



## Verbal Combat Strategies in William Shakespeare's Othello: Othello versus Iago

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### ABSTRACT

Jeremy Hawthorn in his book, *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* (1992), argues that Cultural Materialism is an "umbrella term" that allows itself the opulence to use a wide range of instruments and theories from many different disciplines and interdisciplinaries in the superstructure. This also allows us to justify the nature of both commonly acknowledged and abstruse socio-cultural episteme and discourse, one of the most prominent of which is the subject matter of power and power relations.

This study, which was originally part of a larger body of work on Cultural Materialism, attempts to draw upon a few different theories to scrutinize the confrontational relationship that exists between the two prominent characters of Shakespeare's (1953) *Othello* (namely Othello and Iago), as represented by the duel-like direct and indirect orations and actions of the two characters. The main purpose of the article is to show how Iago is able to control the words of Othello against him and thus succeed in manipulating other characters.

The critical and theoretical debates are drawn upon in this paper will include Austin's (1999) attitudes on language as action, Bourdieu's (1999) argument of dialogue as contest and Hutchby's (1999) findings on turn-taking strategies. This study will also utilize some theories of Michel Foucault such as discourse, language, power and power relations in order to have some influence in relation to individuals' ideas.

### Keyword:

Cultural Materialism,  
Language and Power,  
Oration, discourse, power  
relations

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