this tragedy had a life span of over 600 performances. The excellent company, producers, and Margaret Webster demonstrated to the country that Shakespeare can be entertaining, artistic, and socially enriching.
APPENDIX

COSTUME PLOT

It can be assumed that notes on costumes, unless otherwise documented, are derived from the costume inventory list located in the Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Costumes will be listed in the order of the characters' appearances, and only changes will be noted.

ACT I. Scene i

Iago wore a mauve-brown garment\(^1\) with a leather jacket which had brown cloth sleeves, decorated with silver studs around the shoulders and around the neck.\(^2\) The sleeves pointed in a "V" fashion at the wrists.\(^3\) Beneath the jacket was a gray broadcloth blouse. On his head was a leather studded skull cap. He wore brown cloth trousers with black braid, and on his feet were dark gray suede boots laced up on the side.\(^4\) Iago also wore a sword belt at his waist and carried a sword in this scene.\(^5\)

Roderigo was in browns and blacks, wearing a "pumpkin-shaped" Elizabethan garment which Robinson Stone believed was unsuitable; it was "foppish and comic."\(^6\) He wore black woolen tights, a black velvet yoke, and a jacket

363
with golden ornaments. At his waist was a golden braided sword belt, accompanied by a sword. On his head was a dark brown velvet hat with a green feather. His shoes were black "pumps" and on his shoulder was a two-toned green silk cape. Of this cape, Don Keefer (Roderigo on the tour) said Margaret Webster told him, "Don't be self-conscious about the beautiful pineapple-green satin cape Robert Edmond Jones designed for you, use it! ... by the end of the run, you'll be so in love with it, I'll probably have to say, 'Leave that cape alone!'" Roderigo also carried a box of candy in a golden container.

Brabantio's First Servant wore a green velvet, gold-ornamented jacket with matching knee-length trousers, beige woolen hose and shoes. The skull cap which adorned his head was also made of green velvet.

Brabantio wore a gray woolen nightdress at the beginning of this scene. A servant brought his red velvet robe-coat with brown fur around the edges.

Brabantio's Second Servant wore the same costume described for the First Servant, only the Second had garters on his legs.

Othello was dressed in a soldier's uniform, brocaded and intricately worked with dark colors. He wore a brown and black jacket which had a breast plate, and black velvet and rose striped sleeves. His trousers matched the design in the sleeves. Lions' heads adorned the chest. (Robert
Edmond Jones used the "lions' heads" theme on many of the costumes.) Over Robeson's torso was a rust metallic robe edged with fur, the sleeves of which reached to the elbow. The lions' heads held this outer garment open to reveal a silk lining underneath. (Robinson Stone says this cape was not used on the tour.) Over the breast plate was a large pendant with three lions' heads hanging one on top of the other. Brenda Ueland, of The Minneapolis Daily Times, said that Robeson's armour looked like football padding on his huge shoulders. Frances Wayne wrote that the uniform was magnificent with its reds, golds and bronze brocade, "flowers" robe and "flashing arms."

The First Red Guard wore a red velvet jacket trimmed in gold cord, with matching trousers, skull cap and pumps. His legs were covered with beige woolen hose with garters, and he wore a metal helmet, which presumably covered the skull cap in this scene.

The Second Red Guard was dressed in the same costume described for the First Guard.

Cassio's costume was much like the guards' in contour, but not in color. It was constructed of silver lamé with heavy black and white braid applied diagonally for stripes. The material had no "give," says Clanton (who played the role on the road) since the lamé was much the same as fabrics used in ladies' handbags. Consequently, the actor was constantly tearing his costume in the right armpit and the crotch. James Monks, who performed the role in
New York, was less active than Clanton, so the garment had to be altered for the tour. The jacket received new crescent-shaped, black velvet armpits, and the pants became a gray "cavalry twill" adorned with braid. Clanton apparently "had no trouble" with the new design. On his shoulder he wore a Venetian cape made with six yards of red silk velvet, lined with a bright silver (more flexible) lamé. It fastened with a hook at the shoulder and hung down Cassio's left side, looping under the arm and over the shoulder again with another hook, then down the back to the floor. On his head was a black and silver studded cap. He also wore gray suede gauntlets, matching dark gray suede hip boots, and a black leather sword belt, ornamented with silver and accompanied by a sword. On his right shoulder were the two lions' heads, consistently used by Jones to designate Venetian heraldry.

