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Research Article

Analogy of Shakespeare's Othello with a Special Reference to Wells (1952), Parker (1995) and Sax (2001)

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Abstract
Actors and filmmakers alike love adapting Shakespeare's plays because of their universal themes and innate appeal. This makes it easy for directors to personalize and implement their own interpretations in the theatre or onscreen (Kidnie, 2008). This research will examine three Othello cinematic adaptations, including Orson Welles' 1952 film, Oliver Parker's 1995 film, and Geoffrey Sax's 2001 BBC adaptation.

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Introduction

As a consequence of its universal themes and the intrinsic attraction of the stories, William Shakespeare's plays have been adapted more than any other in history, making it easier for different filmmakers to design and apply their own interpretations in both the stage and the movie (Kidnie, 2008). Elizabethan theatrical texts allow more flexibility and adaptations are more inclined to utilize conversation not only sparingly but also beyond the framework provided by the original. This is owing to the fact that the substance of the plays lends itself to the construction of representations in a natural way (Jackson, 2007). Because the tale may be told in a variety of ways by various people, no two adaptations are ever the same. One filmmaker may choose to remain as true to the original text as possible, while another may choose to adapt it to a totally different and typically current setting. There are many examples of this, but Othello stands out because it is "...not merely a product of cultural milieu but also as a creator of cultural meanings" (Vaughan, 1996). As a matter of fact, the play has often provided as inspiration for a screenplay that is largely based on Shakespeare's original while also being sculpted into a cinematic product that appeals to the play's contemporary audience. Therefore, the variations between adaptations may be enormous, making it necessary to compare and evaluate many versions of Othello throughout time in order to determine how much they have changed.

For this project, the three cinematic versions of Othello will be examined: the 1952 Orson Welles film, the 1995 Oliver Parker film, and the 2001 BBC production directed by Geoffrey Sax. A thorough comparison of each film's opening sequence will be conducted to explore the differences in more depth than a broad comparison can give. This will be done to identify the film's main elements, important moments, and concept, with comparisons being made in suitable places throughout the film. Ultimately, the objective will be to determine whether or not each director's rendition of Othello is unique and successfully draws attention to issues and ideas that are closely linked to their tastes, vision, and imagination. Because of the limitations of filmmaking, filmmakers are forced to make decisions that have an impact on the nature of the screenplay and, as a consequence, on the final product.

Welles' *Othello*

The Orson Welles film version of Shakespeare's play, which was produced in 1952 and runs for 91 minutes, almost half the length of the stage performance, makes it immediately apparent that Welles made significant changes to the play's text from the beginning of the production (Tatspaugh, 2007). For example, the film employs a narrator to establish the film's overall context: Othello was an Italian nobleman who lived in Venice once upon a time and was highly recognized for his achievements in military affairs. Othello had the misfortune of falling in love with Desdemona, a young noble lady, who was drawn to Othello by his kindness and dignity (Welles, 1952). This removes the need for the first two scenes of the text and shows an excellent way of creating a narrative arc. The film does not actively follow the play until 5 minutes and 30 seconds into the film, when it references Iago's Act I Scene 3 phrase "I despise the Moor." While the opening sequence is not positioned correctly in regard to the play script, it does an excellent job of expressing the film's tone and nature. Additional moments that are frequently regarded significant, like as Iago's final monologue, are also removed. Despite this, it is largely regarded as one of the most conventional and accurate adaptations of the play (Vaughan, 1996), and, while sections are trimmed to make the most of the time given, it is recognized as Othello.

