

Handout 1

Putting Out the Light

Comparing Film Versions of Act 5, scene 2 of Othello

This activity is designed to familiarize students with basic film terms, and takes place over several class periods.

1. Before this activity commences your class should have read Othello 5.2. Having students be familiar with the text will allow them to concentrate on the film techniques rather than comprehension of the text.
2. Introduce film terms to the students. (I found the book *Reading in the Dark* by John Golden to be a particularly helpful source for teaching film terms to students. See the Bibliography for other book suggestions) This may take a large portion of one regular class period.
3. On the day of the viewing, assign students a specific element to look for in each clip. Show Othello 5.2.1-71. Show the Orson Welles version first. The elements are more exaggerated in this version and are easier to spot. Discuss the following questions.

What mood is created in this film? How do the elements of film technique create this mood? How does this mood fit with your vision of this scene?

How is Othello portrayed in this film? How do the elements of film technique create his character? How do you feel about this portrayal?

How is Desdemona portrayed in this film? How do the elements of film technique create her character? How do you feel about this portrayal?

4. Watch the same part of the Oliver Parker version. Answer the same questions as above and then address the following questions:

What are the similarities of the film techniques used in the films?

What are the differences of the film techniques used in the films?

What are the strengths of each version? Which do you prefer and why?