

The Curtain Caller

A publication of the Theater 9 Dramaturgy class, spring 2000

Wabash College Presents:

William Shakespeare's

OTHELLO

Adapted By L.L. West

Ball Theater,
April 19-22, May 12-13, 2000

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We've got it all this issue!!

All this done through the courtesy of:

Lust!

VIOLENCE!

Malice

Jealousy!

Vengeance!

(And we even **write** about a couple of them!)

wabash
college
theater

Wabash College Presents:
William Shakespeare's
O T H E L L O

Adapted By: L.L. West

Director: **L.L. West**
Assistant Director: **George Belmore**
Scenic Designer: **James Gross**
Costume Designer: **Laura Connors**
Original Music Composer: **Michael Abbott**
Stage Manager: **James Cloud**

Cast of Othello:

Othello: Johnny Warren	Desdemona: Lydia Crumpacker
Iago: Aaron Parks	Emilia: Betsy Nagel
Cassio: Michael Shannon	Bianca: Rhonda Owens
Montano: Justin Dirig	Roderigo: Paul Kennedy
Gratiano: David Hirt	Barabantio: J.R. Sherburne
	Duke of Venice: David O'Neil

Gentlemen, Officers, Attendants:

George Belmore
Logan Kuhne
B.J. Whetstine
Katie Coachys
Jason Morales
Andrew Kaiser

Crew:

Assistant Stage Manager: Thomas Meeker
Light Board Operator: Lee Flater
Sound Board Operator: Daniel Christian
Props Master: Andrew Cortez
Students of Theater 2

ESH Workers

Jason Morales
Dave Hirt
Jeff Philippe
Lee Flater
George Belmore
Alan Cooley
Andrew Kaiser

There will be one ten-minute intermission.

The Curtain Caller

DEPARTMENTS

2 Editors' Page

See what we have to say!
It'll only be the beginning...

10 Biography and Stuff

Some facts about Shakespeare and how *Othello* influenced or was influenced by his life. You may even discover something not commonly known (but don't count on it--we're not *that* good yet)!

13 - 14 Director's Notes

Director Larry West talks (and, as we find out, questions) about his experience with the Wabash College production of *Othello*.

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Here they are, the bold and the beautiful (and the cast even! just kidding) who make *Othello* into the intense live spectacle it has become at Wabash.

IN THIS ISSUE

3 Revenge, jealousy, suspicion in *Othello*

Iago's out to get the Othello, the Moor's out to get Desdemona... it seems that revenge dominates the entirety of *Othello*. But is *Othello* really a revenge play? Tony Goodwyn explores the significance of jealousy and suspicion as motivators for (and possibly subversions of) revenge.

6 Racism in *Othello*--still around today?

"Thick lips?" "Old black ram?" Hmmmm... sounds like racial epithets were pretty common in Shakespeare's day, too... but maybe that's just us. An exploration of cultural otherness in *Othello* leads Rob Summers on an investigation of a more subtle form of racism that exists today.

8 Adaptation, adaptation, adaptation...

Okay, our guess is that the 1996 *Romeo and Juliet* was not the first overtly different adaptation of a Shakespearean play, just the worst. It seems we were right; Alan Cooley turns up some (fairly) recent "modernized" Shakespearean plays, including Larry West's adaptation of *Othello*.

11 And my play **is** tragic, because...

Are the tragedies of the Elizabethan period the same as the stories we would today call tragedies, or do we need to seriously consider renaming them? James Cloud delves into the definition of tragedy as related by the late great Aristotle, and sees if our modern-day "equivalents" compare.

17 And I **am** a tragic hero, because...

Most Shakespearean tragedies directly feature a tragic hero. Is *Othello* such a character? Lee Flater thinks he is, and explores what makes the Moor a tragic heroes, from his noble soul to the faults that contribute to his downfall.

The Curtain Caller

Notes from the Lowly Professor

Dramaturgy is a relative new-comer to the American theater scene. It's doubtful that many people even know what dramaturgy is. Rather than define the term in academic terms, I refer the reader to this publication, which is a purely dramaturgical effort.



Like the production itself, this magazine is a collaborative venture. Working together, five students conceived the project, wrote the articles, and designed the layout. Like most dramaturgs, they worked quietly on the periphery of the production, consulting with the director and investigating the text, attempting to fulfill their roles as caretakers of the play, while at the same time uncovering new ways of thinking about Shakespeare's classic tragedy.

I am pleased by the efforts of these five young men, and I am delighted to present to you the fruits of their labors. Enjoy *The Curtain Caller* and the Wabash College Theater department's production of *Othello*.

A publication of



the Wabash College
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Notes from the Lowly Managing Editor



Oh, wow.

That's about all I was thinking when I finally realized just what I had gotten myself into with this magazine.

It all started out easy enough. I was going about my usual business of being my

normal, incorrigible self: you know, the senior who had taken the course before and knew it all. The idea to make a magazine seemed like a wonderful way to one-up my performance in last year's Theater 9 class. So after a couple days of pondering just what makes a theater magazine a theater magazine, I drafted an outline and submitted it to the powers that be at the theater department.

Yes, it all started so simple...

We batted around ideas in a leisurely fashion, figured on what we wanted to write about for *Othello*: We got to drafting our articles and figuring out what was going to go into the magazine, assigning jobs and gradually completing them.

Then the deadline came.

I had known it was coming, of course. You have to know these things in at least some offhand, peripheral way, or you're really in trouble. Still, you're never quite prepared for it.

One other thing you're never quite ready to deal with is the final form of the publication. It always differs from whatever initial conception you have of it. Accommodating that difference always involves re-working and re-shaping the whole magazine. A fun job, to be sure; just not exactly conducive to a stress-free life.

But I have survived (more or less)!

With my sanity, no less (okay, well, I guess that one's still up to debate)!

Working on this magazine has been a learning experience for me. It's also been a humbling one, as I've come to realize that there are just some things that I can't do by myself. There are *some* things I can do by myself, but usually at the cost of my already fragile mind. That's not worth it.

I want to thank everyone involved in the production of this magazine, this tangible representation of what started out as an object of my mad inspiration. There are too many to list here, but you know who you are. Thank you all for helping me carry this through.

THE VENGEANCE FACTOR

or,

Why's everyone at each other's throat?

#1

(yes, the pun was intended. live with it.)



No matter who plays Othello, it's clear that vengeance and jealousy play strong motivators (to differing extents for the actors) for the characters. Incidentally, no matter who plays Othello, they all end up dead (cue spoiler warning).

by Tony Wren Goodwyn

Since we started kicking around ideas and questions about *Othello* in the board room a few weeks back, I've been turning a particularly interesting query over in my mind. I've taken both sides of it to task, and finally came up with enough material to write something that I thought would be fairly entertaining and thought-provoking (hence the nonsensical wordplay you're reading at this very moment). The question goes something like this:

Is *Othello* a revenge play?

A word to the wise: be careful answering this question. It's trickier than it looks.

I made the mistake of falling on the 'yes' side of the chopping block at first. It certainly *felt* like revenge was a big part of the play. People were plotting, counter-plotting, dying, and some lame attempt at retaliation was made near the end. Revenge, right?

Then another question was brought up. Was *Othello* wronged in the first place?

Ummmm... yes?

By Desdemona?

Ummmm... no?

Isn't she the one he kills, or 'retaliates' against?

Well...

Where, then, is *Othello's* revenge?

It was at about this time when the lights in my head started to flicker and explode. An emergency light that read, DAMAGE CONTROL PLEASE REPORT TO TONY'S ANSWER blared all over my brain. The room began to spin as I waited to be put in place by my questioner. I agreed that the matter needed more attention before I could give a good answer to the question, and I left, tail between my legs, to think about whether or not *Othello* was indeed a revenge play.

Boy, has my answer changed since then.

Let's look at it from a more technical standpoint. First of all, what is a revenge play? Though no "textbook definition" presented itself to me during my search, I found a good deal of common elements among them. A revenge play, it seems, is one in which the hero or central figure seeks retaliation for a wrong committed against a friend or family member. The villain suffers a rough form of justice (usually death) at the hands of the avenger, or revenge hero. This hero often becomes romanticized as a symbol of the individual over "the system" as he takes the law into his own hands and works outside traditional avenues. In this sense the revenge play (or perhaps more appropriately, revenge drama) is a phenomenon we have shared with Elizabethans, whose heroes have ranged from Hamlet to Robocop to Chuck Norris.

That's the basic definition of a revenge play. Now, let's try applying it to *Othello*.

Let's see... the central character of *Othello* is, well, Othello. So he would be the revenge hero in this play, right? Right.

