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Deictic Shifts and Discursive Strategies in Othello

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Résumé

Ce mémoire, *"Deictic Shifts and Discursive Strategies in Othello"*, est une étude des outils linguistiques et les stratégies utilisées par les différents personnages de la pièce. Il explore la façon dont le texte est construit et les différentes techniques qui le régissent de l'intérieur. Il étudie également l'utilisation de certains outils tels que les déplacements, les références déictiques indexicaux, les actes de langage et la rhétorique, et la façon dont ils permettent aux intervenants d'obtenir des résultats différents en fonction de la situation où ils sont.

Ce travail est divisé en trois chapitres: le premier est consacré aux discours publics où je trace les différentes techniques utilisées par les personnages tel que la monopolization de la parole, la défense ou la persuasion de leurs interlocuteurs. Le deuxième chapitre se concentre sur les discours orientés vers une seule personne et montre comment les discours peuvent être utilisés pour avoir un effet sur l'interlocuteur. La première partie de ce chapitre traite de la sémiotique de choc. La deuxième partie est consacrée à la sémiotique de la tromperie et de manipulation. Le dernier chapitre est consacré aux soliloques et met l'accent sur l'écart entre les paroles de Iago et les réponses émotionnelles ainsi que les changements dans la personnalité d'Othello et de l'effet connexe de ces changements sur sa langue.

Mots Clés: William Shakespeare, Othello, sémiotique, stratégies discursives, déictique, rhétorique.

Abstract

This thesis, *Deictic Shifts and Discursive Strategies in Othello,* is a study of the linguistic tools and strategies used by different characters in the play. It explores how the text is built and the different techniques that govern it from within. It also studies the use of certain tools such as deictic shifts, indexical references, speech acts, and rhetoric, and the way they allow the speakers to achieve various results depending on the situation they are in.

This thesis is divided into three chapters: the first is dedicated to the public-oriented speeches wherein I trace the different techniques used by the characters to monopolize the conversational floor, defend themselves or convince their addressees. The second chapter focuses on the one-addressee oriented discourses and shows how discourse can be used to have an effect on the addressee. The first part of this chapter deals with the semiotics of shock. The second part is dedicated to the semiotics of deception and manipulation. The last chapter deals with soliloquies and focuses on the discrepancy between Iago's words and emotional responses as well as the changes in Othello's personality and the related effect of these changes on his language.

Key Words: William Shakespeare, Othello, semiotics, discursive strategies, deictic, rhetoric.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Résumé i

Abstract ii

Acknowledgments iv

Introduction 1

Chapter One: The Public-Oriented Discourses 8

- I.1: Brabantio’s Speech: An Antagonistic Discourse 11
- I.2: Othello’s Responses 24

Chapter Two: The One-addressee Oriented Discourses 41

- II.1: Discourse as a Way to Shock the Addressee 43
- II.2: Cases of Manipulation 51

Chapter Three: The Soliloquizing Instances 69

- III.1: Iago’s Soliloquies 71
- III.2: Dilemma Soliloquies 84

Conclusion 96

Bibliography 102

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Introduction

Keir Elam defines semiotics as being the "science dedicated to the study of the production of meaning"[1]. In the field of literary studies, semiotics seeks to look beyond the surface content and the observable features of a text in order to discover the underlying organization of phenomena. It concerns itself with "the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged."[2] The Semiotic School is interested in studying the different techniques that govern the texts from within. Advocates of this school believe that analysing the mechanisms upon which the text is built helps reveal meaning.

Semiotics was first proposed as a comprehensive science of signs by the linguists Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce. Ever since, it went through two effervescent periods. First, during the thirties and forties with the works of Czech formalists, then in the sixties and seventies mainly in France, Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States of America. Afterwards, the semiotic enterprise flourished especially in the field of literary studies. However, poetry and the narrative received much more attention than theatre and drama.[3] This work is a contribution to the attempts to address this oversight [Elam, 1980; Serpieri 1985; Melrose, 1994]. It proposes an alternative reading of the dramatic text that focuses mainly on the language used, the shifts in the axis of reference, the rhetorical tropes, and shows that meaning is determined by the contexts in which the text is produced. In this context Serpieri explains that,

> Dramatic criticism, in general, and Shakespearean criticism, in particular, have tended to privilege […] the less marked 'poetic' levels of rhetoric of drama, dedicating themselves above all to

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[1] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama,*New York: Routledge, 5th ed. 2002, 1.
[2] *Ibid.,* 1.
[3] *Ibid.,* 1-2.

> paralinguistic readings of tropical systems of fields of imagery, of figural patterns on the page rather than for the stage. It appears more productive now, without neglecting the results achieved by paradigmatic studies, to shift attention to the mechanisms of discursive rhetorical interaction, and thus to the *syntagmatics* of figures within speech exchanges.[4]

The study of these discursive interactions highlights the speech dynamics within the dramatic text, down to its smallest units.

The paramount importance given to discourse has been justified by many scholars by the fact that it fixes the difference between the dramatic text and other genres. Alessandro Serpieri maintains that drama is a different form because it is "conditioned by directions for more-than-verbal use*"*[5]. The 'narration' in drama, if we may call it so, does not evolve as a narration of events given according to a unique perspective, but the story is rather built through the alternation of sequences of speech which form the text.

The dramatic text is thus considered as the sum of what Keir Elam calls "macro-sequences" which are nothing else but the sum of speech acts attributed to each character. 'Speech act' is the coinage established by J. L. Austin in his seminal book *How to Do Things with Words*, which synthesises Austin's view about language. For him, language goes beyond the traditional communicative function to become a performative one. In other words, when making an utterance, the speaker does not only aim at interacting with his interlocutor but he might be seeking to perform an act or expect his interlocutor to perform one. As Austin puts it, “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action –it is not normally thought of as just saying something”[6]. The character using any category of speech act (declarative, directive, commissive, etc…) might be addressing another character or group, he may speak to the audience or just to himself. Keeping in mind the different types of speech acts, while analysing the macro-sequences within a text, is a valuable factor in understanding the dynamics of this text and having an insight into the relationship between the agent (speaker) and the patient (hearer).

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[4] Alessandro Serpieri, "Reading the Signs: Towards a Semiotics of Shakespearean Drama", trans. Keir Elam, in John Drakakis, ed., *Alternative Shakespeares*, London, Routledge, 2nd ed, 2002,
126-27.

[5] *Ibid.*, 124.

Keir Elam suggests dividing the “macro-sequences” into smaller units that he calls “micro-sequences” (or speech segments). There is a transition from one mico-sequence to another each time the speaker changes his indexical references. “An index”, as Peirce defines it, “is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that object.”[7] In this respect, Elam distinguishes three broad categories of deixis (sometimes labelled indexations): spatial (like here and there), temporal (such as now, tomorrow, and yesterday) or personal (I, you, she etc…). This makes him claim that “[d]eixis, therefore, is what allows language an ‘active’ and dialogic function rather than a descriptive and choric role”[8].

Another important factor in the dynamics of interaction is the ‘turn’, which Vimala Herman defines as being “the enactment of a speaker’s right to speak by taking an opportunity to speak in a speech event or situation”[9]. In simpler terms, a turn is a sequence of speech uttered by one of the involved persons in a conversation. Turn management, the way turns are attributed to or organized among the different participants, within a conversation is also important in the interpretation of discourse because the way the speeches are distributed, whether they are long or short, the way they are taken by a character or allotted to another can be very telling about the interpersonal relationships between the different speakers and it also helps us in interpreting some aspects of characterization. For example, a turn may be long if the speaker wants to dominate the floor and impose his own views or plans. A character may also interrupt the turn of his interlocutor, which may denote dominance and power. The limited turns also can reveal some information about the character. For example, an interrupted turn may denote hesitation, fear or a lack of confidence on the part of the speaker.

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[6] Qtd in Jonathan Culpeper, et al eds., *Exploring the Language of Drama: From Text to Context,* London: Routledge, 1998, 130.

[7] Qtd in Keir Elam *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama,* New York: Routledge, 5th ed. 2002, 20.

[8] *Ibid.*, 127.

[9] Vimala Herman, “Turn Management in Drama” in *Exploring the Language of Drama: From Text to Context,* Jonathan Culpeper et al eds., London: Routledge, 1998, 19.

This thesis applies semiotics to Shakespeare's *Othello*, as it contains a wide range of speeches that differ from each another in terms of their structure and their internal mechanisms. This diversity will allow me to vary my samples and avoid redundancy, both in the analysis and in the results. In my analysis, I will not consider all the speeches of the play, but I will rather choose extracts that exemplify best the different techniques that I endeavour to explain. Throughout the different chapters, I will show and analyse the specificities of each kind of speech, such as how it is built, the different techniques that govern it from within, the way verbs are distributed and the way the speaker uses different indexations. This will help in interpreting some aspects of characterization *via* the discourses involved. My work requires an alternation between text-based analysis and theory and therefore, my analysis will be supplemented with close readings, historical contextualisation, and different theoretical readings and approaches such as public sphere theory, postcolonial theory, and rhetoric.

This work will be divided into three parts. In the first two chapters the focus will be on speeches within interactive sequences, that is to say, texts involving exchanges between characters. In the first chapter, I will examine the publicly oriented speeches, which means the speeches delivered in a public scene, in the presence of many characters. My focus will be on Brabantio's and Othello's public speeches in order to study how these speeches are structured and to show that the two characters use language in a performative way, in other words, that they use their speeches in order to achieve particular goals depending on the situation they are in. In Brabantio's case, for example, the goal is to convince the court that Othello is guilty of coercing Desdemona to marry him. Othello, on the other hand, attempts to defend himself and prove the falseness of Brabantio's claims.

The second chapter will be dedicated to macro-sequences that are addressed to only one addressee, sometimes with many speakers. My aim is to study the different techniques used by Iago to manipulate his different interlocutors. My argument is that he succeeds in manipulating them through the combination of different techniques such as the monopolization of speech, controlling the topics of the conversations, and adapting his language according to whom he is addressing as well as to the circumstances in which the discussion is taking place.

The last chapter will focus on speeches that occur outside the world of interaction, by this I mean the soliloquies. In the first part, I will study Iago's soliloquies arguing that the problem about the credibility of his arguments stems from the disparity between his language and his emotional responses and behaviour. The second part focuses on Othello's soliloquies with the aims, first, to show that his language has been affected by that of Iago whose language is echoed in Othello's speeches. Then, I will show how the structure of his language reflects his distorted state of mind as he faces the dilemma of whether or not to kill Desdemona.

Chapter One: The Public-oriented Speeches

Othello is a play where language performance is very important means of communication to create complex networks of social and public relations. Rosa Eberly defines the public sphere as being “a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment about them.”[10] Consequently, it is crucial to have a strong sense of the importance of language and how to manipulate it, especially in cases where language is the only weapon we have to defend ourselves. As we shall see, throughout the play, the different characters compete with each other to found solid bases for their stands, to convince their audience, and to ensure that the outcome of the vents is in their favor, with language as their sole tool. The discourse takes its importance from the variety of functions it can have apart from just communicating with, and conveying meaning to, other persons. As Hauser explains,

> Discourse is organized along lines of *power*, as the wealthy seek to retain their economic advantage; *status,* as elites of lineage, position, and knowledge seek to retain their privilege to define issues and solutions; and *need,* as those who are economically, politically, or socially disenfranchised and those whose special interests are threatened seek protection and survival under the law.[11]

However, a discourse does not only derive its power from the eloquence of its speaker but it also depends on other factors that are mostly related to the social context where the discourse is delivered, or where the conversation is taking place, as well as it depends on the social statutes of the involved speakers. In his book *Language and Symbolic Power,* Pierre Bourdieu explains how language is affected by the context of its production. He develops the concept of the linguistic market through which he explains how the conditions of reception determine both the value of utterances, and discourse production. In Bourdieu's market analogy, conversation becomes an 'economic exchange' where the producer (the speaker) is endowed with a 'linguistic capital' (language), the consumer (the listener) is 'the market', and the aim of the conversation is to procure a 'certain material or symbolic profit'. Thus, language transcends its basic communicative function and becomes an instrument of power that shapes, and is shaped by, the social context of its production.

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[10] Qtd in Gerard A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres.* South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press. 1999. 61.

[11] Gerard A. Hauser, *Ibid.,* 58.

In the light of these theories, I will show how language in *Othello* is employed by characters as a powerful tool to achieve their aims rather than using it simply as a means of communication. Moreover, I will also show how the characters adopt their utterances to the requirements of the social context as a way to ensure successful results (like, for example, convincing the audience, manipulating the interlocutor(s), defending oneself etc...). I will study the major public speeches of Brabantio (I. ii. 62-81, I. iii. 94-106), and Othello (I. iii. 76-93/ 128-70, II. iii. 160-9/195-208, V. ii. 339-357), wherein I will trace the different techniques used by the characters to monopolize the conversational floor, defend themselves or convince their addressees. Public speeches, as their name indicates, are speeches delivered in public, which means in the presence of a group of persons. I will look into the various techniques that characterize a text like the different uses of speech acts and their implications. In addition, I will pay attention to the different indexations used by the characters either to refer to themselves, to their addressees or to their environment and determine the use of such shifts in the development of the speaker's discourse. I will first start by working on Brabantio's speech in which he accuses Othello of having used dark magic to seduce

Desdemona (I. ii. 62-81). Then, I will contrast it with the speech he utters in the trial scene (I. iii. 94-106) to see whether or not the change of the setting and context affects the nature of the discourse. Afterwards, I will study Othello's response to this accusation, and, simultaneously, I will try to pick out the different strategies used by each of the addressors to come to their end. My last part will be dedicated to two other speeches delivered by Othello in Cyprus. The first is delivered after the brawl (II. iii. 160-9/195-208), and the other one (V. ii. 339-357) after that Othello kills Desdemona then realizes that she was innocent. These two speeches will serve to trace the evolution of Othello's discourse along with the different changes that the character undergoes. These changes are the illustration of the circumstantial relation between the context and the language that Pierre Bourdieu talks about in his book.

I. 1 / Brabantio's speech: An antagonistic discourse:

I begin this section with an analysis of Brabantio's first speech when he attacks Othello for the first time in the play after he discovers his daughter's elopement (I. ii. 62-81). This speech is organized on a triangular basis between the "thou" (Othello), the "I" (Brabantio) and the "she" (Desdemona). I want to show how Brabantio uses language in an attempt to incriminate Othello and revoke the marriage.

Brabantio begins his speech addressing a "thou": "O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter? / Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her" (I, ii, 62-4). This segment opens on an interjection which expresses emotion on the part of Brabantio. Interjections are usually used when the speaker encounters events that cause emotion. In Brabantio's case, this interjection is caused by the elopement of his daughter with the Moor, and it expresses his anger. For Brabantio, Othello is a "thief". By using this particular term, Brabantio highlights the illegitimacy of the marriage. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a thief is a person who steals or appropriates portable property from another without the knowledge or consent of the latter (1). Accordingly, in Brabantio's view, Othello is a thief because he took his daughter away from him without asking for permission. In this respect, the marriage itself becomes alarming because it represents an affront to Brabantio's patriarchal authority since Othello violated the normal courtship rules. He did not ask for Brabantio's permission to court Desdemona as it was the custom at that time. Courtship in early modern England was a long and a non-exclusive process that comprised different stages. In the beginning of courtship, young people had the right to meet in different places without chaperonage, but as soon as it "became serious it was thought correct and proper to inform parents, who could formally give or withhold their approval to continue."[12] The parental assent, as Diana O'Hara explains, was a fundamental prerequisite for courtship and marriage. Parents were to determine the propriety of the match regarding "questions of reputation, honour and morality."[13] The role of family in matters of marriage choice is related to "[t]he repercussions which a marriage might have for the social standing and reputation of a family."[14] Families could be the targets of defamation and gossip as well as communal sanctions. Moreover, the use of the term "stow'd" further emphasizes the secrecy of the marriage and, accordingly, its illegitimacy as Othello, according to Brabantio, does not only 'steal' Desdemona but also hide her.

Brabantio's statement combines two popular Elizabethan beliefs. First, the association of blackness with the devil, hence the statement "Damn'd as though art", and second, the belief in witchcraft, and therefore Brabantio's accusation "thou hast enchanted her". Usually, accusations of witchcraft entail that the accused is linked to the devil since there was a common belief that in order to practice witchcraft, a person has to make a pact with the devil[15]. However, in this case, the situation is reversed. Othello's blackness stands as a proof of his affiliation with the devil and consequently his ability to practice witchcraft. In his book *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England,* James Sharpe explains that "it is possible to see the witchcraft accusations as a final severing of relationships.[16]" Accusations of witchcraft are taken very seriously in early modern England to the point that a reconciliation between the accusing and the accused (if he/she is not punished, which is rare) is impossible. Accordingly, it seems clear that Brabantio's accusations aim at denigrating the legitimacy of the marriage and bringing the relationship between Othello and Desdemona to an end.

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[12] Richard Adair. *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage in Early Modern England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996, 135.

[13] Diana O'Hara. *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000, 31.

[14] *Ibid.,* 41.

Sharpe also notices that "witchcraft, under appropriate circumstances, might be invoked as the cause of an otherwise inexplicable disease or other misfortune.[17]" According to this, Brabantio's accusations of witchcraft tell us much about his perception of the marriage. Brabantio sees Desdemona and Othello's marriage as a misfortune that only witchcraft can account for, and explain. The sole idea of such an illegal marriage (according to him) "oppresses" (I. i. 141) him. For him, such a marriage cannot be considered other than an "accident" (I, i, 142) that must be repaired.

