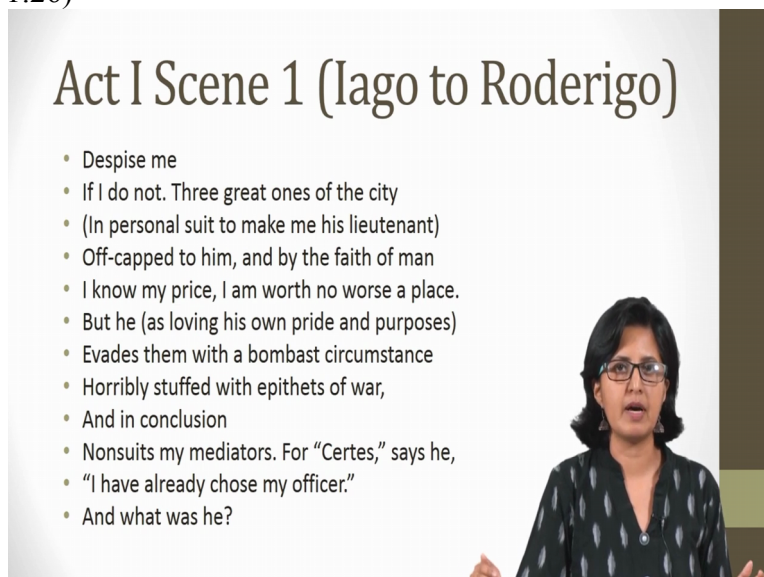


Introduction to World Literature
Professor Dr. Merin Simi Raj
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Madras
Othello -2
Othello by William Shakespeare

Hello and welcome to yet another session of the NPTEL course, Introduction to world literature. Today we continue to look at Shakespeare's iconic play, the tragedy-Othello. We had given a brief introduction in the previous session. Today we try to look at some of the scenes and some of the segments in a fairly detailed way so that we also get a hang of how this play is positioned. I also encourage you to take a look at the play in original in this link which also has a modern translation given alongside.

If you notice, you can also see that there is a different kind of English which was used in the, during the Elizabethan times and even till the early 17th century, that is when this play was written. And if you feel that that is a little inaccessible for obvious reasons, you can always take a look at the modern oscillations also alongside. However, it would be a useful exercise to read the play in original in 17th-century English to also understand how Shakespeare played with language and how he used a number of new ways in which language could be used, new words, new coinages and emotions which he could convey through language and through the staged representations.

(Refer Slide Time 1:26)



Act I Scene 1 (Iago to Roderigo)

- Despise me
- If I do not. Three great ones of the city
- (In personal suit to make me his lieutenant)
- Off-capped to him, and by the faith of man
- I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.
- But he (as loving his own pride and purposes)
- Evades them with a bombast circumstance
- Horribly stuffed with epithets of war,
- And in conclusion
- Nonsuits my mediators. For "Certes," says he,
- "I have already chose my officer."
- And what was he?

The slide features a video inset of Professor Dr. Merin Simi Raj, a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark patterned top, speaking and gesturing with her hands.

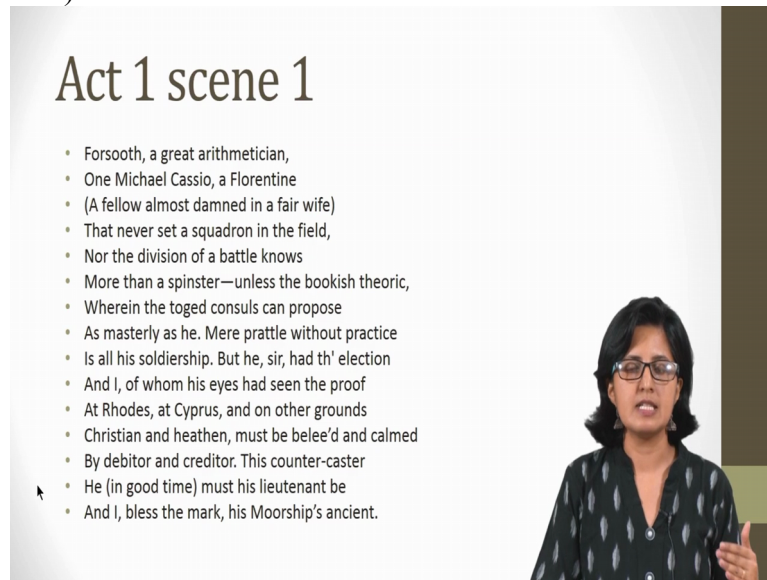
So here we continue looking at the play and we will not be doing a thorough reading of the play across 5 acts in different scenes, we will only go through certain important segments and some important scenes which were also turning points as far as this story is concerned. We begin looking at act I, scene I and we find that this is set in Venice. And a brief insight at this point, if you are familiar with Shakespeare's plays, you will notice that he had not set his plays in contemporary England, in the England of the 16th century or the 17th-century.

He either chose imaginary locations like he does in place like *Midsummer night's dream* or he chose faraway locations in Rome, in Venice and this some say, some critics say is also to avoid running into any legal complications or any political controversy with his predecessors, the University of vets, as we know they were also political in their approach and also had run into various issues on account of that. So we find here a genius dramatist, a genius playwright who also knows how to use his craft in a very skilful way and how to get that across the audience. So here we have this play which is set in Venice and the opening scene is in one of the streets and we have Iago and Rodrigo having this conversation and halfway through the conversation, Iago is telling Rosderigo that he also hates Othello.

So this is the context of the opening scene. They all get to know that Desdemona, Brabantio's daughter who is also from a family of a high social standing, who is part of the governing Council of the citystate, she has run away with Othello, the moor, who is also the general of the Army and Iago who is supposed to be the trusted confidante of Othello is found to be sharing with this Rodrigo who also had Desdemona as his object of desire.

So here Iago is telling Rodrigo, despise me if I do not. Three great ones of the city in personal suit to make me his lieutenant. Off-capped to him and by the faith of man I know my price, I am worth no worse a place. But he as loving his own pride and purposes, evades them with the bombast circumstance horribly stuffed with epithets of war and in conclusion non-suits my mediators. For "Certes" he says "I have already chose my officer". And what was he?

