

Early Theatre

2021 Prize for Note or Issues in Review Essay, Volumes 22-23

Justin Shaw
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“Rub Him About the Temples”: Othello, Disability, and the Failures of Care’
Early Theatre 22.2 (2019), 171–84
<https://doi.org/10.12745/et.22.2.3997>

Justin Shaw’s article offers a fascinating study of Othello through the lens of ethical care and disability. The essay situates the play in the context of our own time and offers a profound reading of the play. Shaw provides a historically contextualized, detailed analysis of the relationship between Othello and Cassio. He also demonstrates how the handkerchief metaphorically represents an alternative, and more authentic, network of care that is subsumed by Venetian (and by proxy, English) suspicion of blackness and disability. Shaw’s intervention asks us to think in more nuanced ways about race and disability in early modern drama.