

Essay 3–Analysis of a Scene From *Othello*

Pick a scene from *Othello* and analyze how a film production interprets that scene. You may choose to analyze a short section from a longer scene. Focus on a segment of the film between 5 and 10 minutes long.

Think about how the director interprets the text, how all the creative choices work together to express a specific “take” on the scene. Consider how choices of casting, setting, costuming, editing, camera angles, performance choices, and so on affect our understanding of the scene. Does the production emphasize elements not emphasized in the text? Does it de-emphasize any elements and if so why? Does it do anything to make the scene or elements in it less complex, difficult, or disturbing than they might otherwise have been? What was cut and to what effect? Give very specific examples to support your analysis. Your essay should be about 3-4 pages (800-1,200 words).

Select ONE of the following films for your analysis:

- *Othello* (1952) directed by Orson Welles, starring Orson Welles
- *Othello* (1965) Directed by Stuart Burge, starring Laurence Olivier
- *Othello* (1981) Directed by Jonathan Miller, starring Anthony Hopkins
- *Othello* (1990) Directed by Trevor Nunn, starring Willard White
- *Othello* (1995) Directed by Oliver Parker, starring Laurence Fishburn
- *Othello* (2007) Directed by Wilson Milam, starring Eamonn Walker

Begin your paper with a genuine question about the scene and how the film interprets it. Make that question the last sentence of your first paragraph. The rest of the essay should answer this question.

Support your analysis with detailed evidence from the film and from the text of the play. Read and watch the scene closely and repeatedly, and select relevant details to support your analysis.

Present your analysis in a clear and well-organized manner. Each paragraph should deal with a specific element of the scene, explain how that element works, and present its main point in a clear topic sentence. If you list the topic sentences of each paragraph, you should create an outline of your essay that would make sense by itself, would proceed logically, and would contain all of your main points. Draw your conclusions in your final paragraph. Briefly sum up the answers to the question posed at the start of your essay.

Remember that you are writing for an audience thoroughly familiar with this play and with early modern English; do not, therefore, waste time summarizing the plot or paraphrasing the language. Avoid

generalizations. Everything you say in your analysis should relate directly to either the actual words of the text or the actual sounds and images of the film.

Write your essay in classic prose style: clear and concise, specific and engaging. Don't waste my time and yours trying to sound impressive. Make every word count.

In evaluating your essay, I will focus on the intelligence and specificity of your ideas, the precision of your analyses, the clarity of your prose, and the originality and persuasiveness of your thesis.

Your sources for this essay will be the text of the play and your film production. When quoting the text, use parenthetical references with act, scene, and line numbers. You must have a Works Cited page with proper bibliographic information on the text and film production. Use proper MLA style for formatting your document. (See <http://drmarkwomack.com/mla-style/>: "Document Format," "Anatomy of a Citation," and "How to Quote Shakespeare.")

Due: November 29

Bring THREE copies of your essay to class for Peer Critiques.

Revision Due: December 10

Bring your Revised Draft, your Initial Draft with my comments on it, and all the Peer Critiques you received to class in a folder with your name on the front cover.