(Refer Slide Time 4:05)



Act 1 scene 1

- Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
- One Michael Cassio, a Florentine
- (A fellow almost damned in a fair wife)
- That never set a squadron in the field,
- Nor the division of a battle knows
- More than a spinster—unless the bookish theoretic,
- Wherein the togged consuls can propose
- As masterly as he. Mere prattle without practice
- Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had th' election
- And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
- At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
- Christian and heathen, must be beleev'd and calmed
- By debtor and creditor. This counter-caster
- He (in good time) must his lieutenant be
- And I, bless the mark, his Moorship's ancient.

A video inset on the right shows a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark patterned top, speaking and gesturing with her hands.

Forsooth, a great arithmetician. One Michael Cassio, a Florentine, a fellow almost damned in a fair wife. So this is what Iago is trying to share with Rodrigo. He is upset with Othello that he was not chosen as the lieutenant. Iago thinks that he was best suited for that position but someone else gets chosen instead of Iago. In Iago's own words, I am worth no worse a place. And then he recalls this incident where Othello tells him "I have already chose my officer". And who is he? Michael Cassio, a Florentine.


And that is this a reference, a very personal reference to him by saying that he cannot even control his own wife and we find that Othello is someone who will always use uncooked language and this tone is set right from the opening scene. We get to know about the nature of Othello that he is someone who would go to any length perhaps if he does not like someone. And as this conversation progresses, we also get to know who Iago is as far as his relation with Othello, the moor is concerned. And I, bless the mark, his Moorship's ancient.

There is a way in which we get to understand that Iago is connected to Othello, Iago is seen as a trusted friend by Othello as well as Rodrigo here but we also know that the way he is presenting these details about people and the way he is presenting his own resentment and his agony, there is a kind of suspicion and a kind of reluctance that the audience already begins to feel about Iago.

(Refer Slide Time 5:48)

Act 1 scene 1 (Iago to Roderigo)

- Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago.
- In following him, I follow but myself.
- Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
- But seeming so, for my peculiar end.
- For when my outward action doth demonstrate
- The native act and figure of my heart
- In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
- But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
- For daws to peck at. I am not what I am

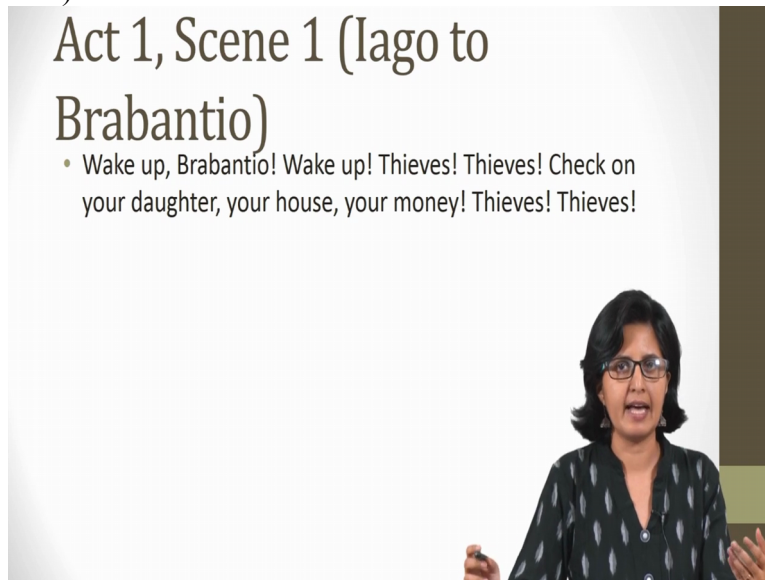


And as it continues, were I the Moor, I would not be Iago. In following him, I follow about myself. Heaven is my judge, not eye for love and duty. But seeming so, for my peculiar end. For when outward action doth demonstrate the native act and figure of my heart in complement external, it is not long after but I will wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peck at. I am not what I am.

He is telling us that in following the Moor, in being presenting himself as a trusted aide to Othello now, he is actually not following Othello but he is only following himself. It is to meet his own ends and he also says very directly in act I, scene I itself that I am not what I am and whatever I seem to be in front of different people, it is not what I am. He is also warning Rodrigo who will in fact face a very violent death on account of the schemes and plans of Iago.

It was an inadvertently done, it was an accidental death but nevertheless we get to know that right from the outset Iago is being very cunning and he also tells at the outset of the play which of course only the audience may catch and it remains very hidden, it remains obscure as far as the other characters are concerned.

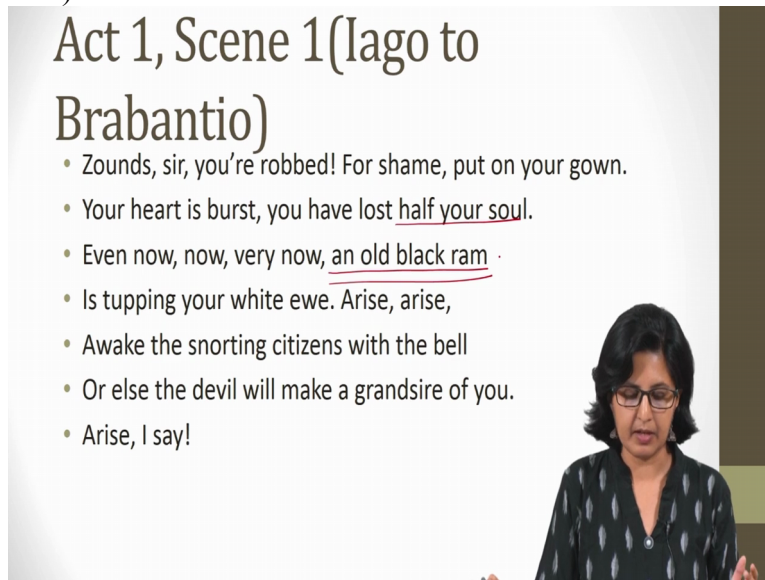
(Refer Slide Time 7:15)



We are given to understand that Brabantio's daughter, Desdemona had eloped with Othello. So Iago and Rodrigo, they decide to go to Brabantio's place, this is Desdemona's father to wake him up and inform him about what has happened to his daughter. Wake up, Brabantio, wake up. Thieves thieves. Check on your daughter, your house, your money thieves thieves. So he is not presenting this as an elopement, elopement out of her own will. Desdemona left with Othello out of her own will. That is being presented as some burglary, some robbery which had happened in a Brabantio's house and he is also now informing Brabantio as an anonymous person.