He does seek retaliation for wrongs committed against himself (which, for the moment, is good enough), against Desdemona, and briefly (and futilely) at the end against Iago. But wait! Iago, the villain, is wounded by Othello, but is still alive at the play's end, left to suffer justice at the hands of the Venetians who know what has happened. So much for avoiding the system here.

Othello dies. He doesn't get back at Iago. So, it's not a revenge play.

Right?

Well, maybe not for Othello...

What if we turned this play on its ear (only slightly though), and made Iago the play's central figure? Iago is a complex character in his own right, a major player in the game of intrigue that drives *Othello*, and the only character in the play who acts (all of the others, even Othello, react). Though Iago's true motives remain unknown, he nonetheless seeks to topple the Moor, making up one reason after another for his justification. It can be reasonably argued that he is seeking revenge upon Othello for making Cassio his lieutenant instead of Iago. Actor Charles "Roc" Dutton makes a compelling argument for such an approach:



"Othello is no dummy. He believed what Iago said. Iago was his trusted lieutenant. The two men fought side by side; they killed together; they drank together; they womanized together; they dreamt together. Iago was wronged. Othello *should* have given him the lieutenantcy. Not that what Iago did was justified, but remember, that promotion was given to *Cassio*, a guy who never fought in a war, never knew the anguish of battle, and who was wealthy and sheltered—basically a Dan Quayle. Why couldn't Iago be the man who is out of control instead of the man who is calculating? He has a right to be pissed."¹

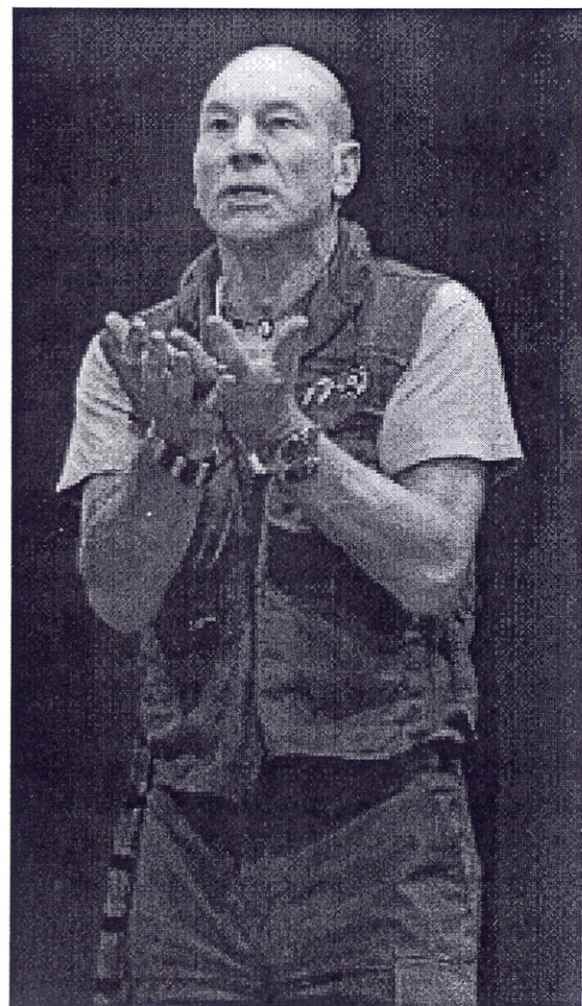
With this in mind, his efforts to snare the Moor in his web of intrigue are seen as retaliation for an unjust slighting.

Othello also becomes the villain if we take this view. Once caught in Iago's deceitful machinations, he is unable to escape, and eventually ends up destroying all that he loves because of Iago. He takes his own life in repentance for his crimes in front of Iago. If Iago is the hero, then he has triumphed over his villain in the most absolute way. *Othello* is a revenge play, for Iago (or at least can be).

One answer for no, and one for yes. Tie breaker, anyone?

Well, consider this: however much the latter view might provide a technically fit and reasonable answer to *Othello*'s standing as a revenge play, there's still something inherently unsatisfying and even discomforting about it. Heck, there are *several* things that make me want to chuck that answer in the garbage.

First of all, with the latter exploration, Iago would have to be-



AGONIZING IN SUSPICION: Patrick Stewart, bottom left, wonders painfully at Desdemona's fidelity. Above right, another Othello is clearly caught in Iago's slanderous web.

come the central character in *Othello*, as the play, being about revenge, would center on the character for whom revenge is the primary action. Should the play then be renamed *Iago*?

We know this would not work. *Othello* is about Othello, and his fall from grace into the hell created for him by Iago. As far as protagonists go, in the literary sense, Othello fits the mold much better than Iago does. If the protagonist is the person who changes throughout a story, then Othello is clearly the protagonist. He goes from a noble, poised general of poetic elocution to a broken-down, enraged beast of a man whose poetry becomes a stark cacophony. Finally, he returns to his former self at the end, when he realizes what he has done, perhaps wiser for the wear, before taking his life at the end.

Another reason I don't like the Iago answer lies in its interpretability. It can be just as easily speculated that Iago's motives stem as much from jealousy, or racism, or greed as they ever do from revenge. Once again, his motives are never revealed, and as the excuses for his actions are flimsily thrown out and dismissed, nothing can authoritatively be said about his intentions. Iago could be jealous of Othello's marriage to Desdemona, or Desdemona's to Othello (believe it or not, some actors have played it this way).

So, after haphazardly traversing both sides of this seesaw, I've come to this conclusion: *Othello* is not a revenge play at all.

It is a jealousy play.

This works when one looks at the play from the perspective either of the aforementioned characters, not that that's even needed anymore. For Othello, his jealousy, sexual in nature, allows him to be goaded and led on by Iago. For Iago, well, as his motives remain unfathomable, he can be jealous of Othello, or Desdemona, or whoever, but it matters much less from his perspective now. Othello can be our appropriate jealous protagonist, and the play will be a jealousy play.

Having been so quick to place this play in the revenge category, I wondered why I did so with so little thought. It was like a reflex, an unthinking reaction I had associated with tragedies, particularly Shakespearean tragedies. After all, when the subject of Shakespearean tragedies is brought up, it is almost automatic for people to start thinking of revenge.

And why not?

Shakespearean tragedies, by and large, are motivated by revenge. People kill or otherwise wrong someone, someone else retaliates, blood is spilled, and either more people retaliate or it all ends with a lot of people dead. Whenever we read or watch a Shakespearean tragedy, that's what we now expect. With *Othello*, we have a similar ending. Othello, Desdemona, Emilia die at or near the end. Iago is carried off. We associate this ending and the way it came about with revenge.

What we don't at first see is that this is all brought about by perceived revenge, which is caused by jealousy and suspicion. There is a vengeance factor, but no real vengeance. Othello has not been wronged, so he can not act out of revenge. He has only been led to believe he was wronged, and so he acts out of suspicion and sexual jealousy. But, as we later see, this revenge is for a perceived wrong, a perceived wrong which ends up being untrue. Thus, Othello's sense of revenge is nothing more than perceived, and tragically, wrong.

It is perhaps a fitting paradox, this jealousy cloaked in vengeance, as *Othello* is a play about, among other things, the tension between appearance and reality. Iago is not what he seems. Desdemona is not the strumpet Othello has been led to think she is. The play itself seems to be about revenge at first glance, but a closer look reveals that it is driven by jealousy and suspicion.

Heavy stuff, huh? ☺

Perhaps if Othello had been driven (as I at first was, however unwillingly) to reexamine certain appearances, he wouldn't have ended up the tragic revenge... er, jealousy figure we see in the play.

¹ Norrie Epstein, *The Friendly Shakespeare*, page 383.

Racism in Shakespeare: LET'S EXPLORE!!!

by Rob Summers

Othello is a very striking and powerful play. For many, what makes the story of *Othello* stick out among other plays of its era is that the lead is played by a black moor who lives in an all white society. However, this moor is no low class servant or middle class tradesman, he is a wealthy and respected member of his community. Then what is it that fuels the plot against Othello? Why does Desdemona's father disapprove so strongly to her relationship with Othello? Racism is definitely a factor, but we are not talking about sheet-head lynch mobs in *Othello*; we are looking at a more subtle racism. The idea of subtle racism intrigued me so much, I designed a little survey to test this idea.

Before we can really look at the survey on racism, we must first explore what racism is and what the difference is between blatant racists and subtle racists. According to Dictionary.com, racism is defined as, "The belief that race accounts for differences in human character or ability and that a particular race is superior to others." I probably didn't have to tell you that. Most people have a pretty general idea about what racism is, and when most people are asked if they are racist, they say no. However, they might harbor more subtle racist attitudes without even knowing that they are racist.