The First Brown Guard wore a brown leather doublet with gold embroidery, a blue denim underbodice with chair mesh sleeves, brown woolen trousers, brown suede hip boots, a metal helmet and a leather sword belt with a sword.

ACT I, Scene ii

The Black and Gold Officer wore a costume much like the Red Guards only the jacket was black velvet with gold braid trim. The trousers and skull cap matched the fabric in the jacket, and the trousers also had the braid. He wore a sword belt, sword, and brown hip boots.
The Senators' garments consisted of a red "plush" under-robe, a red velvet coat, lined in brown fur, a matching hat with a black drape, and matching shoes. Beneath these robes, they wore black hose and garters. Their coats had a sweeping line which added to the splendor of the scene.

The Duke wore a plush under-robe with a long, circular cape made of rich, red velvet. Lions' heads ornaments adorned the shoulder pieces which were made of white velvet and draped down across the chest over the red robe. This capelet was edged with brown fur. On the Duke's head was a white, fitted head bonnet, worn under a rust and gold brocaded hat. The Duke wore black hose, and his shoes were red velvet.

Lodovico in this scene was dressed as a Senator and wore the same type of garment described for them.

The Messenger wore brown woolen trousers with a brown leather doublet and simulated chain mail collarette and sleeves. He was also dressed with a leather studded skull cap, a sword belt and gauntlets of the same material. On his feet were brown suede hip boots. He carried a sword.

Desdemona first appeared in a beige costume with tight, brocaded sleeves trimmed with pearls. Her cap was also brocaded and trimmed. She had beige satin slippers, a full muslin petticoat under her skirt and a single string of pearls. The waist had a cummerbund which reached up to the
bustline to create a "princess" style. The collar of her
dress stood up to frame the neck, and full, capped sleeves
covered the tight-fitting long sleeves underneath.\textsuperscript{15}
Frances Wayne said that Uta Hagen moved with grace and beau-
ty in her gowns,\textsuperscript{16} but Stark Young believed she was not
"happily" dressed.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{ACT I, Scene iii}

\textit{Montano} wore a two-piece brown and green suede
striped suit with braid trim. He had light brown gauntlets
and matching hip boots. On his head he wore a metal helmet
matched by a metal gorget (armoured collar). At his waist
was a sword belt and a foil. A huge black cape of metal-
colored silk draped his shoulder.

\textit{The Second Gentleman Soldier} was dressed in woolen
trousers, a light brown braided canvas jacket, a black and
silver braided vest with a matching skull cap, brown leather
hip boots with matching gauntlets, and a sword belt with a
sword. William Browder says that all of the soldiers' cos-
tumes were of the same basic design; knee-length, \textit{full}
trousers with an Eisenhower jacket having a high "turned-down"
collar which stood up around the neck (the gorget). The
jacket was open to the waist and had a silver striped
"dickie" set beneath it. At the soldiers' waists were wide
belts with large buckles and at the wrists were broad, cuf-
fed gauntlets. The shoulders seemed larger since they were

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
adorned with "caps," (as Browder called them) which fit over the shoulder seam. Each soldier also carried a sheath and sword.  

The First Gentleman Soldier (who appeared after the Second) was dressed much like the Second only his trousers, jacket and gauntlets were of a green color.

The Third Gentleman Soldier's garments were exactly like those worn by the other Gentlemen, but the trousers, boots and gauntlets were tan, and the jacket was gold in color. His sword belt was also more ornamented.

The Brown Guards were dressed identically and wore the same costume described in Scene i.

The Cyprian Woman was dressed in a full muslin black petticoat with a flowered silk over-garment. Her face, covered with a red spangled harem veil, was topped with a black head piece. Her costume included black cotton hose, garters, and sandals. Virginia Mattis (Durand) writes that these Cyprian costumes had a "Gypsy" look.