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[15] For ample discussion of the issue of witchcraft in early modern England see James Sharpe's *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, and the collection of essays *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief,* edited by Jonathan Barry, Marriane Hester, and Gareth Roberts (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[16] James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, 62.

[17] *Ibid.,* 61.

The idea of theft is not only due to the fact that Othello violated the rules of courtship but also to the fact that he is perceived by Brabantio and other characters, like Iago and Roderigo, as an outsider. In addition to not being a Venetian, Othello is also, and most importantly, racially different. In her article "Othello was a white man: Properties of race in Shakespeare's Stage", Dympna Callaghan says that "the definitive characteristic of racial other both on stage and in culture remained skin colour. Black skin persisted as the most conspicuous marker of racial difference."[18] By 1604 there was a discourse of racial difference that was ingrained in the English consciousness. This discourse was mainly established and nourished by the great number of travel books that were published in that period, and also the books and stories that the English society inherited from the previous generations and that were translated into English during the sixteenth century like Bartholomeus Anglicus' *Proprietatibus Rerum* (1240-1260) translated into English by Stephan Batman in 1582, Johann Boemus' *Omnium Gentium Mores* (1524) translated into English in 1555 by William Waterman as *A Fardle of Factions,* and Leo Africanus' very popular book *Della descrittione dell'Africa et delle cose notabili che iui sono* (1550) translated into English by John Pory as *A Geographical Historie of Africa* in 1600[19]. However different the stories related by these books, a common concern stands out, which is their endeavour to give an explanation for the blackness of Africans. According to Karen Newman, "[u]ntil the sixteenth century, speculation about the cause of blackness depended on classical sources rather than experience or observation."[20] Many theories were developed to explain this skin colour such as the proximity to the sun that we find in different travel accounts like Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589). This theory was soon refuted due to the various cases of miscegenation in England as well as by the fact that even the blacks who were born in England did have a black skin colour. One of these cases is accounted for by George Best in his book *Discourse:*

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[18] Dympna Callaghan, "Othello was a White man: Properties of race in Shakespeare's Stage" in *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage.* New York: Routledge, 2000, 78.

[19] For more examples and an extensive study of the image of the blacks in travel narratives see "The Nonliterary Response" in Elliot H. Tokson. *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550-1688.* Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hunter & Co., 1982, 1-19.

> 1 my selfe have seene an Ethiopian as blacke as a cole brought into England, who taking a faire English woman to wife, begat a sonne in all respects as blacke as the father was, although England were his native countrey, and an English woman his mother: whereby it seemeth this blacknes proceedeth rather of some natural infection of that man, which was so strong, that neither the nature of the Clime, neither the good complexion of the mother concurring, coulde any thing alter[21].

Best's account does not only show the falseness of the latitudinal theory but it also includes an alternative explanation for the skin color. Best claims that "blacknes proceedeth rather of some natural infection of that man." However, Best's choice of words: "blacke as cole, a fair English woman, natural infection, and the good complexion of the mother," emphasizes the opposition between black and white and betrays the writer's ethnocentricity. "Best" and "natural" are allied with white; black is a "dirty (coal)" and "unnatural abomination". Yet, Best's ethnocentricity reflects the position of the English society back then. To illustrate, even the definition of black, as mentioned by Winthrop Jordan in his study *White over Black,* included "deeply stained with dirt, soiled, dirt, foul… having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly, baneful, disastrous… iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked… indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment, etc.,"[22]

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[20] Karen Newman, "And Wash the Ethiope White: Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*" in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology.* Eds., Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor. New York: Routledge, 1987, 146.

[21] Quoted in Newman, 146.

In his book *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550-1688,* Elliot H. Tokson explores one of the most popular philosophical ideas of that time about blackness. He explains that the "Neoplatonic idea that associates inner being with outer appearance"[23] was vastly spread among early modern English. Broadly speaking, this philosophy relates physical beauty to goodness and virtuousness and physical ugliness to villainy and mischievousness. If black was considered as an ugly colour in the Elizabethan consciousness, then the physical appearance of black persons already exposes them to a certain amount of prejudice. Virginia Mason Vaughan explains that, in the Elizabethan mind, blackness was associated with "monstrous creatures, heathen customs, sexual orgies, and cannibalism;" in addition to being a colour that suggests "negation, dirt, sin and death."[24] Accordingly, Othello, as a black person, visually bears the signs of his nature in the colour of his skin, which makes him subject to different prejudices. Moreover, Vaughan says that: "Black skin signified, in addition to ugliness, an ingrained moral infection"[25]. The association of blackness and moral infection is easily deciphered in Brabantio's speech, first, through the appellation "thief" (I. ii. 62), and second, through the statement "Damn'd as though art, thou hast enchanted her" (I. ii. 63).

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[22] Quoted in Karen Newman, "And Wash the Ethiope White: Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*" in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology.* Eds., Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor. New York: Routledge, 1987, 145.

[23] Elliot H. Tokson. *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550-1688.* Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hunter & Co., 1982, 37.

[24] Virginia Mason Vaughan, "Racial Discourse: Black and White" in *Othello: A Contextual History,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 52.

[25] *Ibid.,* 62.

Brabantio shifts, then, from the “thou” (Othello) to the “I” (Brabantio). This new ‘micro-sequence’ (I. ii. 64) opposes the “I” to the “thou”. Here, the “I” is represented as the rational being who “refer[s] to all things of sense” (I. ii. 64) when defending his arguments and who apparently uses logic to convince his interlocutors. In opposition to Brabantio’s use of logic stands Othello’s supposed use of doubtful means like “drugs and minerals” (I. ii. 74) to enchant and subdue Desdemona. This opposition is used by Brabantio to further emphasize the inferiority of the Moor.

Brabantio makes a third shift in his speech and focuses this time on the “she” (Desdemona):

> Whether a maid so tender, fair and happy,
> So opposite to marriage that she shunned
> The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,
>
> (I. ii. 66-68)

He draws a portrait of Desdemona which is in contrast to that of Othello, both on the physical and the moral side. He highlights the reference to her “fair” skin contrasting it with Othello’s “sooty bosom” (I. ii.70), which recalls Best’s “cole”. He also represents her as “a maid so tender” (I. ii. 66) and chaste in opposition to the savage and lusty Othello. This description is reiterated in the court scene where Brabantio’s allegation reaches the Venetian court:

> A maiden never bold;
> Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
> Blush'd at herself […]
>
> (I. iii. 94-6)

For Brabantio, Desdemona is a model of the perfect woman, with regard to the social norms. She is fair, obedient and chaste. He does not entertain for a second the idea that his daughter might have gone with Othello by her own will because, for him, such an event goes “against all rules of nature.” (I. iii. 101) He does not question the responsibility of Desdemona in this elopement, but accuses Othello of it and makes him accept the whole responsibility by assuming from the start that Othello is a “thief”. Furthermore, the rhetorical questions show how Brabantio is intimately convinced of his assumption. He does not wait for an answer or for Othello to refute the accusation: “O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?” (I. ii.62-3) and:

> Whether a maid, so tender, fair, and happy,
> So opposite to marriage, that she shunn’d
> The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,
> Would ever have (to incur a general mock)
> Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
> Of such a thing as thou?
>
> (I. ii. 66-71)

The technical term for these rhetorical questions and answers is *anthypophora.* Anthypophora is a rhetorical device in which the speaker (or author) poses an opposing argument, then immediately refutes it. Brabantio anticipates what might be his opponent’s argument and refutes it. This argument is that Desdemona might have willingly married Othello. She has already had many suitors which means that she is mature enough to get married and, in addition to this, the fact that she “shunn’d” these suitors shows that she has enough character to choose for herself, which would explain that her marriage to Othello could be her personal choice and not the result, as Brabantio claims, of witchcraft. However, in his speech Brabantio manages to anticipate and reformulate this argument in a way that is more appropriate to his needs. In fact, he explains her refusal to marry any of the several “wealthy curled darlings” of the nation by the fact she is opposed to the whole idea of marriage, “So opposite to marriage” (I. ii. 67). Besides, the impassioned rapidity of Brabantio’s questions and answers and his self-objections gives the speech an emotional quality and makes it more sublime[26] and credible because as Aristotle notices, “those who are in the grip of the emotions are most persuasive because they speak to the same natural tendencies in us.”[27] Furthermore, the rapidity of the questions and answers, as Longinus observes, “[questions and answers] increase the realism and vigour of the [speech] by the actual form of the figure.”[28]

The use of successive rhetorical questions and answers gives the impression that Brabantio gradually raises all the possible explanations for the marriage, each time refuting them before finally reaching the conclusion that the only explanation for this marriage is that Desdemona is a victim of witchcraft. Brabantio first talked about the possibility that Desdemona might have freely chosen to marry Othello, then, he rejected this supposition on the basis of his argument that Desdemona is “so opposite to marriage”. Afterwards, he moved to his second argument which is that Desdemona, being fair and tender, could not have been attracted by someone who is, according to him, not handsome. Finally, Brabantio moves on to give an alternative explanation to this union, which is that Othello “has practis’d on her with foul charms,/Abus’d her delicate youth, with drugs or minerals,/ That wickens motion.” (I. ii. 73-5) “[T]he figure of question and answer,” as Longinus notices, “arrests the hearer and cheats him into believing that all the points made were raised and are being put into words on the spurs of the moment."[29] Actually, Brabantio succeeds in cheating his hearers into believing that he has raised all the pertinent points and this is clear through the fact that when he ends his speech ordering the officers to "Lay hold upon him, if he do resist,/Subdue him at his peril." (I. iii. 80-1), they obey him and try to arrest Othello.

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[26] Here, the term “sublime” does not imply the use of ‘grandiose diction’ but rather ‘high thinking and strong passion’.

[27] Qtd in Brian Vickers “The Expressive function of Rhetorical Figures” in *In Defence of Rhetoric.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, 297.

[28] *Ibid.,* 308.

In his article "The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England", D. E. Underdown explains that;

> Patriarchal authority within the family was the cornerstone of Elizabethan and Jacobean political theory, the ultimate, 'natural', justification for obedience to the state: to reject either was to threaten the entire social and political order[30].

According to this social distribution, Othello did not only transgress Brabantio's patriarchal authority but also the social and political order. Consequently, Brabantio is convinced that he is not only defending his patriarchal authority, but also his nation and his Venetian fellows. For this reason, Brabantio assumes that he will be supported by people in his claim, and considers that he is invested with the necessary power to judge Othello. The judgment is achieved through a declarative speech act[31] which is reinforced by the use of the emphatic "do":

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[29] *Op. Cit.,* 308.

[30] David E. Underdown. "The Taming of the Scold: the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England" in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England.* Eds. Anthony Fletcher & John Stevenson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 117.

[31] It is the kind of speech acts that would effect physical changes (naming ships, marriage, sentencing etc…). Keir Elam *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama,* New York: Routledge, 5th ed. 2002, 152.

I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
For an abuser of the world, a practiser
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.

(I. ii. 77-9)

This acquired authority is not only manifested by the articulation of judgement, but also by the use of two directive speech acts[32]: “Lay hold upon him: if he do resist, / Subdue him at his peril” (I. ii. 80-1). The “I” here is loaded with more than its usual personal reference. Brabantio does not only speak for himself but as a representative of the Venetian state. Thus, the “I” (Brabantio) takes the role of the inclusive “we” and creates a generalization from a personal affair. Othello’s transgression does not seem to affect Brabantio all alone but the whole Venetian society. This is openly said towards the end of the scene,

Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own

(I. ii. 95-7)

This is not the first time that Brabantio links personal and public affairs together. In the first scene, when he discovers that his daughter is gone, he says, “Strike on the tinder, ho! / [...] call up all my people[33]” (I. i. 140-1). Instead of dealing with this affair privately, he decides to alert the Venetians through striking the tender (bell) and calls his people and informs them about Desdemona’s elopement hoping to get support to get her back.

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[32] It is the kind of speech act that the speaker uses to get someone else to do something (commands, orders, requests etc…). Keir Elam, *ibid*., 151.

[33] ‘People’ stands for Venice or the Venetian court.

Brabantio's speech imitates the kind of gradation used in courts. He starts by stating the accusation, then moves to the argumentation and ends up sentencing the accused. However, this process lacks a fundamental part of any equitable trial, which is the defence. This lack has different implications. Firstly, it draws attention to Brabantio's monopolization of speech as he develops a tirade against Othello without allowing him to respond. This emphasizes his socially legitimated detention of power as I explained earlier. Strangely, this legitimacy is not questioned by Othello who does not interrupt Brabantio at any time during his tirade and does not make any effort to hold the floor and defend himself, as if he accepts the portrait drawn of him by Brabantio. Secondly, the other element to be questioned here is the accuracy of the accusations. Brabantio starts his argumentation saying that he will be using "all things of sense", but by the end of the speech we are left with an impressionistic judgement based on probabilities and deduction rather than facts. Thus, Brabantio is violating one of Searle's felicity conditions[34] which is the 'preparatory condition'[35] since Brabantio does not provide any proof of his accusations to Othello.

In the absence of stage directions, the perlocutionary effect[36] of Brabantio's directives can be inferred from Othello's response: "Hold your hands" (I. ii. 82). This response shows that those directives are met with a positive perlocutionary effect[37] because the guards obey and attempt to arrest Othello. However, his response itself is a directive and it acts as a statement of defiance denying Brabantio the right of sentencing him. This directive, along with the question: "where will you that I go, / And answer this your charge?" (I. ii. 83-4), delay the perlocutionary success of Brabantio's directives. Othello asks another question: "What if I do obey?" (I. ii. 88), which aims not just to delay the effect of the order but also to subvert the power of Brabantio. In fact, this question acts as an indirect commissive speech act[38]. Thus, Othello does comply with the law, not because Brabantio uses his authority but because he chooses to do so. Consequently, the result achieved is no more due to Brabantio's will but to Othello's. In assuming that his obedience depends on his will, Othello challenges Brabantio's power. This defiance, on the other hand, is done in a subtle way. In fact, Othello proceeds with his inquisitive attitude:

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[34] "Rules governing the illocutionary acts and, in particular, determining whether they are successful or defective". Keir Elam, *Op. cit*., 147.

[35] "The speaker must be authorized to performe the act [...] he must have evidence for what he says", *Ibid.*, 147.

[36] "The effect which the utterance has upon the listener". Keir Elam, *ibid*., 144

[37] Keir Elam makes the difference between a positive and a negative perlocutionary effect. Positive when it is obeyed and negative when it is not, *ibid*., 171.

> How may the duke be therewith satisfied,
> Whose messengers are here about my side
> Upon some present business of the state
> To bring me to him?
>
> (I. ii. 89-92)

In this last question, Othello makes a deictic shift from the "I" to the "he" (the duke). This shift is done to cover Othello's defiance and relate it to a superior power, that of the duke. To subvert Brabantio's power, Othello introduces a third character who is higher in status and consequently more influential, and to whom Brabantio cannot object.

Othello's resort to the duke is not only justified by his will to overcome Brabantio's authority but it also shows his priorities. For Othello, affairs of the state take precedence over domestic ones. This is an attitude that will become clearer towards the end of the scene where Othello guarantees to the duke and senators that his mission shall not be spoiled by his desire and love for Desdemona (I. iii. 260-274). In addition, it can also be inferred that Othello does not consider his marriage as a transgression as is the case with Brabantio and consequently Brabantio's complaints can wait.

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[38] "commiting the speaker to a future course of action", Keir Elam, *Op. cit.*, 151.

Despite Othello's attempt to defy Brabantio's authority, Brabantio does not renounce his directive method. He clings to the same use of directive speech act: "Bring him away" (I. ii. 94). This does not stem from a will to defy the duke's authority but rather from a conviction that this person will take his side: "Cannot but feel this wrong, as 'twere their own" (I. ii. 97). Consequently, it is Brabantio's speech act that is met with a perlocutionary success and not Othello's.

Brabantio's speech is very telling about his beliefs and strategies. His speech is mainly built upon personal indexations. The shifts among these deictics[39] allow the speech to evolve and to avoid stagnation. They also mark the passage of the affair from the private scale to the public one as Brabantio considers that Othello is not just a threat for him but for the whole Venetian society. Brabantio's acquired sense of power is manifested through his monopolization of speech and his resort to directive speech acts. The aim behind this strategy is to subjugate Othello and condemn him without giving him the chance to defend himself.

I. 2/ Othello's response:

I begin this section with an analysis of Othello's speech to observe the strategy he follows when building his defence against Brabantio's accusations. The first thing to be noticed is that Othello does not start his plea until he is prompted to do so: "What in your own part can you say to this?", asks the Duke (I. iii. 73-4). This is not the unique instance in which

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[39] "indexical signs" related to persons, time or place. Keir Elam, *Op. Cit.*, 23.

Othello is asked to defend himself, other examples occur in (I. iii. 110-114) and (I. iii. 127). Instead of answering, Othello makes a long introductory tirade that will be commented upon subsequently. This irrelevant answer urges the first senator to intervene and consolidate the first request with a second clarification:

> But, Othello, speak:
> Did you by indirect and forced courses
> Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
> Or came it by request and such fair question
> As soul to soul affordeth?
>
> (I. iii. 110-4)

The new request is reinforced with two questions. It shows the increasing attention and curiosity among the Signiory and this curiosity is fuelled further by Othello's delay to give a direct answer, which is a strategy designed to gain more attention. The effectiveness of this strategy is confirmed when the duke reiterates his request once again: "Say it, Othello" (I. iii. 127).

