

THE EFFECTS OF RACISM ON THE THEATRICAL CAREERS OF  
IRA F. ALDRIDGE, PAUL LEROY ROBESON, AND JAMES EARL JONES

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DAWN DELLA DEVEAUX



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An Abstract  
Presented to the  
Graduate and Research Council of  
Austin Peay State University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Dawn Della DeVaux  
June 23, 1987

## ABSTRACT

This study was made to determine the effects of racism on the theatrical careers of Ira F. Aldridge, Paul Leroy Robeson and James Earl Jones. The history of racism in the theatre begins with the introduction of Ira F. Aldridge, who was forced to leave the United States due to limited opportunities for Black actors only to discover forms of racism while in England.

Racism also affected Paul Leroy Robeson's career in the United States. Despite sterling performances in numerous roles, Robeson was sporadically rejected for political and social reasons. For example, it was due to racism by fellow artists that Robeson was unable to perform Othello on Broadway until the 1940's. Nevertheless, he had greater opportunities during his stage career than did Ira Aldridge.

James Earl Jones educates his audience concerning the racist attitudes that permeate general society. The work he has done throughout his career shows a true sense of concern for fellow Blacks throughout the world. Jones' work attempts to depict differing psychological traits of Blacks in the United States as well as in South Africa.

Clearly, progressive strides have been made by these Black actors in the world of theatre. Moreover, it is certain that opportunities for them to live within their chosen professions have increased considerably as civil rights and other social and legal concerns become more dominant.

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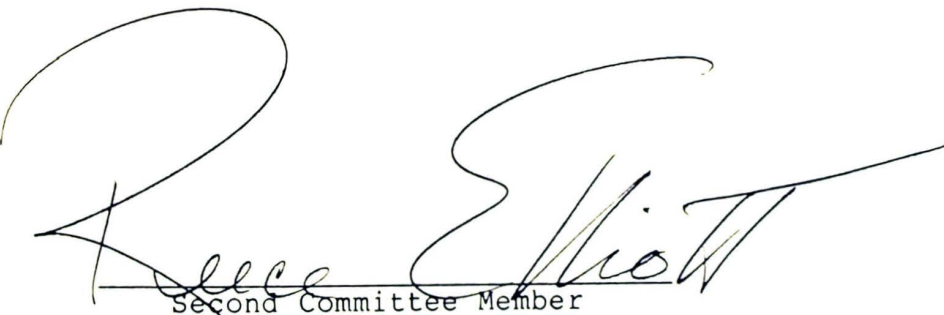
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To the Graduate and Research Council:

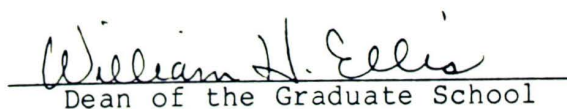
I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Dawn Della DeVeaux entitled "The Effects of Racism on the Theatrical Careers of Ira F. Aldridge, Paul Leroy Robeson, and James Earl Jones." I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content, and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts, with a major in Theatre, Speech, Mass Communications.

  
Major Professor

  
Second Committee Member

  
Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Graduate and  
Research Council:

  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the professional lives of Ira Frederick Aldridge, Paul Leroy Robeson and James Earl Jones in an attempt to determine the effects of racism by others on the three Black actors' theatrical careers. The current project will not only provide insight into an important part of the history of the American theatre, but it should yield a clearer vision of the state of today's Black actor.

As a means of facilitating this study, the thesis will attempt to answer several relevant questions. First, was there a relationship between the roles that Aldridge, Robeson and Jones played and the color of their skin? Were there dramatic limitations imposed upon them? Moreover, as actors, were these men limited in their acting careers to certain geographical sections of America and/or Europe due to their race? If so, what was the nature of their confinement relative to the types of physical theatres in which they played?

One may question the need to understand the limitations placed on these actors. To clarify the importance of such questions, the study is being developed and written for several reasons. First, an analysis of evolving limitations may signal significant changes in the racial attitudes in theatre practitioners and audiences in the theatrical world. Second, an examination of *dramatis personae* that were made



available to Aldridge, Robeson, and Jones, as well as roles of which they were deprived, may reveal deeper insights into the changes of systems of value found among the three actors.

Third, by examining racism in the theatrical world, one which reflects its society, readers can better understand the broader effects of racism. Finally, this scholarship should be of value because there is no work which fully addresses racism and these three actors solely in the live theatre, the primary source of their claim to fame.

To understand the point of focus of this study, it is necessary that the scope of the project be clarified. The writer will explore only the American and European stages and their treatment of Black actors. Moreover, while examining the theatre, the author will highlight the impact of racism only as it pertains to the professional lives of Aldridge, Robeson, and Jones.

An exhaustive review of the literature of this area reveals that there are several books which discuss racism in the performing arts in America and in Europe. One piece of scholarship which deals with racism in film is entitled, From Sambo to Superspade--The Black Experience in Motion Pictures, by Daniel J. Leab. This book is devoted strictly to Blacks in film and the racist treatment of Hollywood producers. It does not, however, examine racism on the American and European stage for the past 180 years. Two other works on the same

subject bear mention. Peter Noble's The Negro in Films discusses the bias encountered by Blacks due to the color of the actors' skin. While Noble's work serves as a good background for the thesis project, the primary purpose of this study is not included. Finally, Edward Mapp's book, Blacks in American Films: Today and Yesterday, chronicles racism that Black actors encountered when attempting to build their careers in Hollywood and elsewhere; however, the legitimate stage is given only cursory treatment in the study. Although there has been comprehensive treatment of Blacks in film, primary evidence related to the three actors under study must be located in several different sources. There is no single source which deals effectively with the author's purpose; however, several primary sources are of value when studying Aldridge. A periodical, Crisis, provides important accounts of Aldridge's life in Russia. Moreover, reviews of Othello from The London Times and The Mirror are helpful. Upon investigating the career of Aldridge, the author examined the reviews to discover what kinds of roles Aldridge played and marked the reviewers' reactions to his acting style. A significant secondary source for Ira F. Aldridge is a book published by Herbert Marshall and Mildred Stock entitled Ira F. Aldridge, The Negro Tragedian. This book is the only major work that reflects a comprehensive treatment of the career of the actor, Ira F. Aldridge.