An Arab was dressed in a long black under-garment, covered with a black and white striped robe. On his head was a tan striped turban, and the costume was further colored by an orange silk sash which intertwined with another of green and gold metallic fabric. Black hose, garters, and black shoes completed his costume. Robinson Stone, who calls these people the "Moorish crowd," says the predominant colors were browns, dark wines, and black.
Another Cyprian Citizen wore a brown robe with a yellow and brown striped shoulder drape, a matching draped turban, and brown shoes.

Another Cyprian Citizen was dressed in a royal crimson satin under-garment, with a tapestry belt. This was covered with a floral striped robe. A flowered silk material covered his head and also created a shoulder drape. Tan leather sandals and beige woolen hose completed the costume.

A fourth Cyprian Citizen wore a brown "basket weave" robe with a blue shoulder drape, a blue draped turban and a red woolen robe over the brown.

A Cyprian Lady was dressed in a black muslin petticoat under a black satin dress, covered with a black sparkled fabric. She wore sandals, black hose and garters, and a veil.21

Bianca entered the scene in a "Roman" brown striped taffeta costume with a jeweled necklace and a rainbow-colored head scarf. Beneath her skirts was a muslin petticoat, and on her feet were golden kid pumps. She wore two large stone rings and had an orange tucked in her skirt. The Costume Inventory List said that she carried a blonde wig which she never wore, but Robinson Stone tells us that he is quite sure the wig was always worn on the tour, and that the actress never had an orange tucked in her skirt.22

Desdemona appeared in this scene in a copper metal lace costume with a blue corded coat lined in silk and
trimmed with jewels. Her mesh cap was studded with topaz stones, and a golden net snood with stars was around her hair. She wore matching brocaded slippers.

Emilia was dressed in an outer garment of black velvet, consisting of a bodice with red velvet bows. Her black faille silk skirt was made fuller with a white muslin petticoat. Under her bodice was a soft white bouse, which was only revealed at the bosom. The material of the skirt was carried into the sleeves which were very full. Her necklace, earrings and ring were made of black jet. On her head was a black faille and lace hat. She carried a small white handkerchief.

Iago appeared in his full military uniform which, in addition to those garments mentioned in Scene i, consisted of a large black shoulder drape lined with green silk.

Othello was dressed in the same military uniform described in Scene i. Over this, however, was a red satin cape trimmed with antique silver braid. He had a sword in a red case and carried a helmet.

Othello entered later in this scene in the costume more photographed than all of the others designed for Robeson. It consisted of a long beige corded robe gathered at the waist, with a studded, wide brown belt. Over the under-garment was a large "A" shaped robe with enormous bell sleeves. It too was corded, but of a sage green, and loosely covered the beige beneath it. Both garments were trimmed around every visible edge, outlining the simple
contours of the costume. The underdress wrapped around and
over-lapped across the actor's torso, and the outer robe
slipped over the arms and hung loosely from the shoulders to
the feet. He carried a small curved sword in his hands. 23

Desdemona reappeared in a taffeta pleated nightgown,
probably covered by a robe, although the Costume Inventory
List does not indicate this.

Emilia was later dressed in a black serge full robe
with a black muslin petticoat, a green bonnet and a long
green chiffon scarf.

ACT I, Scene iv

Othello was dressed in a long gold and henna-colored
metallic robe, sashed with wide striped silk. Over all, he
wore a gold slipper satin coat, ornamented with three lions'
heads down each side of the chest. The outer and under gar-
ments were trimmed around every visible edge.

Desdemona wore a pale silver-blue underdress covered
by a blue and silver metallic coat. The sleeves were short
and capped, yet puffed to add a youthful look. Her under-
dress had an empire line, gathered under the bustline. 24
She carried an embroidered strawberry handkerchief.

An Arab is seen in a white and red striped, floor-
length "Moorish" robe, tied with a green lamé sash, with a
skull cap on his head. 25
Emilia wore the same costume described at the beginning of Scene iii.

Cassio probably did not wear his long cape in this scene.

ACT II, Scene i

Desdemona was dressed in a blue and silver brocaded costume with Medieval lines. It was pearl-trimmed and she had a pearl "Juliet" cap with a gold lace head piece. She wore a pair of gold brocaded slippers on her feet. At her neck was a double string of granulated pearls.

