



ENGL LIT

Ira Aldridge

(Kailei Hinton Lesson Plan)



Goals for the Lesson:

- Read and analyze “Red Velvet” by Lolita Chakrabarti
- Learn the history of the 1800's as it relates to racism and theatre
- Make connections to our modern society
- Lead discussion in groups about Ira Aldridge and “Trailblazers”



RED VELVET BY LOLITA CHAKRABARTI

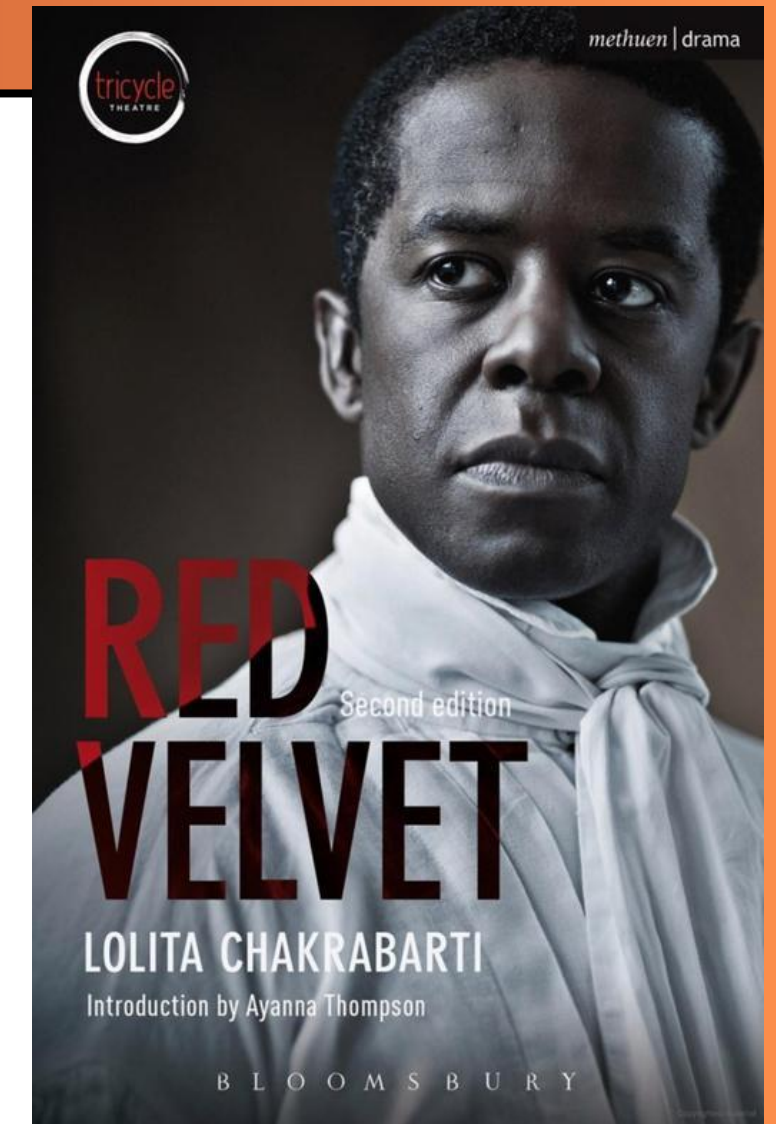
-PUBLISHED IN 2012 AND FIRST PREMIERED AT THE TRICYCLE THEATRE IN LONDON, OCTOBER OF 2012.

-SUMMARY FROM CONCORD THEATRICALS:

"IT'S LIKE BEING AT A CROSSROADS - A POINT OF ABSOLUTE, UNEQUIVOCAL CHANGE. IT MAKES THE BLOOD RUSH.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN, 1833. EDMUND KEAN, THE GREATEST ACTOR OF HIS GENERATION, HAS COLLAPSED ON STAGE WHILST PLAYING OTHELLO. A YOUNG BLACK AMERICAN ACTOR HAS BEEN ASKED TO TAKE OVER THE ROLE. BUT AS THE PUBLIC RIOT IN THE STREETS OVER THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, HOW WILL THE CAST, CRITICS AND AUDIENCE REACT TO THE REVOLUTION TAKING PLACE IN THE THEATRE?