In contrast to the research found on Aldridge, a review of the literature concerning Paul Leroy Robeson reveals a great wealth of information. The research, however, presents very little scholarship devoted to his live theatrical career. The author uncovered countless pieces of information concerning Robeson's career as an athlete, scholar, orator, linguist, concert-stage singer, film star, and human rights activist, but no comprehensive study concerning racism and its effects on his stage career.

The following primary sources were used to support the thesis statement: A pictorial biography of Paul Robeson entitled, He Has Got the Whole World in His Hands, compiled by Robeson's granddaughter, Susan Robeson; Paul Robeson Speaks, edited by Philip S. Foner, which gives insight into Robeson's thoughts by compiling all available speeches and interviews by Robeson.

Eslanda Goode Robeson, the wife of the subject, wrote a book in 1930 concerning the life of Paul Robeson. The book, Paul Robeson, Negro, is the earliest work dealing with his life. As a major resource, it does not include two primary areas. First, it lacks a comprehensive quality, having been written early in Robeson's career as an actor. If one examines the life of Robeson, one will discover that his career was just beginning in the 1930's. The second problem is that the book does not address the climate of racism during

the time period in which Robeson lived. A positive point of the work is that Eslanda Goode Robeson was an eye witness to the development of her husband's career as an actor and presents a clear picture of how Robeson's professional life evolved.

In a different manner, Virginia Hamilton writes about Paul Robeson in her book, Paul Robeson: The Life and Times of a Free Black Man. The work, published two years before the death of Paul Leroy Robeson, provides background information and discusses civil-rights activities and Robeson's performing career.

The book briefly handles racism encountered by Robeson in the United States as well as in Europe. While it presents a comprehensive study of Robeson's life, it does not address the racist environment under which he lived.

Closer to the pulse of racism in Robeson's time, Joseph Hazel authored a work entitled Paul Robeson: Biography of a Proud Man, in which he examines the controversy concerning Robeson as a Black man living in the United States as well as throughout Europe. Racism relative to his stage career is an important facet of this study, but it fails to survey in depth the prevailing conditions immediately prior to and after Robeson.

Dorothy Gilliam, a reporter for The Washington Post, wrote a book, Paul Robeson: All-American, which presents



Robeson's life. Gilliam began research on the background information before his death and the work was published in 1976, the same year as Robeson's death. The work provides detailed information concerning the boyhood, education and working career of Robeson. As in the case of Nazel's book, however, Gilliam does not take into account a thorough study of racial conditions before and after Robeson.

Charlotte Turner Bell, Paul Robeson's last piano accompanist reveals the final years of Robeson's life in her book, Paul Robeson's Last Days in Philadelphia. Bell's purpose is to show that Robeson did not die a lonely man. Bell contends that Robeson was a strong Black man throughout his life; however, the book is limited to an examination of Robeson's activities from the summer of 1966 until the day of his death on January 23, 1976. Paul Robeson's Last Days in Philadelphia is the most recent book concerning Robeson's life, having been published in 1986.

In addition to the foregoing books, the following works were examined: Edith Isaacs' The Negro in the American Theatre, a study of the Black man and woman as a performer in the American Theatre; Sterling A. Brown's Negro Poetry and Drama, which gives background information concerning the drama and its history in the Black community; finally, Anatol I. Schlosser's dissertation, Paul Robeson: His Career in the Theatre, in Motion Pictures, and on the Concert Stage, which

has become an invaluable tool for the author's thesis by providing some insight into Robeson's stage career.

When treating the final subject, James Earl Jones, the author examined several primary sources, reviews, criticisms, articles and memoirs written by people who have worked with and knew Jones. The major work, Edward Setrakian's 1976 dissertation, The Acting of James Earl Jones, has been of significant value in that it examines Jones' acting techniques. Finally, the author has surveyed newspaper articles, theatre programs, publicity booklets and advertisements to further identify the nature of the stage career of James Earl Jones.

To assist the reader, this thesis will use the term, "racist," to refer to one who believes that some races are inherently superior to other races. They may believe that the superiority stems from intellectual concerns, physical concerns or both.

Having stated the purpose and scope of this study, and having reviewed literature pertinent to the topic, it is necessary to analyze the conditions under which the three Black actors labored. To facilitate this end, the following chapter will chronicle the social climate of their times in an effort to understand more fully the existing conditions as they influenced the theatre.

## Chapter II

Fundamental Systems of Value and Social Milieus in the Times  
of Aldridge, Robeson, and Jones

Just as theatre is a reflection of society, race relations in the theatre are linked to the social climate of the times. The social and political elements which foreshadowed the emergence of Ira Aldridge, one of America's first great Black actors, exemplifies the correlation between theatre and society. In 1776, Americans were fighting for their freedom from the British. Ironically, the social impact of the American Revolution on Blacks was somewhat disheartening. According to historical accounts, Americans were fighting for freedom, but freedom was denied to Black Americans. In 1776, 95 percent of all Black Americans were<sup>1</sup> slaves.

One of the most important consequences of the Revolution was to reduce this proportion considerably and create a sizeable free Black community.<sup>2</sup> Many Whites during the Revolutionary War took the equalitarian principles of the Declaration of Independence quite seriously, and the ideals for which they fought forced them to recognize the contradiction between their democratic professions and the practice of human beings in slavery.<sup>3</sup> As a result, in 1781, a Massachusetts court interpreted the State's constitution as having abolished slavery.<sup>4</sup> The other New England States and Pennsylvania set gradual abolition in motion during the



Revolution, and New York and New Jersey followed suit in 1799<sup>5</sup> and 1804. Slavery, however, was not as prominent in the Northern states as it was in Southern states.<sup>6</sup>

Although it is true that Northern states abolished slavery, they did not prohibit their citizens from participating in the slave trade.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the war unquestionably encouraged and gave moral force to the growing movement for the abolition of slavery.<sup>8</sup> One of the reasons for growing anti-slavery feeling was that 5,000 Black soldiers had fought side by side with their White compatriots in the Revolution.<sup>9</sup>

The Revolution provided a fresh start to a substantial number of newly freed Blacks, including stage opportunities.

Blacks were on the American Stage by the time of the American Revolution. He [the Black] was a character in the plays of the English Authorship, the most popular of which was The Padlock by Isaac Bickerstaffe and Charles Diblin, which was produced<sup>10</sup> in New York in 1796.

Conditions quickly became such that in the North free Blacks began to form their own theatrical companies.

