Aspects of Cartographic Demonization in Shakespeare's *Othello*

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Abstract

This research paper examines the concept of cartographic demonization in Shakespeare's *Othello*, focusing on how geography and spatial metaphors are employed to geographically demonize and marginalize Othello as an outsider, based on his geographical background. Cartographic demonization, defined as the process of using maps, geographical representations, or spatial imagery to produce negative views of certain individuals or locations, is essential to comprehending Othello's depiction as the "tainted Other." The study explores how spatial and racial constructs contribute to Othello's alienation in Venetian society, regardless of his military rank or personal qualities. By studying essential scenes and dialogues, the paper reveals how Othello's African origins and Moorish identity are portrayed through a prism of otherness, tying him to barbarism, savagery, and moral perversion. References to "cannibals" and "anthropophagi," together with metaphors such as the "barbary horse," characterize Othello as both exotic and menacing. The geographical and racial prejudices are further intensified in the transition from Venice to Cyprus when Othello's identity increasingly merges with what was depicted as the "barbaric East." Theoretical perspectives from Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Robert T. Tally Jr.'s *Spatiality* elucidate how literary mapping influences Othello's narrative, transforming him into a character that represents the ideological and racial demarcations between the familiar and the unfamiliar. The results indicate that geographic demonization not only alienates Othello but also exposes him to exploitation, ultimately resulting in his terrible demise. This analysis highlights the persistent importance of spatial critique in comprehending how literature mirrors society's perspectives on race, identity, and difference.

Keywords: Cartographic Demonization, Spatial Metaphors, Racial Otherness, Geographical Identity, Colonialism

1. Introduction

Cartographic demonization, a relatively new term, refers to the use of maps, spatial representations, or geographical metaphors to construct negative images of certain groups or regions. It emphasizes showing some areas or people as "other" or inferior. Therefore, it is used as a mechanism by writers, poets, and playwrights to justify religious missionary work, colonial control, social hierarchies, and imperial ideologies by visually isolating or demonizing groups that are considered outside the dominant cultural or political order. In *Othello*, Shakespeare explores how racial identity and spatial geography intersect to construct the protagonist as an ideological 'Other,' reinforcing colonial binaries through language, setting, and symbolism. The Mediterranean serves as an effective representation highlighting the racial conflicts between Othello, a Moor, and the mostly white Venetian society (Johanyak & Lim, 2010, p. 93). The physical distance separating Venice from Cyprus exposes not only

the geographical difference but also the deeper cultural and symbolic divide between Othello's status as a foreigner and the European world he wishes to be part of. Öz Öktem argues that *Othello* and other early modern English plays often depict the Moors as "villainous outsiders" who symbolize the "darkly subversive forces" that threaten European society (Öktem, 2021, p. 126). This intellectual and geographical mapping reinforces Othello's status as the "tainted Other". It reinforces the racial prejudices seen in the historical processes highlighted by Philip Jenkins. Jenkins notes that Europeans have a fear of Muslims and that the colonial mindset portrays the East as being inferior (Jenkins, 2007, p. 106). Additionally, this racialized mapping extends to the wider Mediterranean world, where Othello's position as an outsider is worsened by the imperial and racial narratives that were ingrained in the cartography of the time (Brotton, 2008, p. 231).

In Shakespeare's era, cartography played an important role in shaping social perceptions, particularly through the depiction of the "Moor" in *Othello*. The word "Moor", usually associated with Muslims, captured the complex interactions of the age with the Ottoman Empire (Halil & Riche, 2020, p. 79). Shakespeare's portrayal of Othello as a Moor reflects modern English worries about cultural identification and the danger of the forthcoming Ottoman Empire (Johanyak, 2009, p. 77). *Othello* not only reflects the prevalent stereotypes of Muslims as outsiders, but it also highlights the paradox of a Muslim converting to Christianity (Ghanim, 2018, p. 150). Furthermore, influencing English playwrights' imaginations was the relationship Queen Elizabeth developed with the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Murad II, which brought in a new age of communication and cultural contact (Ghanim, 2018, p. 151). This historical context highlights how crucial sociological viewpoints and geographical depictions are for understanding Shakespeare's works.