Even though race does not appear to be a major issue in this adaptation, with only a few references to Othello's race and his appearance being of a relatively light skinned nature, the development of Othello and Iago's relationship brings gender issues to the forefront, and the camera is used as a patriarchal gaze instrument throughout the film (Vaughan, 1996). "Othello" by Shakespeare fetishizes the female form and shows how oppressive the masculine gaze can be, according to one author (Vaughan, 1996). Desdemona is essentially a "...textual body that is indicated upon in order to support or contradict strategic, shared cultural beliefs, wants, and obsessions regarding male subjectivity and female objectification," according to (Hodgdon, 1991). Desdemona's status as a sexualized object rather than a person with agency is highlighted in many scenes in the film, which are explored more below. In particular, when she is presented at Othello's side in a white dress soon after being roused by the sounds of war, her body is emphasized as a place of sexual yearning by the audience. After cutting between her and the

rest of the audience in one shot and panning around, the camera then shifts to a reverse angle, which shows all of the men in the audience staring at her, while the lighting casts her in an almost angelic hue that is diametrically opposed to the darkness and shadows that the men are usually seen in. As a consequence, her beauty and vulnerability to the male gaze are emphasized, and she is reduced to the position of a pawn in the ongoing game between the male characters, robbing her of any agency. She is definitely a Shakespearean character who effectively translates from the page to the film in this respect.

Welles' version of Othello is not just fascinating philosophically, but also stylistically and aesthetically. When it comes to the adaptation, Welles makes extensive use of film noir elements, opting for long camera views over close-ups in order to avoid any kind of intimacy with the characters being formed, and instead attempting to convey the tragedy of the story outside by using gloomy or intimidating landscapes (Hampton-Reeves, 2010). With disorienting camera work, the use of shadows, and the establishment of the bleak side of human nature in every scene, each scene has a distinct film noir feel to it: "These characters were fragile, small people living in an indifferent universe dominated by structures and forces that had little interest in their stories" (Hampton-Reeves, 2010). For one thing, according to Davies (1990), Welles chooses to emphasize the authenticity infused by the dramatic environment rather than the manufactured theatricality that is typically evident in Othello adaptations' décor, thereby reproducing rather than attempting to imitate previous performances. The only long-range shot that lasts more than a few seconds is taken while Iago and Othello walk together along the wall of the castle. The rest of the camera work seems to be blended together in order to give the viewer a skewed and sometimes confused narrative development. A montage of the ship on which Othello and Desdemona would embark on their last voyage, for example, is characteristic of the picture. It alternates between fixed views of the ship and angle shots that concentrate on the glistening surface of the sea, reverse angle shots that throw shadows on the ship, and a close-up of the prow that juxtaposes a silhouette of the ship with a silhouette of Desdemona. As Mason (2007) points out, this approach accentuates Welles' intended effects and guarantees that the narrative's cyclical focus (as Welles intended) is obvious.

It is impossible to remark on how the Welles (1952) version of Othello compares to previous films based on the Shakespeare book since it is the first to be examined. As a result, additional cinematic productions that have the same structure applied to them, at least in principle, must be examined. The 1995 adaptation of Othello by Oliver Parker is a perfect example of this.

Parker's *Othello*

Oliver Parker directed one of the most well-known contemporary versions of Othello in (Parker, 1995), starring Laurence Fishburne as Othello, Irene Jacob as Desdemona, and Kenneth Branagh as Iago. Laurence Fishburne plays Othello, Irene Jacob plays Desdemona, and Kenneth Branagh plays Iago in the 1995 film Othello, directed by Oliver Parker. As a result, it is almost 30 minutes longer than Welles' film, and the editing is less professional; nevertheless, the film remains a unique experience. While Welles' adaptation of the tragedy makes use of flashbacks to heighten the romantic attraction between Othello and Desdemona, Parker employs cinematic techniques that Welles does not in his adaptation of the tragedy, with the two protagonists' visits to Brabantio's effectively visualising their attraction to each other and foreshadowing the impending demise of the marriage, as well as foreshadowing the impending demise of the marriage (Tatspaugh, 2007). Flashback is an essential element of the film's concept for the audience because of the various cinematic methods used throughout the film. It also serves to portray Iago as firmly on the outside looking in, despite the fact that he is the primary protagonist. Although this is a major change from the Shakespearian play, it helps to establish the narrative's passion and sensuality, which is essential to the film and marks yet another difference from previous cinematic versions (Kolin, 2002). Indeed, Parker makes a conscious distinction between Othello's affection for his wife and Othello and Iago's homosocial bond (Vienne-Guerrin & Hatchuel, 2015). This is required in order to achieve the necessary tension in order to effectively replicate the play's tragic endings in this film, which Parker accomplishes brilliantly. This is also present in Welles' version of the film, although it is less effective owing to Desdemona's objectification. She is shown as a well-educated woman with considerable independence, which enhances Welles' connections.