Despite the general notion of freedom, many Black men and women in the North suffered severe discrimination based on skin color. Special laws were designed to regulate Black males and females. For example, they discovered that there were laws established to regulate their behavior, such as curfews and limits on the right to travel, and they were

frequently denied the right to vote and other basic civil liberties.<sup>11</sup>

While the American Revolution provided many Blacks in the North an opportunity to enjoy limited freedom, it did little to end slavery in the South where it was strongest, and most Blacks continued to live in bondage.<sup>12</sup> For entertainment, slaves provided music for their White masters who sat on the big porch of the manse.

Racism, however, was not restricted to young America. It also was found to be engrained in British society. Despite the fact that slavery in Britain was abolished in 1834, racism lingered in its society.<sup>13</sup>

The American equivalent that was designed to free Blacks was the Emancipation Proclamation, which was developed by President Abraham Lincoln. The Emancipation Proclamation stated in 1863, "all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." Lincoln signed the proclamation as a war measure, and it applied only to slaves held by the confederate states. Although Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, he did not feel that Blacks were equal to Whites. As early as 1858, Lincoln expressed his feelings concerning Blacks.<sup>14</sup> Lincoln did not believe that the Black man possessed the same intellectual qualities as those of the White.<sup>15</sup> He was not an advocate of Negro voting,

or Black office holding, or of Blacks serving on juries.

Lincoln believed that the greatest hope for Blacks was the colonization of Africa.<sup>16</sup> Despite Lincoln's beliefs, the Blacks stayed in the United States, although life was difficult for many of them following the Civil War.

Abraham Lincoln who, contrary to all evidence, has been immortalized as the "Great Emancipator," was offended when he was accused of abolitionism and emphatically declared in 1858 during the Lincoln-Douglas debates:

I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the White and Black races; I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or Jurors of Blacks, nor qualifying them to hold office...I will say in addition to this there is a physical difference between the two races living together on terms of social and political equality and in as much as they cannot so live, while they do remain together, there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the White race.<sup>17</sup>

A decade before the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, free Blacks were allowed to see the stage version of Uncle Tom's Cabin but were relegated to segregated sections of the theatre. This production, like other productions



during this time, was performed by a company of White actors. Blacks formed their own companies and held performances for Black and White audiences. In 1821, the African Company of Black actors was formed in New York and presented performances at the African Grove in Greenwich Village. The Black actors performing "graciously allowed" the back of the theatre for the accommodation of the White audience.<sup>18</sup>

In 1896, the Supreme Court, through the case of Plessy V. Ferguson, declared that Blacks accommodations were separate but equal and judicially sanctioned the segregation of Blacks from Whites.<sup>19</sup> The case of Plessy v. Ferguson involved the constitutionality of Louisiana law that required separate accommodations for White people and Black people who travelled on railroads in the State.<sup>20</sup> The United States Supreme Court reports the law was challenged by Homer Plessy, a railroad passenger of one-eighth Black blood, who refused to ride in the section of the train designated for Blacks.<sup>21</sup>

After his conviction in the lower courts, Homer Plessy appealed to the Supreme Court, claiming that the statute was contrary to the 13th and 14th amendments.<sup>22</sup> He also argued in his case that enforced segregation of the races stamped Black people with a "badge of inferiority." The United States Supreme Court voted 8-1 to uphold the Louisiana Statute.<sup>23</sup> For the majority, Justice Henry Billings Brown delivered the opinion upholding the Louisiana law. Brown declared: "The object of the 14th amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the

absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based on color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political, equality or commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either.<sup>24</sup> The lone dissenter was Justice John Marshall Harlan, who argued that "our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens."<sup>25</sup>

The Supreme Court denied the Plessy argument that the ruling labeled Blacks as second-class citizens. The court denied that the law stamped the Black race with a "badge of inferiority," suggesting that such would only be the case if Blacks chose to put that construction upon it.<sup>26</sup>

As the Supreme Court was ruling in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson, Black actors were fighting another type of battle. In the years 1898-99, the musical, A Trip to Coontown, written by the legendary Bob Cole, was presented in New York. It was the first show to be produced and stage managed by Blacks and based on a script which had structure and continuity. Though it was stereotypical in style, this show was revolutionary in technique and moved Black entertainment another step away from minstrelsy.<sup>27</sup>

The events of the Civil War notwithstanding, one of the bloodiest periods for Blacks in America's history was the Race Riots of 1919. As early as 1904, the seeds of the riots were planted. The North as well as the deep South saw a

burgeoning of racial violence in the first decades of the new century. Examples of early riots were those taking place in New York in 1900; Spring, Ohio in 1904; Atlanta, Georgia and Greensburg, Indiana in 1906; Springfield, Illinois in 1908; East St. Louis, Illinois in 1917.<sup>28</sup>

Several factors contributed to the race riots. As large numbers of Southern Blacks moved to the North, Whites saw them taking too many of their jobs in the factories. Blacks were being hired in the factories and Whites were discharged. A second factor which contributed to racial unrest was that a wave of Black migration from the South caused overcrowded housing conditions among Blacks and Whites alike. This frustrated many Whites and added to their hostility toward Blacks.<sup>29</sup> Yet another factor that impacted the race riots was the lynching and killing of Black children, women, and men.<sup>30</sup> Blacks fought back by burning the homes of Whites and also killing them.

In the period during the First World War, a substantial Black exodus from the South occurred and Blacks organized campaigns to challenge not only the concepts of White supremacy but also the discriminatory practices resulting from it.<sup>31</sup> This time period created upheaval because, for the first time, a large number of Northern Blacks aggressively and unconditionally claimed equal rights. Most of the Northern Whites for the first time had to encounter Black migrants who competed for jobs and seemed to be making



unlimited demands on limited housing, transportation and recreation facilities.<sup>32</sup>

Until World War I, the Black man and woman were not seen as a serious threat in many major cities. With the moving of Blacks to the North, Whites became concerned and this concern led to frustration. The race riots throughout the country were a direct result of this frustration on the part of Whites.

During the race riots Black entertainers in the United States became focal figures and targets of the wrath of White males seeking victims. When race relations deteriorated, Black progress in the entertaining arts slowed down, indicating a direct connection between the Black's status as a citizen and his freedom to express himself artistically.<sup>33</sup>

Also in 1919, Britain saw her share of race riots. The riots took place as a result of unemployment pressures among seamen along the British coast where the majority of the Black citizens lived. As a result of the riots, both Blacks and Whites lost their lives.<sup>34</sup>

As troubling as the 1919 race riots were, conditions in the 1940's and 1950's in America made some matters even worse. This was the period in which Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin espoused the anti-communist cause.<sup>35</sup> There were several events which led to Americans' fear of Communism in the United States, but it culminated in the trial and conviction of three American Communist

couriers. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed in  
1953.<sup>36</sup> The trial and case of Alger Hiss also contributed to the lack of trust among Americans. Hiss was accused of having been furnished valuable classified documents, which had been photographed by communist agents and then returned to official files. Hiss denied the charges under oath; his indictment, trial, and conviction on charges of perjury on January 21, 1950<sup>37</sup> shocked the nation.