In a study done by Eugene Hightower (1997), the question of overt and subtle racism is looked at. In his study he cites another study by Pettigrew and Merritts (1995) where they looked at and defined a questionnaire designed to determine whether someone was tolerant, subtly racist or blatantly racist. Pettigrew defines the blatant racist as being openly hostile and expressing beliefs that ethnic minorities are inferior. He goes on to define subtle racists as denying prejudice toward minorities, but lacking sympathy to their plight and blame social inequalities on what they view as maladaptive features of minority culture and customs. (Hightower, 370)

The results of Hightower's study were interesting. He was concerned with comparing the mental health and well being of blatant racists and subtle racists with tolerant people. His study was constructed using several questionnaires and scales of personality and mental health. To determine the racist views, he used Pettigrew's questionnaire. Hightower's participants were 131 white women and 130 white men whose ages ranged from 25 to 40.

The results of his study show some fundamental differences between blatant and subtle racists. Blatant racists adhered to the following four main beliefs: (1) African Americans who receive support from welfare could get along without it if they tried, (2) white Americans and African Americans could never really be comfortable with each other even if they were friends, (3) most politicians care too much about African Americans and not enough about white Americans, and (4) African Americans were less honest than white Americans. (Hightower, 371).

Subtle racists adhered to similar but less direct beliefs which include: (1) African Americans could overcome prejudices and work their way up without special favors and (2) African Americans could be as well off as white Americans if they only worked harder. Both blatant and subtle racists also indicated that African

Americans differed from white Americans by their family values, sexual values and quality of language that they speak. Tolerant participants did not adhere to any of the preceding items. The study also showed that people who were blatantly or subtly racist tended to be less psychologically healthy than the tolerant participant. (Hightower, 371)

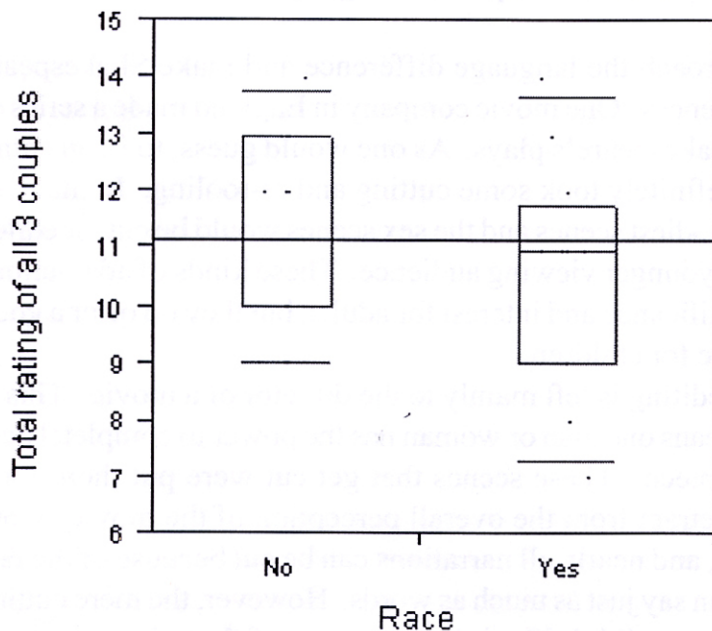
When I designed my survey, I wanted to explore the idea of subtle racism and the effect race might have on someone's perception of events or situations. In a study done by Pierce and Harris (1993), race was found to have an effect on the participants' perception of a case of domestic violence. A fictitious article was given to their participants and they were asked to rate several things related to the incident like 'how responsible' people involved were and how violent the incident was. Race was found to have an affect when participants rated white assailants as less responsible.

Using Pierce and Harris's study as a base, I constructed three different relationship situations. Each included the age, degree of education and occupation of both people in the couple. Half of my participants received the same description of the couples with the addition of race. In all three descriptions, the race of the male was given as black and the race of the female was given as white. I thought this would keep it similar to the situation presented in *Othello*. After the short description of the couple, I asked the participant to rate on a scale of one to seven how successful of a relationship the couple would have. Seven, which was the most successful, was described as being "a healthy relationship which will last for the rest of their lives."

A total of 23 people participated in the survey. All were male students at Wabash College. I compiled each person's score as a total of the ratings they gave to the success of each relationship, which would be in the range of three to twenty-one. The higher the score the more successful the participant thought the relationships would be. The mean for the control (no race given) was 11.7 and the mean score for the experimental condition (race given) was 10.4, which is a difference of 1.6. After performing an analysis of variance, I found the results not to be significant. However, the data did seem to be leaning in the direction of a racial bias since the numbers for the relationships tended to be lower when race was given.

There are a few things that I think might have affected the results. Some of the people who received the race condition might have detected the intent of the survey, which would have caused it to affect their scoring.

Figure 1: Total of each participant's ratings.
Quntile boxes show the middle 50% of scores.



I probably should have put in some relationships where race was the same. After I started to distribute the survey I realized that I only stated gender in the race condition. Also, I did not take any kind of demographic data from the participants. The race of the participant might have had an effect on the data, which I did not take into account.

While my data did not show statistical significance for a subtle racial bias, it seemed to indicate a slight tendency towards a racial bias. The study of racism fits particularly well with Larry West's modern adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*. People today are more likely to fit the subtle form of racism rather than the blatant form. Racism is something that is important for us to study. The more we are aware of it the more we are able to combat it.

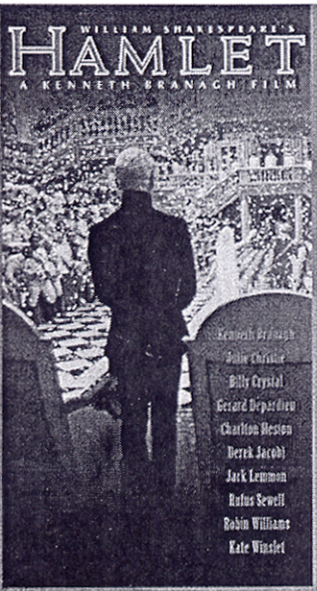
FEATU#3

The fine art of adapting Shakespeare to the modern stage

or,

"You're doing *WHAT* to my play?!?"

by Alan Cooley



Shakespearean plays are *the* most widely read and performed plays in the world; therefore it is no wonder that they are also the most widely adapted plays. Adaptations of Shakespeare's works appear in many forms, but the most popular form today is that of the movies. Three hundred ninety-five is the number of times that a work of Shakespeare has been transposed to film. A little over one third of these are meant for television, while the rest are movies made primarily for the big screen. Making Shakespeare into movies, whether for the big screen or for television, screams for alterations to the dialogue, actions, and of course setting.

Shakespeare is often called the greatest writer of the English language, so why you ask, would anyone be compelled to change something that is already a masterpiece? There are many answers to this; one being that the principle medium of entertainment in today's society is the movie. Movies are much more simple in the way of acting than live theater. Actors don't have to worry about forgetting lines in front of an audience or executing improper stage directions. Films usually get more time to prepare and perfect the final product before the presentation to the public. The fact that movies are available to the general public requires another alteration—language. Shakespeare's plays were often written to please a certain crowd, crowds of people from the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Because of their availability to the public, the language must be understandable if the movie is to be viewed in today's world. Very few, if any, of the most popular Shakespearean movies actually follow closely to the Shakespearean language with all of its "thee"'s, "thy"'s, and "thou"'s.

Some directors approach the language difference and make Shakespeare appealing to the young audiences. One movie company in England made a series of half-hour cartoons from Shakespeare's plays. As one would guess, to fit an entire play into half of an hour definitely took some cutting and re-tooling. In many of Shakespeare's plays the bloodiest scenes and the sex scenes would be cut, or edited as to be appropriate for the younger viewing audience. These kinds of adaptations do remove much of the significance and interest for adults, but they do offer a good introduction to Shakespeare for children.

Unfortunately, the editing is left mainly to the director of a movie. This is unfortunate because that means one man or woman has the power to completely cut a scene from the original piece. These scenes that get cut were put there for a reason, cutting them can detract from the overall perception of the movie. Conversely, some monologues, and nearly all narrations can be cut because of the fact that the visuals in movies can say just as much as words. However, the mere cutting of a scene because the director didn't like it is just a way of flaunting power, or

perhaps the director's or re-writer's desire to have their name remembered alongside of Shakespeare's name.

This almost omnipotent power allows the director to have better control over just what the audience does see and what it doesn't see. The director morphs the play into his very own production with this power. It gives him or her the power to bring out subtleties, and hide elements that pull attention away from the main action.

A way to adapt Shakespeare's works that has become very popular among audiences and filmmakers is updating the setting to modern day instead of the distant past. Almost all of Shakespeare's plays have been modernized in some fashion. This is a bold undertaking, but by doing this, it brings more relevance to the play.

