

# Analysing cassio in act two of othello

Literature, Russian Literature



Pg 47: \*Cassio is mentioned before he is seen.

-Initially, Shakespeare presents Cassio from someone else's perspective, so as to place a particular view of Cassio in the minds of the audience before he is actually seen.

~ The Third Gentleman states, '...yet he looks sadly,/ And prays the Moor be safe; for they were prated/ With foul and violent tempest.'

\*This demonstrates Cassio's loyalty for Othello and his genuine concern for him.

Pg 48: \*Cassio enters

\*What was stated about Cassio's worry for Othello is confirmed;

~ Cassio: '...Oh let the Heavens/ Give him defence against the elements,/ For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.

,

-Therefore the audience recognise Cassio as a caring, loyal Lieutenant.

-This again develops our negative opinion of Iago, as we heard him speak negatively of Cassio in Act One, and now find his comments to be false.

\*Line 20 brings an interruption to the form of iambic pentameter with Cassio's words, 'What noise?'

-This draws attention to what he's saying and so what is happening: the arrival of Iago, Desdemona, Emilia and Rodrigo.

\*Line 31 demonstrates Cassio's extravagant use of language; in describing Desdemona.

~He states, '...he hath achiev'd a Maid/ That paragons description, and wild fame:/ One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens'.

-This flamboyant language makes the audience question Othello's reasons for appointing Cassio as his lieutenant, above Iago. Othello may've chosen Cassio as he's more articulate and would suit the part better in that sense, rather than based on his ability.

Pg 49: \*Cassio explains that despite the soldiers and Othello being mortal, 'The Divine Desdemona' has guided them home safely from the rough seas that one may have expected to take their lives.

\*Line 14 sees an interruption in the rhythm, as there are only 5 syllables on the line, followed by a line of 6 syllables. \*One could also argue that line 14 begins with an inverted foot:

~'She that I spake of:'

-This would be Shakespeare's method of drawing attention to Desdemona in this passage, as she is the topic being discussed. This emphasis is possibly so that the apparent strength of the love between Othello and Desdemona is magnified by Cassio, which will prove ironic later on, when Iago inclines Othello to believe that Desdemona is committing adultery with Cassio.

-This passage once again demonstrates Cassio's habit of using extravagant and flamboyant language, once again in reference to Desdemona.

\*Line 24 sees yet another interruption in the rhythm, as it has only three syllables, and an inverted foot.

-This is to draw attention to the activities occurring: the arrival of Desdemona, Iago, Rodrigo, and Emilia.

\*Cassio shows his caring persona, as he reassures Desdemona of Othello's safety;

~'He's not yet arriv'd, nor know I aught/ But that he's well, and will be shortly here.'

Cassio's speeches often include broken strings:

~'This likewise is a friend

See for the news:'

-From this we can deduce that he must speak with haste and speed, so as to not let the rhythm be unnecessarily interrupted. This adds to the fact that he is extremely articulate and well spoken.

Pg 50: \*Cassio addresses Iago as 'good Iago', which conveys his trusting nature, and the high esteem in which he holds Iago.

-This demonstrates Shakespeare's use of dramatic irony, as we know that Iago is plotting to convince Othello that Iago is having an affair with his wife, whereas Cassio believes in Iago's supposed good nature.

-This in turn summons sympathy for Cassio within the audience, as we wish him not to be so good-natured towards Iago, developing our positive view of Cassio.

Pg 52: \*Cassio continues to praise Iago, wrongly;

~'...you may relish him/ More in the soldier, than in the scholar'

Pg 54 \*Iago speaks of his plan to convince Othello of his wife's fictional affair with Cassio.

~'I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip'

-Again this arouses sympathy for Cassio within the audience, as well as further developing the audience's negative opinion of Iago.

## SCENE TWO

Pg 57 \*Cassio and Othello's faith in Iago is reinforced;

~'Iago is most honest'

Pg 58 \*We see the interaction between Iago and Cassio, and witness Cassio's plan for revenge being put into action, as he leads Cassio into praising Desdemona.

~'She is indeed perfection'

-The form here has changed to prose, and so may not have the fluency of earlier dialogue. This would make the audience notice more of what is being

said, as there is no regular rhythm, and so certain phrases or words would be emphasised by the natural rhythm enforced.

-This consequently inclines the audience to witness Iago's manipulation of Cassio's words. Therefore seeing his plan put into action.

-This makes the audience pity Cassio, as they witness him being vulnerable to Iago's revenge scheme.

Pg 60 \*Whilst Iago is executing his plan and attempting to get Cassio drunk, Cassio exhibits his loyalty to and praise for Othello, as he toasts;

~'To the health of our General'

-This proves somewhat ironic, as Iago is executing his plan to try and prove Cassio is having an affair with Othello's wife, therefore attempting to expose him as disloyal, whilst Cassio is declaring his loyalty to Othello simultaneously.

Pg 61 \*Cassio realises he's done wrong in his position as Lieutenant, and attempts to make Iago aware of his place;

~'The lieutenant is to be saved before the Ancient'

\*Iago's plan develops as he convinces Montano that Cassio is often drunk before bed, and inclines Montano to question Cassio's ability as Othello's Lieutenant, and Othello's own judgement;

~'Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature/'

Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,/ And looks not on his evils'

Pg 62 \*Cassio aids Iago's plan by drunkenly shouting verbal abuse at Rodrigo, in front of Montano, leading to a fight between himself and Montano.

-here we see how easily Cassio is manipulated by Iago, which inclines the audience to sympathise with him, and Othello when he enters, as he too seems engulfed by Iago's scheme.

\*Iago's intelligence is exhibited, as he continues to outwardly show feelings of friendship and loyalty towards Cassio, whilst actively deceiving him.

~'I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth,/ Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio.'

\*Cassio remains loyal and friendly to Iago, not blaming him for what he's responsible for: Cassio's drunkenness, and consequently the subsequent fight.

~'My reputation, Iago, my reputation.'

-This develops the audience opinion that Cassio is extremely trusting, as even after the night's events, he doesn't think to suspect Iago of foul play, but rather turns to him, foolishly, for advice. This trusting nature of Cassio's is his flaw, and what causes him to take Iago's advice, aiding Iago's revenge plan. The audience may view Cassio as rather innocent at this point, as he fails to see, though many do, what has been done to him by Iago: he's been stripped of his dignity and esteem.

Pg 68 \*Cassio's final words of the Act are; ' Good night, honest Iago', which demonstrates his vulnerability in being manipulated by Iago, and his remaining loyalty to him.