Othello begins his speech addressing the Duke and Senators: "Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors, / My very noble and approv'd masters:" (I. iii. 76-77). The particular way with which Othello starts his speech explains his previous attitude and gives us an insight into his psyche. In fact, his silence is rather calculated. By keeping silent and waiting until he is given the right to speak, Othello shows that he is being respectful of his interlocutors' authority. Thus, he accepts indirectly his inferiority. The use of the superlative "most" and the accumulation of adjectives (potent, grave, and reverend) is a second way used by Othello to assert his respect for the signiory. The same thing is attempted in the following line where he uses the adverb “very” before another accumulation of adjectives (noble, approv’d and good). Though the aim in the two lines is to show respect, the change in the appellation used makes the interpretation of the speech take another turn. Firstly, Othello uses the title “signiors” then substitutes it with “masters”. The first title is meant to assert the social authority of the committee independently from any other factor, while the use of “masters” builds a relationship of power between the speaker and his interlocutors. In other words, by using the title “masters”, Othello presents himself as the servant and, consequently, stresses his inferiority. The perlocutionary effect intended by this procedure is to gain sympathy from the committee and probably ally them to his plea. Besides, as Callaghan notices, Othello “duplicates the tropes of civilization – deference and decorum […], he attempts to play white and straight, against the aberration signified both by his black face and by his sexual transgression.”[40]

After preparing the floor, Othello begins his defence by the use of an inversion: “that I have taken this old man’s daughter, / It is most true: true, I have married her” (I, iii, 78-9). This inversion puts an emphasis on the accusation rather than on the confession. By doing this, Othello gives himself the chance not just to restate the accusation, but to totally reformulate Brabantio’s words and give them a new meaning. Moreover, the repetition of the word “true” is appealing. This conduplicatio (the repletion of a word or words in adjacent clauses or phrases) is meant to generate amplification. By doing this, Othello draws attention to a specific word that he, simultaneously, loads with a new meaning and re-expresses from his own perspective. In fact, for Brabantio the truth is that Othello has stolen his daughter and tricked her into marrying him, however, as Othello puts it, the truth is just that he married

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[40] Dympna Callaghan, “Othello was a White man: Properties of race in Shakespeare’s Stage” in *Shakespeare without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage.* New York: Routledge, 2000, 87.

Desdemona. In addition, while Brabantio says, “She is abus’d, stol’n from me and corrupted” (I. iii. 60), Othello says, “I have taken away this old man’s daughter” (I. iii. 78) brushing away all the exaggerations and negative meanings infused by Brabantio. Therefore, Othello makes his presumed crime seem less important and consequently increases his chances of acquittal. Even the confession itself is formulated in a way that makes the audience see the reality from Othello’s angle. In fact, he does accept the truth of the accusation he has just formulated, but he gives his own view of truth. The only fact that Othello finally admits is that of taking Desdemona for a wife and he tries to legitimise it.

I said earlier that Othello resorted to admitting his inferiority in terms of authority as a way to gain the support of his superiors, but I must add here that it is not the unique attempt. Othello assumes inferiority once again, but through different means and from another perspective. The inferiority he claims this time is not in terms of status but rather of language. Furthermore, the claim is made explicitly instead of alluding to it as in the beginning of the speech: “Rude am I in my speech, / And little blest with the set phrase of peace” (I. iii. 81-2) then, “And little of this great world can I speak, / More than pertains to feats of broil, and battle,” (I. iii. 86-7) and “And therefore little shall I grace my cause, / In speaking for myself” (I. iii. 88-9). By talking about his speech defects so directly, Othello seeks to make the court side with him and eventually forgive any inefficiency on his part. However, Othello’s pretence of inarticulacy is ironic since his speech is rather elegant, elaborate, and ornamented with various metaphors and other rhetorical figures and tropes. For example, Othello uses metonymy when speaking about the military camp referring to it by “tented field” or “feats of broil” for the battlefield. Moreover, his discourse is well built and follows a specific reasoning. There is nothing arbitrary about it and each utterance is produced for a particular purpose and targets a particular effect. In fact, as Dympna Callaghan notices, "what Othello self-deprecatingly describes as his 'Rude…speech' and 'sound unvarnish'd' story turns out to be not so much the plain tale he promises, but a compelling and flagrant rendition of the exotic, replete with proper names, marvels and geographical specificity."[41] To justify his defect, Othello refers himself to his personal history and uses a distal deictic orientation towards the past and a proximal deictic orientation towards the present[42]:

For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest action in the tented field,
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle,
(I, iii, 83-7)

This discourse, which on the surface seems to be humble and to justify a flaw in Othello's language, turns out to be hiding an egocentric stratagem. Indeed, Othello restricts his history to his career as a soldier. He is indirectly reminding his addressees of his military achievements and especially of his accomplishments for the Venetian state for which he assumes that he deserves to marry a Venetian lady. This belief is said out loud by Othello when he is told by Iago about Brabantio's complaints: "My services which I have done the signiory / Shall out-tongue his complaints" (I, ii, 18-19). This proves that Othello's humility is fake. It is just there to feed his interlocutors' sense of pride[43].

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[41] *Op. Cit.,*87.

[42] Keir Elam divides the orientation towards context time into proximal (related to now) and distal (related to then: either the past or the future), Keir Elam, *Op. cit*., 169.

The Duke ends up reprimanding Brabantio for his unfounded accusation:

> To vouch this, is no proof,
> Without more wider and more overt test
> Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods
> Of modern seeming do prefer against him.
>
> (I. iii. 107-109)

Such an answer from the Duke shows that Othello's attempts to win the support of his audience and make them consider things from his viewpoint are rather successful. Compared with Brabantio's discourse, it is Othello's speech that has a stronger perlocutionary effect. The eloquence makes it possible for Othello not only to hold the floor for a long time but also to make his audience side with him. As Aristotle explains, "aptness of language is one thing that makes people believe the truth of your story... Besides, an emotional speaker always makes his audience feel with him."[44]

Brabantio's interruption can also be seen as an attempt to reduce Othello to silence by taking the floor. Brabantio's self-selection[45] to speak is meant to redirect the conversation and drive it towards action by interrupting Othello's narration. This attempt fails as the first senator and the Duke ask Othello to speak permeating him thus to possess the floor again which is a sign that Othello's strategy is paying off.

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[43] Brabantio grows tired of Othello's long and yet unconvincing speech and he interrupts him to reiterate his accusations (I. iii. 103-6). As he lacks any tangible proof, he will be reprimanded by the Duke.

[44] Qtd in Brian Vickers, "The Expressive Functions of Rhetorical Figures" in *In Defence of Rhetoric.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. 296.

[45] Brabantio does not wait to be given the permission to speak but he takes the initiative and interrupts Othello.

As he dominates the floor again, Othello proceeds in his defence by referring himself to his personal history orientating the speech to drop into a narration of past events. This is the longest tirade that Othello produces throughout the play (I. iii. 128-70). Its length reaches forty-three uninterrupted lines during which Othello tells “the story of [his] life” (I. iii. 129). Othello starts his speech by describing his native land and his travels. The speech consolidates all the stereotypes that were common during that period because of the travel writers[46]. Othello confirms what has been reported about the savagery and the extravagance of the inhabitants of the lands he visited. The aim behind this is to please his addressees and gain their attention through the exoticism of the story. Othello seems to be trying to lure the persons present at the court by providing a meticulous description, which makes him gain in credibility. Furthermore, by retelling the story in the same way he did tell it to Desdemona, Othello makes his audience live the same experience that Desdemona went through and, consequently, experience the same feelings of curiosity and fascination as her. He could have just said that he told Desdemona his story and that she fell in love with him because of that, but this would not have been enough to convince the audience.

Othello did emphasize from the beginning his ignorance and lack of ease with the practices of the society, which he related to the fact that his life was centred on the military camps. He uses thus a sophisticated language when talking about his role as a warrior to reflect his expertise and adopts a simpler one when it comes to his role in the society in order to express his simplicity and even his naivety. This social inferiority that Othello is assuming is meant to prove that "he would not have had the presumption to pay court to Desdemona"[47]. He goes as far as to say "that Desdemona has been the aggressor in their love"[48]:

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[46] Footnotes (143-5) in *Othello,* ed. M. R. Ridley, The Arden Shakespeare. London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 29.

> She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
> That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,
> And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
> I should but teach him how to tell my story,
> And that would woo her. *Upon this hint I spake*
>
> (I. iii. 163-6. My italics)

Othello denies the responsibility of being the instigator of this affair and pretends that he did not attempt anything until he had a hint from Desdemona that she loved him and he loved her for that: "She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd, / And I lov'd her that she did pity them." (I. iii. 167-8)

Claiming inferiority turns out finally to be profitable to Othello who, through this strategy, succeeds in convincing the duke and gaining his support and concomitantly his freedom from charge:

> I think that this tale would win my daughter too,
> Good Brabantio,
> Take up this mangled matter at the best;
>
> (I. iii. 171-3)

However, Othello's success is only partial for two reasons. First, the duke's speech to Brabantio betrays his apparent support to Othello. The use of the expression "mangled matter” reveals the true feelings of the duke about the marriage and Othello’s defence. The duke’s word choice shows that he does not approve this marriage. Consequently, it seems that the duke’s apparent consent is not wholly due to Othello’s eloquence but also to the fact that he needs Othello’s services as a military officer to defend Cyprus. Second, there is another person in the audience from whom Othello fails to get a positive perlocutionary effect. This person is Brabantio. Othello surely did not decipher the duke’s real thoughts yet, he seems to have anticipated Brabantio’s reaction and have prepared himself from the very beginning of his speech:

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[47] Don Baker, "Foreignness of the Subject Matter in *Othello",* in *Don Baker's Lectures in Kairouan,* Ed. Mohsen Hamli, Tunis: Emir editions, 2002, 20.

[48] *Ibid*.

> I do beseech you,
> Send for the lady to the Sagittar,
> And let her speak of me before her father;
>
> (I. iii. 114-6)

It is Desdemona’s testimony that backs up Othello’s story and makes it meet with perlocutionary success. Brabantio does not give up his convictions about Othello’s full responsibility until he hears this testimony, after which he decides to drop out of the conversation: “God bu’y, I have done; / [...] I have done my lord” (I. iii.189/198).

Othello’s well elaborated strategy and Desdemona’s testimony are not the unique and most important factors that lead Othello to get such a favourable position from the Senate. In this, I join Ania Loomba’s belief that Othello is just being valued as a warrior and that he is forgiven just because he is needed in the war against the Turks: “Othello the warrior is strategically included as one of ‘us’ as opposed to the Turkish ‘they’”[49]. Loomba is not the only person adopting this view. Edward Said also notices such a feature among the European countries when dealing with foreign subjects and he says, “The conversion of the service of the dominant culture is a crucial feature of the European encounter with colonised peoples. Hence the alien must be incorporated”[50]. This is a concept that Othello fails to notice and understand.

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[49] Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, New York: St. Martin's, 1989, 50.

So far, Othello has adopted an attitude of inferiority but this will not last throughout the whole play. This method and the type of discourse that goes along with it is abandoned and substituted with another strategy as soon as Othello finds himself in a different context and a different setting. In the second act, the action is transferred to Cyprus, where Othello arrives ‘victoriously’ from the war against the Turks. This victory boosts Othello’s self-esteem and makes him adopt a totally different discourse, as when he intervenes to stop a brawl between Cassio and Roderigo (II. iii. 154-208).

The first thing to be noticed is that Othello gives up his attitude of waiting for his turn to speak and he even designates his interlocutors: “Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving, / Speak, who began this? On thy love I charge thee” (II. iii. 165-6) then Cassio: “How came it, Michael, you were thus forgot?” (II. iii. 180) and Montano: “Give me answer to ‘t”(II. iii. 187). Being the one who directs the conversation and who selects the participants, Othello is assuming the position of a ‘turn-manager’, which is a sign of power. The ‘turn- manager’ is the one who organizes the evolution of the conversation, appointing each time whose turn it is to speak. The management is organised sometimes on the basis of coordinated questions. This interrogative pattern becomes a feature of Othello’s speech strategy and marks a change in his attitude. In fact, he is no longer the one who answers questions but rather the one who asks them: “What is the matter here?”(II.iii.154) then “from whence arises this?”(160) then

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[50] Qtd in Ania Loomba, *Op. Cit.*,50.

"what's the matter, masters?"(167) and "who began this?"(169) This is justified by the difference of the addressees. Othello has a military status which is higher than that of his addressees. He is a general talking to his lieutenant, ensign and retired general.

In addition to asking questions, Othello also gives orders: "Silence that dreadful bell." (II. iii. 166) What is also conspicuous is that Othello adopts a menacing discourse. He threatens his interlocutors twice: "Hold, for your lives!"(II. iii. 157) and "He that stirs next, to carve for his own rage, / Holds his soul light, he dies upon his motion;"(II. iii.164-5). This menacing discourse aims at stopping the brawl and bringing back order, but it actually hides an egocentric growth. Othello is enraged because this brawl threatens his image as a leader. He has been sent to Cyprus to keep peace and order and such an incident makes him feel that the situation is out of his control. He who called Brabantio to "command with years / Than with […] weapons." (I. ii. 60-1) threatens to use violence. Othello is aware of this shift and admits it openly. He uses the temporal deixis "Now" (II. iii.195) when opposing how he used to govern and how he acts now. He no longer resorts to reason to make his judgements and utter commands but rather reacts passionately. His emotions confuse him and dull his intellect[51]:

> My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
> And passion, having my best judgment collied,
> Assays to lead the way
>
> (II. iii. 196-8)

The irony of the situation here is that Othello blames them for their violence while declaring that he himself is willing to resort to violence in order to restore order. This violence is due to the fact that Othello feels that his reputation as a leader is spoiled. The change in the attitude is concomitant with a change in language. Othello shifts from a poetic to a prosaic register and this translates a change in his priorities. The focus here is on controlling and directing things more than on showing the mastery of language. His speech is no longer meant to create an affective effect but it is there to force action. This image of leader is very important for Othello as he equates it with his identity. I mentioned previously how Othello restricted his history to his military successes, hence this equation between identity and the military self. What is threatened here is not just his title, but also his identity and his image as a military man.

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[51] A. C., Bradley, ''Othello'' in *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Macbeth,* London: Penguin Books, 1991, 179.

This speech also displays Othello's transformation in terms of his self-identification:

> Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
> Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
> For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl
>
> (II. iii. 161-3)

It is the first time Othello uses the inclusive "we" in the play. This shows that he sees himself as a Venetian, which clashes with the image of him as other presented elsewhere in the play. It shows the evolution of his perception of himself, as he does not see himself as a servant anymore but claims that he is part of that circle. Such a perception is fostered by the context in which the text grows. Othello was in fact sent to Cyprus to defend it against the Turkish fleet, and though he did not really have to fight because the Turks were drowned, he saw himself a victor and this boosted his pride. Consequently, Othello does not see himself as a peripheral character anymore. This reminds us of his previous claim when advocating his marriage to Desdemona on the ground that he served the signiory. Now he sees that he deserves such status because he has defended the Venetian interests against external threat.

In the following analysis of Othello's last speech (V. ii. 339-57) which he delivers as he is lead to prison after he strangles Desdemona and kills her believing that she cheated on him with Cassio, I argue that Othello's discourse is once again influenced by the context of the events and reflects the changes that occur in his personality and his self-identification.

In opposition to the previous speech after the brawl, here Othello does not take the freedom to speak as he pleases but he rather asks for permission first. Indeed, the speech starts thus: "Soft you, a word or two" (V. ii. 339). In the beginning of the speech, Othello reminds his audience again of his military achievements, "I have done the state some service, and they know't" (V. ii. 340). This statement echoes the one articulated by Othello in the first act, scene two, "My services, which I have done the signiory,/ Shall out-tongue his complaints;" however, the present statement, (V. ii. 340), is different in that Othello proceeds saying: " No more of that" (V. ii. 341) as if he is minimizing the importance of his services because he realizes that they are not enough this time to justify his trespassing. Instead, he employs paralipsis, the technique of "pretending to pass over topics while actually hinting at them."[52] This way, Othello does remind his audience of his military services in a subtle way while giving the impression that he has more important things to say.

Othello moves on to make the following request,

> I pray you in your letters,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of them as they are; nothing extenuate,

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[52] Brian Vickers, "The Expressive Functions of Rhetorical Figures" in *In Defence of Rhetoric.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. 306.

Nor set down in malice

(V. ii. 341-4)

This request reflects Othello’s concern about his reputation and the way he will be remembered, yet there is great irony in it since in the lines that follow, instead of speaking of the facts “as they are”, Othello goes on to misrepresent himself and his motives. First, he denies responsibility for his crime as he declares that it was not “set down in malice” and uses the term “unlucky” to qualify his deed instead of murder, asking therefore for a balanced judgment. Second, his attempt to gain sympathy from his audience persists as he emphasises his sorrow and his loss,

Of one that lov’d not wisely, but too well:
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplex’d in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,

This part of the speech, as Alexander Leggatt notices, “sounds like a plea in mitigation, an attempt to throw himself on the sympathy of the court.”[53] Ironically, Othello describes himself as someone who is “not easily jealous”, while this is not true according to what we have seen in the play and how Iago easily aroused his jealousy. Moreover, he declares that he “drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees/ their medicinal gum” (V. ii. 351-2), which is also false as he did not show any sign of sensitivity when imagining the different ways to kill his wife or express any remorse for killing her until he discovers she was innocent.