In modernizing Shakespeare's works the themes must be carried over, even if language, names, and setting are changed. The themes are very important because they are more applicable today than ever before. The main themes in Shakespeare's plays are often the same: prejudice, politics, and sex.

The prejudices are shown in very well in Othello. The relationship between Desdemona and Othello was created before its time. In today's society interracial relationships exist frequently, and like in the play there are many Iago's that don't approve, and try to stop these kinds of relationships. One of the recent topics on the TV talk-show hosted by Dr. Joy was "is your teen involved in an interracial relationship and they need help?" This is proof that Shakespeare was ahead of his time in writing and that his plays can be accurately modernized while maintaining punches needed to convey his ideas. Another racial issue, that is less prominent today as it was thirty years ago, is that of the race of people in commanding positions. Prejudices also come across in political conflicts in many of Shakespeare's plays.

The political aspects of Shakespeare's plays do not stand out as much as other aspects, but they are among the themes that carryover in today's world. The political facets in these plays are portrayed in feuds between families and people of different social standing. When adapting Shakespeare's plays to film it is easier to dramatize these differences by using a visual flashback in place of a verbal flashback.

The political aspects are usually overshadowed by the universal theme of sex. It is nearly impossible to escape the theme of sex in any of Shakespeare's works. Films of today are the same way, in almost every movie in theater, or show on television, sex is there. Therefore it is no problem for this theme to carryover into every adaptation of any of Shakespeare's plays. Adaptations of his plays focus on everything from fetishes to plain sexual attraction. The converting of a play to a movie allows much more graphic images with music underscore to set the mood. This is possible to accomplish with live theater, but it is much easier to do with cameras.

William Shakespeare's plays are classic, and with the help of modern-day entertainment techniques, his classics can be transformed into very different works of art. Art that appeals to our society, and art that brings us to a greater understanding of human nature, the way that it used to be and still is.

ADAPTATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS:

A whole slew of films and shows have been made with the Bard or his works in mind, and have had widely varying looks, feels, and atmospheres.



Biography of the Author

William Shakespeare was a great English playwright, dramatist and poet who lived during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Shakespeare is considered to be the greatest playwright of all time. No other writer's plays have been produced so many times or read so widely in so many countries as his.

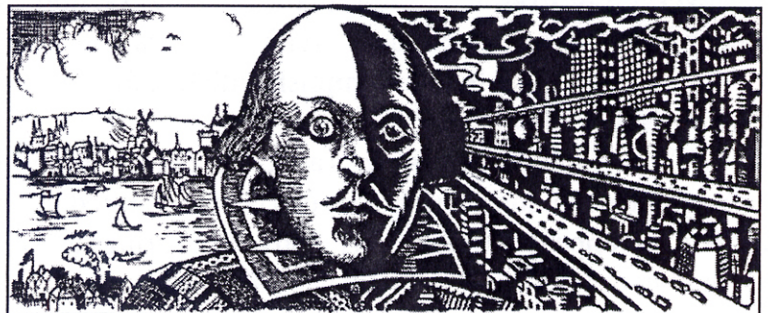
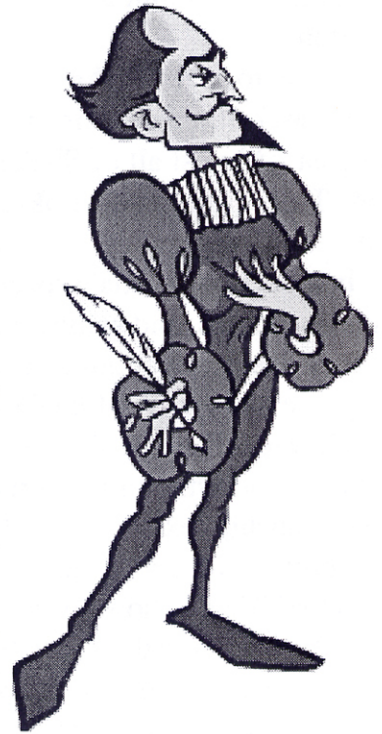
Shakespeare was born into a middle class family in Stratford England in 1564. His father John was a well-respected local businessman, and his mother was the daughter of a farmer with a wealthy family. Shakespeare was one of eight children in this prominent family. He spent long hours at school, but living in Stratford, his life was far from dull. Stratford was a very lively town that commonly hosted pageants and large fairs throughout the year. Stratford also had fields and woods surrounding it, giving young William many places to hunt and trap small game. The river Avon ran through town allowing him to fish as well. Shakespeare's poems and plays show his love of nature and rural life, which reflects his childhood.

In November of 1582, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway of Shottery, England. He married at the age of eighteen, when Anne was twenty-six. Together they had three children: Susana and twins Judith and Hamnet. Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, died 1596.

London is where Shakespeare's career really took off; he became well known in the theater by 1592. In London he joined a repertory theater company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men. This was the most popular acting company in London, and by 1594 Shakespeare was a leading member of the group and six of his plays had been produced by this time. In 1599, he became a part owner of the famous Globe Theater, and ten years later he became part owner of the Blackfriars Theater.

There are many reasons why William Shakespeare is so famous. During Shakespeare's life, there were two monarchs who ruled England. They were Henry the eight and Elizabeth the first. Both were very impressed with his work, which helped to make his name known. Shakespeare is also considered to be both the greatest dramatist the world has ever known as well as the finest poet who has written in the English language. Many reasons can be given to his enormous appeal. His popularity is basically from his great understanding of human nature. He was able to find universal human qualities and put them in a dramatic situation creating characters that are timeless. Yet he had the ability to create characters that are highly individual human beings. Their struggles in life are universal. Sometimes they are successful and sometimes their lives are full of pain, suffering, and failure. In addition to his understanding and realistic view of human nature, Shakespeare had a vast knowledge of a variety of subjects. These subjects included music, law, Bible, stage, art, politics, history, hunting, and sports.

Shakespeare had a tremendous influence on culture and literature throughout the world. He contributed greatly to the development of the English language. Many words and phrases from Shakespeare's plays and poems have become part of our speech. Shakespeare's plays and poems have become a required part of education in the United States. Therefore, his ideas on subjects such as romantic love, heroism, comedy, and tragedy have helped shape the attitudes of millions of people. His portrayal of historical figures and events has influenced our thinking more than what has been written in history books. The world has admired and respected many great writers, but only Shakespeare has generated such enormous *continuing* interest in his works



FEATURE #4

Is a tragedy really a tragedy...?

Should there be another name?

What is a tragedy? Is a tragedy simply something that makes us cry, or rather something that portrays a real life situation? In the following text I will take a look at what the definition of a traditional tragedy is and who set it in stone. Then, I'll turn to see if our modern idea of a tragedy is close to the same.

A list. That is what is needed to present this information in its most simple form. So here is one for you to use in your comparison. The event is sad, senseless, naturally inflicted in some cases, involving a group of people (usually innocent), death, pain (whether physical, mental, or emotional), and preventable. While this is not a complete list, it is a fairly inclusive list and one, which shall serve its purpose well.

So let us move on shall we (or rather backwards if you will) to find and explore the tragedy of old. In order to do this, we must go all the way back to between 384 and 322 BC. Yes that is what I said, BC. This is the time when the great philosopher, Aristotle was alive. Aristotle you see was the first person to set down a "curriculum," or guidelines for writing a tragedy.

Aristotle's works, which consisted of lecture notes, and writings, were formally published in a book known as *POETICS*. While we are unsure why this philosopher chose to philosophize about poetry, the fact remains that he did. In doing so, Aristotle laid down some pretty strong guidelines that were followed for years. Why question greatness?

He states that poetry consists of three things: rhythm, tune, and meter. He makes the differentiation between Dithyrambic and Nomic poetry from Tragedies and Comedies through their use of these three means. Dithyrambic and Nomic poetry employ all three means at once, as complimentary layers, while Tragedies and Comedies employ these means one after another, or in a caravan form.

He goes on to define tragedies as "...imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude." Well that is simple enough, but that is still kind of broad isn't it? Don't worry Aristotle thought of that already, he isn't done yet.

He goes on to say that in writing, there are three ways of representing men. The first is to portray men just as they are. The second method, which is employed by comedies, is to portray men as worse than they are. And the third, which is employed by tragedies, is to make the men seem better than they are. Now looking at this, it is easy to question why it makes any difference as to how the writer portrays the character. You should be able to make the character look, seem, and act in any way you want, right? But stop for a moment and think about this. How many times has the main character been a noble, decent person and yet when something horrible happens to them, you laugh? Not very often huh? The majority of society would feel sorrow, not joy. So you can see that Aristotle was thinking when he wrote this.

Aristotle forms another rule for tragedies. He says there are six main principles in a tragedy, which he lists in his order of importance. The first is the plot, which he also refers to as "The Soul of Tragedy." The second principle is Character, the third is thought, and the fourth principle is Diction, the fifth Music, and the sixth and final principle is spectacle.