Shakespeare explores the intersection of race, geography, and identity in *Othello*. He uses Othello as a lens through which he portrays the geographical and racial boundaries. Othello becomes a symbol of the "Other" in Venetian society. His identity is marked by his racial and geographical differences from the dominant Venetian society. Ania Loomba argues that such characters are "constructed" through colonial and racial stereotypes (Loomba, 2007, p. 101). Othello's sense of alienation is not just a matter of race but is also tied to his displacement from his homeland in Africa to the foreign land of Venice. Edward Said helps us understand how geographical boundaries, whether literal or metaphorical, play a critical role in this social construction of identity. In such geographical representation, we can find that the colonizer defines and controls the space that the colonized inhabits (Said, 1979, p. 204).

Othello's struggle to navigate this alien terrain is underscored by his awareness of his geographical and racial "otherness". In this sense, Homi Bhabha points out that the colonized often internalize the oppressive gaze of the colonizer, and this internalization shapes Othello's perceptions of himself (Bhabha, 2012, p. 114). Furthermore, Paul Gilroy discusses how geographic boundaries affect cultural identity. He highlights that the disorienting effects of displacement in Othello force him to reevaluate his identity within the new spatial context (Gilroy, 1993, p. 85). This disorientation is reflected in Othello's struggles with his identity in Venice, where he is constantly reminded of his status as an outsider in both geographical and racial terms. Stuart Hall also argues that the experiences of individuals who move between geographic spaces often result in fragmented and fluid identities (Hall, 2018, p. 225). Consequently, the play shows how Othello's identity is demonized through the intersection of race and geography.

This research paper focuses on exploring cartographic demonization and how Shakespeare handles the interaction of geography, race, and social identity in the play. A theoretical framework that has been applied in its foundation is comprised of *Orientalism* by Edward Said and *Spatiality* by Robert T. Tally Jr. Regarding the demonizing of Othello's identity, we look at how racial ideas and geographical depictions entwine. Said highlights how the West has created the East as the "Other" and how it has defined itself in resistance to the Orient historically. He says, "A line is drawn between two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant" (Said, 1979, p. 31). The theoretical framework used in *Othello* extends to focus on Othello's representation as an outsider. Tally claims, "Space is not merely a container for action but an active element in the production of meaning within literary works" (Tally 8). The voyage from Africa to Venice reflects the spatial dynamics of colonial discourse. It is still characterized by the "otherness" of racial and cultural communities. It is also a representation of the conflict that exists between the known and the unknown. Robert Tally highlights the need for spatial analysis in the context of literature rather strongly. According to him, "the mapping of territories within a narrative can reveal underlying power structures" (Tally Jr, 2013, p. 3). In *Othello*, the mapping of Othello's journey from Africa to Venice is a navigation across complex social and ethnic terrain as much as a physical journey.

2. Geography and Racial Demonization in *Othello*

In *Othello*, the intersection of geography and race becomes a major mechanism for understanding how community limitations construct and restrict identity. Othello's account of his life events —"I ran it through, even from my boyish days / to th' very moment that he bade me tell it, /wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances /Of moving accidents by flood and field," (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1. Sc. 3, 153-156)—demonstrates how the geographical locations he comes to frame his personal narrative and the racialized expectations that go along with these spaces. Marked by "disastrous chances" and "moving accidents by flood and field", his journey reflects the colonial and racialized geography of the play. So, spatial otherness is the mirror through which Othello is geographically demonized. Said argues that the political mapping of the world into "Oriental" and "Occidental" areas is not only an ideological construct but also a strategy of consolidating power through geographical classifications that help to differentiate the "civilized" from the "barbarous"(Said, 1979, p. 210). Othello falls

inside the limits of racial and cultural "otherness," hence his acceptability into Venetian society is constrained by this framework of geographical and racial difference.

Robert Tally offers a perceptive framework for appreciating how such spatial ideas impact Othello's narrative. Literary mapping, he claims, shows how literary works construct imagined places interacting with real locations. It also shapes how individuals negotiate and view space (Tally Jr, 2013, p. 7). This spatial mapping demonstrates how Othello is viewed in Venice, a city that nonetheless imposes territorial limits defining his outsider position, even with its cultural variety. Brabantio's harsh reaction to his daughter's marriage—"O, thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter? / Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her!" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1. Sc. 2, 80-87)—reveals how geographical divisions also reinforce social and racial hierarchies. Gillies, writing on poetic geography in Shakespeare, argues that the violence of racial and geographical distinction mirrors the "ancient poetic geography", where the geography of difference marks the civilized from the barbarous (Gillies, 1994, p. 98). Thus, Othello's racialized geography is not only a spatial but a social construct that confines him to the role of the exotic "Other,". It reinforces the geographical and racial boundaries that define his tragic fate.