Parker also includes the audience in the story by asking them to go with the characters via direct speech. Iago, for example, often talks directly to the camera, addressing the audience with his soliloquies: How am I then a villain when I offer free and honest advice? Probable to ponder, and

indeed the path to reclaim the Moor? Desdemona's love has enslaved his spirit to the point that she can create, unmake, and do anything she wants. Her hunger, on the other hand, will play god with his weakened function. So how am I a villain advising Cassio to choose a path that leads straight to his good? Hell's Divinity! (Parker, 1995).

The efficacy of the instrument is shown in this soliloquy. Iago talks to the camera, which moves around him and gives him a close-up of his head and shoulders. He leans towards the camera as he finishes the last phrase, emphasizing his deceit of Cassio and his evil characterization. In addition, one half of his face is shadowed, indicating his deception and proclivity for manipulation and dishonesty. The use of lighting is especially significant here since Iago's shadow also symbolizes his position in both his and Othello's relationships, as well as Othello's and Desdemona's. This instrument is a significant change from Welles' picture, since it is not a method utilized by the previous filmmaker. In reality, it serves to modernize the picture by engaging the audience and encouraging them to participate while also offering a counterpoint to the popular belief that audiences will always favor the hero. Whereas Welles' Othello intentionally distances the viewer from the characters, Parker takes the polar opposite method to tremendous success.

There is a significant conceptual divergence between the two films, in addition to some of the visual methods employed by Parker being completely different from those used by Welles. Although Welles' film ignores race, Parker's film emphasizes it to the point where some critics claim it reinforces racial stereotypes: "...the film makes extensive use of Laurence Fishburne's corporeality; the moor is eroticized and exoticized through the use of jewelry and, more importantly, tattoos," which others the protagonist and casts an exploitative gaze upon him (Gruss, 2009). His appearance on screen is one of the film's most prominent elements, and his ethnicity and otherness are unmistakably highlighted. Othello has a sophisticated English accent, yet he has certain inflections that distinguish him. Similarly, his tattoos and clothing set him out from the crowd. Neither emphasizes his race, but they do distinguish him from his contemporaries, especially Iago, who is dressed in traditional Elizabethan garb and stands out from the crowd as a consequence of his actions. Othello is not identified as distinct as a consequence of his race in Welles' film, thus this is a whole different method to adaptation, although one that more properly reflects the play due to Shakespeare's focus on race. However, the Parker film isn't the only one to focus on racial problems. As a consequence of Parker's modernization of the screenplay, the 2001 television movie directed by Geoffrey Sax draws attention to it in a more overt manner than Parker did.

Sax's Othello

However, although there are clear similarities between the Welles and Parker films, Sax's 2001 adaptation of Othello is a far cry from the traditional narrative in that it simply follows the play's basic framework while updating its ideas and concepts to a modern context. It is told by Ben Jago, a modern-day Iago who is a deceptive and dishonest policeman who becomes jealous when John Othello, a black cop, is named Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police since the job necessitates the appointment of a black man. This storyline raises questions about its relevance, which is a problem. Using news stories such as the Stephen Lawrence murder and the notion that the police are institutionally racist, Smith (2015), for example, connects the film's relevance to a modern audience. This is certainly the conclusion reached when Ben Jago, the film's Iago, rises to prominence and manifests racism within the mechanisms of law and order, removing any notion of poetic justice. However, in contrast to the Welles and Parker adaptations, which depend heavily on Shakespeare's words, the film includes just a small portion of the play's text. Aside from the application of its ideas and notions in terms of race and gender, there is little little of its content to be found in the film. Indeed, the film violates all aesthetic preconceptions about Shakespeare's works, with nothing in the way of costume, setting, or the adaptation of specific scenes for cinema, giving it a facelift and modernizing it in order for it to appeal to current audiences (Cartelli & Rowe, 2007).

