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Reading *Othello* Through the Prism of Conceptual Metaphor Theory: Animals as Source Domains

Abstract

This paper aims at reading Shakespeare's play *Othello* through the prism of cognitive linguistics, more specifically, through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory. Metaphorical linguistic expressions that have animals in the source domain are extracted from the play so that matters of race and gender could be discussed from below the level of words, where cognition and conceptualization occur. As the analysis of metaphorical linguistic expressions progresses, the representation of evil will appear to be intertwined with the perception of gender and race, becoming yet another cognitive interest of the literary text. While African American studies, critical race theory, post-colonial studies, Marxist and feminist readings have immensely benefitted the comprehension of the play, conceptual metaphor theory promises to explore and explain how a derogatory perception of "Other" emerges in *Othello*, along with the offensive language that embodies it. Additional relevant concepts that account for the disturbing pace of the plot towards the catastrophe and tragic end are indoctrination and manipulation. These are specifically related to Iago's perceptual playing around with unstable and highly sensitive notions such as race, gender, fallen virtue, degraded and demonic human nature, which he presents through disquieting mental images conveyed by powerful metaphorical language.

Keywords: *Othello*, conceptual metaphor, source domain, animals

Introduction

Metaphor was traditionally described as a distinctive feature of poetic imagination, literary style and discourse. It was perceived as a matter of words rather than thoughts, of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. However, it has been found that metaphor is omnipresent in our daily lives not only in the language we use, but in our thought and actions as well. Our conceptual system, which plays a vital role in defining our realities, is highly metaphorical in nature. This further means that the way in which

we think, feel, relate to others, and experience the world is primarily a matter of metaphor. Moreover, communication resides upon the same conceptual system that we use for thinking and comprehension, which is why language is significant evidence for what the system behind it is like (see: Lakoff and Johnson 1980). This applies not only to ordinary language but also to the language in works of literature. Caroline Spurgeon (1935: 4) believes that the revelation of author's personality, temperament, and the quality of his mind start in the metaphorical language that he uses to describe his characters' thoughts, or to directly express his own meditation. She also notices that the greater and richer the work of literature is; the more metaphorical language it seems to contain (Spurgeon 1935: 5). More importantly than this, Kövecses (2010) ascertains that metaphors are created within cultural contexts, which means that they do not only reflect the inner world of the poet and his personal experiences of the world. In being culturally dependant, metaphors reveal a great deal about common views and ideas shared by people in different epochs and in different parts of the world.

When Zoltan Kövecses (2010) discusses metaphorical linguistic expressions from everyday lives, he gives examples such as "the baby is on the way", "to go ahead with your plans", "to get side-tracked", or "to do things in a roundabout way". In order to use these metaphorical linguistic expressions and understand them in our interlocutor's discourse, we rely on conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY[1]. What happens here at the level of cognition is that we rely on the concrete concept JOURNEY (source domain) to understand the abstract concept LIFE (target domain). George Lakoff and Mark Turner (1989: 3) also analyse LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor, and they say that the knowledge of this metaphor means being aware of numerous correspondences between the elements that structure domains of life and journeys. In the mapping process that occurs between systematic correspondences of the source and target domains, the person leading a life is a traveller, our purposes in life are destinations, difficulties in life are impediments to travel, people who give us advice are guides, progress in life is the distance travelled and so on.

When writers and poets produce powerful metaphorical language, they use the same conceptual metaphors as modes of thought that we all share in our cognitive apparatus. However, metaphorical creativity of poets and writers takes the form of extending, elaborating, questioning, and combining of well-established conceptual metaphors and cognitive patterns. Compared to metaphors in non-literary texts, metaphorical expressions found in works of literature "are more creative, novel, original, striking, rich, interesting, complex, difficult, and interpretable" (Semino and Steen 2008: 233). In producing complex metaphorical linguistic expressions, writers and poets tend to go beyond, challenge, and extend our linguistic and conceptual resources, thus providing us with fresh insights into human experience. Lakoff and Turner (1980: xi) propose a similar view in saying that great poets speak to us because they rely on modes of thought that we all possess. Using the capacities common to all people, poets can "illuminate our experience, explore the consequences of our beliefs, challenge the ways we think, and criticize our ideologies" (Lakoff and Turner 1980: xi). In criticizing prejudices and modes of thought among his contemporaries in *Othello*, Shakespeare frequently uses source domain ANIMALS in order to approach race, gender, otherness, and representation of evil. This mechanism of thought leads not only towards offensive language where Othello is described as "an old black ram" (1.1.88), "a Barbary horse"

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1   The usage of small caps means the wording does not occur in language as such, but it conceptually underlies metaphorical linguistic expressions.