Plot; that one is simple enough. The reason behind the story. But why did Aristotle list plot as number one on his list? It has been argued for centuries that he was wrong in doing so; that number two, Character, is more important than the plot. This debate unfortunately has no real, clear-cut answer to it. You see it can effectively be argued either way. On the one hand, you have the plot the basis of the story.

But one could also argue that the character is the basis for the plot for they are the ones, which the play is being written about. So it is a tricky question that no one has been able to answer clearly yet.

Now, number three, thought. Thought today has been termed as the theme of the play, which seem to be categorized by things like revenge, jealousy, love money, power etc. Aristotle was correct I believe in placing thought as high on the list as he did, for it is a highly important element in any story.

Number four on Aristotle's list is Diction. Okay, I know, what does diction have to do with writing a tragedy? We aren't speaking it yet, we are just writing the tragedy so far. I asked the same question myself, so I went hunting for the answer. Well as luck would have it, it was in the text, you just have to read a bit deeper to understand it. Aristotle defines it as the mere metrical arrangement of the words. A lot of help he was huh? No actually he was quite helpful. What he means is the way in which the tragedy was written or verses, the writing style chosen by the author of the tragedy. Simple enough huh?

The fifth element mentioned by Aristotle was music. We believe that when Aristotle spoke of music, he was talking about the chorus in the Greek tragedies that would sing the story along at times. It was very common for a Greek tragedy to have a chorus, which is why we believe that Aristotle listed music as one of the six elements.

The sixth and final element is spectacle. While that is a broad term, Aristotle means it as a special effect. Now his idea of a spectacle would be something that is fairly easy to produce with our modern technology. But in Aristotle's days it was a sight to see for someone to be picked up from the stage, and lifted up to "heaven," saving the tragic hero of the story. Aristotle had no idea that things would advance as far as they have today. So we have had to redefine a spectacle in that sense.

So there it is...the tragedy in both forms in a nutshell. Now with this in mind, we have to go back and answer our original question. What should today's tragedy be called? Should we still call it a tragedy or should we find another name for them? Well, even though Aristotle classified the Tragedy in his day, the same does not apply today. So I guess we should find another name for them...but what?

Tragedy. Well let's look up tragedy in the thesaurus and see what it has to say.....AH HA! I have it, how about a misfortune? Well I guess it could be a calamity though....or a catastrophe, or a heartbreak. Wow this is tougher than I thought. Well I guess we should probably go with disaster though, after all, that IS the definition of a tragedy!



What think ye of my thoughts,
o vaunted Aristotle?

Director's Notes

I've never been a fan of 'Director's Notes.' My thinking has always been if I have to tell my audience what I'm going to do before I do it, then I don't have much confidence in my ability to do it in the first place, now do I? I know, I know, you've made a special effort to come to the theatre early and you're sitting in your seat with fifteen minutes to kill before curtain time . . . Lord knows, that you don't want to talk to your date, or your wife (husband), or—gulp—the stranger sitting next to you . . . and you're bored and looking for something to do . . . maybe, something to read. And what could be more fun than reading the 'Director's Notes?' Right? Well, my friend, I've got a different sort of activity in mind for this snippet of time before the play begins. Read on McAudience . . .

Like many of you, I am painfully aware that a good many cultural events, such as the theatre and bingo, frequently occur at the exact same time as Prime-time TV. With that in mind, and what with the recent fascination with TV game shows, I thought it might be exciting for you to play your very own sit-in-your-seat-before-the-show version of . . .

TA-DA!
WHO WANTS TO BE AN OTHELLO GEEK!

Understand that this is a hard-core, no lifelines, adaptation of the game and you will be playing for Othello-dollars, which are similar to Euro-dollars; difference being that the Othello-dollars are worth absolutely nothing. You may stop playing at any time and there are no commercial interruptions.

Due to budgetary considerations, there is no Regis-like host and although there is a dynamic set, suspenseful music and dramatic lighting . . . we're saving those goodies for the real show.

Ready to play? (Answers will be at the end of the last question. No peeking.)

For 100 Othello-dollars:

Who wrote *Othello*?

- A) Kit Marlowe
- B) Thomas Kyd
- C) William Shakespeare
- D) Queen Elizabeth

For 200 Othello-dollars:

What is the full title of the play?

- A) *Othello the Fourth, Part I*
- B) *King Othello the Fourth, Part Two*
- C) *The Tragedy of Othello, Prince of Denmark*
- D) *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*

For 400 Othello-dollars:

In what year was *Othello* written?

- A) 1604
- B) 1492
- C) 1776
- D) 1812

For 800 Othello-dollars:

Othello takes place in two separate locations. What are they?

- A) Vatican and Canada
- B) Venice and Cyprus
- C) Venezuela and Columbia
- D) Vermont and California

For 1000 Othello-dollars:

Which of the following characters is NOT in *Othello*?

- A) Gratiano
- B) Cassio
- C) Prospero
- D) Montano

For 2000 Othello-dollars:

How do you describe the over-all mood of *Othello*?

- A) Happy and gay
- B) Sad and gay
- C) Not gay at all . . . but not very happy either
- D) Downright tragic

For 4000 Othello-dollars:

According to the director's wife, the title of the play should be:

- A) *Othello, the Really Handsome Guy of Venice*
- B) *The Emilia Show*
- C) *My Baby Does the Hanky-Panky*
- D) *Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella*

For 8000 Othello-dollars:

Which of the following characters does not die in *Othello*?

- A) Mary Poppins
- B) Roderigo
- C) Desdemona
- D) Emilia

For 16,000 Othello-dollars:

Without looking at your program, who plays the title role in the Wabash College production of *Othello*?

- A) Johnny Depp
- B) Johnny Cochran
- C) Johnny Appleseed
- D) Johnny Warren

For 32,000 Othello-dollars:

Without looking at your program, who plays the wicked, evil, nasty, villainous Iago in the Wabash College production of *Othello*?

- A) Aaron Copeland
- B) Aaron, the brother of Moses
- C) Aaron, the Moorish lover in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*
- D) Aaron Parks

For 64,000 Othello-dollars:

From what source did Shakespeare pirate the story of *Othello*?

- A) "The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe" by 'Kit' Marlowe
- B) "Hecatomithi" by Giraldi Centhio
- C) "Finnegans Wake" by James Joyce
- D) "The Roly-Poly Pudding" by Beatrix Potter

For 125,000 Othello-dollars:

What three great theatre artists comprise the brilliant design team for the Wabash College production of *Othello*?

- A) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
- B) Larry, Curly and Moe

C) Snip, Snap and Snur

D) Gross, Connors and Abbott

For 250,000 Othello-dollars:

Which of the following lines is from *Othello*?

- A) "To be or not to be . . ."
- B) "O beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green eyed monster . . ."
- C) "Out, damn'd spot! Out I say!"
- D) "A plague on both your houses!"

For 500,000 Othello-dollars:

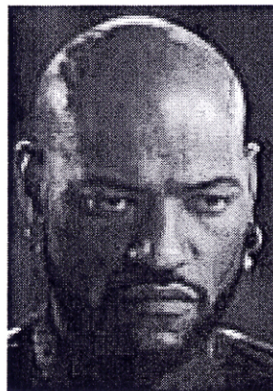
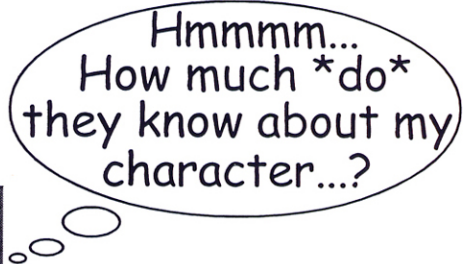
How many times does the word 'honest' appear in the original text of *Othello*?

- A) None
- B) 12
- C) 27
- D) 42

For 1,000,000 Othello-dollars:

Where does a director find a company of talented, dedicated actors and technicians who are courageous enough to embrace the demanding challenge of bringing *Othello* to the stage?

- A) Yale
- B) Royal Academy of Dramatic Art
- C) Bellview Hospital, Psycho Ward
- D) Wabash College



ANSWERS: (did you really NEED these?)

100 (C), 200 (D), 400 (A), 800 (B), 1000 (C), 2000 (D), 4000 (B), 8000 (A), 16,000 (D), 32,000 (D), 64,000 (B), 125,000 (D), 250,000 (B), 500,000 (D), 1,000,000 (D)

Cast and Crew Bios

Andrew Kaiser is a sophomore at Wabash and is eager to be performing for the first time on the mainstage. His former stage appearances include *Pirates of Penzance* at Saint Mary of the Woods and numerous high school productions. He is an Art major/German international Studies minor. Andrew is responsible for the artwork used on the poster and the magazine, which you are reading now.