All three films, however, have one thing in common: they all take use of the play's "everydayness" (Smith, 2015). The "...play is current in time, place, and occurrence... is immersed in the problems of 'everyday occurrence,' set amid the ordinary, normal, and plain" is fully set in the present (Smith, 2015). This is the brilliance of this adaptation: since it is based on current events, it is totally relevant to the audience. Apart from the fact that it is set in a visually and artistically current period, Welles and Parker both aesthetically put their films in the past and draw on problems from their own eras, and this is no exception.

Although the changes mentioned above distinguish this picture from previous adaptations, race does offer a point of comparison. The issue of racial otherness in Sax's picture is similar to Parker's in that Othello is othered via the imposition of racial prejudices on the protagonist. In this instance, it's clear from Jago's discussion with the Commissioner in the restroom: "So, where are all these black cops you're bringing on?" Jago asks. Commissioner: "You make an excellent argument. I'd be a happy guy if I could discover any with brains as large as their dicks, eh? Isn't it the truth, though?" (Sax, 2001).

This conversation takes place in the bathroom and appears to be lighthearted on screen, but the nature of the conversation belies the tone of the remarks, which belies the nature of the conversation, which is highly offensive and certainly taps into long-held stereotypes, lending credence to the notion that the Met is rif Jago, who is not directly responsible for the racial undertones, communicates them to the audience. This reveals his dishonesty and brings up the issue of race. According to Bladen (2015), the mise-en-scene also achieves this by framing Othello in the manner it does. In the dinner scene, he delivers a speech on his family's history as slaves against a backdrop of flashy décor and map figures: "This shot shows the link between the laborious hybrid human-architectural ornament and the discourses of servitude and ugliness" (Bladen, 2015). His remark draws a distinction between himself and his pals, none of whom are black, and demonstrates that racial hate persists in society outside the current institutions that maintain the peace. While the film's treatment of racism varies from (Parker, 1995) feature, it is undeniably at its heart.

Thematic problems, which serve as the foundation for the film, aren't the only area of commonality between the two films, which seem to be diametrically opposed. While Jago doesn't speak directly to the camera as often as Parker does, Sax makes him the sole character that does so throughout the film. Throughout the film, Ben Jago addresses the camera directly and is the only character to do so, implying that the script has been revised for the screen in the same way it was for the stage. Iago's stage role in Othello is referenced by his character's constant awareness of the camera and perception of the audience as a confidant. In this play, Iago serves as a liaison between the characters and the audience at various points throughout the performance (Harnett, 2010).

Jago basically recounts the story to the audience in the same way that Iago does in Parker's film, infusing a feeling of hatred and jealousy into the otherwise innocuous dialogue, but only to make the audience aware of his unstable emotional condition. The camera, on the other hand, aids in the focus of this approach, resulting in a reciprocal and mutually beneficial connection with Jago, although in a different manner than Parker. Parker positions Iago in the center of the frame, shifting the camera to make room for him. That is not the case here, since the use of tight close-ups to pass judgment on him rather than being complicit with him is uncomfortable (Rothwell, 2004). This strategy has the benefit of "...painting him as a cunning, insinuating, and deceitful criminal." The camera often creeps up on Jago's slim, devilish face as he is hypocritically hugging and promising John Othello of lifelong friendship in an over the shoulder shot" (Rothwell, 2004). The camera moves around the table towards the conclusion of John's speech at the flashy restaurant, after Cass's interruption of the dinner, and as it passes over Jago's shoulder, he turns to face it. His face seems unnaturally lengthy and hilariously exaggerated due to the lighting, which throws it in nearly blinding white light. What he says next, though, is borderline ridiculous: "So, what are your thoughts? I know what you're going through since I'm in the same boat. I'm nearly with you, but it's too late now. It is now operational. It's out of my hands" (Sax, 2001). This does not excuse his acts or his malice, but it does give the impression that he is aware of the audience's thoughts. His assumptions actively enhance his power, mirroring Parker's Iago's authority.