The Rosenbergs and Hiss were not the only people affected by the hearings led by Joseph McCarthy. Black and also White actors were summoned to be questioned about alleged subversive communist activity. Due to Joseph McCarthy, many actors were unable to practice their profession because they were blacklisted.<sup>38</sup> Ironically, as the livelihood of theatricians and others was being restricted, the basic rights of Blacks were being developed through the Civil Rights movement. It was a humble Montgomery, Alabama seamstress, Rosa Parks, who decided on December 1, 1955 that because she was tired, she refused to release her seat on a bus to a White man as the law required.<sup>39</sup> Mrs. Parks was arrested and the Montgomery Bus Boycott began. The boycott lasted over a year. Unknown to the national scene was a young Baptist minister named Martin Luther King, Jr. King, with other concerned Blacks, led the boycott. The eventual success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott led to massive demonstrations throughout the country.<sup>40</sup>

In 1957, Congress passed the first federal civil rights law since Reconstruction.<sup>41</sup> The Civil Rights Act of 1957 set up the Commission on Civil Rights to investigate charges of denial of civil rights.<sup>42</sup> It also created the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice to enforce federal civil rights laws and regulations.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the strongest civil rights bill in the United States history. It ordered restaurants, hotels, and other businesses that serve the general public to serve all Americans regardless of race, color, religion or national background.

The Civil Rights Movement affected the world of theatre in several different ways. Black revolutionary drama evolved in the theatre world. The terms, "Black revolutionary drama," conjure up visions of the 1960's and 1970's when there erupted on the American theatrical scene a type of play that was allied to and inspired by the Black liberation movement of those momentous years. At no previous time in the history of the American Stage was Black theatre identified so pervasively with militant overtones that described the ongoing struggle of Blacks for equality and justice. Most of these revolutionary plays were written by young authors and produced by Black companies off-Broadway, and in regional and community theatres across the country. Examples of such plays are Slave Ship, The Blacks, and For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf.



It has been seen that throughout history major events have shaped the lives of Blacks living in the United States. As a result, Blacks have been excluded from many freedoms which Whites have enjoyed. A host of challenges lay waiting for Ira F. Aldridge, one of the first Black actors to perform on the legitimate stage.

## Chapter III

## Ira F. Aldridge: Early Black Efforts

Ira Frederick Aldridge, who was considered to have been one of the greatest Shakespearean tragedians of all time, Black or White, was born in 1807 in New York City.<sup>43</sup> Unlike many Blacks born in America at this time, Ira Aldridge began life as a free person due to the fact that New York abolished slavery in 1799.<sup>44</sup> Aldridge's father, Daniel Aldridge, was a lay preacher.<sup>45</sup> Little is known about Aldridge's mother, except that she was born in North Carolina and died when Aldridge was a child.<sup>46</sup>

From an early age Aldridge was interested in public speaking and theatre. While attending the African Free School in New York, he was a member of the public speaking team. Aldridge also worked closely with the theatre in New York City, where he became preoccupied with the world of dramatic art. A minor job enabled him to observe from behind the scenes the action on the stage of the Chatham Theater in New York City. Moreover, he received some acting experience in the African theater in New York, a theater whose company provided an opportunity for Blacks to perform on the live stage. Although they played to a mixed audience, Whites attended the performances often only to shout insulting words to the performers.<sup>47</sup>

Ira Aldridge was not the first Black man to perform on

the English speaking stage. Yet, he is the one known as the  
 "African Roscius."<sup>48</sup> The first man of color appeared on the  
 English Stage in the 1760's. Ignatius Sancho, an unseasoned  
 actor who was an ex-slave and former attendant to the Fourth  
 Earl of Montague, acted in Othello and also in the role of  
 Oroonoko, the same role in which Aldridge later made his  
 London debut.<sup>49</sup>

In 1820, the second Black tragedian, James Hewlett,  
 began pursuing an acting career for himself and influenced  
 Ira Aldridge in the process. Hewlett, a West Indian Black,  
 helped spearhead the African Grove Theatre, which Aldridge  
 attended in his youth. Opportunities for Blacks to perform  
 were limited and the African Grove Theatre gave Blacks a  
 vehicle to perform their craft. The company performed  
 Shakespearean dramas before White and Black audiences as  
 early as 1821, but had problems with White hoodlums who  
 visited and jeered during the plays.<sup>50</sup> Because of a succession  
 of incidents provoked by rowdies, New York authorities closed  
 down the African Grove Theatre.<sup>51</sup> As a consequence, Hewlett's  
 dreams were destroyed. Although Hewlett appeared in other  
 theatres,<sup>52</sup> his leadership in Black theatre waned.

Despite its failure, the African Grove Theatre  
 influenced Ira Frederick Aldridge. Aldridge was the first of  
 a long line of Black artists to flee America to Europe to  
 find outlets for their craft and an acceptance impossible in  
 their native land.<sup>53</sup>



During this time, the hardening of White prejudice against Blacks diminished the opportunity for some Blacks to work. While the careers of Black actors were hindered, White actors' careers prospered, even in Black roles. For example, in 1823, Edwin Forrest played the so-called plantation Negro on the American stage.<sup>54</sup> In 1828, an American actor, Thomas Dartmouth Rice, created the character of Jim Crow.<sup>55</sup>

Due to the difficult conditions in America, Aldridge sailed to England to pursue his craft. Aldridge was the first Black actor of significance to surmount the bars of race prejudice and to receive recognition on the legitimate English speaking stage.