It is very important to know that, if you read through that scene, you will know that Iago is not presenting himself as Iago because to the world outside, to the public, Iago is someone who is closely appreciated with Othello, one of the closest allies of Othello. But here, he is just being an anonymous informant and we do not, the Brabantio does not really to know who that is.

(Refer Slide Time 8:23)



Act 1, Scene 1 (Iago to Brabantio)

- Zounds, sir, you're robbed! For shame, put on your gown.
- Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul.
- Even now, now, very now, an old black ram .
- Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise,
- Awake the snorting citizens with the bell
- Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.
- Arise, I say!

The slide features a list of Iago's lines from Act 1, Scene 1 of Othello. The lines are: 'Zounds, sir, you're robbed! For shame, put on your gown.', 'Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul.', 'Even now, now, very now, an old black ram .', 'Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise,', 'Awake the snorting citizens with the bell', 'Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.', and 'Arise, I say!'. The words 'half your soul' and 'an old black ram' are underlined. A small video inset in the bottom right corner shows a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark patterned top, speaking.

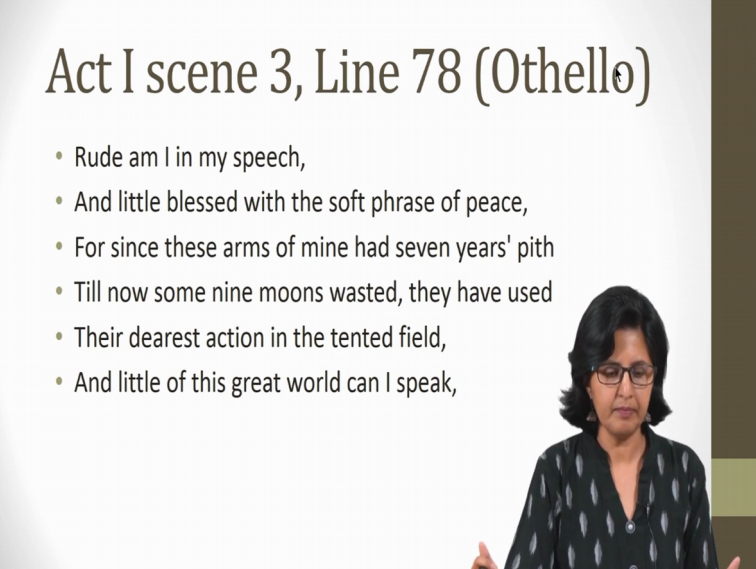
And after that, he continues to use very filthy language and he also referring to this love affair between Desdemona and Othello in very base terms. Look at the kind of language that Iago uses here that too to talk to Brabantio about his own daughter. “Zounds, sir, you are robbed. For shame, put on your gown. Your heart is burst, you lost half your soul. Even now, now, very now, an old black ram is tupping your white ewe. Arise, rise, awake the snorting citizens with the bell or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.”

And look at the imagery which is being used here. He is using a very base, sexual imagery to talk about their relationship. He is referring to Othello as the old black ram. Here we also find a racist prejudices at work and he is also saying, and he is also telling Brabantio in one certain term that if you do not alert the citizens and if you do not prevent this union, tonight the devil, it may even provide you with a grandson. And this is the kind of language and this is the kind of thoughts Iago has.

And I give these segments in great details to you so that you will know that at the outset of the play, it is the playwright's intention, it is Shakespeare's intention that we know about who Iago is. Iago is talking with various people, with Rodrigo first, with Brabantio and soon you will find Iago interacting with Othello as well. And just like he points out, I am not what I am and I can talk in different ways, I can behave in different ways and there is no way in which in fact we get to know what Iago is actually.

And just like he tells us, I am not what I am, throughout the play we realise that he continues to be very very elusive. He can transform his self, he can transform his loyalties in a matter of a fragment of seconds. And even at the end of the play, we realise that he is someone who hardly changes. There is no loyalty to anyone. There is no remorse, there is no regret and we have absolutely no idea why he is behaving in such a way. And this, his character, it has been constructed so well in such a refined manner that he continues to be seen as one of the most significant and supreme villainous characters ever conceived in literature.

(Refer Slide Time 10:45)



Act I scene 3, Line 78 (Othello)

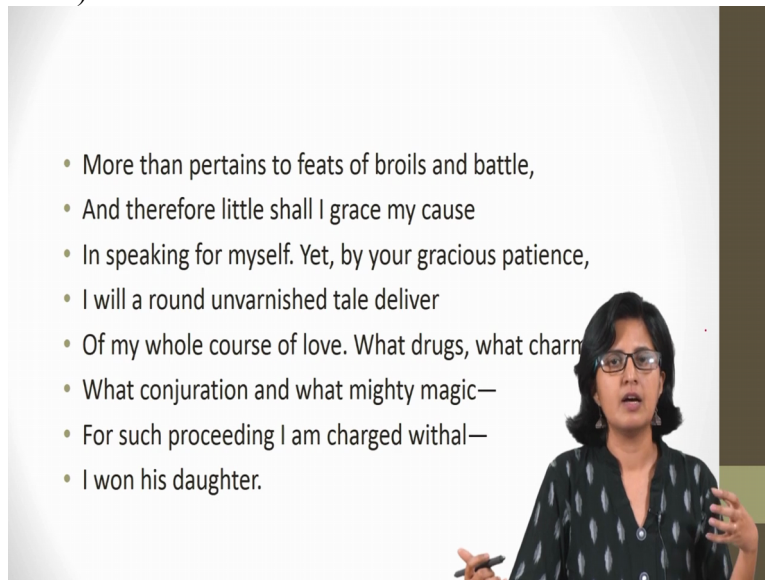
- Rude am I in my speech,
- And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace,
- For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith
- Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
- Their dearest action in the tented field,
- And little of this great world can I speak,

The slide includes a video inset of a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark patterned top, who appears to be presenting the content.

Now we move on to act I, scene 3. Here Othello is speaking and in course of time, you also will get to know that Othello is being summoned before Council of generals to give a testimony about what had happened that Othello and we find him doing all of that in a style and in a classy way that befits a general. And in Othello's own words, rude am I in my speech and little blessed with the soft phrase of peace for since these arms of mine had 7 years pith. Till now some 9 moons wasted, they have used their dearest action in the tented field, and little of this great world can I speak.

So this is a long speech, a fairly long speech that Othello gives. He tells us about the difficulties that he went through in his life and how Brabantio himself used to invite Othello to his home and it was a veneration of these adventures and this tough life that he had that attracted Desdemona towards Othello.