Comparative Analysis

It is essential to compare and contrast a single scene from each of the films mentioned below in order to determine the similarities and differences. This will show the degree to which audience expectations and interpretations of the play vary over time. The opening scenes of Welles', Parker's, and Sax's films offer such a contrast. Welles and Parker use the opening scenes to "...introduce a point of view and visual imagery that will contribute substantially to the way the filmmaker portrays Othello and Desdemona and Iago's ruin of their marriage," according to Tatspaugh (2007). For each picture, each filmmaker creates a dominating tone." Parker's film begins with a stunning and gorgeous nighttime vista of Venice, with a gondola skimming over the lake towards the camera. A black guy picks up a tragedy mask and puts it over his face as it goes

past the camera, while a lady seems to be sleeping on his shoulder. This symbolic gesture sets the tone of the film and foreshadows what is to come, symbolizing Othello and Desdemona and predicting their sad end. Its setting is interesting since the action shifts from Desdemona's arrival at her wedding to Othello to a strategic council meeting to discuss the council's strategy for Cyprus, which is juxtaposed with Desdemona's arrival at her wedding to Othello. It is via this compositional choice that Parker immediately draws the attention of the listener and asserts his authority over the text, both in terms of content and aesthetic appeal. It is true that lighting reinforces the meaning of the tragedy mask by imposing a sense of darkness on the film from the beginning that distorts the film's focus; however, the use of lighting also imposes on the audience several ideas – such as the presence of carnivalesque elements and whiteness covering blackness – that are in fact at odds with the rest of the film (Crowl, 2003). It is unclear if Parker is attempting to deceive the audience with this deliberate misdirection, but there are certain routes given that are not fully explored and, as a result, are of little significance to the overall plot of the film. Despite this, when seen in isolation, there is unquestionably an intriguing link between Shakespeare's original goals for the play and Parker's film.

The funeral procession in Welles' film, on the other hand, depicts the main character and his wife's passing. A feeling of dread permeates the whole sequence before the opening titles and lasts throughout the rest of the film as a result. Despite the fact that the two films are quite different in content, the burial scene creates the same sense of dread as the tragedy mask. Both films include beautiful landscapes, but in Welles' opening scene, the environment overwhelms the characters, showing the power of nature over man's aspirations. In Parker's setting, on the other hand, the environment is secondary to the people that live it. The mechanics of the two scenarios, despite their similarities, are vastly different. The movie is structured in a circular pattern that highlights fundamental truths while also transcending time and space (Mason, 2007). Despite the fact that both films have a distinct symbolism that is important in establishing the tone and direction of the picture, Parker's film is noticeably devoid of it. Welles also utilized a variety of cinematic techniques that are present throughout the picture to instantly interest the spectator in the narrative, such as the use of silhouette and shadow, iconography suggesting imprisonment, and different camera angles (Tatspaugh, 2007). All of the individuals walking down the road, with the exception of the bishop, are in shadow. The tale of Iago's imprisonment in a small cage, on the other hand, is starkly different. This film explores the ideas of captivity and death by juxtaposing them while Welles use extreme camera angles to ensure that they coexist. Parker's film has no similar concepts or camera angles to Sax (2001) short, but there are some parallels.