Shakespeare employs geographic and racial markers to depict Othello as an outsider. He designated him as a "Moor with 'thick-lips'" which serves as a distinct reference to his North African heritage and foreign status (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1, Sc. 1, 72-73). This label, imbued with connotations of otherness, dehumanizes Othello by depicting him as an animalistic figure. This technique parallels Edward Said's analysis of Orientalist discourse in its portrayal of the East. Said argues that "Shakespeare's *Othello* (that 'abuser of the world'), the Orient and Islam are always represented as outsiders having a special role to play inside Europe" (Said, 1979, p. 71). Matthieu Chapman complicates the racial interpretation of *Othello* by arguing that the term "black" in Elizabethan discourse cannot be simplistically equated with sub-Saharan African identity, as the concept of racial identity was significantly more fluid during that period (Chapman, 2016, p. 109). The racial and cultural distinctions in *Othello* correspond with Wortham's observation that Shakespeare's audience was shaped by medieval cartographic representations, like the T-O map, which reflected a worldview that classified the East as exotic and sinful, thereby accentuating Othello's position as an outsider (Wortham, 2016, p. 74). Zid and Al-Amri argue that the primary conflict in *Othello* illustrates the confrontation between East and West. It is exemplified by the "sinful" union of Othello, the "barbarian," and Desdemona, who symbolizes European purity (Zid & Al-Amri, 2019, p. 51). This intersection of cultures is being examined through cartographic and cultural perspectives. Consequently, it enhances the play's investigation of racial and geographical demonization.

Iago's characterization of Othello as a "Barbary horse" "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" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1. Sc. 1, 122-125) evokes the Barbary Coast, a region linked to North Africa and frequently perceived as uncivilized and exotic within European discourse. Through the comparison of Othello to a Barbary horse, Iago diminishes him to an animalistic stereotype, thereby reinforcing racial hierarchies and notions of otherness. This concept of geographic and racial demonization corresponds with Edward Said's examination of *Orientalism*, in which he contends that the West perpetually depicts the East as inferior, irrational, and immoral, thereby reinforcing European self-identity (Said, 1979, p. 45). The statement "you are one of those that will not serve God if the devil bid you" illustrates a binary opposition, characterizing Othello as morally corrupt and associating him with evil, solely based on his racial and cultural identity. Enterline claims that "Barbary" functions as both a geographical and emotional trigger. It connects Africa's exoticism with Desdemona's sorrow to contrast with Iago's initial insult (Enterline, 2014, p. 162). Klein also explores Othello's "placelessness". He suggests that his ambiguous racial and geographic identity renders him a transgressive figure. It is positioned between cultural spaces and racial categories (Klein, 2017, p. 34). The term "Barbary horse" demonstrates how cartographic representations and geographical stereotypes in the play marginalize Othello and reinforce his position as an outsider within Venetian society.

Brabantio's accusation that Othello has "corrupted" his daughter with "spells and medicines bought of mountebanks" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1, Sc. 3, 73-74) links Othello's African background with superstition and dishonesty. This strengthens a geographical connection between the exotic East and magical practices. This further fits Said's *Orientalism;* he claims that Orientalism not only reflects the "truth" but also creates a narrative of misrepresentation whereby the East is portrayed as an "Other" via a lens of superstition and backwardism (Said, 1979, p. 272). Brabantio's accusation that Othello employed magic is thus a clear example of how Orientalist ideas distorted non-European civilizations and supported racial stereotypes via geographical and cultural demonization, hence permeating Western thinking. Gillies notes that Othello's "exoticism" is sometimes presented as dangerous. He implies that his use of geographic terminology, such as "Propontic" and "Hellespont," conforms to the old discourse of exoticism linking these names to a world of myth and magic (Gillies, 1994, pp. 28–29). Likewise, Watts emphasizes how these "exotic place-names" in *Othello* suggest areas where the lines separating reality from myth blur, therefore stressing a world full of magical and legendary overtones (Watts, 2017, p. 17).