Emilia wore a rust-colored faille silk costume with a cream vest. Her hat and shoes matched the skirt, and she wore bronze jewelry at her neck, ears, and on her dress.

Othello appeared in wine-colored brocade trousers with a purple and black striped metallic long robe, sashed with a wide, biased material of the same color. He also wore wine-colored hip boots.

Iago's costume remained the same except he had changed into a gray braided jacket.

Cassio had some changes in this scene. His jacket was made of light gray canvas piped in white with a belt which had an ornate buckle. The dickie was made from a black and white braid, placed on a "cellophane" material in horizontal lines. A sword belt and sword was worn under the
jacket which reached to the hips. The rest of the costume was the same as the one described in Scene i, with the exception of the cape.

Bianca entered this scene in a red satin dress, with gold lamé braid trim, a very full underskirt and two gold lamé flounces which were placed across the front of the garment. On her head was a plumed jeweled hat, and she had gold kid pumps on her feet. She wore a jeweled necklace, long earrings and three rings.

Lodovico was dressed in a military costume with matching jacket and trousers of rust velvet with gold braid stripes. His long velvet robe was sleeveless and of the same rust color, as was the plumed hat, gauntlets and suede hip boots. At his waist was a sword belt and sword.

Roderigo wore matching brown velveteen trousers, a jacket, skull cap, and slippers. On the jacket were dull bronze ornaments. He was also dressed in brown woolen hose and garters, brown suede gauntlets and an enormous brown shoulder cape. He had a sword belt with a sword.

ACT II, Scene ii

Desdemona is seen in the same garment worn in the last scene, but wears also a deep rose pink satin robe and peach satin slippers.

Emilia wore the same black bodice seen in the first act, along with the same skirt. The costume is highlighted,
however, with a wide, silver, ornamented belt. She was also
dressed in patent shoes and antique silver earrings and
necklace.

ACT II, Scene iii

Gratiano wore matching black velvet, silver-trimmed
jacket and trousers. Over this was a plush, green robe,
lined with golden silk. He had tan suede hip boots, black
hose and garters, and a green hat with a brown crown. His
make-up included a gray beard and mustache.

Emilia appeared in a black flannel hooded cape over
the dress described in Scene ii.

ACT II, Scene iv

Desdemona was sleeping in a soft, white cashmere
nightgown which gathered with a ribbon under the bustline
and had puffed, capped sleeves.26

Othello was dressed in a bronze metallic sleeveless
robe, worn with a sleeved brown and black metallic coat.
Over these garments was a very long, circular, red velvet
cape, lined in silver cloth. Rosamond Gilder described this
shoulder drape as being "blood red."27 Othello carried a
sword in his hands.
FOOTNOTES

COSTUME PLOT

1 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

2 Souvenir program for the Othello tour, (photograph), personal possession of the author.


5 Othello property list, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


7 Don Keefer, personal letter to the author, 28 September 1976.

8 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 5 May 1976.

9 Robinson Stone, personal letter to the author, 18 September 1976.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


ARTICLES, CLIPPINGS AND OTHER ITEMS FOUND IN PERIODICALS


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


"Life Goes to a Performance of Othello: Paul Robeson is the first U.S. Negro to play the passionate Moor in Shakespeare's tragedy of jealousy." Life. XIII, 31 August 1942, pp. 82-85.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
"Old Play in Manhattan." Time Magazine. XLII, 1 November 1943, pp. 70,72.


"Take Note, O World!" Newsweek. 1 November 1943, pp. 90,93.


Webster, Margaret. "A Better Way to Meet Shakespeare." Good Housekeeping. CXVI (January 1943), 40,156.


"The World and the Theatre." Theatre Arts. XXVIII (June 1944), 323-325.

ARTICLES, CLIPPINGS AND OTHER ITEMS FOUND IN NEWSPAPERS


Advertisement for Margaret Webster's production of Othello at the Mayfair Theatre in Portland, Oregon. The Oregon Journal. 16 January 1945, p. 5.

Advertisement for Margaret Webster's production of Othello at the McCarter Theatre at Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. The Packet. 13 August 1942, p. 3.

Advertisement for Margaret Webster's production of Othello at the Nixon Theatre in Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. 6 November 1944, p. 21.


