

Othello – act three
scene three is one of
the most important
scenes in this play

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Act three scene three is one of the most important scenes in this play; this is because it is the scene when we see Iago has successfully manipulated Othello into believing that Desdemona has not been faithful to him, this is very significant to the rest of the play as it affects everything Othello the main character thinks, feels and says from this point onwards. At the start we see a noble character, who by the end of the scene is left on his knees swearing revenge on his wife.

Act three scene three is also the longest scene in the play, which reflects its importance because so much develops and evolves throughout this period. During act three scene three we can actually begin to see the importance of the scene to the rest of the play, as the plot really starts to move forward, this is once Iago has planted his seeds of suspicion in Othello's mind and starts to water them so that the suspicion will grow. This is a significant development in the play as we see Iago put the plans he spoke of in earlier soliloquies and asides into action.

In act three scene three just as Cassio hurriedly leaves the room Iago says "Ha! I like not that" this is said to arouse suspicion in Othello's mind as once this has been said Iago leaves Othello to ponder the various diabolical meanings provided within this short statement, which makes him quite agitated and irritable. At the end of the scene we also see a completely transformed Othello who uses vulgar language and crude animal imagery such as "I had rather be a toad and live upon the vapour of a dungeon.

Than keep a corner in the thing I love for others uses. This is a clear influence of Iago upon Othello who now seems more violent. Towards the

end of the scene the decided plan of action will be for Othello to kill both Cassio and Desdemona, we know this as he says, " I will withdraw to furnish me with some swift means of death for the fair devil. " This is linked to the rest of the play because we can see Iago's plan is starting to work, and that he has manipulated Othello enough to make him think Desdemona is unfaithful so much so he now wants to kill her, this shows a complete transformation in Othello's character.

The scene is also important as it reveals the true extent of Iago's devilish nature and how he goes about putting it to use by manipulating Othello in way the audience would not have thought possible, he manages to tear Othello and Desdemona's seemingly strong relationship up within a relatively short period of time, although we have already seen this side of Iago before when he shouts to Barbantio in act one scene one " an old black ram is tupping your white yew. This reveals part of his racist crude ways as well as showing us how deceitful he truly is in as much as he is pretending Roderigo is saying these things, he also reveals the marriage of Othello and Desdemona to Barbantio behind their backs. By doing this early on the audience are immediately aware of Iago's deceitful nature. The quote also reveals Iago's racist ways and what he thinks of moors and non-Venetians.

These comments he makes would shock a twenty first century audience, as we live in a multi cultural society and everybody should be treated equally within it, however a Elizabethan audience would not of been shocked due to the fact they thought black men were sexually charged predators as shown in many of the quotes. Other signs that Iago is a skilled manipulator is the

way he persuades Othello of Desdemona's infidelity, he uses various techniques to do this, for a start he appears to let on more than he really knows, this makes Othello want to feed his suspicion.

There are also points when fate plays a part in the proceedings such as when Iago receives a particular handkerchief, which was Othello's first gift to Desdemona, he then tells Othello that Cassio dropped it, this is the proof Othello requested. Iago then went on to make up a dream he said Cassio had of Desdemona in which Cassio started saying, "sweet Desdemona, let us be wary, let us hide our loves," this completely enraged Othello, whilst Iago appeared to be getting a kick out of everything that was going on.

He is also quick to point out Othello's cultural differences in an attempt to make him feel insecure and like an outsider this is revealed in the quote "They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience." By saying this he is telling Othello that Venetian women are loose and that he does not know what they are like, as he is an outsider. Religious references are used a plenty during this scene an example is when Othello uses such phrases as "death and damnation" and "heaven and hell" it is a very important theme in the play.

The fact people were very religious in the sixteenth century is very important as it appears Iago has no concern for his soul, he has no sense of shame or remorse which is quite a chilling thought. The reason this scene is so important is the complete transformation of Othello the main character from a dignified figure to a jealous rage, we can see how successful Iago was here as earlier we saw how noble and calm Othello was when confronted by

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Barbantio and he told him to put his sword away now at the end of act three scene three Othello has become extremely violent and less confident in his relationship with Desdemona.

We are also able to see how Shakespearian tragedies work, clearly the hero moves from a state of happiness to misery and eventual death through some fault or weakness of their own in Othello's case his tragic weakness or flaw, can be linked to the theme of jealousy and honesty within the play, he is easily made to jump to conclusions through thoughts of jealousy when it comes to Desdemona's infidelity, he is also too open and trusting towards certain characters like Iago who take advantage.

By the end of the scene Othello has been completely enraged and his stature and reputation turn for the worst seen mainly through his language, which was once poetic like, Othello's language was controlled and he was able to enthral an audience as he did with the duke when explaining his courtship with Desdemona. Towards the end he is left cursing using imagery of hell such as "death and damnation" which are clear influences of Iago. The point we see Othello has completely given up and lost faith in Desdemona is when he says "farewell tranquil mind" which is a clear indication of how he feels completely distraught.

To make this scene stand out among the rest Shakespeare has been very clever with his dramatic devices and his use of them in particular the way people enter and exit, for example when Cassio exits hurriedly leaving Desdemona, which causes Othello to wonder why he left so hastily. There is also the matter of timing and when characters speak which causes an awful

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amount of dramatic intensity, as mentioned earlier the length of the scene is very significant to the rest of the play because it allows time enough for Iago to put his plan into action and to work Othello's trust.

When talking about dramatic devices we must also mention the very important part of soliloquies and asides in which a character reveals their inner most thoughts and feelings, which leads to dramatic irony as the audience are already aware of plans and actions to be undertaken. In conclusion the fact that so much significant and crucial parts take place in act three scene three prove that it is very important to the rest of the play, as it really starts to develop the plot and themes we have seen growing throughout earlier scenes. It is especially important because of the fact we see such a tremendous change in Othello.