Othello’s speech is marked by the fact that it is built around two different personal deictics. In the first part, Othello speaks of himself as a “he”, precisely using the term “one”, while in the second part he goes back to talk using the first singular pronoun “I”. Each of these pronouns represents a different Othello. When speaking in the third person, Othello is dictating to his audience his story, the way he wants it to be reported as well as the manner he wants to be remembered. On the other hand, the part told using the “I” depicts Othello as he sees himself at the moment of the speech, or the Othello that he has become by the end of the play. Othello, as we can see, ends up having a split identity, one of the Christian, Venetian, and loving husband that he used to be; and the other of the “turban’d Turk”, “the circumcised dog”, and above all the brutal savage who killed his wife. The new identity that Othello assumes in his dying moments reflects that he was influenced by his entourage and their prejudices about him. Indeed, the influence is so strong to the point that Othello did not only subconsciously absorb those stereotypes and prejudgments but also adopted them when speaking of himself. As Jyotsna Singh explains,

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[53] Alexander Leggatt. “Othello: I took you for that cunning whore of Venice” in *Shakespeare’s Tragedies: Violation and Identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 142.

> In his dying moments, Othello perpetuates the dichotomy between “civilized” Venetians and “barbaric” non-Europeans: For instance, he chastises himself as a “base Judean” who “threw a pearl away” and in stabbing himself (“I took the circumcised dog by the throat”) he implicitly identifies with the “malignant and turbaned Turk.[54]

The conflict that is taking place in Othello’s psychological state is outwardly expressed through his speech. Othello’s speech summarizes his personal evolution from a “civilized” man to a “barbaric” outsider. His speech underwent clear changes due to the influence of the context in which the event took place. Indeed, from the beginning of the play, Othello was surrounded by people like Iago, Brabantio, and Roderigo, who see him as a "Barbary horse", "an extravagant and wheeling stranger", and a "damned" creature capable of all the imaginable horrors. Under the influence of the racist discourses of these characters and the crafty manipulations of Iago, Othello internalizes these stereotypes about himself and is lead to confirm them by his actions by the end of the play.

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[54] Jyotsna Sighn, “Othello’s Identity, Postcolonial Theory, and Contemporary African Rewritings of *Othello*” in *Women, “Race”, and writing in the Early Modern Period.* Eds., Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker. London & New York: Routledge, 1994, 291.

Realizing the seriousness of his act, Othello finds no other way to deal with the situation than by "splitting himself in two: Othello and he that was Othello, "I" and the turk."[55] By doing this, he fixes the image, or the identity, of the Othello that he wishes the people to remember and by the end of his speech executes justice through killing the offender, the turk, the outsider. However, since the two Othellos are in the same body the only way to purge Othello and allow him to reintegrate his identity is by killing himself in a symbolic gesture of killing the offender that killed Desdemona and thus establish again the justice and peace that he came to Cyprus for in the first place.

A comparison between Othello's three speeches shows the evolution that this character has undergone. In fact, the humble and submissive person that we saw in the first speech has turned into an egocentric and commanding self. The change is manifested by the way he takes part in conversations and the way his own text operates. In the first speech, he is reluctant to talk and does not take the initiative to engage in a speech before being asked. He also acknowledges his inferiority several times. In the second speech, however, he opts for a completely different discursive stratagem. He initiates conversations, distributes turns and even threatens to use violence to assert his power. On the other hand, the final speech depicts the last changes that Othello experiences. He ends up trapped in the dichotomy of civilized/non-civilized and experiences a split in his identity that is translated into a divided speech between a “he” and an “I”. Othello acknowledges his weakness and lack of judgment and attempts through his language to retell his story his own way, as he has always done throughout the play, before killing himself in a honourable manner as a final gesture to purge himself and safeguard his reputation.

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[55] Alexander Leggatt. "Othello: I took you for that cunning whore of Venice" in *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Violation and Identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 144.

The study of Brabantio and Othello’s speeches reveals how each of them builds his conversational strategy in order to impose his arguments. Brabantio aims at marginalizing Othello as he considers him a threat to the whole society and along with this he aims at asserting his power as a representative of that society. On the other hand, Othello’s priority is to plead his innocence regarding Brabantio’s accusations, and then as the context changes Othello’s priorities change too and we see how he moves from a weak position to an empowered one, then again to a weak one. These changes exemplify Bourdieu’s assertion that language is circumstantial and that it is affected by the context of its production. In fact, the evolution in Othello’s language is generated by the change in the circumstances in which every speech is uttered.

Chapter two: The one-addressee oriented discourses

No other character in *Othello* has raised as much talk as Iago. His ability to manipulate all the other characters and to control and direct the events according to his will is outstanding. He is indeed the artisan of the intrigue by the end of which all the protagonists are destroyed. Iago's ability to manipulate his addressees hinges mainly on his linguistic skills which allow him to subvert realities, to overturn dominant morality, and to interpret events and situations according to his own point of view and to what works better for him and for his plans.

The discourses where Iago takes part will be the basis for the analysis in this chapter. I focus on discourses where there is only one addressee but sometimes more than a single speaker. As a first step, I will consider an extract in which there are two speakers and just one addressee: the conversation where Iago and Roderigo announce to Brabantio the elopement of his daughter (I. i. 83-144). Then I will move to macro-sequences in which an addressee is facing a single interlocutor. I will start by analysing the dialogue between Iago and Roderigo (II. i. 213-80), then the one between Iago and Cassio (II. iii. 12-80), and finally the dialogues between Iago and Othello (III. iii. 35-43/ 93-261). These macro-sequences are also chosen because they represent speakers who tend to manipulate their addressee and play with his emotions. I argue that Iago succeeds to dominate the other characters, manipulate them, and lead them to do whatever he pleases through his use of language. Many have argued this before, but in this study I endeavour to show this from a semiotic approach that will uncover the linguistic tools used by Iago to achieve his goals. I will also show how Iago combines different techniques like the monopolization of the discursive space, the detention of topic control, and the use of personal deictics to spread his ideas among the other characters as well as to generate emotional responses on his interlocutors. Throughout these processes, I will demonstrate how the language used by the speakers is affected by the circumstances in which the discussion is taking place. For example, now Iago talks differently to and about the characters according to the circumstances of the discussion and also how Othello's management of language and eloquence is also affected by them.

II. 1 / Discourse as a way to shock an addressee:

To illustrate the way in which a discourse can be used to shock the addressee, I have chosen the example in which Iago and Roderigo announce to Brabantio his daughter's elopement in I. i. 83-144. This extract involves three characters but I have chosen to classify it as a one addressee-oriented because it focuses on a single listener. By this I mean that the speech is deictically oriented only to Brabantio despite the fact that it is uttered alternatively between Iago and Roderigo.

This extract is built upon personal deictics. Both, Iago and Roderigo build a speech which turns around the "you" (Brabantio), the "he" (Othello) and the "I" (Iago/Roderigo). Here, the "he" (Othello) is described as being the "devil" (I. i. 91), "a Barbary horse" (I. i. 111) and above all as "an extravagant and wheeling stranger" (I. i. 135). The reference to the devil is related to Othello's colour while that of the Barbary horse is related to his origins. Celia R. Daileader notices that "'Black' in the early modern period very often stands in opposition not to a necessarily racial sense of 'white' but rather to 'fair,' meaning beautiful."[56] Thus, Othello's, supposedly hideous blackness stands in strike opposition to Desdemona's-presumably beautiful, whiteness suggesting the inadequacy of this match. On the other hand, mentioning Othello's origin serves to single him out as a non-venetian, an outsider. Othello fails to notice that his "services, which [he has] done the signiory" (I. ii. 18) are not enough to make him be accepted as a Venetian citizen and that he remains a guest. As long as Othello is serving the state of Venice he is treated, as Ania Loomba states it, as "an honoured guest"[57], but as soon as he marries a Venetian woman degrading metaphors diffuse about him. He is no longer the "Valiant Othello" (I. iii. 47) but the "devil" (I. i. 91), "a Barbary horse" (I. i. 111), a "lascivious Moor" (I. i. 126), and "an extravagant and wheeling stranger" (I. i. 135). By using metaphorical language, Iago aims at actuality and liveliness seeking to generate emotional intensity on the part of Brabantio.

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[56] Celia R. Daileader, *Racism, Misogyny, and the Othello Myth: Inter-racial Couples from Shakespeare to Spike Lee.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2005, 14.

The shocking effect of this discourse on Brabantio is not limited to the description of this outsider but also to the interpretation and the presentation of the match between him and a Venetian lady. Warning Brabantio about this elopement by shouting "thieves, thieves, thieves!" (I. i. 79) makes it easy to infer that the marriage is seen as a violation. Desdemona and Othello "have crossed what a later age would call the color bar"[58]. Once more, Iago carefully chooses his figure of speech. The use of *epizeuxis* (repeating a word with no other word intervening)[59] is to convey extreme feeling of anguish about a tragic situation. The transgression is not limited to that of crossing the colour bar but goes as far as crossing the barrier between species[60]: "You'll have your daughter cover'd up with a Barbary horse" (I. i. 110-11). In this image the outrage is even amplified and its impact exaggerated. Iago creates for Brabantio a visual effect of a hidden and abhorrent action. In the beginning, he shows Desdemona and Othello as animals: "Even now, very now, an old black ram / Is tupping you white ewe" (I. i. 88-9). Through this description, Iago sheds light on the differences of colour and age, and he intends to shock his addressee by stating this image. Then, he increases the shocking effect by stating that Desdemona is having sex with a horse: "Your daughter is cover'd with a Barbary horse" (I. i. 111). In the end, he presses further his anxiety when he pictures Desdemona and Othello forming a monster: "your daughter and the Moor, are now making the beast with two backs"[61]. This gradual description gives a more threatening representation of the marriage as it describes various levels of transgression and is likely to produce a stronger effect on Brabantio and force him to react immediately and radically. The use of metaphors in this extract proves to be strategic, since the metaphor "sets the scene before our eyes; for events ought to be seen in progress rather than in prospect."[62]

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[57] Ania Loomba, "Sexuality and Racial Difference" in *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Othello.* Ed. Anthony Gerard Barthelemy. New York: G. K. Hall & Co. 1994, 172.

[58] Alexander Leggatt, "Othello: I took thee for the cunning whore of Venice" in *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Violation and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 114.

[59] Brian Vickers. "The Expressive Function of Rhetorical Figures" in *In Defence of Rhetoric.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. 338.

[60] Alexander Leggatt, 114.

In this confrontation between the "you" (Brabantio) and the "he" (Othello), the "I" (Iago) shows an act of solidarity for Brabantio. The speaker says that he is a "simple and pure soul" (I. i. 107) who comes to warn his compatriot against this transgression, and it is this speaker who detains the answers for this puzzled father: "Sir, I will answer anything" (I. i. 120). By presenting himself as an ally to the addressee, the speaker is trying to gain the 'hearer's favour', which is one of the three requirements for persuasion that were set by Aristotle, and later by Cicero, "for purposes of persuasion the art of speaking relies wholly upon three things: the proof of our allegations, the winning of our hearers' favour, and the rousing of their feelings to whatever impulse our case may require."[63]

By occupying the status of the guide, Iago allows himself to violate the maxim of politeness by addressing Brabantio directly without the use of any title: "Awake! What ho, Brabantio" (I. i. 79). It is inappropriate if we consider the difference of rank and social status.

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[61] *Op. Cit.*, 115.
[62] *Ibid.,* 320.
[63] Qtd, in Vickers' *In Defence of Rhetoric,* 74.

However, this violation is not to be seen as a sign of discourtesy but, on the contrary, it contributes to the credibility of Iago and his concern with the emergency of the situation. The rank and social class disappear and what remains is a white, Christian, Venetian male warning another white, Christian, Venetian male about an ominous chaotic situation. Moreover, Iago takes advantage of the setting. Iago and Roderigo go to alert Brabantio about the elopement at night. The darkness of the night is used by him as a cover behind which he allows himself to cross the limits of civility especially when, contrary to Roderigo, he does not present himself to Brabantio and "can use what sexual insults he pleases"[64]. As soon as Brabantio calls for light, "Light I say, light!" (I. i. 144), Iago rushes to leave: "Farewell, for I must leave" (I. i. 145).

By allying this "I" (Roderigo/Iago) to the "you" (Brabantio), the affair extends from the private to the public sphere. In fact, Iago draws Brabantio's attention to the fact that his problem does not just affect him alone but that it touches all the people and, consequently, the whole city must be warned: "Awake the snorting citizens with the bell" (I. i. 90). The transgression committed by Othello and Desdemona does not threaten her father only but "all the civility" (I. i. 131).

To explain the expansion of this private affair, Iago introduces an axiology between the present and the future. He starts by putting an emphasis on the temporal deictic "now", reiterating it twice and multiplying the adverbs "even" and "very": "Even now, very now, an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe; arise, arise". The temporal deictic, "now", is reiterated for a third time: "your daughter and the Moor, are now making the beast with two backs" (I. i. 115-6) and each time its use is meant to actualize the transgression and give it a vivid image. However, when Iago introduces the modal “will” the present action takes another dimension. Actually, this present transgression becomes a threatening one for future generations. In fact, this match will spoil the purity of the human race as the union between a woman, “Your daughter”, and a “Barbary horse” will not bring human descendants but monstrous beasts: “you’ll have your nephews neigh to you; you’ll have / coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans” (I. i. 112-3). This image provokes Brabantio’s wrath and as a response he asks, “What profane wretch art thou?” This question shows Brabantio’s confusion and his inability to accept the truth of this report. He rather prefers to believe that his interlocutor is a liar and a wretched person, instead of taking into consideration the possibility of such transgression.

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[64] Frank Kermode, "Othello" in *Shakespeare's Language.* London: Penguin Books, 2000, 167.

As I mentioned earlier, Iago does not proceed alone in the elaboration of this stratagem. He is assisted by Roderigo, who intervenes effectively, albeit only towards the end. Initially, his utterances are very short and sometimes limited to the reiteration of a single word. They do not really contribute to the evolution of the speech; his speech somehow works against Iago’s. When Iago answers Brabantio’s question: “Why, wherefore ask you this?” (I. i. 85), by giving information, Roderigo replies by another question: “Most reverend Segnior, do you know my voice?” This directs Brabantio’s focus from the news that has just been reported by Iago to the identity of the second speaker. This shift is not beneficial for Iago’s and Roderigo’s strategy as it delays the effect of the news on Brabantio who becomes furious against Roderigo rather than outraged by the news of the elopement and starts threatening him:

> But thou must needs be sure
>
> My spirit and my place have in them power

To make this bitter to thee.

(I. i. 101-3)

Roderigo does not dilate the text deliberately but rather out of confusion as he does not seem to have a clear plan in his mind as to what to say, and especially, how to say it. At a certain point, he even loses the ability to provide full sentences and he just reiterates one word: “Sir, sir, sir” (I. i. 100). Moreover, Roderigo seems to be intimidated by Brabantio, which is inferred from his exhaustive use of titles when addressing Brabantio such as: “Signior”, “Most reverend signior”, “good sir”, and “Most grave Brabantio”. He finally resorts to a directive speech act: “Patience, good sir” (I. i. 104). This request is nothing else but a way to gain some time in order to organize his thoughts and reconsider his discursive approach. However, this attempt to gain time fails as Brabantio proceeds in his speech. We have to wait until line 120 for Roderigo to indulge in a more elaborated and flowing speech. This macro-sequence (I. i. 120-139) comes as a result of Iago’s previous interventions. Indeed, it is Iago’s direct and rude speeches (I. i. 86-92/108-113/115-117) that make Roderigo dare to overcome his reticence and give his own version of the story.

Roderigo builds his speech around two personal deictics, the “he” (Othello) and the “she” (Desdemona). He gives his view about Othello and Desdemona, but contrary to Iago, he is somewhat more civil in his tale. Roderigo echoes Iago’s description concerning Othello but deviates from Iago’s version when he talks about Desdemona. In fact, Roderigo joins Iago in categorizing Othello as an outsider and “an extravagant and wheeling stranger” (I. i. 136) to configure him as an outsider in order to arouse Brabantio’s anger. He qualifies him as “a knave of common hire” (I. i.125), to put emphasis on his dishonesty and stress the fact that, according to him, Othello is inferior to Desdemona in social status and does not represent an appropriate husband for her. He also echoes Iago's view by presenting the same animalistic image of Othello (I. i. 88/111). He refers to him as being "a lascivious Moor" (I. i. 126) and this strips the marriage of its sentimental and romantic qualities and restricts it to a sheer sexual encounter. Moreover, the use of term "moor" is a reference to the racial difference between Othello and Desdemona (or even between Othello and the Venetians in general). Signalling out this difference is meant to set Othello, once again, as an outsider, "the other who is not like us"[65]. The link between "lascivious" and "moor" reveals, as Karen Newman notices, "the stock prejudices against blacks in the Elizabethan and Jacobean culture: the link between blackness and the devil, the myth of black sexuality, the problem of black subjection to authority"[66]. During the early modern period, and even in the previous centuries, black colour was commonly linked to the devil. Blacks were notoriously thought of as being wild and as having a strong sexual appetite[67]. In his *Discourse,* George Best gives a theological explanation for the origin of blackness and the ideas, or prejudices, associated with blacks. Best uses the story in Genesis of Noah and his three sons

> Who all three being white, and their wives also, by course of nature should have begotten and brought foorth white children. But the envie of our great and continuall enemie the wicked Spirite is such, that as hee coulde not suffer our olde father Adam to live in the felicitie and Angelike state wherein hee was first created, but tempting him, sought and produced his ruine and fall: so againe, finding at this flood none but a father and three sonnes living, hee so caused one of them to transgresse and disobey his father's commaundment, that after him all his posteritie shoulde bee accursed. The fact of disobedience was this: When Noe at the commandement of God had made the Arke and entered therein... hee straitely commanded his sonnes and their wives, that they... should use continencie, and abstaine from carnall copulation with their wives... Which good instructions and exhortations notwithstanding his wicked sonne Cham disobeyed, and being perswaded that the first childe borne after

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[65] James L. Calderwood, *The Properties of Othello.* Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989, 7.