Taking on the role of Roerigo is sophomore Paul Kennedy. This marks his third appearance on stage at Wabash. You may remember him as the Charismatic Juror number 2 in *12 ANGRY MEN* or as Barry in the *BOYS NEXT DOOR*. He would like to thank his family for indulging him for so long, his brothers at Kappa Sigma for keeping him apprised of evening TV throughout the weeks of rehearsal and as always, the Cosmos.

My full name is Lydia Ann Crumpacher. I have little experience in the theatre other than two school musicals. The first is *Tied to the Tracks*, and the second being, *The Nifty Fifties*. I also had a small role in the Crawfordsville High School production of *Our Town*. I am very proud to be a part of the *Othello* cast and hope it all goes well.



By summer Logan is a camp counselor in his hometown Fort Wayne. Last fall, he became a Wabash Man with hopes of becoming a math teacher. This winter he wrestled with the Wabash team. Now this spring, he makes his first appearance on the Wabash Stage. He has performed as the prosecutor in *Les Miserables*, a disciple in *Godspell*, the captain in *Anything Goes*, and as Ali Hakim in *Oklahoma!* His thanks go out to Mrs. Beth Franklin, Jesus, and the rest of the *Othello* Crazy Train Passengers.

Justin Dirig is making his first appearance at Wabash as Montano in *Othello*. He is pleased to be able to work with so many talented people. Justin has also enjoyed helping construct the scenery for the theater departments productions. In addition to his studies in theater, he also makes time for his chemistry and anatomy. In his free time he plays Lacrosse for Wabash.



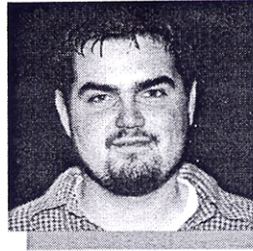
Jason Morales is from Gary, Indiana where he has lived his entire life with his mother and grandmother. He has been on stage since kindergarten when he first experienced applause. Jason joined the Westside Theatre Guild from his high school in the 10th grade. Since that time he has taken the lead roles in such musicals as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and more. In the summer times Jason enjoys leading campfire songs and acting out short skits at the Boys Scout camp. Jason is a member of the Glee Club and an Eagle Scout. Oh yeah, and he doesn't really smoke.

James Cloud is pleased to stage manage this production of *Othello*. James is a graduate of Southmont high school, a Theatre Major, and he swims for Wabash College. James has had no acting experience over the years because he chooses not to. In previous years he has acquired many invaluable skills in the theatre by doing many different jobs. He has done everything from mopping the floor to managing this show. He thanks Professor West for asking him to board the train with him, Professor Gross for helping him through everything, and to Doug Boody, who has become a good friend and teacher.



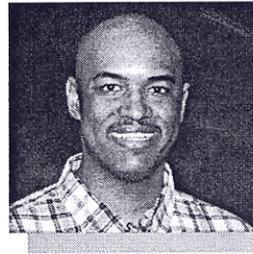
George Belmore (Man In Black) is a Fine Arts Fellow in the class of 2001 and a Theater major, Philosophy minor. He is a member of the Scarlet Masque chapter of Alpha Psi Omega. George has appeared in numerous productions while at Wabash; his most recent as juror #10 in *Twelve Angry Men*.

David Hirt is a Senior Theater/English double major, specializing in the creative pursuits of both, being a poet, actor, and scenic designer. This is Dave's sixth show treading the boards at Wabash. After graduation he plans to attend Wayne State University to get his MFA in Scenic Design and Technical Direction. He wants to thank the theatre department for all of the attention he has gotten and the chances to design his two shows while here at school. He wants to thank Drs Hudson and Campbell of the English Department for the inspiration they've been to him as well.



Aaron Parks is a Theater major in the class of 2003. This is his third production at Wabash; he played Sir Edward Clarke in *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and Juror No. 7 in *Twelve Angry Men*. We hear he can cook a pretty mean pan of lasagna.

Michael Shannon is "happy" to be gracing the Wabash College stage in the role of Cassio. He has just ended his tour with the Backstreet Boys as a backup singer and dancer #4. Unfortunately after his hair turned back to it's natural color, he was canned. Prior to the tour, his acting and stage experience includes movies as stunt double for the likes of Adam Sandler...and the late Chris Farley. Michael first got his start on stage as a Mouskateer on the Mickey Mouse Club and then went on to become a grand champion on *Star Search* in 1987. After Wabash, Michael plans on attending a rehab center for compulsive liars.



Johnny Warren is a graduate of North Side High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana, a member of the Class of 2003, and a Fine Arts Fellow in Theater. He plans to double major in Political Science and Speech. This is Johnny's third Wabash theater production. His previous roles include: Edward Carson in *Gross Indecency: the Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, and Juror #3 in *Twelve Angry Men*. Johnny has had a fantastic time working with the extremely talented director, cast and crew of *Othello*. He would like to thank his family for their love and support, and he would like to send a special thanks to his former Speech and Drama coach, Claryn Myers, for all her hard work. "Carpe Diem!"

Wabash's production of *Othello* marks J.R.'s fifth performance here in Ball Theater and is his Swan Song. It has been an amazing five years and J.R. deeply thanks the entire Wabash Theater Department family for the opportunity to work with such dedicated, spirited professionals. A large hearted group with deep souls, everyone. Also a tip of the hat to Professor Peter Bankhart, who taught us what ethics and Academic Honesty is all about here at Wabash.



Katie Coachys is a third-year music therapy major at St. Mary of the Woods College. She has been active in musical theater all her life, but this is her first appearance in a play. Her previous theater experience includes the musicals *The Wiz* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. She is also in the college chorale and Madrigals. She is delighted to have an opportunity to perform on the Wabash mainstage.

Rhonda Owens is a freshman marketing major at St. Mary-of-the-Woods College. *Othello* is among the first of plays she's done during her college theater experience, the only other being *The Pirates of Penzance*.



Remember Christopher Short's timeless *Id: An Evening of Unbridled Dementia*? Well, last semester, Mr. O'Neil greased a few palms around the Fine Arts building and was allowed into the play as Mr. Short's grandmother, and the distinguished Dr. Kaderabak. Later that semester he went on to act as "young man" in somebody else's timeless drama *Desire, Desire, Desire*. So now he appears in this, Prof. Larry West's bold interpretation of *Othello*, as that waggish rogue, the always irresistible Duke of Hazard. There will be a five minute autograph session after the show.

BJ Whetstine is a Junior Theatre Major here at Wabash, and has performed in *ID* and *Sorry Wrong Number*. This year BJ has appeared in several productions at Saint Mary of The Woods College. These include Horatio in their yearly Christmas Production, Stanley, in Durang's Tennessee Williams satire, *Desire, Desire, Desire*. His most recent performance was in Gilbert and Sullivan's musical, *The Pirates of Penzance*.



Betsy Nagel is pleased to have this opportunity to share the stage with the men of Wabash. From Salt lake City, Utah, she has performed in many plays and musicals with the Pioneer Theatre Company, The Salt Lake Acting Company, and the Sundance Summer Theatre. Favorite roles include: Constance Ledbelly in *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Ado Annie in *Oklahoma!* and the 12 year old boy, Charlie, in *Marvin's Room* where she met her husband, Larry West. Betsy has performed in numerous commercials, voice-overs, industrial films, a movie-of-the-week, and an episode of "Promised Land." She has a BFA in Modern Dance, Musical Theatre Emphasis from the University of Utah.



Tragic Heroes in *Othello*

by Lee Flater

As children we had heroes: G. I. Joe, He-man, Optimus Prime, the Dukes and the Incredible Hulk. We looked to them and wanted to be just like them in every way possible. We imagined ourselves as them, played with them, and at Halloween we even dressed up like them. We could not, however, become them because of their flawless personas. They were perfect citizens and nothing could make them fall or do them harm. In reality, this is not possible; we as humans have our faults. Even those of our social elite have problems that can not be solved.

Shakespeare addressed this reality of human flaw within his tragedies. He takes almost flawless heroes and places them into a situations to where there one flaw leads the to not only their own downfall, but to the downfall of the people that are closest to them. This is what is considered their tragic flaw. Each of Shakespeare's tragic heroes Macbeth, Romeo, Othello, and Hamlet, all have one thing in common; they each have a flaw within them that brings them down to destruction. "In Othello Shakespeare places the soldier hero in a close human entanglement, the kind of human entanglement for which his background and sense of himself have in no way prepared him." (1 p 95) Othello is a warrior, a soldier; his entire life he has been through nothing but war and its aspects. This becomes Othello's flaw, his personality as a warrior is then placed into a situation in which it does not know how to deal with in the proper way. His personality pushes him to handle the situations like a soldier would, and this leads to his own downfall.