Acceptance in European Theatre did not come easily for Ira Frederick Aldridge. Several times, White performers refused to play on the same stage with Aldridge. Once an actress' husband informed Aldridge's manager that his wife would not play with a "nigger."<sup>56</sup>

In order to get into the theatre, Aldridge became a lackey to a certain actor. Even in England, prejudices against the people of a darker race were so powerful that the actor, learning that Aldridge was engaged to play in the same theatre angrily refused to play on the same stage with a despised "nigger."<sup>57</sup>

Some dramas lent themselves more to giving Aldridge work than other productions. One such play was The Black Doctor, adapted by Ira Aldridge from Le Docteur Noir, by Auguste

Anicet-Bourgeois and Pinel Dumenoir. The play involves a Black doctor who loves and marries the daughter of an aristocratic White family.<sup>58</sup> Aldridge plays the role of the Black doctor who saves the daughter from an accident. They later declare their love for one another and, due to their racial backgrounds, the lovers are forced to marry in secret. As the play unfolds, the couple goes through an unwanted and traumatic separation that culminates in the doctor's death. The Black Doctor is unique, because then, as now, audiences had a difficult time with the theme of interracial marriage. Many years passed before this theme was used again on the stage.<sup>59</sup>

The issue of Aldridge's color was a constant factor in the disposition of roles. The disadvantage of color, which severely limited Aldridge in America, was not entirely overcome in England among a prejudiced, wanton and unthinking few, who could not allow an opportunity to pass for sneering at and ridiculing the "presumptuous nigger."<sup>60</sup> Several Whites believed that he was the exception to the rule, thinking he must be Black by "accident."

Throughout many Blacks' careers, there are offers to perform roles which bring embarrassment to the Black race. Aldridge was offered a role in The Forest Inn, or A Night in the Back Woods, in which the Black servant, waiter or help, impersonated three, four, or more characters and provided examples of the various types of Blacks, as the Dandy Black,

the free Black slave, the laughing nigger and a very old and deaf Black with white hair.<sup>61</sup> There is no record stating that Aldridge performed in these productions.

Although he gained fame in other roles, the role of Othello was most frequently linked to Aldridge. There were two ties between Othello and Aldridge. The one of which Aldridge was most proud was that they both were of princely descendants.<sup>62</sup> Aldridge boasted that his forefathers were princes of the Fulah tribe.<sup>63</sup>

Some White audience members had a difficult time accepting Aldridge as the Moor. Audience members often wished to see a White actor do the role of Othello. Many Whites were uneasy seeing a Black man kissing a White woman.<sup>64</sup>

Although the Black actor was mostly confined to Black plays, such was not always the case. In at least one instance Aldridge whitened his face to play a white character and thereby expand his repertoire. Aldridge played King Lear in this fashion. Several measures were taken to turn Aldridge from a Black actor to a "White" character. A flesh-colored headpiece of paper mache, from which hung silvery locks of hair which covered his wooly thatch, came down almost to his eyebrows like a helmet. Wax filled in the curves of his flat nose. A thick coat of grease paint covered his black cheeks, and a great white beard covered the rest of his face and came down over his chest.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the fact that the characters of Othello and Lear



were high points in Aldridge's career, they were not the only Shakespearean roles of consequence for the great actor.<sup>66</sup>

Ira Aldridge overcame initial resistance in England to become one of the most celebrated Shakespearean actors of his day. Whether Macbeth or Othello was his greatest role, his total achievement was to prove that a Black man was capable of classic performance by the highest standards of White men.

Crisis magazine states that Ira Aldridge had his greatest success, not in the role of Othello, but in Macbeth:

For a splendid capacity to affect deeply, in tragedy and to amuse in comedy, Aldridge was compared with the illustrious English actor Garrick. One author compared the playing of Aldridge with the most grandiose scene in nature<sup>67</sup> she had witnessed, the waterfall at Niagara.

Regardless of Aldridge's even disposition and the quality of his performance, most White audiences were still reluctant to credit the Black race as an important force in theatre. On the horizon, however, loomed Paul Robeson, an actor who spoke in defense of the Black race and who lent growing credibility to Black theatre in America.

## Chapter IV

## Paul Leroy Robeson: The Emergence of a Major Figure

Three decades after Aldridge and only two years after Plessy v. Ferguson, Paul Leroy Robeson was born in 1898, in Princeton, New Jersey. On the surface it would appear that Paul Leroy Robeson enjoyed a fruitful career which was free of racial discrimination. This appearance is, in fact, deceiving.

The avenue which Robeson took to become an actor was unique. Robeson's plans were to become a lawyer and advocate for the rights of Black people. Like many students, Robeson worked various jobs to assist him in paying his fees at Columbia Law School.

Using his voice to earn money for law school, Paul sang with 'The Four Harmony Kings', which included jazz bandleader Fletcher Henderson, in the fabulous Shuffle Along, and at the Cotton Club in a show with the diminutive and dynamic Florence Mills. Another job during law school was playing professional football with the Akron Indians and later the Milwaukee Badgers, on the weekends.

Robeson also supplemented his income by acting in local productions, and he continued to work various jobs until completing his tenure at Columbia Law School. He rejected his first job opportunity after graduation from law school in

1923 when he was offered a political job to tide him over until he could build up his practice, but he rejected it because of many enforced allegiances it entailed. Unwilling to enter the political arena at that time, Robeson continued to look for a job which could use his skills.

Getting a job commensurate with one's education and ability was extremely difficult for a black man, even one of Robeson's renown. During the 1920's, the American Bar Association excluded Blacks from membership, and work for black lawyers was severely limited to politically uninfluential areas or relegated to organizations with the black  
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community.

Robeson waited several months for a position. Finally, he gained employment with a rich law firm in downtown New York City. While working there, one of the firm's White secretaries refused to take dictation from Robeson. Hurt and disillusioned, Robeson resigned and never returned.

After leaving the law firm, Robeson began working with the Provincetown Players, who had not forgotten his performance while in law school as Simon the Cyrenian.<sup>70</sup> Robeson was cast in the lead in two plays written by Eugene O'Neill. The plays were All God's Chillun Got Wings and a revival of The Emperor Jones. In the second play he replaced Black actor, Charles Gilpin. Gilpin's lead in the four-year run of The Emperor Jones had been his most important role. Gilpin was a



talented actor, but there were few roles for Black actors, and after leaving Emperor Jones, he never returned to the stage.

Robeson was more successful in the theatre than Charles Gilpin. However, Robeson was continually reminded that his color would not allow him the same freedom as White actors. The first unpleasant racial incident in his theatrical career was in 1924, when he played Jim in All God's Chillun Got Wings. The play concerns itself with the issue of inter-racial marriage, and both Blacks and Whites were offended by the play. Whites protested principally over the final scene, when the Black protagonist's hand is kissed by his White wife. Blacks were offended by the fact that the wife had been a prostitute who went insane after marrying a Black man.