[66] Karen Newman, "'And wash the Ethiop White': Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello",* in *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Othello.* Ed. Anthony Gerard Barthelemy. New York: G. K. Hall & Co, 1994,128.

[67] *Ibid., 126.*

> the flood (by right and lawe of nature) should inherite and possesse all the dominions of the earth, hee contrary to his fathers commandment while they were yet in the Arke, used company with his wife, and craftily went about thereby to dis-inherite the off-spring of his other two brothen: for the which wicked and detestable fact, as an example for contempt of Almightie God, and disobedience of parents, God would a sonne should bee borne whose name was Chus, who not only it selfe, but all his posteritie after him should bee so blacke and loathsome, that it might remaine a spectacle of disobedience to all the worlde. And af this blacke and cursed Chus came all these blacke Moores which are in Africa. (Qtd in Karen Newman, 127-8)

This passage shows both the racial prejudices against blacks in the Elizabethan and Jacobean society, and the justifications produced for these attitudes towards blacks. As this passage explains, black colour is linked to the devil, at that time, due to the belief that blacks were cursed for their “inherent” disobedience. It also traces back the origin of the myth of black sexuality that is reverberated by Roderigo’s expression “lascivious moor”.

Roderigo does not just echo Iago’s opinion about Othello but, also like him, he resorts to the same logic of axiology to support his view. However, his axiology is not temporal but spatial. Indeed, Roderigo opposes the “here” (I. i. 137) to the “everywhere” (I. i. 137) in an attempt to emphasize the fact that what is happening with Brabantio is not a private affair but a public one. This affair is even widened to a civilizational scope. It does not affect the state of Venice all alone, but threatens the stability of an entire white race.

Despite the fact that Roderigo reverberates Iago’s opinions about Othello, picturing him as an outsider and talking about him using animalistic references, he adopts a different one when discussing Desdemona. He does not represent her as lustful to echo the ensign’s terms, but rather as a fair, dutiful, beautiful and intelligent lady (I. i. 135).

The way Roderigo portrays Desdemona is very similar to the way Brabantio describes her in the trial scene (I. iii. 94-7). Roderigo’s speech can be interpreted as being a way to please Brabantio and gain his favour by showing respect for his daughter and by talking about her in such good terms. Consequently, by attempting to gain Brabantio's favour, Roderigo is obviously seeking to make him more prone to persuasion. However, by giving a different representation of Desdemona from that previously given by Iago, Roderigo leads us to notice the disagreement about the representation of the female in the play.

The main feature of this macro-sequence is that its dynamism is regulated by two types of axiology, a temporal and a spatial one. These two axes lead the progression of the various segments of the extract in a chronological as well as a spatial order that strengthens Iago's and Roderigo's arguments to impact Brabantio's emotions and thus urge him to act. Moreover, the use of rhetorical figures such as metaphors and *epizeuxis* together with different speech acts turn out to be effective in emotionally moving Brabantio and pushing him to action. Desdemona's father does react immediately by reporting the affair to the state, which confirms that Iago and Roderigo's speeches succeed in having the perlocutionary effect intended.

II. 2 / Cases of manipulation:

In this section I will analyse speeches where Iago separately interacts with Roderigo, Cassio, and Othello in order to trace the different techniques used to manipulate or influence the interlocutor or urge him to react, such as the monopolization of the conversation either through long turns and/or choice of topic, and the variations in the personal pronouns used to address the interlocutor. This choice is meant to keep the same orientation as in the first part by focusing on discourses which are directed to one listener each time. However, the difference, here, is that there is just one speaker in every case. I will also show that Iago is the main dominant character in the play in terms of manipulation. He is always the one manipulating the others. In addition, I will demonstrate that Iago uses almost the same techniques to manipulate the different characters. However, I will also trace the instances where some differences occur, such as the chronological order of the techniques used, and show that these slight differences are circumstantial and used to adjust Iago's discursive strategy to the situation and allow him to secure the perlocutionary effect desired on the interlocutor.

I start with the dialogue between Iago and Roderigo (II. i. 213-80) in order to show the influence Iago has upon Roderigo. I showed in the preceding section that Roderigo echoed Iago's words and opinion about Othello but resisted Iago's presentation of Desdemona and gave a different image of her. In this extract, I will explain the strategy used by Iago to influence Roderigo's opinion about Desdemona and eventually induce him into adopting the same principles and views as his own.

The first noticeable feature about this extract (II. i. 213-80) is the difference between the lengths of the two character's turns. Iago's long turns (sometimes going up to 26 uninterrupted lines) stand in striking opposition to Roderigo's that are very short and occasionally limited to one sentence. This textual imbalance prepares for a potential imbalance in terms of dominance and power between the two characters. It is obvious that Iago is dominating the floor, but my in depth analysis of the two speeches will show that this dominance is also a sign of power detainment.

Iago's long turns display certain features that determine his position despite the fact that he has a lower social status than Roderigo. In his two first turns Iago extensively uses performative speech acts, like "Do thou meet me presently at the harbour" (II. i. 213), "come hither" (II. i. 214), "list me" (II. i. 216), "lay thy finger thus" (II. i. 220) and "mark me" (II. i. 221). This use shows that Iago is leading Roderigo. This is also inferable from the fact that Iago monopolizes the floor and leaves no space for Roderigo to interrupt him. We know from the beginning of the play that Roderigo belongs to the nobility of Venice, which makes us expect to have what Jean Jacques Weber calls "master identity"[68]. This is the kind of identity which is acquired as a result of the speaker's age, sex or social class and which gives to him what Weber calls a "socially legitimated power"[69]. However, it is clear that Roderigo is not in a powerful position but rather holds an inferior or subordinate one, since he receives orders from Iago despite the fact that he belongs to a lower class than him.

In addition to this, 'topic control' is also in Iago's hands. It is he who directs the conversation and who initiates the topic of Desemona and Cassio's affair, "I will tell thee this, Dedemona is directly in love with him" (II. i. 17-18). Roderigo is just listening and does not bother to challenge this topic.

Iago's macro-sequence can be divided into smaller fragments according to the shift in the personal indexations. The first micro-sequence develops around the "she". In this section, Iago gives his opinion about Desdemona and her marriage to Othello depicting it as a mere satisfaction of a sexual desire (II. i. 221-33). To support his argument and make it have a stronger effect on Roderigo, he integrates a succession of rhetorical questions. Consequently, they have an informative quality. In fact, Iago uses them to introduce new assumptions: "Will she love him still for prating? (II. i. 223), and "What delight shall she have to look on the devil?" (II. i.224-5) They are used to introduce Iago's arguments rather than to ask for a confirmation from Roderigo. These questions also mark the transition from one argument to another. Iago starts by raising questions about specific points, like Othello’s defective language and his ugliness, and then he gives his own view claiming that Desdemona will “abhor the Moor” (II. i. 232) because of these defects.

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[68] Jean Jacques Weber, "Three Models of Power in David Mamet's *Oleanna"* in *Exploring the Language of Drama from Text to Context,* ed. Jonathan Culpeper, Mick Short and Peter Verdonk, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, 114.

[69] *Ibid.*

The evolution from the exposition of the argument to the drawing of the conclusion is marked by the use of the temporal deictic “now”:

> now, for want of these requir’d conveniences, her delicate
> tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the
> gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature
> will instruct her in it and compel her to some second
> choice
>
> (II. i. 229-234).

We also notice in this micro-sequence the use of the temporal deictic “will” twice. This deictic is no doubt a reference to the future, but what is worth noticing is that by using such a reference in his argumentation Iago is relying on nothing else but a mere supposition or fantasy. This is ironic because the whole story he is telling is in fact imaginary too. The temporal deictic “now” (II. i. 234) is used a second time to mark a new transition, but this time not to a conclusion but to a newer argument. Such transition is also marked by a shift from the personal deictic “she” to the “he” and this leads the text towards a new segment in which Iago gives his own perception of Cassio. He depicts him as a deceitful person, a “knave”. This qualification is used by Iago three times when talking about Cassio instead of calling him by his name, which reveals his hatred of him (II. i. 236/240/243). However, he acknowledges his physical beauty, which is done not out of admiration or mere enumeration of Cassio's merits but rather for a specific reason that will be clear few lines farther. Iago puts emphasis on Desdemona and Cassio's beauty as part of his strategy to infuse the idea into Roderigo that this beauty can only lead to a sexual attraction between the two. Once again Iago restricts the relationship between them to pure sexual interest. This reminds us of his attitude towards Othello and Desdemona's marriage, which he did also consider as a mere "submission of the will to the base passions of the body"[70], stripping it of any sentiments. This attitude is constant in Iago and he tries to spread it among the different characters in the play.

Iago's speech displays also an unusual use of the pronoun "thee". In fact, Iago addresses Roderigo using the "thou" instead of the "you", which is a form of courtesy to address a person from a superior class. There are several instances of this use of the "thou" in addition to the pronoun "thee" and the determiner "thy" but towards the end of the dialogue, Iago changes his attitude and he shifts to the use of the "you". This shift comes after Roderigo rejects Iago's affirmations about the supposed affair between Dedemona and Cassio, "I cannot believe that in her" (II. i. 247) and "Yes, but that was but a courtesy" (II. i. 253). After these objections, Iago readjusts his strategy and starts using the pronoun "you" abundantly. Indeed, he reiterates this dectic eight times in the same segment:

> But, sir, be *you* ruled by me: I have brought *you* from Venice: Watch *you* to-night, for your command, I'll lay't upon *you*. Cassio knows *you* not. I'll not be far from *you*: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline; or from

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[70] Frank Kermode, "Othello" in *Shakespeare's Language,* London: Penguin Books, 2000, 172.

> what other course *you* please, which the time shall more favourably minister.
>
> (II. i. 259-65. My italics)

The opening line of this micro-sequence echoes the one in which Iago starts his first argument: “Let thy soul be instructed” (II. i. 220) and marks the beginning of his new discursive strategy. This extensive use of the personal pronoun “you” has two reasons: on the one hand, it is directed to move Roderigo’s sense of pride and his ego. By using the “you” when addressing Roderigo, Iago shows respect and loyalty. On the other hand, it helps Iago gain credibility and convince Roderigo that all that his interlocutor is doing is for his own sake. Thereafter, the Iago’s new discursive strategy is to make Roderigo believe he is dealing with an ally. The reference to the alliance is made explicit by the use of another determiner “our” when Iago says, “our prosperity” (II. i. 275). This strategy has been proved successful with Brabantio when reporting to him the news of his daughter’s elopement and it is once again met with success in this case because Roderigo ends up believing Iago’s words and accepts to apply the plan fixed by him: “I will do this” (II. i. 277).

In short, there is a consistency in Iago’s thoughts and points of view about Othello, and his perception of the romantic relationship. Comparing how he addresses Brabantio to the way he addresses Roderigo, we see that there is a consistency in the way he proceeds to convince his interlocutors. He starts by raising some questions to get the attention of his interlocutor, and then indulges in his explanations through which he gradually infuses his views. Even the shift in the use of the pronouns is almost the same despite some differences in the reasons behind it.

The shift between different pronouns when addressing the same person is not limited to Brabantio and Roderigo’s cases but it is also present in the dialogue between Iago and Cassio at the beginning of act two, scene three. Before getting to this matter of pronoun shift, I shall start first by depicting the strategy adopted by Iago in his conversation with Cassio (II. iii. 12-80).

This speech segment starts with Cassio giving an indirect order to Iago: “We must to the watch” (II. iii. 12) which is quite expected if we consider the nature of the relationship between the two: Cassio is Iago’s lieutenant. Unexpectedly, Iago does not obey immediately, he rather defers the action by saying, “Not this hour, lieutenant, ‘tis not yet ten o’clock” (II. iii.13). This particular sentence marks the beginning of Iago’s plan. Iago’s first attempt is to make Cassio loosen his military discipline. It also marks the shift in the roles between Iago and Cassio. We notice that, while Cassio is the lieutenant and is, consequently, the one who is supposed to give orders, it is Iago who directs things. This is even acknowledged by Cassio himself a few lines earlier when he tells Othello, “Iago hath directed what to do” (II. iii.4). This acknowledgment is ironical and it is made with no real awareness of its implications. In fact, none of the characters are aware that Iago is the one holding the ropes and that he is using each one of them (characters) for his own interests.

Iago shifts to another topic in order to divert Cassio’s attention from his military duty and it shows once again that it is Iago who is orientating the dialogue towards what best suits his plan. He manages to control the situation and this is partly due, not just to the shift in the topic and the control of the floor, but also to the kind of language used by the speaker. It has vulgar sexual references and makes Cassio feel uneasy (II. iii. 15-25). In other words, being Iago’s superior, Cassio is not comfortable with such familiarity with an ancient. Cassio considers this conversation out of place due to the military context in which it is taking place and tries to cut it short by resisting Iago's vulgar terms. Cassio provides a formal discourse in order to prevent Iago from getting too familiar with him.

The shift in the topic (II. iii. 26) marks the evolution of the segment towards a new micro-sequence in which Iago starts, or at least attempts, to transpose Cassio's ideas. Iago starts by speaking about the relationship between Desdemona and Othello in a vulgar way, which reminds us of the speech he used with Brabantio. In fact, Iago resorts once again to sexual references to talk about the union of Othello and Desdemona, "She is sport for a Jove" (II. iii.16-7). Contrary to Roderigo, who was affected by Iago's language and ended up echoing it, Cassio resists and does not follow. The unique thing that Iago succeeds in doing with this kind of language is to destabilise Cassio and put him in a position which is in Kermrode's terms: "such that despite his being the superior officer he cannot reprove Iago, only withhold assent to his slyly voyeuristic propositions and provide more courtly alternatives"[71]

> *Iago.* Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o' the clock.
> Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; who
> let us not therefore blame: he hath not yet made wanton the night
> with her; and she is sport for Jove.
> *Cassio.* She is a most exquisite lady.
> *Iago.* And, I'll warrant her full of game.
> *Cassio.* Indeed she is a most fresh and delicate creature.
> *Iago.* What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley

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[71] Frank Kermode, "Othello" in *Shakespeare's Language,* London: Penguin Books, 2000, 172.

of provocation.

Cassio. An inviting eye, and yet methinks right modest.

Iago. And when she speaks, 'tis an alarm to love.

Cassio. It is indeed perfection.

(II. iii. 13-25)

Iago understands that Cassio is too loyal to Othello and Desdemona to be corrupted by his words and be driven by him, so he gives up the first stratagem:

> Well, happiness to their sheets! … Come, lieutenant, I
> have a stoup of wine, and here without are a brace
> of Cyprus gallants, that would fain have a measure to
> the health of black Othello.
>
> (II. iii. 26-9)

Iago drops the topic of the marriage of Desdemona and Othello. Cassio fails to seize the opportunity to regain control by taking over the conversation and directing it the way it pleases him, which is probably due to the fact that he is still confused by the talk he has just had with Iago. This confusion allows Iago to preserve his position of a 'turn manager' and proceed with the conversation. It gives him also some time to think of a new approach: to incite Cassio to drinking, which is crucial for the fulfilment of his (Iago's) plan.

Though Cassio's confusion was beneficial to Iago. After the first mistake of not securing the uptake in the conversation, Cassio commits a second one which is to address Iago as "good Iago" (II. iii. 30). So far, he has addressed him as "lieutenant". This mistake is what permits Iago to change the way he addresses Cassio. He seizes the opportunity and drops the formalities and adopts a more informal address: "What, man, 'tis a night of revels, the gallant desire it" (II. iii. 39-40). He addresses him as if he were his friend and not his lieutenant and he even goes as far as requesting from him to invite other "gallants" to join: "I pray you call them in" (II. iii. 42), to which Cassio makes no objection and accepts very smoothly: "I'll do it" (II. iii. 43). Germaine Greer says in this respect that "To seduce Cassio [Iago] becomes the morality character good fellowship, suddenly bursting into a wassail song"[72]. In fact, the last device used by Iago to finally get his plan in execution is to resort to singing:

And let me the cannikin clink, clink;
And let me the cannikin clink, clink:
A soldier's a man;
A life's but a span;
Why, then, let a soldier drink.

(II. iii. 64-8)

This song is meant to convince Cassio to forget about his military responsibilities and to enjoy himself. Resorting to explanations about man's nature, position, desires and claims is one of Iago's recurrent and effective strategies in seducing his interlocutors. He has used this strategy with Roderigo many times like, for example, in the passage where he delivered a speech about masters and servants (I. I. 43-55) or the one comparing the body to a garden (I. iii. 319-33). Such a good knowledge of human nature is beneficial to Iago in different ways such as in dominating the conversation and gaining the hearers' interest and faith; but it is also, and above all, efficient in allowing him to achieve his own goals. As Cicero notices,

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[72] Germaine Greer, "Poetics" in *Shakespeare: A very Short Introduction,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 54.

> The speaker will not be able to achieve what he wants by his words, unless he has gained profound insight into the characters of men, knowing all the mental emotions, all their natural characters and [...] habits of conduct. [73]

Here, Iago is reproducing the same tactic with Cassio.It is clear that the situation, or circumstances, in which each dialogue took place influenced Iago's choice of tone. While he adopted a serious tone when addressing Roderigo, Iago resorts to a lighter tone when it comes to address Cassio. As he is concerned with how to make Cassio lose his seriousness, Iago is obliged to resort to music. This strategy is remarkably clever and effective since Cassio is seduced by this light and merry atmosphere and ends up by drinking: "To the health of our general!" (II. iii. 80). Cassio knows that he gets drunk very easily and that once he is drunk he loses control over himself:

> I ha' drunk but one cup to-night, and that was
> craftily qualified too, and behold, what innovation it
> makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and
> dare not task my weakness with any more.
>
> (II. iii. 35-9)

Iago also knows this about Cassio, "he is rash, and very sudden in choler," (II. i. 267) and this is exactly why he tries so hard to make him drink wine. The moment Cassio accepts to drink marks the success of Iago's strategy.