(1.1.113), and "the devil' (1.1.91) but also towards numerous frustrations and tragedies in the lives of individuals, and in the broader social context.

Kövecses (2010: 276) gave a list of the most frequent source domains that we rely on to comprehend the abstract. He said that much of human behaviour seems to be metaphorically understood in terms of animal behaviour based on conceptual metaphors HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR, PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS, and OBJECTIONABLE HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR. The author further explains that people attribute their characteristics to animals, and then re-apply those characteristics onto themselves. THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor assigns a place in a strict hierarchal system for everything that there is in universe, and it allows us to refer to a particular level of the chain to understand another level of it. When humans are represented through source domains ANIMALS, PLANTS or INANIMATE THINGS, the conceptualization goes from a lower source towards a higher target domain (Kövecses 2010: 231). This has important cognitive and linguistic implications because animal-related metaphors that describe people, their character and behaviour usually become a vehicle for transporting undesirable characteristics from the world of animals into the human world. In her catalogue of Shakespeare's imagery, Caroline Spurgeon (1935: 335) talks about the bestiaries in *Othello* and *King Lear,* and notices that in both tragedies animals appear in the semantic sphere of suffering and cruelty. While in *King Lear* there are many references to fierce beasts of prey such as tigers, vultures, wolves, boars, and sea monsters, in *Othello* prominence is given to reptiles and insects. Different ambience in these two tragedies and different impressions that they leave on the audience are closely tied to animal species that prevail in the source domain.

Conceptual Metaphor Analysis

Predatory animals in *King Lear* indicate that history and absolute have been put into motion by the ambitious and ruthless human nature that above all desires power. Lascivious creatures that crawl, breed, and prey upon one another in the dark and airless landscape of *Othello* primarily represent the world of fallen man overcome by prejudice, tormented by passions and hatred.

> Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
> Is topping your white ewe. Arise, arise;
> Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
> Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you:
> Arise, I say.

> (1. 1. 88-91)[2]

When Iago describes Desdemona as a "white ewe" and Othello as "an old black ram", he relies on the binarizm of white and black and on source domain ANIMALS to emphasize the discrepancy between them in terms of race, gender, and age. The white/ black division of beauty and virtue preceded Renaissance, but it became infused with race and gender preoccupations during this period (Hall 1995: 2). However, Shakespeare goes beyond black and white as negative and positive signifiers, and he dives into the sphere of cravings of the flesh thanks to the mental images of mating animals. These images show

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2   Quotations are taken from the latest Arden edition.

people as degraded from their human status to domestic animals whose negative representation over a long period in history implies the life governed by impulses and physical needs. Due to Iago's elaborate scheme of indoctrination and manipulation, the irreconcilable differences between the spouses that he constantly insists on trigger stereotypes and prejudices typical of the 15th and 16th century Europeans. We should remember that in Shakespeare's time, darkness of the skin, physical deformities, and non-Christian heritage were popularly associated with immorality and savagery (Kott [1964] 1966: 117). The xenophobic racism from the opening of the play translates the lovers into animals, their progeny and Brabantio's kin into the damned (LaPerle 2021: 83). In presenting Othello as the devil, or an evil beast-like creature, Iago reinforces the animal-related metaphor and broadens its implications. He partially inherits his perception from "the Church-sponsored morality plays from the medieval period, when demons were depicted as black" (LaPerle 2021:78; see also: Hall 1995: 4). Traditional association of blackness with evil, death, and mourning is confirmed by Emilia as well, who reacts to Othello's accusations of Desdemona's untruthfulness even when the maiden is lying on her deathbed by saying, "the more angel she, and you the blacker devil" (5.2.130-1). These modes of thought and possibilities of this kind of language have their root in a powerful cultural memory, aesthetic discrimination, and Christian dogma that associate scorn with pigmented characters (LaPerle 2021: 79, see also: Hall 1995: 4, 5).