Newspapers throughout the New York area protested the play by Eugene O'Neill; there were mixed reviews on the production.

William Randolph Hearst's American led the opposition and reported rumors that two backers of the Greenwich village Theater were withdrawing their support in outrage and that the kissing scene had prompted countless blacks to subscribe to the theatre. Both rumors proved to be false. Otto H. Kahn, the stockbroker, and art patroness Mrs. Willard Straight actually increased their support of the theatre, and many Blacks attacked the

Due to the nature of the production, hate mail poured in for the actors and author, with O'Neill being a prime target. The head of the Ku Klux Klan in Georgia threatened O'Neill's son's life if the play opened. Hardly a literary masterpiece, the play was, nevertheless, significant:

All God's Chillun certainly was an imperfect play with serious flaws. But it was the first attempt by an important theatrical company to produce a play starring a black in a human portrayal, and playing a leading role opposite a white woman.<sup>72</sup>

As a result of the controversy, Robeson was given public exposure that served both as a benefit and a detriment. He became known as an upcoming talent, but the racial effects of the situation required a degree of caution among the principals who were affiliated with the production.

Not only did Robeson pursue a stage career, he also sang and performed in movies. While in Europe in 1925, Robeson sang and performed on the live stage. For example, Robeson performed in The Emperor Jones with the Provincetown Players in London, leading to the observation that "the name Paul Robeson was virtually unknown to the general public in England when it was announced he would star in The Emperor Jones. . . ."<sup>73</sup>

While in London, he was able to move more freely as a Black man; the United States, however, continued to limit the

movement and freedom of all Black Americans. During this period Plessy v. Ferguson remained a landmark case denying support for the Black cause. Robeson's wife Eslanda Goode Robeson wrote about her husband's feeling toward freedom in London:

There were few inconveniences for him as a Negro in London. He did not have to live in a segregated district. . .he ate at many other restaurants in town with white or colored friends without fear of the discrimination which all Negroes encounter in  
 74  
 America. As the time grew near for Robeson's opening in London's theatre world the British colonial "pukka sahibs" whose grandfathers had conquered India, and whose fathers were now its civil servants, thought a black man should never be given such prominence. However, most London theatregoers intended to turn out to see the "giant  
 75  
 Negro."

The "giant Negro" gave a stunning performance in the production. After the play had closed, Paul and Eslanda Robeson spent the winter on the French Riviera. They agreed that in England and France there were no apparent racial barriers against black people.

Eslanda and Paul Robeson's new-found freedom was short-lived. They were confronted with situations which clearly stated that they were not welcome as Black people. Lady



Sybil Colefax, a London socialite, gave the Robesons a party at the Savoy Hotel Grill Room. When Paul and Eslanda arrived for the party, the hotel refused to let them in. Later the hotel begged the pardon of Eslanda and Paul Robeson; however, the damage had been done. Neither Eslanda nor Paul Robeson would forget the incident. It was very similar to the treatment given to Blacks in the United States. This incident reminded Robeson that racism is not limited to any one country.

Robeson fought racism and while in the United States refused to perform in segregated theatres. He lost money by making this decision, but he did not lose his dignity as a Black man. Robeson searched his soul and realized he could never feel truly free in England nor the United States.

The feeling of being apart from the general society would aid Robeson in his playing of William Shakespeare's Othello on the live stage.

Perhaps this was the reason he brought such unusual sensitivity to his role in Othello. Some claimed that Shakespeare's Moor was meant to be an Arab having no Negro blood; and others believe that Othello was distinctly Negroid. The problem facing Paul was whether he could play the part as Shakespeare had meant it played. Finally, he decided that Shakespeare meant Othello to be a tragic figure because he was black and surrounded

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by whites.

Keen insight assisted Robeson in his portrayal of Othello. Having been born the son of a former slave, having been forced to attend a segregated elementary school during childhood, and having studied at Rutgers University, the only Black member of the student body, Robeson understood separatism. Being surrounded by Whites was a feeling that Robeson shared with Othello. The parallel between Othello the Moor and Robeson the Black American was close and clear.

Robeson's playing Othello on the London stage stirred feelings of racial hatred. There were several factors which contributed to the hatred. First, the London theatre audience was not accustomed to seeing a genuinely Black Othello. The last Black man who played Othello on the London stage prior to Robeson's appearance was Ira Frederick Aldridge. Moreover, many Whites were unhappy with Robeson playing opposite the popular Peggy Ashcroft. In fact, during the rehearsals, a number of threatening letters had protested his being cast against a white woman, and these had shaken him so that he refused to get close to Peggy Ashcroft.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the production with Ashcroft was highly successful in London.

It would be 13 years later, in 1943 before Whites in America would be able to organize a production of Othello with Robeson as the Moor. Finally in the 1940's, the United States was able to watch the Moor embrace, kiss and finally kill a White woman on the Broadway stage. Jose Ferrer and

his wife Uta Hagen were cast to play the roles of Iago and Desdemona opposite Robeson. Margaret Webster, the eventual producer, had a difficult time finding White actors to work on the production. The actors were concerned that the production would be a failure. Webster, later commented that "there was so much fear in the public's race prejudice that producers were skeptical about putting money into it. Everybody was scared. Most of them said an American audience would never come to a theater to see a Black man play a love scene to a White woman."<sup>78</sup>

The production first opened in Massachusetts and traveled throughout the country and finally went to Broadway. According to reviews Paul Robeson gave a wonderful series of performances in New York.

Othello broke all Broadway records for Shakespearean productions, with a record of 296 consecutive performances, by far surpassing the previous record of 157 performances set by Orson Welles' production of Julius Caesar.<sup>79</sup>

The unquestioned success of Robeson's tour of the United States established him as one of the nation's finest actors.

Robeson did not limit himself to purely acting and singing. He spoke on the injustices of the world. One of his speeches imperiled his performing career. At the World Peace Congress in Paris in 1949, he stated the following:

It is unthinkable that American Negroes will go to



war on behalf of those who have opposed us for generations against a country (the Soviet Union) which in one generation has raised our people to the full dignity of mankind.<sup>80</sup>

This quotation was taken out of the context of the speaker's intent. A vendetta against Robeson would cause doors to be closed to him. McCarthyism pointed the finger at Robeson, and his passport was revoked for over ten years. Robeson went from making over \$100,000 a year to \$2,000 per year.<sup>81</sup>

During this period in Robeson's life he performed in local Black churches. He later wrote Here I Stand, in which he explained his position concerning McCarthyism. The prime audience for the work was Black Americans. After finally getting his passport back, Robeson and his wife returned to Europe. Robeson performed Othello for the final time at Stratford-on-Avon in 1959. The supporting cast included Sam Wanamaker as Iago, Mary Ure as Desdemona, and Albert Finney as Cassio.