(Refer Slide Time 11:46)



- More than pertains to feats of broils and battle,
- And therefore little shall I grace my cause
- In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
- I will a round unvarnished tale deliver
- Of my whole course of love. What drugs, what charms
- What conjuration and what mighty magic—
- For such proceeding I am charged withal—
- I won his daughter.

And he is also trying to refute the charges made by Brabantio that it is not through what drugs, what charms, what conjuration, what mighty magic, for such proceeding I am charged withal. I won his daughter. So he is giving a long speech where he is also telling the audience and the council of generals about how he had won Brabantio's daughter and that narration gives us a glimpse into the past life that Othello had. And we also get to know that he belongs to a different class, a different ethnic group altogether and his life experiences were also a coarse and harsh and not sophisticated and smooth like Desdemona or the many others that whom you would meet in the play.

(Refer Slide Time 12:31)

Act 1 scene 3 (line 384)

Iago


- Thus do I ever make my fool my purse.
- For I mine own gained knowledge should profane
- If I would time expend with such a snipe
- But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,
- And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets,
- He's done my office. I know not if 't be true,
- But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
- Will do as if for surety. He holds me well.
- The better shall my purpose work on him.
- Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now,

In act 1, scene 3, we find Iago coming back to the stage again and he is very directly telling us, I hate the moor. And there is no particular reason that we can find throughout the play. We find that Iago is always searching for a reason it appears so. And here he says, he has done my office. He did not give him the promotion, the position of the lieutenant that he had been coveting. I know not if it be true but I, for mere suspicion in that kind, will do as if for surety. He holds me well. The better shall my purpose work on him. Cassio's a proper man.

We find Iago, the villain himself saying that perhaps Cassio is the right kind of pawn that he can use for his gain. He also talks about something which he does not know if it is true and even if he is only suspicious about that thing which is, which he is not now sure of, he will just do as if for surety. So what is that thing? It is that, it is thought abroad that twixt my sheets, he has done my office. So here, he is referring to a rumour that Othello and his own wife had adulterous relationships with each other.

But he also says there is no proof that he can present but perhaps this is the reason that he can use against Othello for undoing him, for finishing him off not at a professional level but more at a personal level and you will see the intricate ways in which he manipulates and he works his way through towards this end.

(Refer Slide Time 14:11)



- That Cassio loves her, I do well believe 't.
- That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit.
- The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
- Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,
- And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
- A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,
- Not out of absolute lust—though peradventure
- I stand accountant for as great a sin—
- But partly led to diet my revenge,
- For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
- Hath leaped into my seat. The thought whereof
- Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards,
- And nothing can or shall content my soul
- Till I am evened with him, wife for wife.

And about Cassio also, he makes this totally unfounded remark. Cassio loves her, that is Desdemona. And I do well believe it. That she loves him, it is apt and of great credit. So he is now beginning to plot how he will take this action forward and look at the very obnoxious ways in which his mind works. Now I do love her too. The reference is to Desdemona. Not out of absolute lust. Though peradventure I stand accountant for as great a sin. But partly led to diet my revenge for that I do suspect the lusty Moor hath leaped into my seat.

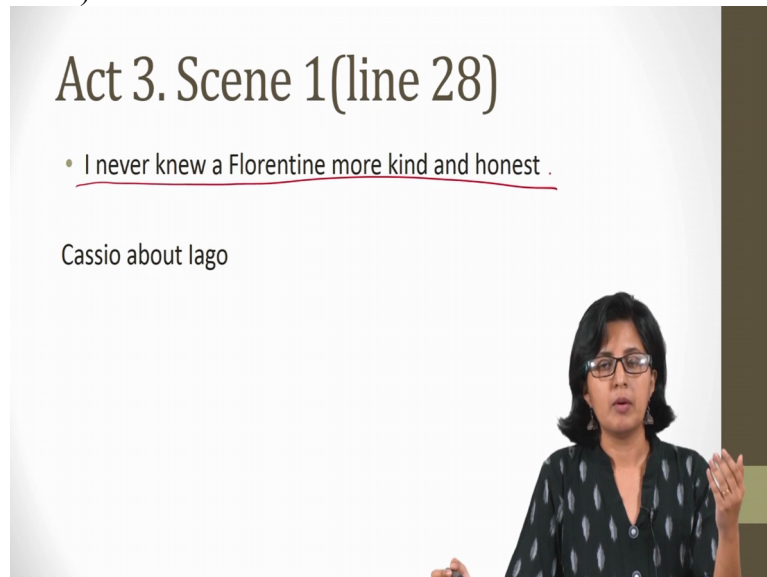
He is saying, he is plotting his revenge and he is also willing to desire it to lust for Desdemona because he thinks that Othello also had perhaps taken his position by having relationship with his wife and but one is not too sure whether this had happened or not. And as the play progresses, we will also get to know that this is all Iago's own doing. He is just imagining it up and trying to give himself a reason for doing all of these things against Othello. And there is very little evidence within the play to tell us that he is even genuinely upset about losing the position of the lieutenant.

But the revenge that he plots against Othello is in a very disproportionate manner and he also does this single-handedly. The way he convinces Rodrigo to stand by him is by telling him that he will help him in some way or the other to get Desdemona's hand in marriage. And Rodrigo is really not aware of the cunning plan and the violent things that he is imagining up in his mind. So we find that he is pretty much alone and he can do this and execute this in a flawless manner

though he does not have any support, he does not look forward to have any support and he is pretty much self-sufficient as far as that is concerned and he says the line, evened with him, wife for wife.

And throughout he seems to refer to this as if to give a proper rationale for levelling this out, for taking his revenge on Othello who otherwise has not done anything, any harm to Iago or anyone as far as we can see in the play.

(Refer Slide Time 16:32)



Act 3. Scene 1(line 28)

- I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest .

Cassio about Iago

And this is how we find Cassio talking about Iago. So personally throughout the play, we find almost every character, almost every significant character in the play having a high regard for Iago because Iago is not who he is. He has been presenting a very flattering impression of himself. He has been presenting before others a very impressive figure and the kind of things that he has been doing also is very very impressive that we will see.

And in act 33 scene 1, Cassio is saying, I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest. And honest seem to be this adjective that most people, specially Othello he keeps on referring to Iago as honest Iago and we know that he could be anything but that.