> 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not
> serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come
> to do you service and you think we are ruffians,
> you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary
> horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you;
> you'll have coursers for cousins and gennets for
> germans.

<div align="center">(1. 1. 110-115)</div>

In Iago's semantic sphere, animals stand out as arousing anxiety and disgust. He warns Brabantio that his reluctance to act swiftly will result in his daughter's elopement with a man described as "a Barbary horse", which is a physically potent animal, distinctly brown in colour, and not always associated with domestic area. Irene López (2009: 80) says that animal-related metaphors convey biases regarding particular social groups, and they tend to reinforce the dichotomy between self and other. By taking "a Barbary horse" to represent Othello, Iago relies on Elizabethan stereotypes and prejudices about race, and he clearly warns against miscegenation. It is important to mention here that Elizabeth I was represented as "a magical and divine icon of England" (Hall 1996: 465) – a perception reached through the interconnectedness of fairness and purity. In terms of visual presentation, the myth was supported by the portraits in which the queen's excessive whiteness indicated the identity of the whole group (Hall 1996: 466). The dark colour and nature of the "Barbary horse" is to demonize and devalue not only Othello but also Desdemona, while in her case, it emphasises the grace from which she has fallen as well. The combination of blackness and ANIMALS in the source domain is heavily charged with negative meaning for women in terms of their physical and moral states. Like many other critical abstract notions that Iago abuses, race is unstable. It is a fiction conceptually and linguistically built through a social process that Ayanna Thompson (2021) refers to as race-making. While race is fictional, racism is real. In *Othello*, we notice instances of race-making and racism in their typical cause and effect relationship. When Iago and Roderigo present the union of Othello and Desdemona through the mating of animals and

disobedience, they want Brabantio to perceive Othello not only as less civilized than Europeans, but also as dangerous for the normative ideas of their society. Iago understands that metaphor is a powerful tool for race-making; it can build a communal sense of paranoia regarding monstrous lineage, social and racial instability. The effect of his words and the images they convey awake fears of miscegenation and female wantonness in Brabantio who admits, "This accident is not unlike my dream" (1.1.143). His passions are stirred, stereotypes and prejudices triggered by disturbingly vivid animal-related metaphors that evoke various kinds of transgression – social chaos, irrevocably compromised bloodline, and bestiality.

> I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter
> and the Moor are now making the beast with two
> backs.
>
> (1. 1. 117-118)

Contemporary spectators are at ease with attraction between the opposites, and they understand that Desdemona's fascination with Othello is because of the cultural difference, not in spite of it. On the other hand, early modern audience would find this attraction impossible because it is between a fair and gentle lady and a stereotypical African figure represented on the stage by an actor with a blackened face. In the era when Shakespeare wrote the play, the marriage between Othello and Desdemona broke many taboos; therefore, the relationship fell an easy prey to prejudices and social anxieties of the time. Iago's villainous ingenuity is primarily contained in the fact that he is able to recognize the cognitive capacity of his contemporaries for prejudice and discrimination. He then exploits this capacity with the language of animal-related metaphors and black and white oppositions, which all derogate marginal groups in which Desdemona easily fits as a woman, Othello as an outsider and a man of colour. An animal with two backs, one white and the other black, is a brutal representation of miscegenation. It intersects sensitive issues of race and gender in reminding Brabantio of female disobedience and outsiders' savagery, which immediately activates social anxieties of "an evolving monarchical nation-state in which women are repository of the symbolic boundaries of the nation" (Hall 1995: 9).