Othello's alienation in the tragedy is closely linked to cartographic demonization, positioning his identity as a Moor, a figure of foreign origin, as a cultural and geographical outsider. His "otherness" serves as a significant mechanism for social marginalization, as Venetian society—a closed, predominantly white, and Christian community—perceives him as an outsider, regardless of his military capabilities. Berry observes that Othello is "the most rootless of Shakespeare's tragic heroes," lacking a geographical or cultural basis, which demonstrates his displacement (Berry, 1990, p. 323). The concept of "placelessness" highlights Othello's status as an outsider, influenced not only by his race but also by his ambiguous position within the structure of Venetian society. Othello is already marginalized as a racial outsider. Toker pays attention to the European widespread view that individuals of African descent are intrinsically inferior (Toker, 2014, p. 31). Othello's alienation also serves as a reflection

of the broader cartographic constructs that depict him as an aberration within the European world. These constructs are keys to his tragic downfall, as they contribute to the insecurities that Iago manipulates. Said's examination of *Orientalism* clarifies how non-Western identities, such as Othello's, were constructed in contrast to Western standards, frequently depicted as inferior, irrational, and morally deficient (Said, 1979, p. 240). Othello's involvement with negative impressions results in a more intense sensation of estrangement. He spoke out, "Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content! /Farewell the plumèd troops and the big wars /That makes ambition virtue! O, farewell!" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 3. Sc. 3, 400–402). His alienation marks a kind of cartography demonizing that frames him as an outsider, therefore displaying him as vulnerable to self-doubt and manipulation.

Brabantio's portrayal of Othello as having a "sooty bosom" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1, Sc. 2, 89) links his race to moral corruption and impurity, so presenting him as a contaminating agent inside the pure and cultured Venetian society. This geographical demonization fits Edward Said's theory of *Orientalism*, in which the West creates non-European identities as both exotic and inferior and links them with horror and barbarism (Said, 1979, p. 72). Emphasizing Othello's foreignness as something dangerous and uncivilized, the references to "cannibals" and "anthropophagi" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1, Sc. 3, 166-168) help to further map Othello onto terrible images. Othello's tales of far-off worlds, where he meets the terrible creatures, only serve to accentuate his "decenteredness" and alien status, therefore rendering him a questionable figure in the view of Venetian society (Bladen, 2015, p. 24). The way Othello is framed as both a marvel and a threat—a figure who exists on the periphery of society, marked by the fantastical and monstrous traits connected with the foreign and the unknown— mirrors the medieval and early modern maps that showed the edges of the known world as inhabited by "monstrous races". Geographical and ethnic preconceptions help to build this cartography demonization that finally forms Othello's terrible isolation as he absorbs these degrading projections.

Othello struggles with the social prejudices he encounters; he cannot negotiate the "spaces" of Venetian society, just as people in unfriendly surroundings struggle with the alienation of not being able to "wayfind" or "image their place" (Tally Jr, 2013, p. 8). The way maps—real and imagined—fill empty spaces with societal anxieties (Tally Jr, 2013, p. 26). Similarly, the space presents Othello's African roots as depicted as a site of barbarism and cannibalism. Stereotypes of violence and savagery define the metaphorical blank spaces of the known world where his racial identification and alien origins are mapped. Othello's geographical mapping as a "monster" captures how his alienation is not only personal but also formed by a more general system of cultural and geographical mappings defining him as an outsider. He declares, "I had been happy, if the general camp, / Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body, / So I had nothing known" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 3, Sc. 3, 397-399), we see the destructive power of these societal projections as Othello sees himself through Venetian prejudice—trapped in a narrative where his racial and geographical "otherness" becomes the ultimate cause of his downfall. Hizam and Guo similarly explore the distortion of identity in European literature. They state that "Marlowe contributed to demonizing the Orient; he represented Muslims as monsters and demons, like the conflict between Tamburlaine's and Bajezeth's forces" (Hizam & Guo, 2023, p. 10). Marlowe twists Islamic identity for dramatic purposes, while Othello's identity is similarly contorted and situated within the cultural and geographical fears of Venetian society.