LOLITA CHAKRABARTI'S PLAY CREATES IMAGINED EXPERIENCES BASED ON THE LITTLE-KNOWN, BUT TRUE, STORY OF IRA ALDRIDGE, AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN ACTOR WHO, IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, BUILT AN INCREDIBLE REPUTATION ON THE STAGES





Historical Background:

Racism in the 1800's:

- Slavery Abolished in 1865 in USA

- Slavery Abolished in 1833 in Britian

- Racial tensions still extremely high

- Black actors in 1800's did not recieve the same treatment as other actors i.e. minstrel shows, maid and slave characters in plays and severe mistreatment in workplace



Ira Aldridge's Life

Early Life:

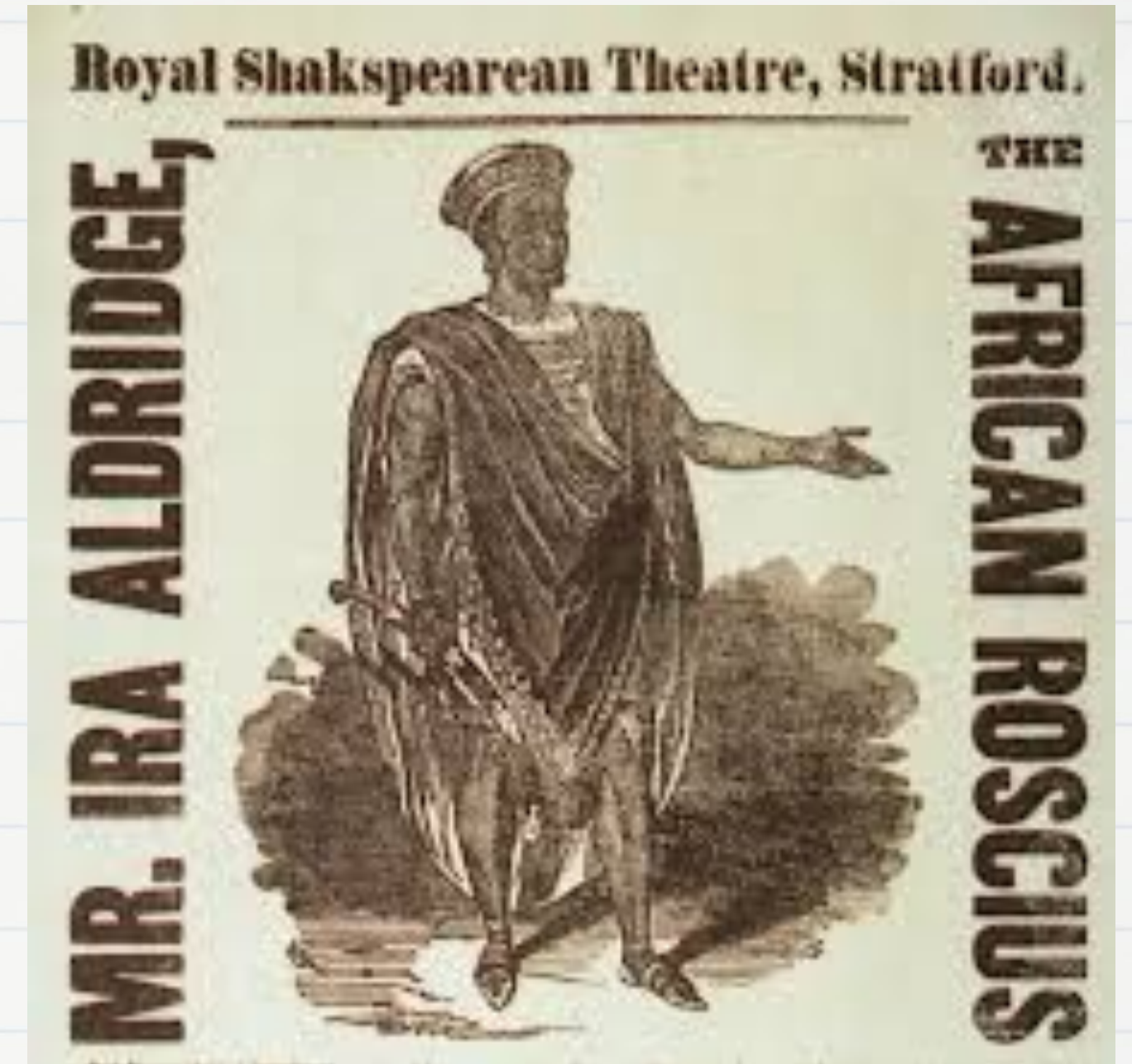
Ira Aldridge was born in New York City in 1807. He was born into a family of free African Americans and received his education at the African Free School in New York City. Aldridge, seeking further education that he was not allowed due to racism in the US, moved to England. In England he studied acting at the Royalty Theatre in London.