> Ere I would
> say, I would drown myself for the love of a
> guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.
>
> (1. 3. 315-17)

Iago frequently uses source domain ANIMALS to degrade women, love, and marriage. Early modern commentators mention apes (Hall 1966: 469) to refer to the unfavourable state of men who have succumbed to female powers and charms. Similarly, Iago does not refer to "a baboon" here so that human nature would be linked to nature itself. A man deeply in love with a woman is seen as "a baboon" because he becomes less intelligent and more instinctually driven. Early modern condemnation of cosmetics (Hall 1966: 469) is also related to the anxiety that women may exert too much power over men. When Iago calls a woman "a guinea-hen", he insinuates that she is not particularly smart; she is noisy, dressed up, and indecent.[3]

Caroline Spurgeon notices that Iago uses animal-related metaphorical language in his discourse substantially more often than other characters in the play. These metaphorical linguistic expressions usually offer images that are contemptuous or repellent (1935: 335). When Roderigo declares that he

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3   See: *Brewer's Dictionary of Phase and Fable* ([1870] 2001).

will drown himself, Iago tells him, "drown cats and blind puppies" (1.3.337-8). The image of cats and blind puppies being drowned has an attributive function. It describes Iago as a character completely devoid of sympathy, irresponsive even to the most disturbing kind of suffering. When Spurgeon (1935: 336) investigates Iago's discourse, she notices a frequent reference to insects and reptiles, but innocent animals that are trapped or beaten are often mentioned as well. This emphasizes the torture that one human being suffers because of another. Birds are for this reason taken as suitable source domains to illustrate lamentable and disturbing positions of people who suffer when they are trapped and snared. Othello's realization at the end of the play that he has been duped counts as a truly touching moment, and it is not by chance represented in the question, "why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body" (5.2.303).

> with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great
> a fly as Cassio.
>
> (2. 1. 169-170)

Source domain ANIMALS allows us to perceive Cassio, Roderigo, Othello, Desdemona, Emilia, and Bianca as great and small flies, while we see Iago as a spider. His intrigues and lies, schemes of indoctrination and manipulation are represented by a spider's web. When each character in the play is metaphorically understood through the prism of insects, it inevitably rouses revulsion. No one in Iago's vicinity is spared from the degradation of their human status where "the white Desdemona, too, will turn into a black fly" (Kott [1964] 1966: 114). White, black, male, and female characters suffer or die on stage because Iago manages to relate them to unstable social constructs and critical narratives, achieving thus his individual supremacy that here proves to be devoid of any singular ideology or animosity. Seeing majority of the characters on stage as flies intensifies the state of helplessness in front of Iago's hatred, which at this moment feels non-discriminatory. It is directed towards everyone, expressed through the activation of different kinds of prejudice, and satisfied in the achievement of personal superiority. It is not simple to read and analyse this controversial and brilliant play precisely because it shows how easily indoctrinated, prejudiced, and manipulated we are into hatred and violence for a myriad of reasons. The metaphor which translates characters into flies is a rather significant one. The blackness of insects entangled and caught in a spider's web intensifies the ominousness and anxiety in the play, but it also shifts attention from race and gender issues towards the investigation of the source of evil.

Acting like "a channel for the transpiring evil" (Gonzalez 1985: 47), Iago's animal-related metaphors lead characters to do his own bidding. In the third act, Othello himself is mouthing several bestial images, his will is fast deteriorating and faith in Desdemona fading (Gonzales 1985: 47).

> If I do prove her haggard,
> Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,
> I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind.
>
> (3. 3. 260-2)

The metaphorical expression quoted above reveals self-pity and immense sadness in Othello's tone. Source domain FALCONRY translates a wild bird into Desdemona, and a falconer emotionally attached to a beautiful but unmanned creature into Othello. The feeling of attachment is illustrated by means of "jesses" and "heartstrings". What Othello communicates here is that he will give up on Desdemona if she is untruthful, even if the sorrow breaks his heart. The metaphor is revelatory of Othello's character, which is all made of extremes. His love is absolute, but so are his hatred and anger. Consistency of metaphorical

patterns is frequently noted in Shakespeare's plays – a capricious woman is understood as a haggard hawk in *Much Ado about Nothing* and *The Taming of the Shrew.* Apart from the superiority of intellect, Iago also enjoys the fall of virtue as if his aim is to prove that meaning is unstable, and that things are neither good nor bad but as we insist to perceive them. In this case, signs of animality in Othello indicate that his barbaric nature is without remedy. The collocation of animality with Desdemona suggests that women are inherently prone to immoral behaviour and, therefore, untrustworthy.