In summary, the stage career of Paul Leroy Robeson was limited in several different ways due to the color of his skin. First, Robeson only played parts which called for a person of color, when performing on the live stage. Othello, Jim, Emperor Jones and John Henry clearly call for Black men to act in the role. Even when attempting to play the role of a Black Othello, some producers and actors wanted to prevent

Robeson from taking the role.

Second, many producers, while they did not want to prevent Robeson from taking roles, were afraid to take a chance on the Black actor. As late as the 1940's, White America was still uneasy about love scenes between persons of different races. London took the risks, but Robeson received volumes of hate mail in an attempt to get him to refuse such roles.

Robeson's career as a Black man was reflective of the racial mood within the theatre. Paul Robeson was a singer, film star and performer on the live stage; yet, he was unable to perform to his capacity because of racial limitations. Despite these limitations, Robeson's artistic integrity stimulated a degree of racial tolerance that served a new generation of Black actors well, chief among them being James Earl Jones.

## Chapter V

## James Earl Jones: Contemporary Patterns of Behavior

Unlike his Northern predecessors Aldridge and Robeson, James Earl Jones was born in the South Arkabutla, Mississippi in 1931. His father, Robert Earl Jones, left the family before Jones' birth to follow first a prize fighting career and then acting. James Earl Jones' parents divorced and he was raised by his maternal grandparents. Jones and his grandparents lived in Michigan throughout his childhood and teen-age years.

Due to the time in which Jones developed his stage career, he was the benefactor of the Civil Rights struggle. Jones graduated from the University of Michigan one year prior to the 1954 Supreme Court Decision Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, which reversed the Plessy v. Ferguson "separate but equal" decision.<sup>82</sup>

Although Jones was the benefactor of the Civil Rights Movement, the bulk of his work, including his early efforts, has been concerned with racism and its effects on Black people. Beginning with his performance of Brett Charles in Deep Are the Roots while a student at the University of Michigan, Jones addressed the problem of racism in the South after World War II.

Jones, involved in the Black struggle, has appeared in Blood Knot. The production involves Black issues of South



Africa. He also acted in an all Black production entitled The Blacks, Jean Genet's vivid satire in which some Black actors sham Whiteness and one, a man, pretends to be a White woman raped by a Black. The critics responded warmly to the production.<sup>83</sup>

Jones' love of the struggle of Blacks is convincingly demonstrated in his most famous role, that of Jack Jefferson in The Great White Hope, by Howard Sackler. The production is based on the career of Jack Johnson, who won the heavy-weight boxing title in 1908 and then later lost in a purportedly fixed fight.<sup>84</sup> Howard Sackler's play concerns itself mainly with a Black man's lifelong battle for personal dignity. To compound Jefferson's battle he must also defy the taboo against marrying a White woman. The couple is forced to leave the United States and live in Europe.

This play was performed in the late 1960's and the early 1970's. It was very timely due to the racist attitudes that faced Blacks in the 1960's. The production was a very critical element in Jones' career as a serious actor on the live stage in the United States. The reviews of his work were prolific with such superlatives as "Towering! Amazing! Majestic!"<sup>85</sup> The Great White Hope became the peak of Jones' fourteen year acting career. Jones won the Antoinette Perry Award (Tony) for "Best Dramatic Actor" of the 1968-69 Broadway season as Jack Jefferson. Not only did Jones receive praise, the play won three awards: The Pulitzer

Prize, the Antoinette Perry Award and the Drama Critics  
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 Circle Award.

On the other hand, the play caused problems for Jones' personal life. "Through that production I began to realize how deep my own psychological problems were." 87 To understand the behavioral aspects of the character of Jefferson, Jones visited a psychoanalyst. As a result, he developed a clearer vision of the psychological ramifications of being a Black male in the United States at that time. 88

Another play in which Jones' work confronts the racist attitudes of others is Shakespeare's Othello. As the Moor, Jones was confronting how others treated him differently due to the darkness of his skin. In 1982, Jones opened as Othello at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York. It was the first time he played the role on Broadway, but it was also 89 his seventh Othello in nineteen years.

James Earl Jones has a unique approach when performing Shakespeare's Othello. Jones changes his diet to become more fit for the Moor going off to war. Also Jones follows his father's advice: "My father believes anyone who plays Othello should clean up his act in real life. I agree with 90 that. Othello must be pure."

Jones' preoccupation with racism in the world is further reflected in his current role on Broadway for which he received a Tony Award. Jones is performing in August Wilson's play, Fences, where he plays Troy Maxson, the aging

patriarch of a family, who does not want his son to accept a football scholarship. Maxson attempted to play professional baseball in his youth, but he was confined to the Negro leagues. The father's past plays no small part in his attitude toward his son's future.

The issue of confinement, therefore has been a part of Jones' career as he continues to struggle with the racist theme on the American stage. Throughout Jones' life opportunities to act on Broadway have been limited due to the color of his skin. Even after receiving a Tony, the opportunities were still sparse when it came to acting a broad range of works. The critics agree with Jones' approach to Othello. According to critics his work has been performed  
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with dignity and heartfelt restraint.

Despite past problems and confining roles, James Earl Jones continues to illuminate social concerns which are related to the Black cause. From the body of work that Jones has presented in the past and present, all indications lead to a continual effort on his part to persistently address the racist attitudes of society in future roles.



## Chapter VI

## Conclusion

Traces of racism manifest themselves in each actor's career, and it continues to permeate the American stage today. Through each actor under study, research demonstrates that acting opportunities given to White actors continue to be denied to Blacks.

Aldridge's career shows how racism forced him to leave the American stage and find another location in which to perform. Europe was a positive experience in many ways for Aldridge. He was allowed freedom of performance to a greater degree than could be recognized in the United States. On the other hand, he continued to face rejection as several White actors refused to perform with the Black thespian. In a sense, Aldridge was a slave in another country; racism was a harsh master which limited where he could perform.

