

OTHELLO – Act I, scene 3 – Iago’s soliloquy

Iago has just consolidated his financial situation with the help of Roderigo’s money. He has heard a rumour that his wife, Emilia, has been unfaithful to him with Othello. Although he does not believe this, he plots to ruin Othello’s marriage to Desdemona and get Cassio’s position of lieutenant (which he believes is rightfully his). He will make Othello believe that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio.

Read together as a group this speech a couple of times, then assign a line or phrase to each person. Then walk around the room saying your lines out loud and experimenting with various different emotional qualities, vocal ranges and pitches. This group will then clump in the centre to become the “inner” voice and devise a plan for how to stage this speech as each person speaks their line.

The “outer” group, which has lines and phrases from Act I, scene 1, will then combine with your group to create a dynamic presentation using both voices.

IAGO

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;	
For I mine own gained knowledge should <u>profane</u>	<i>abuse</i>
If I would time expend with such a <u>snipe</u>	<i>a long-beaked bird (used as a derogatory)</i>
<u>But</u> for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,	<i>only</i>
And it is thought <u>abroad</u> , that ’twixt my sheets	<i>generally</i>
He has <u>done my office</u> . I know not if’t be true	<i>done my job – i.e. slept with my wife</i>
Yet I, for mere suspicion in that kind,	
Will do as if for surety. He <u>holds me well</u> :	<i>thinks highly of me</i>
The better shall my purpose work on him.	
Cassio’s a <u>proper</u> man: let me see now;	<i>handsome</i>
To get his place and to <u>plume up my will</u>	<i>have a bit of fun or glorify myself</i>
In double knavery. How? How? Let’s see.	
After some time, to <u>abuse Othello’s ear</u>	<i>tell Othello lies</i>
That he is too familiar with his wife;	
He hath a person and a smooth dispose	
To be suspected, <u>framed</u> to make women false.	<i>made</i>
The Moor is of a free and open nature,	
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,	
And will as tenderly be led by the nose	
As asses are.	
I have’t. It is <u>engendered</u> . Hell and night	<i>formed, created</i>
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world’s light.	