Ira Aldridge's Life

Career:

Ira Aldridge while still in New York City, worked as an actor at the African Grove Theatre. The African Grove Theatre was one of the first theaters managed for and by African Americans. He then went on to make his London East End Royalty Theatre Debut as Othello in 1825 marking his first performance in England. He went on to tour Europe as an actor, particularly interested in Shakespearean roles. Aldridge also became an advocate against racism and slavery in his later life with his found



Video

**(LINK TO A VIDEO TO SHOW THE CLASS ON PBS ABOUT RED VELVET
AND THE CASTING OF OTHELLO AND IRA ALDRIDGE)**

ILLINOIS.PBSLEARNINGMEDIA.ORG/RESOURCE/SHAK15.ELA.LIT.RACISM/CASTING-OTHELLO-WHY-IS-RACISM-PART-OF-THE-PLAYS-HISTORY-SHAKESPEARE-UNCOVERED/?STUDENT=TRUE

'Trailblazer Project'

DEFINITION OF A TRAILBLAZER: A PERSON WHO MAKES, DOES, OR DISCOVERS SOMETHING NEW AND MAKES IT ACCEPTABLE OR POPULAR

- **IN GROUPS, USING IRA ALDRIDGE AS AN EXAMPLE, YOU WILL WORK ON A CREATIVE PROJECT TO PRESENT A TRAILBLAZER IN OUR MODERN ENTERTAINMENT. THIS CAN BE AN AUTHOR, MUSICIAN, ACTOR, SINGER, OR ARTIST. YOU WILL STUDY THIS PERSON AND PRESENT THEIR LIFE AND INFLUENCE TO THE CLASS IN GROUPS**
 - **YOUR TRAILBLAZER CAN BE ANYONE YOU THINK HAS BEEN INFLUENTIAL TO THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, CHANGED PERSPECTIVES OR PROVIDED REPRESENTATION IN AREAS THAT LACKED IT.**
 - **YOUR PRESENTATION IS ENTIRELY UP TO YOU AND CAN BE A POWERPOINT, PODCAST, TRIFOLD POSTER, OR EVEN A VIDEO EXPLORATION OF THEIR WORK. YOU WILL EACH WRITE A 2-3 PAGE REFLECTION COMPARING IRA ALDRIDGE'S AND YOUR TRAILBLAZER'S INFLUENCE**

'Trailblazer Project'

EXAMPLE OF A MODERN TRAILBLAZER AND ADVOCATE:

ALEX NEWELL IS AN EXAMPLE OF A MODERN TRAILBLAZER IN OUR ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY WHO IS AN ADVOCATE FOR THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY IN THEATRE.



Be Kind and Have Fun!