Advertisement for Margaret Webster's production of Othello at the Strand Theatre in Vancouver, Canada. The Vancouver Daily Province. 9 January 1945, p. 9.


"All Just Looks Well." The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. 6 November 1944, p. 12.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Cassidy, Claudia. "'Othello' Makes Erlanger Success With Robeson and Ferrer in Webster Production." The Chicago Tribune. 11 April 1945, p. 23.


Cohen, Harold V. "Robeson's 'Othello' at Nixon." The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. 7 November 1944, p. 22.


"Current Road Shows." Variety. 6 October 1943, p. 53.


"Dream Street Beat." Variety. 27 October 1943, p. 42.


"Inside Stuff--Legit." Variety. 27 October 1943, p. 42.


Kahn. "Othello." Variety. 27 October 1943, p. 44.


L. W. "Rousing Reception Accorded Robeson and Cast in 'Othello.'" The Vancouver Daily Province. 10 January 1945, p. 10.

"Margaret Webster Has Long Experience." The Victoria Daily Times. 10 January 1945, p. 13.

Matheson, Helen. "Hagen, Robeson Give O/0thello/ Credit to Joe." The Wisconsin State Journal. 5 December 1944, p. 4.


Meegan, Jean. "Margaret Webster Has Right to Call Shakespeare 'Bill.'" The Dallas Morning News. 28 November 1943, p. 10.

"Miss Webster off City Center Board." The New York Times. 28 February 1945, p. 28.


Morehouse, Ward. "'Othello' as Done by Guild and Miss Webster Provides Exciting Evening." The New York Sun. 20 October 1943, p. 28.

"A Negro Othello." Clipping, Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


"PM's Theatre Calendar." *PM*. 23 May 1945, p. 17.


"Robeson--'Othello' Latest Smash Hit on Broadway; Big $19,700 in First Seven Shows, 'Genius' Big $11,500 in Four." *Variety*. 27 October 1943, p. 45.


Sensender R.E.P. The signature on this clipping is torn. Margaret Webster Theatre Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.


"Theatrical Season Comes to a Close Here Saturday." The Packet. 27 August 1942, p. 1.

"This is B. I." The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. 6 November 1944, p. 21.


INTERVIEWS AND OTHER VERBAL RESPONSE

Ferrer, Jose. Personal recorded tape to the author.

Ferrer, Jose. Personal interview with the author. 19 February 1977.

Norton, Elliot. Personal interview with the author. 20 February 1977.

Stone, Robinson. Personal telephone call with the author. 7 September 1976.

LETTERS


________. Personal letter to the author. 27 September 1976.


Hagen, Uta. Personal letter to the author. 15 September 1976.


_____ Personal letter to the author. 22 August 1976.

Keefer, Don. Personal letter to the author. 28 September 1976.


_____ Personal letter to the author. 18 May 1976.

_____ Personal letter to the author. 5 September 1976.

_____ Personal letter to the author. 18 September 1976.

COLLECTIONS

The Margaret Webster Theatre Collection. Library of Con­
gress, Washington, D.C., which includes letters, clippings, contracts, memos, charts and two prompt­
books for Othello.

Theatre Guild Documents. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manu­script Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connect­
icut, which includes letters, contracts and other materials dealing with the Guild's producing func­
tions with Othello.
UNPUBLISHED THESES AND DISSERTATIONS


MISCELLANEOUS


Souvenir program for the *Othello* tour, personal possession of the author.
VITA

Janet Barton Carroll comes from San Marcos, Texas. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Theatre and Music in 1969 from Southwest Texas State University. After teaching theatre at a large high school in San Antonio, Texas, she earned her Master's Degree in Theatre and Speech, also from Southwest Texas State University. Janet is married to Vernon Carroll (who is also in the area of Speech and Theatre) and they have two children, Donovan and Barton. Janet Carroll has directed or acted in over fifty theatrical productions, designed programs in such areas as pantomime, creative expression for children, and dance/choreography. Mrs. Carroll is currently a THIRD CENTURY ARTIST in Boone, North Carolina, President and founder of the Blue Ridge Community Theatre, Administrative Assistant for the Blue Ridge Creative Activities Council and Choreographer for the outdoor drama, Horn in the West.