The beginning sequence of the Saxophone version seems to be significantly different from those of its predecessors. As John watches Dessie sleep, he starts with extreme close-ups of her lips and John's eyes before seamlessly moving to a variety of pictures showing the pair in love, gradually increasing their proximity to one another. In this case, the presence of a narrator is beneficial; for example, "It was all about love," says the narrator. That is something you must understand. Please refrain from bringing up the topic of race with me. Please refrain from bringing up politics with me. It was love at first sight. It's as simple as that. She adored him with all her heart. He adored her in a way that no man should love a woman. Isn't it a tragedy?" (Sax, 2001). When the camera pans away from the pair and to him in the back of a police vehicle, it's obvious that the voiceover belongs to Ben Jago. Although the fact that Jago is shown in the back of a vehicle establishes the notion of confinement, and the camera angles definitely resemble those of Welles, it is the only opening scene in which a person provides any kind of narrative. Although it establishes the connection between Dessie and John from the outset rather than presenting the result, the pictures of Dessie and John are combined into a montage that takes the viewer with them. It does, however, have certain similarities to the previous two films in that it puts Othello and Jago's connection as the central plot point, with Dessie as a feminine element in a love triangle that subverts masculine relationships to some extent. Jago's final remark demonstrates this: "I loved him too, you know" (Sax, 2001). In order to address his audience and establish the scene, he talks straight to the camera, mirroring Iago's use of direct address in Parker's version of the film. Similarly, Iago, or the comparable figure, takes center stage in the opening sequences of Welles and Sax's films, establishing his dominance over the text to some degree, even though he is only seen briefly in Parker's film when Desdemona comes searching for Othello.

This study emphasizes the fact that the opening sequences of all three films are very different in terms of substance and how they handle the concepts and ideas that serve as the foundation for them all. Despite differences, they share a number of characteristics, motifs, and cinematic techniques in order to communicate the tone and essence of the adaptations that their

filmmakers have decided to explore.

Conclusion

A final point to make is that, while the three Othello adaptations under consideration –Welles (1952) film, Parker (1995) film, and Sax (2001) television film– share some important similarities in terms of following Shakespeare's narrative framework, they also share some significant differences, demonstrating that no two adaptations are alike in terms of following Shakespeare. For starters, they are all inspired by Shakespeare's universal themes and tragic tone, which they all draw inspiration from in their own way. Despite the fact that Welles makes no mention of race in the picture, he creates masculine links and gazes over the course of the movie. Despite the fact that Parker and Sax are both interested in gender issues, they are more concerned with racial issues, such as stereotyping, otherness, and erroneous views about black men's social standing in society. Both writers provide contemporary perspectives on the play, which they then alter to suit their own purposes and goals. The research, on the other hand, identifies areas of variation between participants. Despite the fact that both Welles and Parker adhere to the text to a considerable degree, their performances are wildly different from one another. When Welles cuts a significant chunk of the script from his performance, he achieves a 91-minute performance that may be described, in part, as a film noir due to the lighting and camera work, as well as its many realistic qualities. Instead of depending on the noir framework as a basis for his work as Parker did, Parker used lighting to highlight moments of danger, doom, and sadness without relying on the noir framework as a foundation for his work. As with her other productions, Sax takes a whole different approach with Othello, rewriting it in order to appeal to a modern audience via a narrative that examines racism in London during Othello's initial performance. Aside from that, it adds characters that are firmly anchored in the current day and who do not strictly follow the lines of speech written by Shakespeare. Because it follows the plot of the play in its entirety, it is considered a legitimate adaptation. It still does an excellent job of bringing the tale up to date for a modern audience, despite its flaws and shortcomings. Many important aspects are similar in the two films, including Jago's direct address to the camera and the creation of a plot-dictating relationship between Jago and Othello. This is particularly apparent in the comparison of the opening sequences, which demonstrate how diverse the three films are despite the fact that they all use similar cinematic techniques, subjects, and director goals in their creation.

There are two main features of the essay as a consequence of this: it is relevant to the time period in which it was written and it has the capacity to draw attention to problems and concepts that are intimately connected to the director's preferences, vision, and creativity. Thus, the article demonstrates that each director's interpretation of Othello differs substantially from the other, which was previously hypothesized (and supported by evidence). As opposed to being a literal depiction of the play, each film is an adaptation, demonstrating how flexible Shakespeare's words can be when they are adapted for the screen in each of these cases. Aside from that, the audience-specific constraints of cinema actively motivate filmmakers to make decisions that have an impact on both character and, as a result of that, on the final product, which is why three films based on the same text can be so disparate and contain opposing interpretations of the original text.

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