

### Worksheet 11 – Act 2, Scene 3: Iago comforts Cassio... and plots

#### Review: Lecture 10

In Lecture 10, Prof. John McRae discussed the fight scene between Cassio and Roderigo, and Iago's manipulation of the characters in that scene.

- ✓ How is Cassio punished by Othello after the fight in Act 2, Scene 3?

#### Recall: Lecture 11

**Complete this section after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.**

1. Who says which line in Act 2, Scene 3? Match the quotation to the character.

Othello	'It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath'
Cassio	'This advice is free I give and honest'
Iago	'Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter'
Cassio	'I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth/ Than it should do offence'
Iago	'I pray you, pardon me; I cannot speak'

#### Analysis

2. Reread the section of the scene where Cassio reacts to his demotion:

##### **Cassio**

Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

- a) What does the audience learn about Cassio in this scene?
- b) Why is the concept of reputation so important to Cassio?

Challenge: How does Cassio's use of the word 'bestial' connect to Iago's use of animal imagery in Act 1, Scene 1? (*Hint: see Worksheet 4*)

3. Iago often avoids telling complete lies, but instead phrases statements in such a way that they can have two meanings. How could the two lines from Iago below be interpreted differently by Cassio and the audience?

- a) 'As I am an honest man, I thought you had received/ some bodily wound'
- b) 'good lieutenant, I think you think I love you'

Extension: Can you find any more examples of Iago's use of ambiguous language?

## Evaluation

1. Imagine you are directing a stage performance of *Othello*. Annotate Iago's soliloquy with notes for the actor on how the speech should be performed.

### Consider:

- In which tone of voice should different lines be delivered?
- Where will Iago stand on stage?
- What gestures, body language, or facial expressions might he use?
- Where will Iago use direct address (i.e. speaking directly to individual members of the audience)?
- What impact should each section have on the audience?

### **IAGO**

And what's he then that says I play the villain?  
When this advice is free I give and honest,  
Probal to thinking and indeed the course  
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy  
Th' inclining Desdemona to subdue  
In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful  
As the free elements. And then for her  
To win the Moor, were to renounce his baptism,  
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,  
His soul is so enfeathered to her love,  
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
Even as her appetite shall play the god  
With his weak function. How am I then a villain  
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,  
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!  
When devils will the blackest sins put on  
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows  
As I do now. For whiles this honest fool  
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortune  
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,  
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:  
That she repeals him for her body's lust;  
And by how much she strives to do him good,  
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.  
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,  
And out of her own goodness make the net  
That shall enmesh them all.

*Hint: For a prose translation of this speech, visit*

[https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/othello/page\\_114/](https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/othello/page_114/)

### Glossary

- **Cudgelled** – beaten (especially with a cudgel or stick).
- **Dilatory** – slow to act; intended to cause delay.
- **Ambiguous** – open to multiple interpretations; not having just one meaning.