(Refer Slide Time 17:22)

Act 3. Scene 3. line 5

- Oh, that's an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Desdemona about Iago

The slide features a video inset of a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a black patterned top, gesturing with her hands as if speaking. The background of the slide is white with a dark vertical bar on the right side.

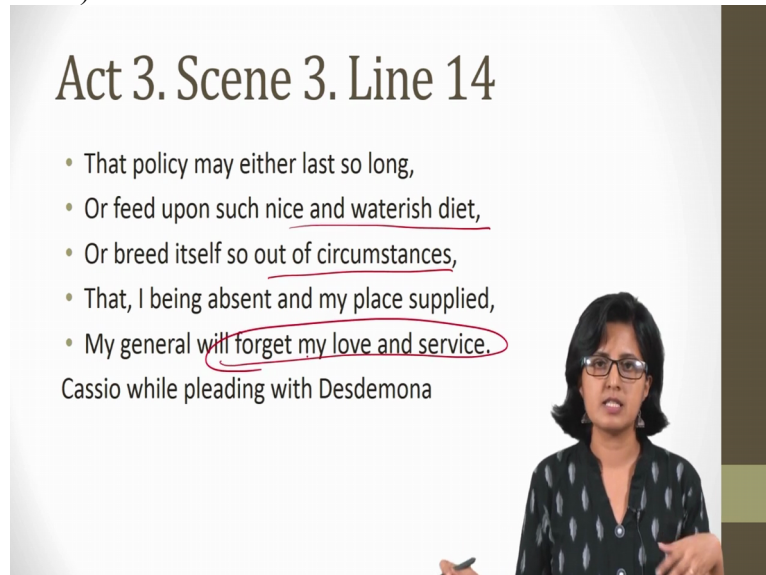
And Desdemona while she is speaking about Iago, oh that is an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio. So we find Desdemona also having the same kind of impression about Iago. Desdemona is telling Cassio about Iago, oh, that is an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio. But I will have my Lord and you again as friendly as you were. This another context, a background to this, Cassio has had a fallout with Othello and this also was engineered very craftily by Iago himself. Iago gets Cassio drunk and he is caught in a brawl. Othello walking into that situation, he decides to immediately dismiss Cassio.

He falls out of his position and also of his favour. Desdemona is trying to intervene here by trying to resolve the issues between Othello and Cassio. And Cassio when he begins to doubt Iago, she is also saying that is an honest fellow. So we find that a lot had transpired between act 1 and act 3 and we find Iago steadily but slowly reaching towards his plan and things seem to be working out in the way that he had designed originally, how he had conceived and people seem to be responding to the plan in an amazing way.

And what is incredible about the way in which Iago is able to read people is that he knows every character in this situation almost inside out. He knows their weaknesses, he knows their strength and he knows how to attack them. He knows what is that one thing that will make each one of them extremely vulnerable and he plays it along accordingly. If at all perhaps there is one person in this play who knows Iago at least partial for what he is, that is his wife, Emilia.

She is able to see through him towards the end but at the same time, in spite of knowing the kind of villain that he is, she has also given to play along. When she was asked to steal this particular handkerchief and give it to Iago, we find her doing that and we also find that in spite of lived with him, perhaps for many years she also just underestimates him. She fails to understand the magnitude of the harm and the capacity for villainy that Iago has.

(Refer Slide Time 19:48)



Act 3. Scene 3. Line 14

- That policy may either last so long,
- Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
- Or breed itself so out of circumstances,
- That, I being absent and my place supplied,
- My general will forget my love and service.

Cassio while pleading with Desdemona

Coming back to Act 3. Scene 3. Cassio is now pleading with Desdemona for his case so that he will be restored his favour with, Othello will be restored. That policy may either last so long or feed upon such nice and waterish diet or breed itself so out of circumstances. He is talking about how many are also taking advantage of this situation, this fallout between Othello and Cassio. That I being absent and my place supplied my general will forget my love and service. He is trying to get into that position as soon as possible.

(Refer Slide Time 20:20)

Act 3. Scene 3. Line 27-28

- For thy solicitor shall rather die
- Than give thy cause away.



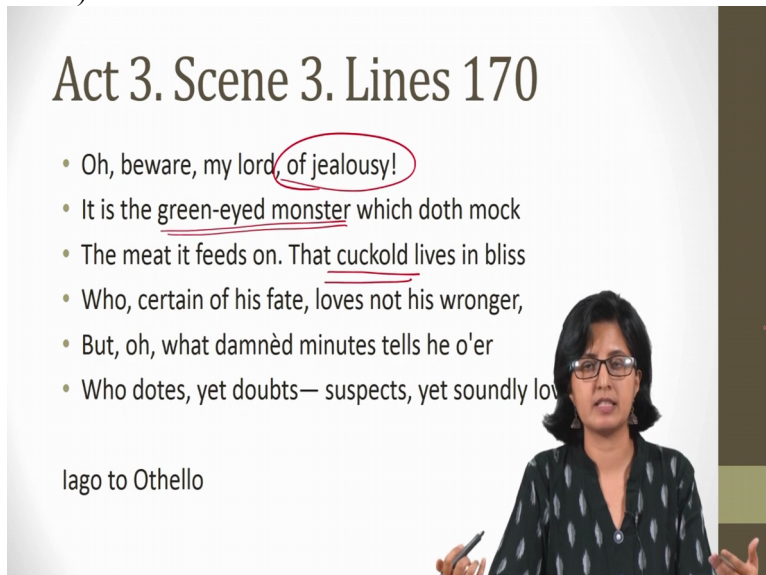
And this is Desdemona's promise to Cassio. For thy solicitor shall rather die than give thy cause away. And we find this getting enacted in the play. This becomes true, it is like a prophecy which Desdemona makes though very inadvertently. Desdemona in fact ends up dying for this cause. In fact, it is not as if she had brought it upon herself but that is how Iago had plotted and that is how Iago had designed and engineers to happen. So it almost appears as if the solicitor, Desdemona she ends up dying for this cause for just restoring Cassio's favour in Othello's eyes.