Unlike the previous speeches where Iago tried to dominate the conversation from the very beginning and to hammer his ideas into his addressees relying on his tricks, in III. iii, when trying to manipulate Othello, he adopts a new strategy: the economy of words. In fact, Iago resorts to as less words as he can. To introduce his sequence, Iago utters a reflection which draws Othello's attention: "Ha, I like not that" (III. iii. 35), which urges Othello to ask him to repeat, "What dost thou say?" (III. iii. 36). Then, Iago utters an incomplete sentence, "My noble lord," (III. iii. 93), which triggers Othello's curiosity, "What dost thou say, Iago?" (III. iii. 93-4). The aim behind Iago's attitude and the way he talks, is to push Othello to be the one who initiates the conversation so that it seems to him that he is the one who discovered what Iago will tell him about Desdemona and Cassio. In addition, Iago asks ambiguous questions: "Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,/ Know of your love?" (III. Iii. 95-6) and makes ambiguous remarks like, "For Michael Cassio, I dare be sworn I think that he is honest" (III. iii. 127-8) and "Men should be what they seem; or those that be not, would they might seem none!" (III. iii. 130-1). This reluctance together with the incomplete thoughts and the insinuations thrown by Iago are part of his strategy to arouse Othello's curiosity and suspiciousness.

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[73] Qtd. in Vickers' *In Defence of Rhetoric,* 74.

Then Iago indulges in a second phase which consists in holding back from disclosing his thoughts: "Nothing, my lord, or if—I know not what." (III. iii. 37) This strategy is new compared to Iago's previous ways of acting. While we have seen that with Brabantio, Roderigo and Cassio he was always ready to talk and give opinions; here he is rather unwilling to speak. In rhetorical terminology, this technique is called *aposiopesis* or *reticentia.* To explain the purpose of this technique, Quintilian states that it is mainly meant to arouse 'some suspicion to indicate that our meaning is other than our words seem to imply.'[74] Vives, attributes two functions to the figure of speech. The first is passionate, when 'we try to make our audience believe that we stop speaking for a moment and suppress an outburst of words by doing violence to ourselves'[75], while the second is calculated because *reticentia* is known to be very suspect 'among men of suspicious natures, who go to great lengths to see sinister conjectures everywhere.'[76] Once again, we see how Iago profits from his knowledge about human nature and how he uses it to better choose his figures of speech and his discursive strategy. In fact, it seems that Iago is using *reticentia* because he knows the suspicious nature of the Moor. This reluctance to speak impacts Othello, who is impelled to try to piece the different hints together and starts to ask questions, "Why dost thou ask?" (III. iii. 97) and, "discern'st thou aught in that? Is he not honest?" (III. iii. 103-4). Here, the apparent consequence of Iago's discursive strategy is that Othello is 'led to seek out the secret which he would not perhaps believe if he heard it openly stated, and to believe in that which he thinks he has found for himself.'[77]

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[74] Qtd. in Vickers' *In Defence of Rhetoric,* 337.

One more technique used by Iago is to reiterate Othello's words,

> Othello. Indeed! ay, indeed: discern'st thou aught in that?
>
> Is he not honest?
>
> Iago. Honest, my lord!
>
> Othello. Honest! ay, honest.
>
> Iago. My lord, for aught I know.
>
> Othello. What dost thou think?
>
> Iago. Think, my lord!
>
> Othello. Think, my lord!

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[75] *Ibid.,*
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] *Ibid.*

By heaven, he echoes me,

(III. iii. 103-11)

This passage displays a particular structure that is used for the first time in the play. It is very compact, actually the most compact extract in the play in terms of the number of words per turn. Iago has never been so laconic. His turns are limited to the reiteration of Othello's words. We notice the triple use the words "think" and "honest". This usage gives the addressee a peculiar uneasiness. Iago succeeds, not only in arousing Othello's curiosity, but also in destabilizing him and making him feel uneasy, as he faces this wall of silence which Iago builds with extreme dexterity. According to Folkerth, "Intrigued, [Othello] develops a deeper desire for the contents of Iago's inmost thoughts"[78]. He becomes obsessed with the idea of knowing what lies behind that wall.

Once Othello is irritated enough to start asking questions and piecing Iago's different hints together, Iago becomes more talkative but still not enough. In fact, Iago resorts to another technique which he has already used with Brabantio in the first scene and later on with Roderigo and Cassio. This technique is to ally himself to his interlocutor. Indeed, he tells Othello, "My lord, you know I love you" (III. iii. 121) as a way to point out that what he is about to say stems from a feeling of love and concern for Othello. Henceforth, Iago recovers his usual pattern of speech, in other words, he gives up his laconic turns and half-sentences to use longer ones and full sentences. He even goes back to his old habit of theorizing and using generalities. He begins by theorising about honesty: "Men should be that they seem, or those that be not, would they might seem none!" (III. iii. 130-1), then honour: "Good name in man and woman's dear, my lord" (III. iii.159) and ends with theorising about jealousy: "O, beware jealousy!” (III. iii. 169). Iago evokes honesty and honour alluding to the supposed affair between Cassio and Desdemona in order to implement the seeds of suspicion in Othello’s mind. On the other hand, by warning Othello against jealousy, he actually provokes the opposite reaction. In fact, Othello does not avoid jealousy, but on the contrary he starts feeling jealous. This habit of theorizing about issues is recurrent in Iago’s speeches, however, we notice that though its aim with the other characters is to convince them of his views, with Othello this theory is twofold: firstly, he uses it to delay answering Othello which irritates Othello. Secondly, these generalities are like seeds which Iago plants in Othello’s mind leaving for him the duty to develop them and above all to turn those hints into clear accusations against Desdemona and Cassio.

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[78] Wes Folkerth, "The Greedy Ear in *Othello*", in *The Sound of Shakespeare,* London and New York: Routledge, 2002, 108.

The shift in Iago’s discursive strategy from short and incomplete sentences to long and uninterrupted ones marks a shift in the balance of power between the two characters. The change of the balance of power is inferable from the turn length of each of them. Contrary to the first part of the dialogue, where Othello’s long turns stand in striking opposition to Iago’s laconic ones, this part displays a clear change. Iago becomes the one who holds the longest turns while Othello’s answers are limited to a word or to two. After eleven uninterrupted lines uttered by Iago, Othello responds with one word, “Zounds!” and in line 175 he responds, “O misery!”.

As Iago’s turns become longer, we notice the shift from the implicit hints and insinuations to explicit accusations against Desdemona: “Look to your wife, observe her well with Cassio” (III. iii. 201). Iago proceeds in his insinuations according to personal indexations. In fact, he starts by talking about Othello himself, pointing out to his naivety: “I would not have your free and noble nature / Out of self-bounty be abused” (III. iii. 203-4) and reminding him that he remains an outsider: “I know our country disposition well” (III. iii. 205). In these two micro-sequences Iago gives a new interpretation of Othello’s status. So far, he has made several references to him as being “a Barbary horse” (I. i. 111) and “the devil” (I. i. 109), while here, he uses the term “noble nature” (III. iii. 203). This new discourse is part of Iago’s strategy to gain credibility and make Othello believe that he is his ally.

The second personal deictic around which Iago builds his speech is the “she”:

> She did deceive her father, marrying you;
> And when she seem’d to shake and fear your looks,
> She lov’d them most.
>
> (III. iii. 210-3)

In this micro-sequence, Iago draws closely on Brabantio’s words: “She deceived her father, and may thee” (I. iii. 293), in order to convince him that Desdemona is deceitful. Besides, he uses another argument which also draws on Brabantio’s words:

> Not to affect many proposed matches
> Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
> Whereto *we* see in all things nature tends;
> Fie, *we* smell in such a will most rank,
> Foul disposition, thoughts unnatural
>
> (III. iii. 233-7 My italics)

By this, he declares that the match is unequal and that it is doomed to failure. This argument echoes the one that he used when talking to Roderigo. In Legatt’s terms, “the first crude interpretation of Othello’s marriage [is] now creeping back, masked as friendly warnings, couched in a new manner of polite regret."[79] We also notice that Iago uses an inclusive "we" to consolidate the idea of his solidarity with the protagonist, involving him concomitantly in these assumptions.

By proceeding this way, Iago's strategy is to inject into Othello's mind his own perceptions. Later on, he tries to make Othello have a pejorative view about himself and he succeeds in that since Othello ends up declaring,

> Haply, for I am black,
> And have not those soft parts of conversation
> That chamberers have, or for I am declin'd
> Into the vale of years,--yet that's not much--
> She's gone, I am abus'd
>
> (III. iii. 267-271)

Each line of these is an echo of Iago's words (II. i. 221-9) about Othello which he has been transposing from one character to another and which end up in Othello's mouth. This extract shows Othello's internalization of the prejudices and racism that other characters showed against him. He associates his blackness with undesirability and deposits it as the reason behind Desdemona's supposed betrayal. Thus, it is clear that he starts perceiving and talking about himself the way the prejudiced society does. Moreover, he starts interpreting things from the same perspective as the other characters. As I showed in the beginning of this chapter, Iago infused these views about Othello into Brabantio's and Roderigo's minds. Iago's success in making his different interlocutors adopt his views is clear through the fact that Roderigo echoed his words when talking to Brabantio who echoed Iago when speaking of

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[79] Alexander Leggatt, "Othello: I took you for that cunning whore of Venice", in *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Violation and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 126.

Othello in the trial scene. Yet, making Othello adopt these views about himself is unarguably Iago's most brilliant success. Once again, Iago's speech has the perlocutionary effect that it is meant to have since Othello believes in all that Iago has been saying to him and he starts condemning Desdemona and Cassio before having any proof.

In the different extracts that I have analysed in this chapter, Iago is always in situations where he interacts with characters who detain master identities but who do not make use of them. Each time, he succeeds in reversing the balance of power by gaining what J. J. Weber calls 'discourse identity'[80]. This identity is built through the verbal activities that a character undertakes, such as asking questions, apologizing, thanking, giving information, and so on. In Iago's case, his discourse identity is built through different techniques which enable him to dominate his addressees and manipulate them and thus negotiate his power. Notwithstanding his low social status, he succeeds in reversing the balance of power by perfecting his 'discourse identity'.

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[80] Jean Jacques Weber, "Three Models of Power in David Mamet's *Oleanna"* in *Exploring the Language of Drama from Text to Context,* ed. Jonathan Culpeper, Mick Short and Peter Verdonk, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, 114.

Chapter Three: The soliloquizing Instances

As a dramatic text, *Othello* is mainly based on dialogues and instances of interaction between several characters. However, as we go through the play we come across various instances of soliloquizing. Hirsh maintains that "[i]n Shakespeare's plays, soliloquies represent self-address rather than audience address"[81] except for some cases that he limits to twenty-four speeches delivered by choruses, five epilogues, and three speeches in early comedies. According to this then, we infer that the soliloquies in *Othello* are classified by him as self-addressed speeches. However, we shall see that in this play some of the soliloquies have some implicit evidence of being addressed to the audience and even in some instances the soliloquy is addressed to different elements on or off stage. Hirsh defines a soliloquy as being any dramatic speech that is spoken by a single actor whose character does not intend those words to be heard by other characters[82]. He distinguishes three different types of soliloquies. First, the audience-oriented speech is the kind of speech where "the character (not just the actor) is aware of, and speaks to, playgoers."[83] This type of speech is meant by the character to convince the audience of his point of view, to justify his actions toward other characters or his system of values, or even to express his opinion about the events of the play. The second type is what he calls a "self-addressed speech". By this, he means that "the character is unaware of playgoers" and speaks only to himself without addressing anybody[84]. He finally refers to a third category which he calls the interior monologue. He explains that "the words spoken by the actor [during his speech] do not represent words spoken by the character but words merely passing through the mind of the character"[85]. The distinguishing limit between self-addressed speech and interior monologue is thin and can be misleading. The difference lies in the fact that the interior monologue is just a representation of thoughts that are not uttered by the character, while self-addressed speech is a concretization of thoughts through speech. Despite this differentiation, each of these types of soliloquy is a privileged moment for the audience to see how the character acts while in isolation. He/she may express feelings, disclose plans or make confessions and so on.

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[81] James Hirsh, *Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquies,* Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003, 199.
[82] *Ibid.,* 13.
[83] *Ibid.,* 13.
[84] *Ibid.,* 13.
[85] *Ibidt.,* 13.

My analysis will rely on Hirsh's work as well as Elam's and Serpieri's to see whether or not the soliloquies follow the same articulations as dialogues as seen in the previous chapters. I have chosen to work on Iago's and Othello's soliloquies because, apart from the fact that these two characters have most of the play's soliloquies, these soliloquizing moments represent an overview of the characteristics a soliloquy can have. My main objectives are to show that the problem with Iago's arguments relies not as much as in their plurality as in the way they are expressed and precisely in the lack of correspondence between Iago's words and his behaviour. Moreover, the analysis of Othello's soliloquies is meant to show that Iago's language affects Othello's and that this latter's troubled state of mind is reflected in his soliloquies.

III. 1/ Iago's soliloquies:

Out of the fourteen soliloquies in the play eight are Iago's. Indeed, he is the character who speaks not only the largest number of soliloquies but also the longest ones. Most of his soliloquies, not to say all of them, display his secret plotting to destroy Othello and other characters. However, the problem is that Iago's soliloquies have created a contention between different critics due to the varieties of arguments displayed in them concerning the real cause of Iago's behaviour. For example, in I. iii. 384 he declares that his acts are instigated by his hatred of Othello, then he moves immediately in I. iii. 385 to declaring that the reason is that he suspects that Othello cheated on him with his wife Emilia. While some critics like Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Bradley –to name but a few -- rejected Iago's declared motives arguing that they are chimerical and that Iago's actions are nothing but, to use Coleridge's words, "the motive-hunting of motiveless malignity"[86], others like Bernard Spivack find that Iago's arguments are plausible. Spivack locates the problem of Iago's soliloquies elsewhere. According to him, when the arguments are taken into consideration one by one all of them are rational and can provide a valid justification for Iago's desire to get revenge. However, when looked at together, these arguments lose their convincing force because, as he explains, there is a discrepancy between Iago's speech and his emotional state: "although we cannot avoid their [the arguments] nominal meaning, which is that Iago is moved to his deadly intrigue by desire for vengeance and for office, his explanations lack the emotional sincerity and dignity of such motives."[87] My analysis will study the language used by Iago in his soliloquies in order to bring to light the discrepancy, mentioned by Spivack, between Iago's claims and his behaviour.

Iago's first speech, which is delivered at the end of the first act, reveals his intentions and sets the clues for his stratagem. It is an example of how his language dissipates the force of his arguments to convince the audience. Indeed, while Iago's arguments seem to be quite plausible, when looked at separately, the way he articulates them and the language he uses call for more reflection concerning their truth. Iago's statements do not conform to his emotional behaviour as we will see. In fact, while the arguments advanced by him suggest anger, we are surprised to discover a person who is taking extreme pleasure in what he is planning to do.

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[86] S. T. Coleridge, "Notes on the tragedies" in *Shakespearean Criticism.* Ed., T. M. Rayson. London: J. M. Dent &Sons LTD, 1960, 44.

[87] Bernard Spivack, "Iago" in *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to his Major Villains*. New York : Columbia University Press, 1958, 7.

This soliloquy (I. iii. 381-402), can be divided into four micro-sequences following the personal deictics that govern its evolution. The first micro-sequence is centred on Iago. It is built on the first personal deictic:

> Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
> For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
> If I would time expend with such a snipe,
> But for my sport and profit
>
> (I. iii. 381-4)

What matters for Iago is his own profit. The extract foregrounds this egocentric nature and we notice this through the predominant use of the pronoun “I” which is reinforced by the adjectives “mine” and “own” in the second line. This expresses Iago’s obsessive concern with himself. It is but a short example of Iago’s selfishness and it can be linked to another soliloquy in which Iago boasts about his devilish nature, as will be discussed below. Iago convinces Roderigo that his actions are meant to help him seduce Desdemona. However, as soon as he is left alone, Iago retracts and declares that all he cares for is his “sport and profit” (I. iii. 384), which shows that Iago does not only change arguments within his soliloquies but also that his arguments vary as he moves from discussions to private settings (the soliloquies).

The beginning of the second micro-sequence is marked by the shift from the first personal pronoun to the third one. Despite the confidence that Iago shows, he tries several times to justify his acts and explain the reasons behind his desire to destroy Othello:

I hate the Moor,
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office;
(I. iii. 384-6)

This is the second argument that Iago gives to justify his hatred of Othello (the first one being Othello’s refusal to grant him the position of lieutenant). However, the argument of cuckoldry is quiet farfetched and is merely, as Berger puts it, a “mimicry of the structure of suspicion and castration known in Venice as manhood.”[88] Indeed, Iago “isn't airing his own suspicion so much as making fun of the insecurity of Venetian males in general--the sexual and proprietary insecurity of husbands and fathers in a culture that promotes the distrust of wives and women.”[89] In addition, the argument is immediately put to doubt by Iago’s confession:

I know not if't be true,
yet I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do, as if for surety
(I. iii. 386-8)

Iago confirms that he does not know whether or not the rumors are true, and yet he declares that intends to act “as if for surety”. This suggests that for Iago “so far as hatred and revenge are concerned the truth of the rumor is irrelevant--the mere fantasy”[90] is enough to instigate his actions.