The idea of love is the first situation in which Shakespeare places Othello. As the play opens, Othello has eloped with Desdemona, and he has never had to deal with the thoughts of love before. He describes himself as a man who does not know how to deal with women. Othello mentions that he is not good with words saying "Rude am I in my speech." (Act 1 scene 3) So he has to call for the aid of his second in command Michael Cassio; who is considered a 'ladies man.' Cassio helps Othello woo Desdemona and this is seen in Act 3 scene 3. The way in which Othello won Desdemona's affections was how a warrior would have done it.

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 th' very moment that he bade me tell it...These things to hear would Desdemona seriously incline, but still the house affairs would draw her thence, which ever as she could with haste dispatch she'd come again, and with a greedy ear devour up my discourse; (Act 1 Scene 3)

By telling his stories, he shows his sense of pride in being a soldier. Desdemona falls in love with him because of Othello's wild heart. "She loved me for the dangers I had passed, and I loved her that she did pity them." (Act 1 Scene 3)

Othello truly loves Desdemona, but with their marriage, Othello is entered into a world of domestic life. He knows how to make decisions for his soldiers, but to make household decisions is a different story. One that comes to mind is when he is to decide where his wife should go while he goes to war for Venice. He knew his responsibility but he did not know what to do; so he asks for advice from the rest of the council. "Most humbly therefore bending to your state, I crave fit disposition for my wife, due reference of place and exhibition, with such accommodation and besort as levels with her breeding." (Act 1 scene 3) He knew that she should not go with him to war, She chose to go with him to Cyprus, and he allowed it.

Othello's major downfall however was his honor being called to question. This occurs twice within the play. The first time Othello's honor was called to question, he handled it with poise because he knew that their accusations were false and had no backing. Brabantio accused Othello of stealing his daughter, Desdemona,

away from him by force or of magic.

O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter? Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her, for I'll refer me to all things of sense, if she in chains of magic were not bound whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy, so opposite to marriage that she shunned the wealthy curled darlings of our nation, would ever have t' incur a general mock, run from her guardage to the sooty bosom of such a thing as thou - to fear, not to delight. (Act 1 Scene 2)

These are powerful accusations that come from Brabantio's mouth. Othello does not worry about the charges because he knows the true feelings that Desdemona shares for him. He even puts his own life in danger because he is in the right. "If you 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." (Act 1 Scene 3)

However the second time his honor is questioned, he has no evidence that disproves the accusations that Iago is presenting. Honor is everything to Othello; it is his reputation that is on the line when it is called to question. When his reputation is posed to be hurt, Othello becomes determined to save it at all costs, but we find at the end the cost is his death and the death of many others. Throughout the play, Iago, Othello's ensign, plans to take revenge upon Othello because of some wrong committed upon him. Iago is considered a true essence of evil because he never shows why he hates Moor so; he just does without any sense or cause. In Act 3, Iago's plan of revenge is set into motion. Iago brings doubt in Othello's mind of Desdemona's faithfulness towards their marriage. Othello believes Iago tells him the truth because he believes that Iago is honest. "Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds." (Act 3 Scene 3) Othello has no evidence to disprove what Iago is saying. In the instance before he had proof against the accusations brought forth, but now that has changed. He does not know how to deal with it so he sends Iago to find more proof of his accusations and bring them to Othello.

Othello's next fault is not talking to Desdemona after the accusation had been made. Othello trusts Iago more than his own wife. This shows more of his ignorance towards domestic life. In Acts 4 and 5 Othello falls deeper into Iago's trap. Iago offers Othello proof that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him. Othello begins to feel the one emotion that a soldier can not deal with and that is betrayal. In Othello's mind, Desdemona has betrayed his trust that he had given her. To Othello, this is unforgivable. From this point on until the death of Desdemona, Othello is irrational and driven by his emotions. He becomes a soldier of war:

The impulse to kill as a means of release from his difficulty comes as a spontaneous reaction on the part of Othello. Moreover, it is the kind of solution to which, it can be assumed, constant experience in war has accustomed him - a traditional method of punishing 'traitors.' The Very real humiliation he feels in regard to Desdemona's betrayal must necessarily make his response that much more automatic and violent.(1 p. 102)

Othello acted out of instinct when he plotted to kill Desdemona, because that was how traitors were dealt with in the army. Those traitors are punished and Othello felt that Desdemona deserved the same.

With his wife dead, Othello learns the truth of the matter and his eyes are now open to the deceit that has befallen him. Several are dead because of his actions. With the realization of what he has done, he becomes a fallen hero. Within his last speech, he tries to make up for those wrongs that he has committed. He then commits his last act by killing himself. Knowing that he could not make up for the wrongs he has done and that he brought his downfall upon himself, he commits a noble act.

With our heroes today we find that they have no faults to behold. We wish that we could be like them, but Shakespeare dealt with the reality of emotions. He knew that no man is perfect and cannot make the right decisions every time. With Othello, he was placed outside of his world as a soldier and put into a place that he has never had to deal with. He could not make the right decisions all the time because he was out of place and in a world that was new to him. That is what Shakespeare does; he explores the human soul within his plays. He tries to bring out the truth that is within us all.

A few extra things...

Looking for information on the bard (aka Shakespeare)? Check out these sites:

(My acknowledgements to the TMLA *Hamlet* Page [<http://members.aol.com/shaman8933/hamlet.html>], from whither I obtained most of these links.)

1. Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet

<http://daphne.palomar.edu/shakespeare/>

This is, to our knowledge, THE best site on the Internet to find out about anything related to Shakespeare: his works, his life and times, etc. It is wonderfully put together.

2. A Short Course on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

<http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~iandel/index.html>

Put together for a college course, this web page contains exercises for each section of the play, as well as some information, more links, and so on. An interesting site.

3. The Falcon Education Link Homepage & Shakespeare Resource

<http://www.falconedlink.com/htable.html>

This site contains paraphrasing for the play on a scene by scene basis.

4. *Othello* Links Site

<http://www.craigmont.org/linkssite.htm>

No bells and whistles here, just plenty of good links to our favorite play *Othello*.

Feel like laughing at Shakespeare? Check these out:

5. Falstaff is Good Beer

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/9751/falstaff1.html>

Some interesting comparisons of one of Shakespeare's most notable clown to that most notable of drinks. *hic!* Just check this one out. Trust us!

6. Green Eggs and Hamlet

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/9751/green.html>

One of the best spoofs on one of the Bard's most well-known monologues! See for thyself why reciting lines about the consideration of suicide can be so much fun!

A special acknowledgement

As we're sure is the case with all publications, there are a great deal of people to thank who had a hand in getting *The Curtain Caller* off the ground. On the Editors' Page is a compilation of names of those to whom we feel we owe a tip of the hat with regard to this publication. In our haste to finally get this magazine published, it is entirely possible we forgot to mention someone who deserves credit for helping the Theater 9 class out with it. For those we might forget, we apologize in advance for this. Please smack us sideways several times and whack us over the head for good measure. Hopefully we'll get it right next time.

There are some people, however, that we simply won't forget to mention!

One person in particular deserves special recognition for aiding the cause of *The Curtain Caller*. You see, as we're also sure is the case with all publications, *The Curtain Caller* costs money to print, money we're reasonably sure neither the Theater 9 class nor the Theater Department on its own was capable of immediately providing. However, a quick email addressing our situation to this man soon got us funded due to his good graces. Given that we very well may not have gotten this publication printed without him, we feel he deserves special acknowledgement here in *The Curtain Caller*.

Thank you, Dean Bambrey.

Without your support and encouragement we never would have gotten *The Curtain Caller* off the ground. Tony would still be sane (arguably, as always) from not having to put together and edit this crazy thing, and we would have had to make do with another batch of production notes, which, while engaging, just don't match the visual punch of a magazine format.

You have opened the door for this publication as well as given us a unique chance to shine as dramaturgs, and for that, we again thank you.

A Brief History of Theater at Wabash College

The first reference to theater at Wabash College dates back to 1836 when the faculty of the college passed the following rule:

Faculty met and took into consideration the subject of Thespian amusements and unanimously resolved that no student who enlists in Thespian exhibitions can longer be a member of this Institution; and that we strongly disapprove of attendance on such exhibitions; and students who attend will be liable to a public admonition, and if they persist, to dismissal.

Wabash student John B. Powers was suspended from classes on January 16, 1837 for violating the rule. It seems Powers was committed to perform in a theatrical exhibition of the "Thespian Society" in December 1836, before the rule was passed. Later, the faculty decided that the penalty was perhaps too severe in light of the offender's previous obligation to perform and his ignorance of the rule, so they were content to settle for a reading before the college of an admission of violation of college law.