(Refer Slide Time 21:09)

Act 3. Scene 3. Lines 170

- Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
- It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
- The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss
- Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger,
- But, oh, what damnèd minutes tells he o'er
- Who dotes, yet doubts— suspects, yet soundly lov

Iago to Othello

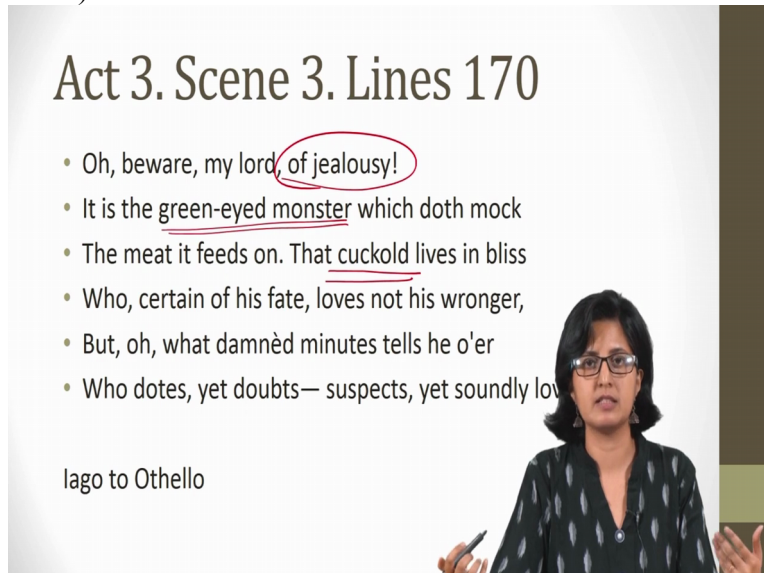


In act 3, scene 3, we have this scene where Iago is talking to Othello. Oh, beware my Lord, of jealousy! It is the green eyed monster which doth mock. This is a phrase coined by Shakespeare and it has become popular ever since. The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss. Cuckold is a man whose wife is cheating on him. The cuckold lives in bliss who, certain of his fate, love is not his stronger. But oh, what damned minutes tells he o'er who dotes, yet doubts- suspects, yet soundly loves.

Iago is being very very cunning here. He is on the one hand telling Othello not to be jealous because that is a green eyed monster and it does mock the meat it feeds on but he is also telling him things in such a crafty way that he loses his mind over jealousy. From this point, we get to know that the emotion of jealousy, it overtakes the play in such a way that Othello is led to such mad rage, Othello is led to even commit a murder, he is able to forget everything else.

His stature, the love that he has towards his wife and the life that he had before, the experiences that he had, the wealth of experiences in fact, the adventurous wife that he had, the tough life that he had led, all of that fading to insignificance and irrelevance when Iago is able to invoke these furious feelings of jealousy in him.

(Refer Slide Time 22:45)



Act 3. Scene 3. Lines 170

- Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
- It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
- The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss
- Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger,
- But, oh, what damned minutes tells he o'er
- Who dotes, yet doubts— suspects, yet soundly loves

Iago to Othello

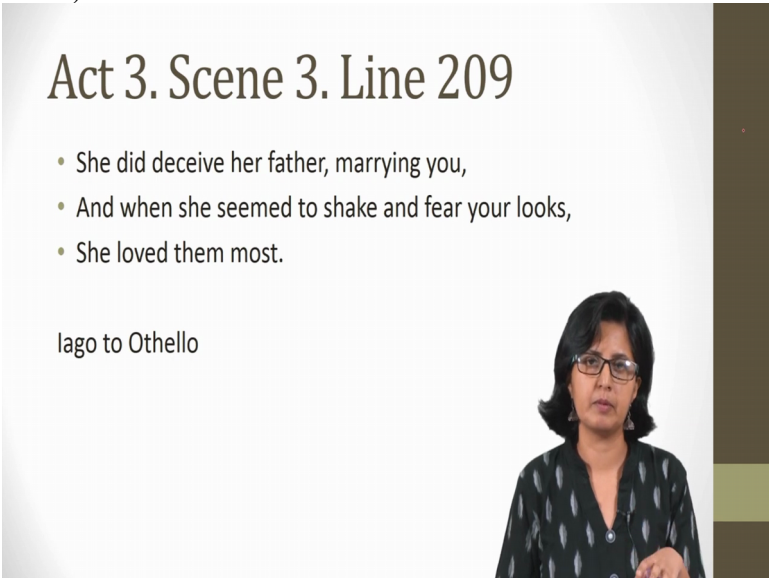
Act 3, scene 3 also tells us very briefly about the fleeting confidence that Othello has. At some level, he knows that he need not worry, he need not feel jealous because Desdemona has come

with him out of choice and that is a choice that makes him feel better about what he is and let us read through this together, act 3, scene 3.

Thinks thou I would make a life of jealousy to follow still the changes of the moon with fresh suspicions? No. To be once in doubt is to be resolved. For she had eyes and chose me. No, Iago I will see before it out. When I doubt, prove. And on the proof there is no more but this: away at once with a love or jealousy!

He has trying to take a rational position here. Othello is trying to tell Iago. Again that also he, Iago successfully manipulates to his own end. Othello is trying to tell Iago that he is someone who will not doubt baselessly and he also realises that it is important to have proof.

(Refer Slide Time 23:53)



Act 3. Scene 3. Line 209

- She did deceive her father, marrying you,
- And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks,
- She loved them most.

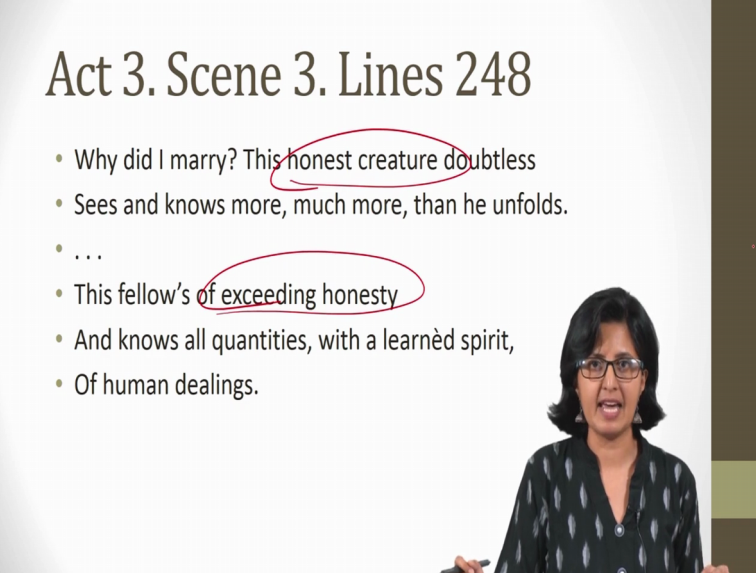
Iago to Othello

The slide features a video inset in the bottom right corner showing a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark patterned top, speaking. The background of the slide is light gray with a dark vertical bar on the right side.

