

Craig Supcoff
09/02/16

James Earl Jones playing Paul Robeson in the play *Paul Robeson*, which was directed by Philip Hayes Dean, reflects that Paul Robeson provided a platform for African American actors such as Jones to play more prominent roles in theater. The play itself received a significant amount of backlash in the community due to an oversimplified portrayal of Robeson in the play, but the development of Jones playing Robeson helps to show the development of both actors careers and how they're intertwined. Robeson was the first African American actor to play Othello in over 50 years in 1930, which was a groundbreaking achievement, and it paved the way for Jones to later play the same role in the 1950's. Both roles helped to propel their careers and the full arch comes full circle when Jones plays Robeson because it showed how far both of their career as African American actors have gone.