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Othello Reflection

Act 3, Scene 4 is intended to make the audience feel empathetic toward Desdemona. The decisions we've made regarding the actions and portrayals of the characters of Desdemona, Othello, and Emilia help influence this intention. In our interpretation of Desdemona, although she is concerned about losing her handkerchief, we made her somewhat defiant and willing to stand ground against Othello. Our Othello is portrayed as remorseful about losing the handkerchief while also having concealed anger about the situation. Additionally, Emilia is also an important character in the scene as it reveals how she is involved in the situation, so we made her feel guilty and based her actions on emphasizing her guiltiness.

In our interpretation of Desdemona, we decided to make her a somewhat defiant character and willing to "fight" against Othello. We did not want to make Desdemona look too guilty or concerned, as she did not lose the handkerchief. To make the audience feel empathy toward Desdemona, we wanted her to be more defiant toward Othello. For example, during the argument, our Desdemona, played by Erin, snaps back at Othello when she emphasizes the lines: "You may, indeed, say so; For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart." This defiance toward Othello is intended to make Desdemona seem more powerful, gaining the empathy of the audience in fighting back against Othello.

Meanwhile, our interpretation of Othello makes him remorseful about losing the handkerchief while concealing his anger toward Desdemona as he blames her for it. We wanted to make Othello upset and remorseful about the handkerchief, as in the scene, he had lost his “precious eye” (treasure) and that losing it would be “such perdition as nothing else could match.” Therefore, as he thought Desdemona may have lost it, Othello would have to be somewhat angry toward Desdemona. As our Othello, played by Dee Dee, talks about the history of the handkerchief, he is remorseful as he is concerned that it is lost. He then gets somewhat aggressive toward Desdemona as he starts blaming and demanding her more for the handkerchief. This makes the audience feel bad for Desdemona and empathetic towards her, as she was not to blame for losing the handkerchief and has to deal with Othello’s aggressiveness.

Additionally, Emilia’s role in the scene is very important as it shows the audience how she is involved with the entire situation between Othello and Desdemona; therefore, her presence and actions in the scene were important. Although Emilia is in the background for most of the first half of the scene, it was crucial to show the audience how Emilia is partly at fault for the argument. In our interpretation, we decided to have Emilia wash dishes in the background while she eavesdrops on the argument and reacts accordingly. At first, she is more relaxed, as she was in possession of the handkerchief, but gets more nervous as Othello shares his stories of the handkerchief and gets increasingly angered toward Desdemona. In my portrayal of Emilia, as the argument gets more heated, I get increasingly shaky and use facial expressions to express nervousness and uncertainty toward the audience. Since it may be challenging to draw the audience’s attention toward Emilia with them being fixated toward Othello and Desdemona, we decided to create a dramatic event for Emilia. With this intense nervousness and shaking, as Othello demands, “The handkerchief!,” I accidentally drop the dishes I’m holding. This is not

only intended to draw the audience's attention toward Emilia, but it allows them to see Emilia's guiltiness in the situation.

In conclusion, these decisions we made with the characters in Act 3, Scene 4 are intended to make the audience feel empathy with Desdemona and are meant to effectively show our interpretation of the scene to the audience. We made Desdemona defiant against a remorseful and angry Othello while Emilia is on the side looking guilty.