Iago’s multiplication of arguments leads us to question his real motives, because when justifying his attack against Cassio, he resorts to the same motive of cuckoldry. He says that he targets him because he doubts that the Florentine may have had an affair with Emilia: "For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too" (II. i. 302). Besides, Iago brings forth another more pragmatic argument:

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[88] Harry Berger, “Acts of silence, Acts of Speech: How to Do Things with Othello and Desdemona” in *Rennaissance Drama 33* (2004): 3-35, 25.
[89] *Ibid., 25.*
[90] *Ibid.,* 7.

> If Cassio do remain,
> He has a daily beauty in his life,
> That makes me ugly
>
> (V. i. 18-20)

This argument, unveils that one of Iago's motives is envy, though he does not admit it directly and he tries to hide it under the specious argument of revenge. Adelman explains that Iago's "willingness to kill Cassio simply because [of his beauty], marks the extent to which he is driven by envy."[91] The accumulation of arguments and Iago's contradictory speeches show that he is aware that there is no real logic behind his action except his own jealousy in both cases. Iago's egocentrism drives him to carry out his plan, while trying to hide his "motiveless [actions] beneath a mask of motivated hostility"[92].

Iago refers to the qualities his opponents have at several instances such as (II. i. 282-6), (I. iii. 390), and (V. i. 19). He "specifically affirms their goodness-and affirms it in order to imagine spoiling it."[93] He brings to the surface Othello's qualities: "The Moor is of a free and open nature too, / That thinks men honest that but seem to be so" (I. iii. 397-8). This "free and open nature" of Othello will be turned by Iago into a naivety of which to take advantage in order that Othello "will as tenderly be led by the nose…/ As asses are." (I. iii. 399-400).

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[91] Janet Adelman, "Iago's Alter Ego: Race as Projection in "Othello"" in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48. 2 (Summer 1997): 125-144, 134.

[92] Leah Scragg, "Iago – Vice or Devil?", *Shakespeare Survey,* 21, 1968, 53-65.

[93] Adelman, 135.

Under the influence of Iago, the constant, noble, and loving Othello will be turned by the end of the play into an unpredictable, savage, hateful moor who will strangle his wife in her bed.

From the beginning of the play, Iago was the first to present Othello to the audience though his dialogue with Rodeigo and then with Brabantio. In the first scene, none of the speakers mentions Othello's name and he is only referred to though various pejorative terms such as the "moor" (I. i. 39), "old black ram" (I. i. 88), and "the devil" (I. i. 91). However, later in act four, we are presented with a different image of Othello, that which the senate have of him and which is voiced by Lodovico as he asks:

> Is this the noble Moor, whom our full senate
> Call *all-in-all sufficient*? This *the noble nature,*
> *Whom passion could not shake*? whose *solid virtue*
> *The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,*
> *Could neither graze, nor pierce*? (IV. i. 260-4 My Italics)

To these questions Iago answers confirming that Othello "is much chang'd" (IV. i. 265) and ads the statement, "He's that he is" (IV. i. 267) which stands in ironic opposition to his declaration about his own identity: "I am not what I am" (I. i. 65). Thus, it is clear that lacking Othello's esteemed qualities, Iago will do everything to spoil them by showing everybody that Othello is in fact not what he is thought to be, but is rather what Iago has declared him to be in the beginning of the play: "a devil". This goal is achieved by pushing Othello to commit the hideous crime of killing his wife, a crime which Emilia decries by shouting at Othello: "you the blacker devil!" (V. ii. 131) and "Thou as rush as fire" (V. ii. 135) signalling the end of Othello's transformation and consequently Iago's victory.

Iago also acknowledges Cassio's merits: "Cassio's a proper man" (I. iii. 390), with "a daily beauty in his life" (V. i. 19); an "honest fool" (II. iii. 344) whom Iago intends to destroy like Othello and Desdemona. Once again, it is clear that what Iago is really attempting to damage are the qualities that his opponent has and which he lacks. Cassio is in fact targeted mainly because of his honesty. Finally, Iago does not miss to mention Desdemona's attributes. He declares that she inclines to any honest suite: "In any honest suite; she's fram'd as fruitful/ As the free elements" (II. iii. 332-3). Yet, it is through her virtue that he will destroy her, as well as Othello and Cassio,

> So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
> And out of her own goodness make the net
> That shall enmesh'em all
>
> (II. iii. 351-3)

Iago opposes his villainous and changing nature to his opponents' good and constant one. Iago's awareness of his opponents' good qualities serves him nonetheless in his stratagem. Like any Machiavel, he perverts their qualities for his own benefit. His knowledge of human nature is thus essential for the success of his scheme. It serves to manipulate his pawns and he knows he has such an advantage: "For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane" (I. iii. 382). This perverse knowledge is put forward by Iago and he distorts with it the virtues within other people: "So will I turn her virtue into pitch" (II. iii. 351). This quote, apart from revealing Iago's intentions, also reminds us of his racism. Using the word "pitch" is a reminder of all his previous articulated prejudices against Othello due to his black colour. "Iago", Joseph notices, "knows each of his victims, works upon the weak or the good points of each, and plays one against the other to his own evil advantage."[94] Such soliloquies are instances in which the character gives free rein to the flow of his most awkward thoughts. Here, Iago gives us access to his mind by sharing with us his thoughts, as he is cogitating about his plan. He has contradictory positions, since he admits the qualities of his opponents but at the same time multiplies the arguments to justify his hatred. These contradictions do not illustrate a dilemma because Iago is rather enthusiastic about putting forward his plan. This enthusiasm stems from his dark nature that pushes him to ignore the irrationality of his arguments and execute his plan however vicious it may be. He ends up presenting himself as "a braggart decrying in others the qualities he himself lacks, bitterly envious, pettily spiteful, morbidly vain."[95]

Iago ends his first soliloquy by making a fourth shift in terms of personal deictics. He refers to an abstract "it": "I ha't, it is engender'd; Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light" (I. iii. 401). In this micro-sequence, Iago concentrates on his plan. The end is what matters for the Machiavel. After he has looked at each component separately, he talks of his stratagem as a whole. We notice that Iago replaces the "it" by "this monstrous birth"; "it" is "the monstrous birth". Here, the demonstrative "this" is a proximal deictic that concretizes this abstract "it" and renders it more tangible. Moreover, the use of the metaphor of birth gives a powerful finality to the soliloquy as it both capture the audience's mind and "imparts a certainty to Iago's uncertainty that communicates nothing so much as the subversive power of his improvisational skills."[96]

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[94] Sister Miriam Joseph. *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language*. New York &London: Hafner Publishing Company, 1966, 243.

[95] Harley Granville-Barker, "Othello" in *Prefaces to Shakespeare*. Vol. 2. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press,1975, 99.

[96] Douglas W. Hayes, "Falstaff and Iago" in *Rhetorical Subversion in Early English Drama,* New York: Peter Lang, 2004,104.

Iago delivers another soliloquy (II. iii. 327-53) after he succeeds in convincing Cassio to ask Desdemona to plead with Othello to forgive him. In this soliloquy, Iago asks two rhetorical questions, “And what's he then, that says I play the villain?” (II. iii. 327-30) then:

> How am I then a villain,
> To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
> Directly to his good?
>
> (II. iii. 339-41)

These two questions represent the evidence that Iago is not just addressing himself but he is also aware of the presence of the spectators. Thus, these questions are also partly addressed to the audience. In fact, Hayes says that “one of the key features of Iago’s rhetorical facility is his habit of addressing the audience directly.”[97] Iago is aware that his actions must have pushed the audience to take a stand against him, yet he does not try to hide his deeds from the audience but he rather unveils his intentions in his different soliloquies in a boasting manner. He affirms that his advice is good, which is true, yet he knows, as does the audience, that this good advice has a disruptive goal.

Iago identifies himself as a villain and accepts to play this role. He is, indeed, assuming this role in front of the audience and goes as far as boasting about it. He is provoking them, knowing that they cannot intervene to stop him. He says in his second soliloquy that, “Knavery’s plain face is never seen, till us’d” (II. i. 306), which also shows the extent of his egocentrism. He speaks jubilantly about his villainy and his Machiavellian plan so we end up believing that his actions are only driven by the desire to feel powerful and controlling everything. In his book *The Artistry of Shakespeare’s Prose*, Vickers argues that

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[97] Douglas W. Hayes, “Falstaff and Iago” in *Rhetorical Subversion in Early English Drama,* New York: Peter Lang, 2004,103.

Iago uses “prose for dissimulation with others and verse for direct self-revelation”[98]. Indeed, Iago moves back and forth between prose and verse depending on who he is talking to. He mainly uses prose when he is manipulating the other characters (except Othello whom he addresses using verse because he is his general), while he shifts back to verse as soon as he is left alone on stage, which is why all his soliloquies are in verse. Verse is also, according to Vickers, not only a sign of frankness but also a manner to show self-possession and to exert authority, which explains Iago’s jubilant speech.

The last soliloquy that Iago delivers is in act five (V. i. 11-22); it comes after he convinces Roderigo to kill Cassio. This soliloquy is mainly built upon a double axiology between present and future. Iago is reflecting upon the evolution of the events, and especially about his arranged plan to make Roderigo kill Cassio. For this purpose, he uses the present perfect, to talk about his recent actions: “I have rubb’d this young quat almost to the sense” (V. i. 11). He, then, shifts to the use of the present, which he emphasises through the use of the temporal deictic “now” (V. i. 12) in order to show the effect of his actions in the present. After that he shifts to the future as he thinks about the outcome of his plan. These temporal shifts prevent stagnation as they project the soliloquy into the future, thus preparing the audience for the potential, or expected, outcome of Iago’s strategy.

According to the personal deictics used, each line of the first quatrain of the soliloquy represents a micro-sequence:

> I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,
> And he grows angry now: whether he kill Cassio,

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[98] Brian Vickers, “Tragic Prose: Clowns, Villains, Madmen” in *The Artistry of Shakespeare’s Prose*. London: Methuen & CO LTD, 1968, 332.

Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my game

(V. i. 11-14)

The proximity of the different deictics reflects how Iago is gathering all the pawn in his imagination before starting to deal with them separately. The following two micro-sequences of the soliloquy display another feature of the Machiavel:

live Roderigo
He calls me to a restitution large,
For gold and jewels, that I bobb'd from him,
As gifts to Desdemona:
It must not be

(V. i. 14-18)

And:

if Cassio do remain,
He has a daily beauty in his life,
That makes me ugly: and besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him

(V. i. 18-21)

They show that what matters to Iago now is that he must destroy all the evidence that may compromise his plan. Furthermore, this shows how much he is concerned with making all the profit for himself. In addition, the text expresses Iago's fear of being trapped: “there stand I in much peril” (V. i. 21). The fact that Iago feels that he is in danger pushes him to take all the necessary risks in order to save himself. In fact he will not hesitate to kill Roderigo and his wife Emilia in his attempt to keep the secret of his machinations.

Apart from exposing new elements of Iago's plan, this soliloquy dramatizes the state of mind of Iago who seems to be determined more than ever to carry his plan forward. This determination stems from a fear of the possible events that might jeopardise his plan and put his life at risk. As a whole, the soliloquy is projected into the future; Iago speaks about imagined events. Iago is ready to continue his game till the last card, whatever the risks and the consequences might be.

As far as temporal order is concerned, Iago's soliloquies are thus built upon a double axiology between the present and the future. This structure is denotative of his determination to carry on his plan to the end despite the absence of a real cause that would push him to destroy the other characters. In other words, Iago sticks to the present and if he parts from it, it is to project himself in the future, but he never goes back to the past which suggests that he does not plan to revaluate his decisions or give up his plan. These two axes are made clear through the temporal deictics "now" and "will". Iago has used the deictic "now" five times and each time it is to evaluate the actual situation. The temporal deictic in this case is a 'proximal deictic orientation towards context time'[99], through which Iago puts the different elements close at hand, in his imagination, in order to be able to take better advantage of them. In fact, each time he refers to a current action or situation he immediately shifts to the temporal deictic "will" which is used to reveal what he will be doing with regard to the current situation. The combination of these two temporal deictics creates a dynamism that forbids stagnation since the deictic "now" marks the beginning of an action in the present and the deictic "will" marks the consequence of that action in the future, which establishes a continuity and readiness for immediate action.

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[99] Keir Elam, *Op. cit.*, 169.

One of the noticeable features of these soliloquies is the variety of arguments advanced in each one. However, each argument is rapidly forsaken, with the exception of Iago's hatred of Othello and his suspicion of him which are repeated twice. Moreover, the discrepancy between Iago's statements and his behaviour becomes clear as we notice that "there is no emotional correspondence with [his] dramatic personalit[y]."[100] In his article "Moral Discourse and the Rhetoric of Emotion", Geoffrey M. White explains that "[c]ulturally defined emotions are embedded in complex understanding about identities and scenarios of action, especially concerning the sorts of event that evoke it, the relations it is appropriate to, and the responses expected to follow from it."[101] Accordingly, if Iago is truly moved by the professional injustice he depicts himself as a victim of, by the supposed betrayal of his wife, and the immorality of Desdemona and Cassio's affair, his claims for retribution should be the result of his anger. However, his soliloquies do not reflect such an emotion and they are rather a reflection of inextinguishable vivacity on Iago's part. Indeed, as Spivack notices, Iago's one real emotion is "an effervescent zest in the possibilities of mischief and a jubilant savouring of success therein."[102]

Finally, it is also clear that Iago's speeches develop according to two different types of indexation. Some of his soliloquies are driven forward by the change in the personal indexation, in other words, the speech moves from one micro-sequence to another each time the speaker changes the personal deictic. Others are mainly built upon time indexations which do not only lead the speech forward, but this also propel the events as they limit the stagnation of action by always establishing a correlation between present and future.

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[100] Bernard Spivack, "The Family of Iago" in *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil : The History of a Metaphor in Relation to his Major Villains*. New York : Columbia University Press, 1958, 35.

[101] Geoffrey M. White, "Moral Discourse and the Rhetoric of Emotion" in *Psychological Anthropology: A Reader on Self in Culture,* ed. Robert A Levine. Chichester, UK ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 69.

[102] Bernard Spivack, 35.

III. 2 / Dilemma soliloquies:

Othello's soliloquies show that he is undecided about whether or not to believe Iago's insinuations about Desdemona's unfaithfulness, which ultimately leads to the dilemma of whether to kill her or forgive her. In addition I will trace the influence of Iago's manipulation on Othello's language showing that Othello ends up using almost the same type of speech as Iago. Indeed, Othello's speech changes and as we move toward the end of the play; it becomes more like Iago's in that he (Othello) starts speaking about himself as well as Desdemona using pejorative terms. Othello drops his praising speech of Desdemona (III. iii. 188-90) and replaces it by one which is more disparaging. Similarly, in his soliloquies Othello starts talking about himself using the same stereotypes about blackness that have been used by Iago about him since the beginning of the play. As we will see in what follows, Othello talks about his blackness, his advanced age, and his defective language in a manner that reminds us of Iago's words that have been addressed either to Roderigo or to Brabantio.

In Othello's first soliloquy, which he delivers in act three, scene three, after Iago tells him that Desdemona is betraying him, he opens with the following terms:

> This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
> And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
> Of human dealings
>
> (III. iii. 262)

This passage is ironic since it is, in fact, Iago’s knowledge of the human dealings that makes him powerful and helps him in deceiving everybody around him. Othello’s speech does not only show his deluded view of Iago, but it also makes it clear that he has fallen into Iago’s trap. By calling Iago “honest” Othello exposes his naivety and confirms Iago’s judgment about his nature. Iago declares: “thinks man honest that but seems to be so” (I. iii. 398). It is Iago’s eloquence, and his dexterity in using any situation to his advantage that allows him to control his image and to deceive all of his interlocutors. Joseph explains that “[t]he noble generalities which Iago utters cleverly instill belief in his own honesty and integrity.”[103] Like all the other characters, Othello is deceived by Iago’s shows and keeps calling him “honest”, “[m]y friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.”(V. ii.155), until the last scene of the play before he, and all the others, discover the sad and infuriating truth about him.

Iago’s influence on Othello’s language is equally visible in his altered self-perception. Othello declares,

Haply, for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declin’d
Into the vale of years,

(III. iii. 267-70)

This echoes Iago’s speech a few lines earlier when he told him:

Ay, there’s the point: as, to be bold with you,
Not to affect many proposed matches,
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,

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[103] Sister Miriam Joseph. *Shakespeare’s Use of the Arts of Language*. New York &London: Hafner Publishing Company, 1966, 100-1.

> [...] I may fear
> Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,
> May fall to match you with her country forms
>
> (III. iii. 232-4 / 239-41)

In this micro-sequence, Iago presents to Othello his view about him as being inferior and as an outsider, while pretending to be giving him a friendly advice. He is trying to convince him that, due to these factors, Desdemona will end up regretting the marriage, and that she will attempt to deal with her regret by betraying him. This speech is clearly echoed by Othello, who uses Iago's speech as a co-text when he builds his own. Othello refers to his blackness, his lack of knowledge about the courting habits of Venice and his age. He does not only adopt Iago's view about him but also assumes that these "defects" will lead to the tragic result predicted by Iago. Iago reminds Othello archly that,

> She did deceive her father, marrying you;
> And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
> She lov'd them most.
>
> (III. iii. 210-2)

Iago echoes Brabantio's words, "[s]he has deceiv'd her father, and may thee" (I. iii. 293) in an attempt to convince Othello that Desdemona is quite capable of deception. Once this possibility is established in Othello's mind, Iago once more draws on Brabantio's words reminding Othello that Desdemona could have chosen any of the Venetian suitors and yet she chose him over all of them, which, according to Iago's reasoning "we may smell in such a will most rank/ Foul dispositions; thoughts unnatural" (III. iii. 236-7). He concludes that Desdemona will eventually re-evaluate her choice and "[m]ay fall to match you with her country forms,/ And happily repent" (III. iii. 241-2). The success of Iago's words in influencing Othello is proved by his declaration in the soliloquy: "She's gone, I am abused" (III. iii. 271).