In the Wabash College academic catalogue of 1852-53 dancing was equated with other "vices":

The discipline of the Institution is moral and parental. It seeks the greatest good of the greatest number; hence no young man who indulges in card playing, dancing, intemperance, or other vice, or who habitually neglects his studies, will be allowed to remain.

This statement was altered in 1868-69, changing "dancing" to "profanity." By the late 1860's the prejudices against drama had somewhat dissipated. Students were permitted to perform in plays and many of these productions included performances by local citizens of Crawfordsville. Although it is obvious that Wabash men participated in plays, dramatic readings, and other Thespian amusements, these exhibitions were apparently not encouraged by the college until the early twentieth century.

In 1908, about 100 feet south of South Hall (near what is now the front patio of Martindale Hall), production of a series of ancient Greek tragedies commenced with a performance of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. These performances continued annually until 1915 under the direction of Professor Daniel Dickey Hains (1873-1937), then Head of the Department of Greek. The productions had elaborate sets, costumes, and programs and were performed by Wabash men in English in the middle of June between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. They enjoyed, in the words of *The Wabash*, "an almost country-wide reputation, pronounced by competent judges to be the equal of any of the Greek dramas ever presented at Harvard." Lulu Britton Hains (1873-1945), wife of Professor Hains, created and constructed the costumes for the productions and members of the Glee Club performed in the choruses. Women's roles were always played by men and at least two of the productions toured Indiana advertised as the first Greek plays performed in the state.

The Greek plays performed over the years were:

- 1908 *Oedipus Rex* (Sophocles)
- 1909 *Antigone* (Sophocles)
- 1910 *Alcestis* (Euripides)
- 1911 *Iphigenia Among the Taurians* (Euripides)
- 1912 *Electra* (Sophocles)
- 1913 *Medea* (Euripides)
- 1914 *Oedipus Rex* (Sophocles)
- 1915 *Hippolytus* (Euripides)

The College Dramatic Society was started in 1908 by Professor Lucian Cary (1886-1971) of the English The name "Scarlet Masque" first appears on programs for plays at Wabash College during 1923-24 and remained until 1976, with brief lapses, as the designation of co-curricular theater productions at the college. In 1955, the

Scarlet Masque initiated its first pledge class in Alpha Psi Omega, the National Theater Fraternity, under the supervision of theater director Charles Scott (b. 1928) and Professor Donald W. Baker (b. 1923) of the English Department, who directed and acted in numerous productions throughout the 1950's and 1960's. During these years the Scarlet Masque performed in a wide variety of locations including the Great Hall of Sparks Center, the Masonic Temple, a train car barn in Crawfordsville, under a tent in various locations, etc.

In 1969, the Fine Arts Department was divided into departments of Art, Music, and Theater. The year before, the production of theater at Wabash had begun in the Humanities Center in two spaces: a 370-seat proscenium theater and a flexible black-box called the Experimental Theater. The newly christened Theater Department evolved from a one-faculty member operation to include the services of a technical director. In the intervening years the department grew to include two full-time faculty, one associated faculty member (in scene design and technical direction), and a costumer. Although no academic credit is granted for performance work, as many as 150 students, along with faculty and staff of the college, and local residents participate in the productions of the Theater Department each year. Students may major or minor in theater at Wabash and many spend a semester or year in diverse off-campus programs at such institutions as the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, London's Drama School, the GLCA New York Arts Program, etc. Many recent graduates have gained entry (and impressive fellowships) to the finest graduate programs in Theater in the country, including the Yale School of Drama, Columbia University, Ohio State University, University of Washington at Seattle, University of Virginia, University of Minnesota, Syracuse University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, among many others. David Schulz (Class of 1988) was the recipient of the prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities Youth Scholarship, which permitted him the opportunity to research and write, under the guidance of Theater Department chair James Fisher, an article on theatrical designer and theorist Edward Gordon Craig's interest in *Hamlet*. The article was subsequently published in *Theatre Studies*.

In recent years, the Theater Department has brought to campus professional artists to work with students on productions. A visiting scenic artist designed *A Flea in Her Ear* in 1975 and visiting actors and actresses have appeared in productions of *The Miser* (Barbara Blackledge; 1980), *The Bogus Bride* (Sara Stuart; 1982), *Aurelie's Waltz* (John O'Hurley, Sarah Rice, and Tina McKenna; 1983), *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Amelia Penland; 1987), *Bus Stop* (Diane Timmerman; 1989), *Dapple Gray* (Jamie Ritchie Watson and Dana Warner Fisher; 1990), *The Merchant of Venice* (Daria Martel; 1993), *Miss Evers' Boys* (Connie Oates; 1994), *As You Like It* (Teri Clark; 1995), *Angels in America. Part 1: Millennium Approaches* (Teri Clark; 1996). The Owen Duston Visiting Minority Scholar and Artist program made it possible for the Theater Department to produce a new work by poet and playwright Alexis DeVeaux called *Elbow Rooms* in 1987. As well, the Duston program supported the one-year return in 1987-88 of Dr. Geoffrey Newman, who had been a member of the Theater Department between 1970 and 1974. In 1990, distinguished Nigerian playwright and director Ola Rotimi worked with the Theater Department for a semester on a Fulbright.

Between 1991 and 1993, significant renovation and additions (for the departments of Music and Art) were made to the Humanities Center Facilities. When construction was completed, the building was rededicated as the Fine Arts Center in October 1993. Honorary degrees were given to individuals in the creative arts area. Wabash College alumnus Thomas V. Feit, who had participated in theater as a student at Wabash (Class of 1962) and was long-time theater teacher at Warren Central High School, Indianapolis, Indiana, was presented with an honorary degree.

Beginning with 1994-95, the Theater Department faculty grew in size from two to three full-time, along with an associated faculty member in scene design, and staff members in costume design and facilities management.

Written and compiled by James Fisher

Wabash College Theater Department
Season of Plays
2000-01

***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Dale Wasserman**

October 4-7, 2000 (8:00 p.m. each evening)
Ball Theater, Fine Arts Center
Director: L.L. West
Audition dates: August 28-29, 2000 (7:00 p.m. each evening)

Adapted from Ken Kesey's novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a classic clash of good and evil... using a mental institution as the background. It is the story of Randle P. McMurphy, a charming rogue who contrives to serve a short sentence in an airy 'nuthouse' rather than in prison. His time in the 'cuckoo's nest' however, is far from calm. He collides with the head nurse, a fierce martinet; he stages a revolt so the 'bull-goose-loonies' can watch the World Series on TV; and he arranges a rollicking midnight bash with wine, women and elevator music. The party goes awry and McMurphy must decide between his buddies or escape. It is a truly American play that celebrates freedom and friendship.

Studio One-Acts: Original Short Plays from Theater 210

November 15 & 16, 2000 (8:00 p.m. each evening)
Experimental Theater, Fine Arts Center
Director: TBA
Audition dates: October 11-12, 2000 (7:00 p.m. each evening)

The Studio One-Acts are produced by advanced theater majors and minors. Supervised by Assistant Professors Larry West and James Gross, the bill provides an opportunity for students to exhibit their skills. These projects emphasize the importance of the collaborative creative process and demonstrate the Wabash College Theater Department's belief that powerful and imaginative theater can thrive in productions of limited scale.

A New Play by Michael Abbott

February 21-24, 2001 (8:00 p.m. each evening)
Experimental Theater or Ball Theater, Fine Arts Center
Director: Michael Abbott
Audition dates: January 10-11, 2001 (7:00 p.m. each evening)

The Theater department will present a contemporary as-yet-untitled play by Associate Professor of Theater Michael Abbott. Stay tuned for details on this new play.

***A Trip Abroad (Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon)* by Eugène Labiche and Edouard Martin**

April 18-21, 2001 (8:00 p.m. each evening except for the matinee performance on May 12th when the curtain will be at 2:00 p.m.)
Ball Theater, Fine Arts Center
Director: Dwight Watson
Audition dates: February 26-27, 2001 (7:00 p.m. each evening)

The plot for this classic French farce ("boy meets girl, boys compete for girl, boy gets girl") traces the spirited rivalry between two good friends, Armand and Daniel, as they outwit each other for the hand of the lovely Henriette Perrichon. To win her parents' approval one young man follows the pattern of being helpful to the gullible *nouveau riche* father, Monsieur Perrichon; the other lets the father do *him* favors. Pursued by the suitors on their trip abroad to Switzerland, Monsieur Perrichon and his family face outrageous disasters and a few embarrassing moments. A play of sparkling wit, frivolous good humor, and fast pace, *A Trip Abroad*, first produced in 1860, is a standard in repertory at the Comedie Francaise, France's national theater.