Emilia's assertion that Othello is a "blacker devil" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 5, Sc. 2, 161) spatially associates him with evil. It implies that his racial identity intrinsically connects him to moral depravity. This demonization employs theological and moral imagery. It portrays Othello as spiritually and socially marginalized. The concept of race as an indicator of moral inadequacy corresponds with Edward Said's examination of Western portrayals of the Orient, which are characterized as remote, eccentric, and morally deficient (Said, 1979, p. 124). The play's simplistic and demeaning imagery highlights this demonization, as Emilia's statements mirror historical worries around race, which, as Hamamra observes, relate to the view of Africa as a realm of darkness and savagery (Hamamra, 2019, p. 29). Vitkus further claims that Othello's portrayal as a "black devil" conveys the simultaneous demonizing of his race. It draws on early modern European ideas about Africa and the Islamic world as inferior and corrupt (Vitkus, 2019, p. 218). Othello's image as a monster creature connects with the Eastern geographical and cultural "otherness". It supports a widespread social structure of marginalization and exclusion.

Likewise, Iago's inappropriate depiction of Othello and Desdemona's closeness as "making the beast with two backs" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1, Sc. 1, 129–130) dehumanizes their relationship, therefore reducing it to an animalistic and base act. Maillet connects Iago's racial portrayal of Othello as an aggressor with no moral agency to remove Othello and Desdemona from their humanity, therefore implying that they lack souls (Maillet, 2019, p. 2). Said's idea of "character-as— designation" (Said, 1979, p. 120) is clear here as Iago reduces Othello to a simple and negative classification, much as early modern maps showed the edges of the known world as inhabited by "monstrous races" such as the "Anthropophagi" and "Cynocephali" (Bladen, 2015, p. 24). This cartographic demonizing supports Othello's sense of moral and geographical outsider. Shakespeare uses language powerfully to turn Othello into a symbol of evil and corruption, much as Orientalism reduces complicated individuals into stereotyped, negative portrayals. This not only isolates Othello but also increases his alienation by reducing him to a "black devil" and an animalistic figure, which finally facilitates his tragic downfall.

3. Spatial Demonization of Othello

In *Othello*, the conflict between racial identity and geographical boundaries becomes prominent in the way the play portrays Othello as the "Other." He is characterized by both his African background and his remoteness from Venetian civilization. As Othello refers to as a man of "free and open nature" who is "led by th' nose / As asses are," Iago's exploitation of Othello's

nature is deeply rooted in racialized spatial imagery (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1. Sc. 3, 441-442). This portrayal highlights an ideological divide, framing Othello's African identity in stark contrast to the perceived civility of Venetian society, therefore establishing the colonial conformity separating the "civilized" Europe from the "barbarian" East. Said points out that this compliance is ideological as well as geographical; Europe is "powerful and articulate," whereas Asia—and so, Africa—is "defeated and distant" (Said, 1979, p. 31). The racist images Iago employs, including "even now, now, very now, an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1. Sc. 1, 97-98), so accentuate the tension by linking the devil and moral corruption to racialized otherness. These sources support a spatial and racial geography that places Othello, regardless of his actual physical presence, as alien to Venetian society. Geographically and spatially, the "white ewe" (Desdemona) and the "black ram" (Othello) separate purity (Venice) from imagined savagery (North Africa). This duality helps to justify Othello's racial identity's demonization.

The play's reliance on the colonial borders that Said outlines in *Orientalism*, where the East is constantly "corrected" or "penalized" for residing outside the confines of European culture, emphasizes even more Othello's "otherness" (Said, 1979, p. 67). Othello, although close to Venice, is a figure of the East because of his race and geographic background. From Brabantio's "damned" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1. Sc. 2, 82) and Othello's reference to Desdemona's name as "begrimed and black," the language of the drama is rife with the dichotomy of dark and light, hell and heaven, where Othello is consistently associated with darkness, evil, and condemnation. Shakespeare's modification of the conventional morality play rules is reflected in these symbolic depictions of Othello as a horrible character (Benjamin, 2025, p. 151). Shakespeare exposes Othello as a sad person caught inside the geographical and ideological limits defining him as the "Other," so preserving and subverting the racial and colonial ideas of the period. Therefore, the spatial dynamics of the play highlight not just the restrictions placed on Othello by society but also the negative consequences of cartography demonizing in the formation of social hierarchies and racial identities.