> It is impossible you should see this,
> Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
> As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
> As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
> If imputation and strong circumstances,
> Which lead directly to the door of truth,
> Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.
>
> (3. 3. 402-408)

If Iago is not using insects and reptiles to depict loathsome human nature, then he evokes animal species that show people as driven by basic needs to feed and mate in the manner of "hot monkeys", "prime goats" and "wolves in pride". His words are savage and the images they convey serve to inflame the imagination and create the motive (Gonzalez 1985: 47). Iago lies to Othello about hearing Cassio admit in his sleep that he is having an affair with Desdemona. The great general is devastated and never questions this vague proof of his wife's alleged infidelity. He immediately refers to Desdemona as a "lewd minx" (3.3.458), and in terms of conceptualizing female nature, Othello begins to resemble Iago in his misogynistic metaphorical expressions. Animal's name in metaphors makes sense only if we are familiar with characteristics conventionally assigned to the animal in question that have become fixed due to a repeated usage. When Othello calls Desdemona a "lewd minx", he emphasizes the fact that she is flirtatious, seductive, and prone to scheming.[4]

Metaphorical expressions based on source domain ANIMALS illustrate Othello's disturbed inner world. Animal-related metaphors in his discourse come unconsciously, from swirling emotions and rich imagination. On the other hand, metaphorical expressions based on source domain ANIMALS prove something altogether different about Iago, which is his cold rationality and speculative habit of the mind. Wolfgang Clemen makes similar observations about Othello and Iago in terms of the imagery that they employ. He adds that we can find scarcely any imagery in Iago's discourse when he is alone, a fact which proves that metaphorical language does not come naturally to him, but it is a conscious device by which he influences others ([1951] 1966:120-121). Iago manipulates people by depicting degraded human nature and fallen virtue – concepts of derision to which everyone exhibits a high level of sensitivity. Brabantio is enraged and appalled by the images of his daughter involved in the world of animalistic behaviour to the extent that he disowns her. Othello's reactions to "nature erring from itself" (3.3.229) shut his power to reason and Iago easily changes his perceptions of Desdemona and Cassio, of concepts of love, marriage, friendship, and even of himself so that the protagonist ends up echoing villain's disturbing words in greeting Lodovico in Cyprus with "Goats and monkeys!" (4.1.260). Metaphorical expressions based on source domain ANIMALS that we encounter in Othello's discourse are not a means of communication with others, but they express what is going on inside of him. Clemen ([1951] 1966: 44) found a similar

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4   See: Ćirović, Mirka (2021).

thing regarding animal-related metaphors in Lear's discourse, where animals in the source domain help the king visualize the violence and ingratitude that he undergoes.

> I do but say what she is: - so delicate
> with her needle! - an admirable musician. O! she
> will sing the savageness out of a bear! - of so high
> and plenteous wit and invention:--
>
> (4. 1. 186-189)

"Bear" is the only ferocious animal included in animal-related metaphors in the play. However, a bear does not depict aspects of physical strength and grandeur. It emphasises the power which delicate Desdemona holds over the grand general. When Iago builds Othello's rage and jealousy to the levels of highest possible intensity, the physically and mentally disturbed general is reminded of his wife's outstanding talents that he used to perceive as embodiments of virtue. The sound of her voice and her singing were so pleasant for Othello that he can only illustrate their soothing and calming effects through exaggerating them as having the power to tame a creature as wild as a bear.[5] The anxiety that women may exert too much power over men has already been depicted by animals in the source domain of metaphorical expressions. However, excessive male subjugation to women constituted not only weakness but also a sign of effeminacy (Loomba 2016: 230). We are here reminded of Othello's comment from the beginning of the play that in marrying Desdemona, he has lost his "unhoused free condition" (1.2.27). This loss is willingly incurred for Desdemona, but there is constant awareness in Othello's perception that it represents a major sacrifice (Bevington 2007: 227). Whenever Othello relies on source domain ANIMALS in his metaphorical language, there is a potent tone of self-pity due to betrayal and disappointment. Here, he is overwhelmed by the fact that he has confined his mighty and adventurous spirit for the creature so shrewd and undeserving.