Despite this declaration, the construction of the soliloquy shows that there is an internal ebb and flow inside the character. Othello says,

> If I do prove her haggard,
> Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
> I'll whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
> To pray at fortune
>
> (III. iii. 264-7)

He is wavering between believing Iago and trusting his wife. We notice, here, the use of the conditional tense which makes us conclude that when uttering these words, Othello is intimately convinced of the improbability of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. However, as soon as he recalls Iago's words he loses his temper and rushes towards judgement: "She's gone, I am abus'd, and my relief / Must be to loathe her" (III. iii. 271-2). Othello builds a binary opposition between the "I" that is presented as the victim and the "She" to whom he gives the role of the abuser. This binary opposition is meant to justify Othello's intended actions. Even the construction of the accusation itself helps in building this opposition. In fact, the two personal pronouns are juxtaposed in a symbolic way. Othello does not start with himself but rather with Desdemona as if to say that she is the one who started this and who was the first to transgress the rules. The fact that she is supposed to have started the "assault" legitimates the violence intended by Othello, making it appear as self-defence rather than as an instigating aggression.

Despite this apparent determination, the text has elements that show that Othello is undergoing an internal ebb and flow. The strong willed statement “I'll whistle her off, and let her down the wind, / To pray at fortune” (III. iii. 266-7) is diminished by the lines which follow the entrance of Desdemona and Emilia into the chamber. He says, “If she be false, O, heaven mocks itself, / I’ll not believe it” (III. iii.282-3) showing Othello’s turbulent state of mind. The steadfast determination expressed using the falcon image is dismantled and forgotten when he sees Desdemona, and he immediately denies that she could be untrue to him. We also notice the use of the interjection “O”, which expresses the tribulation of Othello as he faces this dilemma. This is the second instance in which he uses this interjection, the first was when he cursed the very institution of marriage: “O curse of marriage / that we can call these delicate creatures ours / And not their appetites!”(III. iii. 272-4), which reflects how deeply he is affected.

The construction of the text is a testament to the changing and chaotic state of mind of Othello. The passage shows how he goes back and forth between believing Iago or his wife. The first micro-sequence relates his conviction of Iago’s honesty, which is the basis for his questioning of Desdemona’s faithfulness. In other words, the fact that Othello believes Iago to be honest makes him take into consideration the possibility that Iago might be right and that Desdemona might have betrayed him. This assumption leads the text to its second and third micro-sequences, where Othello respectively supposes and then assumes that his wife has been unfaithful. At this point, he reaches a more chaotic state of mind so intense that he condemns the institution of marriage as a whole. Finding no clue, Othello prefers to adopt a fatalistic discourse: “'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death: / Even then this forked plague is fated to us” (III. iii. 279-80), which does not only reflect his helplessness but also the fact that he assumes that Desdemona has betrayed him. By the end of the extract, Othello rejects all that he said before and abandons his doubts about Desdemona. The different parts of the soliloquy work together to expose the instability in Othello's thoughts.

Othello's confusion and dilemma continues, and it is reflected in his soliloquy (V. ii. 1-22) which immediately precedes the murder of Desdemona. Here too Othello is facing a dilemma: to kill or not to kill. This soliloquy is multi-dimensional: it has a micro-sequence directed to Othello himself, another to an abstract addressee (the stars), and also some 'phatasma-oriented'[104] micro-sequences addressed to the sleeping Desdemona.

Othello begins his speech by addressing himself: "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul" (V. ii. 1). The repetition of "it is the cause" is meant to justify the action that Othello is about to do. In addition, this repetition along with the long vowels of "cause" and "soul", makes the speech acquire a slow tone that denotes the ceremonial atmosphere of the scene. Othello is convinced that he is about to execute an act of "justice" and he tries through his speech to establish some rituals, such as giving the reason for the act he will be performing in order to give some solemnity to the ceremony. However, Othello seems to be reluctant to perform this act. He does not seem to be enthusiastic about it and the repetition takes another dimension. By repeating "it is the cause" Othello is trying to remind himself of the reason that led him to this act and convince himself to carry it to the end, and at the same time, he delays action.

Othello's appeal to the stars reinforces the solemnity of the situation as well as it deepens the sense of reluctance that Othello feels: "Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars" (V. ii. 2). He invokes the stars in order to justify his action. He foreshadows a denial that he has any power to change the course of events as he represents himself as a victim of fate. In this respect, he identifies his will with the divine one, pointing that he is nothing but the instrument of the divine justice.

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[104] "To apostrophize the gods or some absent figure" Keir Elam, *op. cit.,* 132.

These two micro-sequences contradict each other and reflect the state of mind of Othello. In the first one, he endorses the responsibility of the action legitimizing it with the fact that it has “the cause” as its reason, while in the second micro-sequence he disclaims his personal responsibility and attributes it to fate. Othello’s retraction shows that he is concerned with justifying the action and at the same time making sure that he will not be considered as a responsible for it. This contradiction might seem awkward since if someone is convinced of the justice of his action he does not try to deny his responsibility. The explanation lies in the following micro-sequence:

> It is the cause, yet I'll not shed her blood,
> Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
> And smooth, as monumental alabaster;
>
> (V. ii. 3-6)

Othello moves from the contemplation of “the cause” to the contemplation of Desdemona’s sleeping body and her whiteness; her beauty revives the feelings of love in him. The fact that he is really in love with her complicates the situation. Consequently, he continues his process of self-justification. This time, he tries to represent himself as just by signalling that he will not shed Desdemona’s blood in order to preserve her beauty, and this description involves some ominous signs. In fact, the word snow is not just a symbol of beauty, but it has a connotation of coldness. This is reinforced by the “monumental alabaster” which, being a statute, contrasts with her skin that contains blood. The coldness implied here is a coldness of death and it is reinforced by the following line: “Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men” (V. ii. 6). Othello seems to be determined but he is not so. The proof of this lies in the two lines that preceded this declaration. His description shows that he desires Desdemona and the fact that he used the conjunction “yet” confirms this. In fact, he is torn between his desire and the fatality of death that Desdemona is doomed to have. Consequently, this conjunctions signal Othello’s movements back and forth between the desire of keeping Desdemona alive and giving free will to his feelings of love, and the desire to kill her and take revenge.

In the next micro-sequence, Othello shifts to a new deictic as he addresses the torch he holds in his hand. He keeps talking to it and to Desdemona at the same time which is symbolic of his being torn between two different choices. Othello does not just stand between two addressees but he also faces a dilemma:

Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me; but once put out thine,
Thou cunning pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume

(V. ii. 7-13)

Othello reflects upon the possibility of restoring the first light that he holds, if ever he decides to switch it off, and the impossibility of restoring the second light, which stands for Desdemona’s life. In the course of his reflections, Othello mentions Desdemona’s beauty once again: “Thou cunning pattern of excelling nature”. But this time, the description has a derogatory tone due to the use of the adjective “cunning”, which is used to refer to the deceitful nature of Desdemona’s beauty. Othello implies that her pretty looks hide her ugly deeds, her unfaithfulness. Besides, he evokes the myth of Prometheus who succeeded in deceiving Zeus by stealing fire and bringing it down to men: “I know not where is that Promethean heat” (V. ii. 12), through which he implicitly compares himself to Prometheus. The fact that Othello points to his inability to achieve what Prometheus did has two different implications: on the one hand, he points to his naivety as opposed to the cunning nature of Desdemona and on the other hand, he emphasises his limited capacities as a human to defy the gods, which is a reiteration of the fatalistic discourse that he has adopted earlier.

Othello shifts to the use of the present perfect when speaking of Desdemona’s death: “When I have pluck'd the rose” (V. ii. 13). In the previous micro-sequence, Othello used the present (put, quench…) when speaking about the act of killing Desdemona, but here he uses the perfect tense as he projects himself into the near future, imagining his life just after Desdemona dies. This idea distorts his mind and plunge him almost in hysteria. He starts kissing her:

> I'll smell it on the tree, (*Kissing her)*
> A balmy breath, that doth almost persuade
> Justice herself to break her sword: once more:
> Be thus, when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
> And love thee after: once more, and this the last,
>
> (V. ii. 15-9)

This personification of justice is not arbitrary, but is used to refer to Othello himself, who considers that he is the spokesperson of justice. This is further emphasised by the commissive speech act[105]: “I will kill thee”. Othello is committing himself to restore justice, which in his sense cannot be restored unless he kills Desdemona. The repetition of “once more” delays the passage to action, making the text stagnate. This stagnation is not just at the level of the text but it is also a stagnation that concerns Othello’s actions. In fact, he is caught between two contrary choices, that of saving his reputation and that of saving the woman he loves. Both choices are equally difficult for him:

> So sweet was ne'er so fatal: I must weep,
> But they are cruel tears; this sorrow's heavenly,
> It strikes when it does love
>
> (V. ii. 10-2)

The difficulty is emphasized by the opposition of the words “sweet” and “sorrow”, “fatal” and “heavenly”. Once again, Othello resorts to the fatalistic discourse as he relates his pain to fate: “this sorrow's heavenly”.

This soliloquy has a peculiar construction as it involves different indexations. Othello uses personal deictics as well as temporal ones to construct the different parts of his speech. The personal indexations are useful to reflect the multidimensional flow of thoughts of the character and express his distorted state of mind. The temporal deictics, on the other hand, are effective in reflecting Othello’s feelings towards the current and future situations, that is, his actual love of Desdemona and the idea of leading a life without her once he kills her. The fact that this passage is situated before the murder makes it acquire the value of a purification scene rather than a lamentation one. The tragic hero is convinced that he is about to accomplish an act of justice and his speech, though it reflects his torment, is rather meant to justify and legitimize the murder. As Joseph puts it, Shakespeare in this scene "[s]omehow causes us to accept Othello at his own rating, as a sort of private priest sacrificing to justice what he most loves. Although we know he is deceived, there is convincing genuineness in his feelings whose subtle complexity he perfectly expresses."[106]

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[105] Keir Elam, *op. cit.,* 171.

The analysis of the different soliloquies of Othello made it possible to decipher his perturbed state of mind which is made clear through the way he uses language. Othello keeps wavering between opposite stands. Indeed, at several instances, he formulates assertive statements declaring that he will move to action and punish Desdemona "I"ll whisle her off, and let her down the wind/ To pray at fortune" (III. iii. 266-7), yet he very rapidly retracts and falls back into his doubts. Furthermore, the analysis shows how Othello's language progressively picks up on Iago's discourse. The more Othello is eaten by doubts, the more his language changes, and as he starts to believe that Desdemona did betray him he simultaneously adopts the same pejorative diction used by Iago about her and himself. The change in language reflects Othello's altered self-perception.

Throughout this chapter, we notice that the two characters tend to give free rein to the flow of their thoughts, which is a privilege secured through the use of soliloquies. Each of them uses different techniques to organize the sequences of their speeches. The temporal and spatial indexations are used by the two characters; however, the reasons are different. In fact, Iago's usage of these deictics differs from Othello's in that it is meant to expose the different steps of his stratagem, while with Othello; the variation in indexations reflects his distorted state of mind.

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[106] Sister Miriam Joseph. *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language*. New York &London: Hafner Publishing Company, 1966, 263-4.

Conclusion

The analysis of the different kinds of speeches provides us with valuable information that allows for a better understanding of the text and that supplement the results reached through thematic approaches. Considering the text as the sum of various speech acts makes us see things differently and allow us to access in depth the different characters and to understand their way of thinking, motivations, plans and state of mind. Each text, whether or not produced within the world of direct interaction is governed from within by a system of indexation, verbal distribution, and, in the case of dialogues, a system of turn distribution.

In the public-oriented speeches we have seen how the characters try through their language to negotiate their power within the group. This negotiation of status within society is achieved through various techniques. One of the most common is personal deictics. I showed how Brabantio, for instance, uses different indexations that denote a binary opposition between the “I” and the “thou”. He emphasizes the otherness of the “thou” by denying to him all the qualities that he attributes to the “I”. I have also shown how this “I” acquires power when Brabantio equates himself with the state. He claims that the elopement of his daughter was not a threatening event just for him but also for the whole of Venetian society. Moreover, he is defending the state; he assumes that this invests him with the required power to judge Othello. Consequently, the “I” became an inclusive pronoun that is more powerful than the solitary “thou”. Othello uses different personal indexations. While Brabantio uses indexations to favour action, denoting the inferiority of Othello and legitimizing his subjugation, Othello resorts to it in order to first gain the sympathy of his addressees, then to determine action. Othello opposes the “I” to the “you” to signal his defects and to show his respect for his interlocutors in order to provoke an emotional impact, which would be followed by an action. The shift in personal indexations is also used in the examples studied in the second chapter.

The use of personal deictics is similar to that in the first chapter in that it helps negotiate the status of the character in the society. Brabantio's uses personal deictics to set the limit between him and Othello is repeated by Iago who also portrays the "thou" as an inferior person who must be subjugated. The second chapter displays how a character can use the personal indexations in order to deceive his interlocutor by making him believe that he is his ally, which is one of Iago's recurrent strategies. In the soliloquies, we noticed that the personal indexations are mainly used to show the intentions of the speaker towards each of the mentioned characters. Despite these variations in the use of the personal deictics, there is a common usage that is repeated in the different kinds of speeches. In fact, in all the examples that I analysed, personal indexation allows for the evolution of the speech and the transition from one micro-sequence to another.

The majority of the speeches that I explore contain a system of axiology between the past, present and future. I show that the axiology between past and present is usually used in informative texts, like for example, the extract where Othello talks about his personal history comparing it to what he has become. This is meant to show the evolution that he underwent, in an attempt to convince his addressees that he has adopted their culture and at the same time to be forgiven for his defects. The axiology between present and future, however, seems rather dominant in texts that are argumentative. For example, it was used by Iago when trying to convince Brabantio that the elopement of Dedemona is an eminent danger. In that passage, Iago uses the future to predict the kind of descendents that Brabantio will have if he does not intervene to prevent the marriage. The extensive use of time indexations reflects the fact that the speaker masters perfectly his speech and that he has a clear plan in his mind. This mastery is clear in Brabantio's attack on Othello and it is also best exemplified by all Iago's speeches.

Like the personal indexations, the temporal ones contribute to the organization of the different micro-sequences within the text. However, it is worth noting that the shift in the indicators does not necessarily lead the action forward. In fact, some indicators are retrospective and they focus on a narration of events, like Othello's story describing how he wooed Desdemona, which delays the action rather than makes it evolve forward.

The different passages that I analysed, display various strategies that aim at having a perlocutionary effect on the addressee/s, in addition to the variation of indexations. Some characters opted for the monopolization of speech by developing tirades and asking rhetorical questions, as is the case with Brabantio and Iago. The dominance of the conversational space is used to impose the speaker's ideas, and to secure his dominance over the other characters, or, in other cases, like with Othello, this strategy is used to gain sympathy or as a way to defer action and gain time. A character may also interrupt his interlocutor preventing him from developing his argument and reducing him to silence. The speaker can also keep talking as much as he can and move from one topic to another without allocating a turn for his interlocutor. In order to spread their ideas, some characters keep repeating one idea or image over and over again subtly driving the addressee to adopt their point of view. Iago is the best example of this case since, as we have seen through the different parts of this work, he succeeds in implanting his ideas into the different characters' minds. In some cases, the speaker uses speech acts with strong perlocutionary effect like directives and performatives in order to dominate his interlocutor or to control the evolution of the action as is the case with Brabantio. For example, he uses performative speech acts to condemn Othello and directives to commend the guards to arrest Othello.

The various techniques cited previously have been used by different characters in different situations which lead them to achieve different effects. This is due to the fact that language is circumstantial. For example, while delaying information is used by Othello to delay action and have enough time to defend himself, it is used by Iago to irritate Othello and destabilize him. We have also seen how the same image can be received differently in different contexts. For instance, Iago maintains the same discourse about Othello's otherness in speaking to Brabantio, Roderigo, and Othello, but while it was interpreted as a warning by Brabantio and Roderigo it was seen by Othello as advice.

I also showed that the soliloquizing instances represent a privileged moment for the spectators to access the characters' thoughts and see how they act in the absence of other characters. For example, Iago reveals his true intentions towards the other characters in his soliloquies. In addition, it is in these speeches that he informs the audience about the different stages of his stratagem. He uses the personal indexations as well as temporal and spatial axiologies to organize his soliloquies. The organization of the soliloquies reflects the flow of thoughts of the character. Such soliloquies are also meant by the character to have a perlocutionary effect on the spectators since Iago, at several instances, tries to justify his motives. Despite the absence of an interlocutor there is a use of some directives, like Iago's "Dull not device by coldness and delay" (II. iii. 378), which is an order given to himself as a way to dramatize his plan. Othello's soliloquies make use of the same devices to organize the dynamics of the speeches; however, the achieved effect is different from Iago's. The variation in the personal indexations and the temporal axiology were mainly used to reflect Othello's state of mind when facing a dilemma.

This work can be extended to other Shakespeare's plays. The comedies would be an interesting choice to see if the same discursive strategies are used and whether or not they achieve the same effects. Comparing and contrasting a tragedy and a comedy would also broaden the scope of this research and probably lead to some interesting results. There is also the possibility of extending this work to other areas like, for example, studying what are the discursive strategies used by female characters and to what purpose.

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