Racial limitations also were imposed upon the true potential of Paul Leroy Robeson's career. Robeson, like his fellow thespian Aldridge, left the United States for greater acting opportunities. While in London, Robeson felt more comfortable as a Black actor than in the United States. Nevertheless, there continued to be psychological barriers placed on Black actors as opposed to White actors in the form of hate mail and verbal abuse.

When Robeson returned to the United States, racism would

again plague his career. Robeson often felt like an outcast when it came to performing on the live stage because the racial hatred of Whites did not allow him the unrestricted freedom of performance.

There is one major factor which has allowed Jones more freedom in his career than those of Aldridge and Robeson. This factor is the time in which he is living. Racist attitudes in the theatre world are not so prominent as when Aldridge and Robeson performed. The racial climate on the live stage was parallel to the racial climate of the general population. When Ira Aldridge was developing his craft, Blacks held an inferior position in society, many of them as slaves. Later when Paul Leroy Robeson was enjoying a productive career on the live stage, Black Americans began to reap some of the same opportunities and benefits as White Americans. Yet, the door to freedom was not entirely open. Today, James Earl Jones is able to maintain steady artistic and economic growth as an actor at a time that is more profitable for Black Americans in the theatre as well as in society.

The purpose of the thesis has been met by examining the professional lives of Ira Frederick Aldridge, Paul Leroy Robeson and James Earl Jones in an attempt to determine the effects of racism by others on the three Black actors' theatrical careers. This writer's research reveals the need

for other studies concerning racism in the theatre world to gain a clearer understanding of the positive contributions that Blacks have made in theatre. Examples of other studies could focus on Black women on the stage and the effects of racism upon their careers, as well as Black producers and Black playwrights and the effects of racism upon their careers. Future generations of all races would benefit from such studies by examining the nature of racism and its ramifications.



Repertoire of  
Ira Frederick Aldridge

<u>Year of Production</u>	<u>Production</u>
1821	<u>Pizarro</u>
1825	<u>A Slave Revenge</u>
1825	<u>The Ethiopian</u>
1826	<u>Othello</u>
1827	<u>Richard III</u>
1827	<u>Othello</u>
1827	<u>Oroonoko</u>
1827	<u>The Slave</u>
1827	<u>The Castle Spectre</u>
1827	<u>The Padlock</u>
1827	<u>The Revenge</u>
1827	<u>The Death of Christophe</u>
1827	<u>Pizarro</u>
1827	<u>The Savage of the Desert</u>
1831	<u>The Revenge</u>
1831	<u>Othello</u>
1831	<u>Pizarro</u>
1831	<u>The Padlock</u>
1831	<u>The Merchant of Venice</u>
1831	<u>The Brigand or Alessandro</u> <u>Massaroni</u>
1831	<u>The Slave</u>
1831	<u>Oroonoko</u>

1831	<u>Castle of St. Aldobrand</u>
1831	<u>Bertram Bond of Blood</u>
1831	<u>Obi or Three-fingered Jack</u>
1831	<u>The African's Vengeance</u>
1831	<u>Paul and Virginia</u>
1831	<u>The Siberian Exile</u>
1831	<u>The Coronation Day of William IV</u>
1831	<u>Valentine and Orson</u>
1831	<u>Rob Roy</u>
1832	<u>Macbeth</u>
1832	<u>The Galley Slaves</u>
1832	<u>The Cannibal Kings</u>
1832	<u>Father and Son or The Rock of La Charbonniere</u>
1832	<u>Castle Spectre</u>
1832	<u>Laugh While You Can</u>
1832	<u>Banks of Hudson</u> or <u>The Congress Trooper</u>
1832	<u>William Tell</u>
1832	<u>The French Pirate</u>
1832	<u>Frankenstein</u> or <u>The Man and Monster</u>
1832	<u>Oroonoko</u>
1832	<u>Paul and Virginia</u>
1832	<u>The Slave</u>
1832	<u>The Revenge</u>
1832	<u>Othello</u>
1832	<u>The Padlock</u>

1832	<u>Macbeth</u>
1832	<u>School of Scandal</u>
1832	<u>The Invincibles</u>
1832	<u>Othello</u>
1833	<u>Othello</u>
1833	<u>Sambo's Courtship</u>
1833	<u>Paul and Virginia</u>
1833	<u>Alonzo of Castille</u>
1833	<u>Pizarro</u>
1833	<u>The Padlock</u>
1833	<u>Karfa</u>
1833	<u>Captain Ross</u>
1833	<u>Bertram</u>
1833	<u>The Merchant of Venice</u>

(From 1835 to 1839 Aldridge played mostly in Ireland)

Othello  
Revenge  
Titus Andronicus  
Bertram  
Black Brigand of Jamaica  
Merchant of Venice  
Oroonoko  
Padlock  
The Slave



1845	<u>Othello</u>
1845	<u>Virginian Mummy</u>
1846	<u>Othello</u>
1846	<u>Padlock</u>
1847	<u>Othello</u>
1848	<u>The Black Doctor</u>
1848	<u>The Revenge</u>
1848	<u>The Padlock</u>
1848	<u>Othello</u>
1849	<u>Titus Andronicus</u>
1850	<u>Oroonko</u>
1850	<u>The Revenge</u>
1852	<u>The Afghanistan War</u>
1854	<u>Othello</u>
1854	<u>Macbeth</u>
1854	<u>The Padlock</u>
1854	<u>The Merchant of Venice</u>
1854	<u>King Lear</u>
1857	<u>Othello</u>
1857	<u>Pizarro</u>
1857	<u>Titus Andronicus</u>
1858	<u>Richard III</u>
1858	<u>Othello</u>
1858	<u>Macbeth</u>
1858	<u>The Padlock</u>

1859	<u>King Lear</u>
1859	<u>Othello</u>
1860	<u>Othello</u>
1860	<u>The Padlock</u>
1860	<u>The Slave</u>
1860	<u>The Black Doctor</u>
1860	<u>Obi</u>
1860	<u>Bertram</u>
1860	<u>Titus Andronicus</u>
1860	<u>Robinson Crusoe</u>
1861	<u>Othello</u>
1961	<u>The Merchant of Venice</u>
1861	<u>King Lear</u>
1861	<u>The Padlock</u>
1862	<u>Macbeth</u>
1862	<u>Othello</u>
1862	<u>Macbeth</u>
1862	<u>King Lear</u>
1866	<u>Othello</u>
1867	(Aldridge was preparing to do Othello in Lodz, Poland when he died August 7th.)