> O devil, devil!
> If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
> Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.
> Out of my sight!
>
> (4. 1. 247-250)

According to Spurgeon (1935: 335), more than half of animal references in the play are Iago's. Conceptualization based on source domain ANIMALS is manifested in metaphorical expressions such as "black rams topping white eves", "plagues of flies", "spiders catching flies in their webs", "wolves in pride", "prime goats", "hot monkeys", "asses led by their noses", and "blind cats and puppies". To these disturbing images, Othello adds "ill-boding ravens flying over infected houses" and "crocodile tears". Othello is indoctrinated by Iago so that his conceptualization and verbalization resemble emotionally detached, insensitive, and almost vulgar tone of the villain. After he strikes Desdemona, to the astonishment of everyone present, Othello persists in not showing remorse and dismissively reacts to her tears, claiming that there is no serenity in women's sadness or distress because all is a great act. In this, we are reminded of Iago's depiction of women as two-faced when he says that they are "saints" in their "injuries" (2.1.112).

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5   See: Ćirović, Mirka (2021).

Othello's metaphorical expressions that draw on source domain ANIMALS are usually noticed at the moments vital for his inner experience. Regarding this, Clemen ([1951] 1966: 124) observes that forcefulness and agitation of the images that Othello uses serve as indicators of his own passionate nature.

The fountain from the which my current runs,

> Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
> Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
> To knot and gender in!
>
> (4. 2. 59-62)

The weakness of Othello's love for Desdemona is that he completely depends on it. LOVE IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor describes Desdemona as a current of fresh water that enables the sustainability of Othello's life, which is represented through the concept of a fountain. The amount of water in the fountain is the quantity of feeling, while freshness, cleanness, and transparency of water represent the quality of emotion. The image of an empty fountain, whose source has dried up, is the end of love. However, for Othello the end of love is not only comparable to a sad sight of an empty and useless fountain; Desdemona's fall in virtue translates into a cistern full of toads. Kott describes Othello's internal landscape as expanding outwards ([1964] 1966: 114). The environment in the play resembles a dump cistern for reptiles and amphibians to knot and gender. The ambience that Othello describes serves the purpose of depicting a degraded world in which virtue, ideals of love, marriage, friendship and chivalry have all collapsed.

> O curse of marriage,
> That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
> And not their appetites! I'd rather be a toad
> And live upon the vapor of a dungeon
> Then keep a corner in the thing I love
> For others' uses.
>
> (3. 3. 268-273)

Apart from a dark and dump cistern, the environment of the play also reminds of a dungeon. The world is confined. It is without the sun, moon, or stars. Othello proclaims that he would rather be a creature as loathsome as a toad who lives and breathes upon vapours of a filthy dungeon than turn a blind eye to his wife's infidelity, or make peace with her dishonour. Potter (2008: 35) reads this metaphorical expression as an infantile rage over the situation in which one's possession has been spoilt by the uses of others. Iago persuades Othello into jealousy so powerful that it is virtually impossible to prove Desdemona's honesty. He discards Emilia as a witness and rejects Desdemona's professions of innocence in brutal and rather disturbing manners. When she expresses hope that her husband esteems her honest, Othello relies on a simile "as summer flies are in the shambles that quicken even with blowing" (4.2.66-7). Othello compares his wife's honesty and decency to flies in rotting meat and to maggots multiplying with the blowing wind, which is illustrative enough of the tragic hero's obsession with spoiled flesh. When he builds his metaphorical language, Othello seems to sharpen his senses, and he tends to "sense all abstract matters as palpable, testable, audible, and visible things" (Clemen [1951] 1966: 124).