And at this point, Iago shifts his positions a bit. When in the earlier scene, he was trying to tell Othello that you should not allow jealousy to grow and here we find the villain in Iago coming out to non-certain terms. This is what he says to Othello. She did receive her father, marrying you and when she seemed to shake and fear your looks. She loved the most. Here, Iago is reminding Othello that you should never forget that this was the woman who deceived her father by marrying you to remind him, reminding Othello that this is a woman who is capable of deception and do not trust her too much.

And he also says, she is perhaps not what she is because even when she seemed to shaken for your looks, she loved them most. So there is an ambiguity in Desdemona's character. He is very skilfully presenting these thoughts before Othello.

(Refer Slide Time 24:44)



Act 3. Scene 3. Lines 248

- Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless
- Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.
- ...
- This fellow's of exceeding honesty
- And knows all quantities, with a learned spirit,
- Of human dealings.

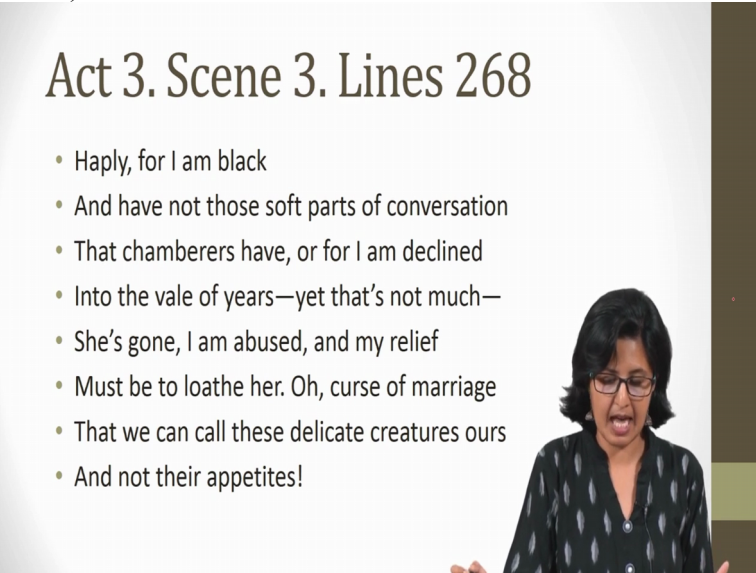
And we do find that Othello gets carried away by this and he goes to such an extent that he is not able to control his own emotions and from act 3, from the end of act 3 onwards we also find that Iago is able to very effortlessly take control of Othello's life. Iago is able to steer Othello's emotions and his actions in the way that he wants to. Othello merely becomes a pawn in Iago's hands. We find this happening in a very pronounced way, in such a tragic way that this play befits the name, a tragedy we realise towards the end of the play.

Here, Othello is wondering, why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless sees and knows more, much more than he unfolds. These fellow's exceeding honesty and knows all quantities with a learned spirit of human dealings. Look at the way in which Othello begins to trust Iago. He is naturally continuing to call him as this honest creature and someone with exceeding honesty and someone who knows human nature and he knows about a lot of things but he is not unfolding them.

And when Iago is at his villainous best, Othello thinks that he is being the best friend ever and this is the kind of irony that makes this play extremely fascinating and a work of genius. And this

irony which is inherent in the play throughout is always known to the audience. That makes this progression in the play unfolding all the more interesting.

(Refer Slide Time 26:18)



Act 3. Scene 3. Lines 268

- Haply, for I am black
- And have not those soft parts of conversation
- That chamberers have, or for I am declined
- Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
- She's gone, I am abused, and my relief
- Must be to loathe her. Oh, curse of marriage
- That we can call these delicate creatures ours
- And not their appetites!

The slide features a list of lines from Act 3, Scene 3, Lines 268 of Shakespeare's Othello. To the right of the text is a small video inset showing a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark patterned top, speaking with an expressive face.

In act 3 in this section, in this scene, Iago begins to loath himself. Haply, for I am black and have not those soft parts of conversation that chamberers have or for I am declined to the vale of years. He is, whatever things that he had presented early before the council in defence of his love for Desdemona, he had presented him confidently as someone who does not confine. He presented himself confidently as that person who has experienced, who managed to win Desdemona over without his might, who managed to win Desdemona over with the kind of life and with the narrative capabilities that he had.

But here we find him using those very things against him. We find that Iago has successfully managed to completely destroy this man. Haply, for I am black and I have not those soft parts of conversation that chamberers have, or for I am declined into the vale of years. He is growing old. And does not much. She is gone, I am abused and my relief must be to loathe her. Look at how successfully and strategically, Iago leads Othello to this point. Now it is a completely irrational being. Now Othello has been transformed into this completely irrational being.

And he thinks, the only relief he may possibly have now is just to loathe her because he is convinced that Desdemona is cheating on him with Cassio and this was the seat of suspicion and jealousy that Iago had planted on Othello that Cassio is cheating on him, that Cassio is having a

relation with Desdemona. While Othello is initially reluctant to believe this, he reaches this point that he is forced to believe it.

And of course, Iago also presents him with this token, with this evidence, this handkerchief which was initially gifted to Desdemona by Othello. Oh, curse of marriage that we can call these delicate creatures ours and not their appetites. He is very very convinced by now that Desdemona has left Othello for Cassio to satisfy her appetites.

(Refer Slide Time 28:49)

Act 3. Scene 3. Lines 299

- I am glad I have found this napkin,
- This was her first remembrance from the Moor.
- My wayward husband hath a hundred times
- Wooed me to steal it, but she so loves the token
- (For he conjured her she should ever keep it)
- That she reserves it evermore about her
- To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out
- And give 't Iago. What he will do with it
- Heaven knows, not I.
- I nothing but to please his fantasy.

The twist

A woman with dark hair and glasses is shown in a video inset, speaking.