The geographical shift Othello takes from Venice to Cyprus is an important space where the ideological divide between "civilized" Europe and the "barbaric" East is most clear. Strategically at the centre point of East and West, Cyprus is a disputed area that highlights the ongoing political and cultural conflict between Venice and the Ottomans. Iago asks Othello, "Are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that / Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?" (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 2. Sc. 3, 182-183). Stressing the geographical and ethnic circumstances of the play, Iago asks Othello how the war for control over Cyprus represents the larger general conflict between Christian Venice and the "barbarous" Turk. Deeply rooted in a legacy of denigration of the Ottoman Empire as irrational, dishonest, and cruel is this "binary" conflict (Vaughan, 1994, p. 23). Together with Iago's strategic manipulation of Othello's race and military status, the frequent references to the "ottomites" and the "barbarous" nature of Cyprus (Shakespeare & Mann, 2014, Act 1. Sc. 3, 39-41) fit the concept of cartographic demonization, whereby geographical areas are imbued with ideological and racial meanings. Othello's personal otherness is mapped onto Cyprus by the demonization of the Turks, therefore transforming him into a figure of the East that always stays outside the European boundary. It is a story from the outside as well.

Cyprus stands for social and racial conflict as much as a geographical area of military threat. Christofides argues that "Othello's problem is and always has been the problem of Cyprus," so Othello's fall from grace is related to the geopolitical strife defining Cyprus (Christofides, 2016, p. 16). Gillis mentions that the name of Othello itself is connected to the Ottoman Empire, intensifying this sense of spatial estrangement, hence blurring the boundaries between Othello's African identification and the more general racialized and exoticized figure of the Turk (Gillies, 1994, p. 32). Combining Othello's identity with that of the Ottoman, Egyptian, and Indian "Other," the play creates his African background as a sort of "pandemic exoticism" (Gillies, 1994, p. 32). This mix of racial and geographical locations not only places Othello outside Venetian culture but also captures the more general colonial fears of Shakespeare's day. The ideological war over Cyprus is not just military but also racial since the area itself turns into a battlefield for the opposing forces of civilization and savagery, a struggle shown in the manipulation of Othello's identity and the ongoing "separation" between East and West. Shakespeare thus deftly maps Othello's tragedy onto the contested territory of Cyprus, where both geographical and racial borders remain unresolved via cartographic demonization.

4. Conclusion

This research paper demonstrates how Shakespeare's *Othello* utilizes visual representations and geographical concepts to construct a negative narrative. The interaction between Venice and Cyprus reveals how spatial constructions can demonize individuals based on their geographical background. This geographical division underscores the play's emphasis on themes of identity and exclusion. It also emphasizes the power of geographic demonization while simultaneously underscoring the complexity of Shakespeare's portrayals. The representation of Othello as an honourable and a devilish figure questions the simplistic use of spatial metaphors. This complexity calls for a deeper understanding, indicating that Shakespeare might be questioning the very mechanisms of othering he depicts, thus providing insight into the constraints of spatial frameworks in shaping identity.

This study further addresses the fears that Europeans had toward the Other during the Elizabethan era. For instance, Othello's portrayal of himself as a Moor who navigates the boundaries that divide the "civilized" West from the "barbaric" East. This representation reinforces the concept of cartographic demonization, which contributes to demonizing Arabs and Muslims in North Africa and the Middle East later on. Having this historical perspective broadens our understanding of the ways in which

the play interacts with racial identity and the constraints brought forth by society. It explores the human inclination to define the self by excluding the other. The cartographic demonizing of *Othello* is a prime example of how geographical metaphors define what they are not, therefore constructing a negative cartographic perception towards the Other. This study also clarifies the processes of marginalization and shows the ongoing human inclination to construct identity by demonization.

The paper examines the ontological and epistemological aspects of spatial metaphors in literature. It explores the impact of spatial conceptions on perceptions of identity and knowledge, challenging the boundaries between the self and the other. This investigation enhances the comprehension of how literature mirrors and influences cultural notions of identity. Its findings also strengthen spatial literary criticism when it explores Shakespeare's use of cartographic imagery in the construction of Othello's identity. The role of spatial metaphors in narrative structure and character development offers insights into the poetics of early modern drama and its engagement with themes of race and identity.

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