Towards the end of the play, as Iago's villainy becomes known to everyone, the conceptualization of this character draws on source domain DOG. As an epithet, "dog" has been offensively used since the

time of Homer (Olsen 2013: 2); however, when Roderigo addresses Iago as "inhuman dog" (4.1.62), he negates him as man and comprehends his appalling crimes through bestiality. In this view, he is joined by Lodovico who ends the play in a similar manner.

> O Spartan dog,
> More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
> (5. 2. 363-364)

"Spartan dog" emphasizes some major characteristics of the villain. In his cancellation of emotions and fellow feelings, in his lack of capacity to comprehend love and happiness, Iago becomes fierce and merciless. Lodovico's metaphorical expression conjures the imagery of unlimited appetite, where Iago is seen as a bloodthirsty animal. The usage of adjective "Spartan" has further inference regarding Iago's character. Spartans were known for their brief, laconic answers. When Iago is asked "why", which is one of the most fundamental questions that the play poses, he simply answers, "what you know, you know" (5.2.304). Iago's silence that follows the discovery of his malicious deeds is disturbing and unsettling, not only because he remains unrepentant before his victims, but also because it proves that evil in man is sometimes without explanation. The final exchanges in the play are attempts to comprehend Iago's character and his motives. Othello tries to understand the phenomenon of Iago by relying on source domain DEVIL and evil is eventually disassociated from blackness.

> I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.
> If thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.
> (5. 2. 286-287)

Othello literary scrutinizes Iago's physical appearance in search of a demonic sign. In not noticing cloven feet on him, Othello seems confused because it is difficult to grasp that simply a man is capable of such wicked deeds. Unlike Richard III, for example, whose criminality is encrypted in his beast-like physical characteristics (Olsen 2013: 86), Iago's physicality is not out of the ordinary in any way that could indicate such distortion of the mind and spirit, which is exactly where Shakespeare's contemporaries become victims of their stereotypes. In matters of cognition, the playwright is ahead of his time, and ahead of any time one might say. In *Othello,* Shakespeare does not link the ugliness of form to ugliness of character, as the rule of Renaissance physiognomy would have it. When he demands explanation from Iago, Othello settles in referring to him as a "demidevil" (5.2.302), which shows the villain as human in appearance but demonic in nature. This means that Shakespeare allowed the existence of individuals whose capacities to pretend and deceive were exceptional, and whose malicious intentions, contempt of love and virtue were beyond the cognitive apparatus of other people.

Conclusion

Investigating the meaning of metaphorical linguistic expressions, identifying conceptual metaphors in their roots, noticing recurrent cognitive patterns in the text is a way to achieve a more objective insight into the themes and concepts that the play is preoccupied with. The notion that *Othello* does not engage with the issues of race because in Shakespeare's time England was still not an empire may safely be discarded because cognition and the language which embodies it go in the direction of racial discourse, among other

things. What follows from this is that conceptualization of "Other" through animal-related metaphors does not come as a consequence of colonization, discrimination, and oppression but rather facilitates all these. Animals in the source domain prove *Othello* to be interested in the devastating outcomes of prejudices and stereotypes, which are constructed by exceptionally vivid and powerful metaphors. The majority of animal-related metaphors are Iago's. As an indoctrinator and manipulator who inscribes the meaning for others, he relies on cold rationality and speculative habit of the mind to identify unstable social constructs so that these could become instances of critical perception which triggers hatred, violence, and discrimination in various forms. Iago is not only a racist, but a misogynist and misanthrope as well. Through this villain, Shakespeare questions the representation of evil, which is eventually disattached from stereotypical modes of perception. By relying on disturbing metaphorical language that leads towards the tragic end, Shakespeare warns against cognitive patterns which discriminate, prejudice, and indoctrinate rather than refer to them in the form of a historical palimpsest. Next to Iago, Othello also uses a significant number of animal-related metaphors; however, metaphors in his discourse are spontaneous, revelatory of passionate nature and rich imagination. Lascivious and disgusting animals appear in the thought and speech of the tragic hero as he becomes indoctrinated by Iago's cognitive input, where people are persistently depicted as degraded and fallen from virtue. The emergence and intensification of animal imagery in Othello's discourse allow us to follow the tragic hero's rapid journey from an excellent state of the mind towards its exact opposite.

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