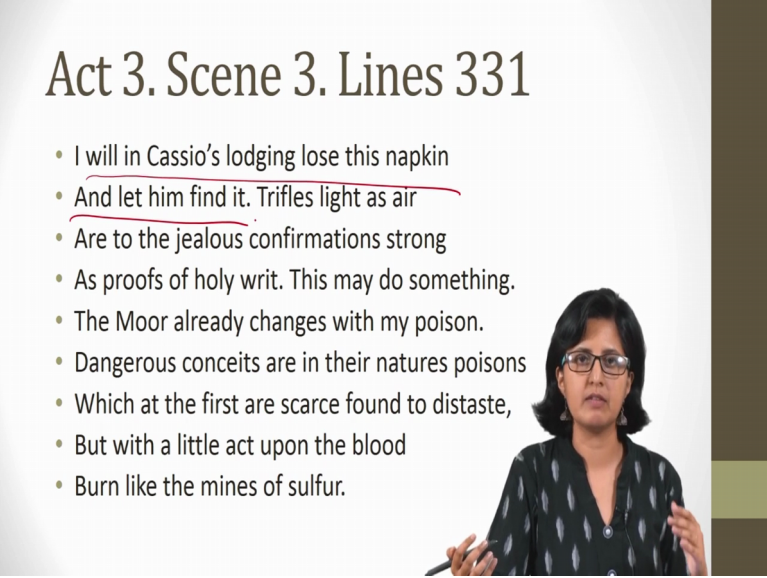
In act 3, scene 3, we find this twist happening and Othello secures the proof that he proposes to present in the evidence of the adulterous relationship between Cassio and Desdemona. He finds this napkin which was her first remembrance from the moor, that was Othello's first gift to Desdemona. And these are the lines spoken by Emilia, Iago's wife. Iago's wife was the one who was entrusted with this duty of getting the napkin and then giving it to Iago. She does not know what this is of use for Iago but nevertheless, she does it.

My wayward husband, she knows him quite well, has a 100 times wooed me to steal it but she loves but she so loves the token for he conjured her she should ever keep it. And this was the deal that Othello and Desdemona had. Othello wanted her to always keep this token with her because he believed in the magical powers of that napkin to keep their love intact. That she deserves it ever more about her to kiss and talk to. I will have the work taken out and given to

Iago. Emilia is a trusted ally. She is someone who is closely associated with Desdemona, spends a lot of time with Emilia taking care of her.

So this is well within her powers to steal it and give it to Iago. What will he do with it? Heaven knows, not I. Nothing but to please his fantasy. So here we have Emilia being given into this weak moment because she just wants to please her husband at least for once because if this napkin is going to satisfy him and if that is going to make him look at her with more favour, then why not? So she goes ahead and do it though she does not know for what purpose this napkin would be put to use to.

(Refer Slide Time 30:39)



Act 3. Scene 3. Lines 331

- I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin
- And let him find it. Trifles light as air
- Are to the jealous confirmations strong
- As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
- The Moor already changes with my poison.
- Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons
- Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
- But with a little act upon the blood
- Burn like the mines of sulfur.

The slide features a list of ten bullet points in a serif font. The first two lines of the first two bullets are underlined in red. In the bottom right corner, there is a video inset showing a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark patterned top, speaking and gesturing with her hands.

And this is Iago's plan. He is now plotting. I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin and let him find it. So he does all these things so meticulously and it seems people think that he is very honest and since he has access to all of these characters who are not even interacting with each other for various reasons and they themselves do not know that Iago is the reason why they are not able to interact with each other. Iago is the one who is putting this wedge between relations between characters, between friends, between lovers and Iago is the same one who is meeting everyone, who has access to these various quarters and who has been doing things the way just he wants. So by putting this napkin in Cassio's place and having him access it, Iago thinks his plan will be successful.

(Refer Slide Time 31:38)

Act 3. Scene 3. Lines 348

- What sense had I in her stol'n hours of lust?
- I saw 't not, thought it not, it harmed not me.
- I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and merry.
- I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.
- He that is robbed, not wanting what is stol'n,
- Let him not know't, and he's not robbed at all.



Here we find Othello continuing to worry himself to death, thinking about this thing that Iago had shared with him about the ongoing affair between Cassio and Desdemona and he says, I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips. He that is robbed, not wanting what is stolen let him know it and he is not robbed at all. And he also says that until someone knows what he or she has been robbed of, you do not even realise it. So he is saying that if Iago had not had this good faith to come and tell him about it, he perhaps would have spent the rest of his life not even knowing what was robbed of him.

(Refer Slide Time 32:23)

Act 3. Scene 3. Lines 369

- Villain be sure thou prove my love a whore,
- Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof
- Or by the worth of mine eternal soul
- Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
- Than answer my waked wrath!

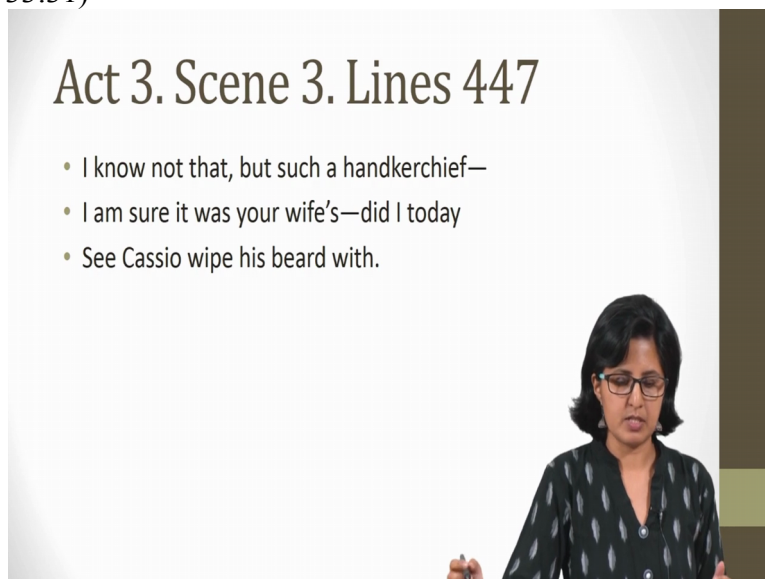
Othello to Iago



And Othello is telling Iago, villain, be sure thou through my love a whore. Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof or by the worth of mine eternal soul, thy thou hadst been better have been born a dog than answer my waked wrath. Othello is now calling Iago villain and this is out of desperation. Deep in his minds, Othello wants to prove Iago wrong but at the same time, completely in Iago's control and this moment, this rare moment in act 3 where Othello tries to become his manly self and he tries to challenge Iago saying through my love a whore, be sure of it and if you do not proof for it and if you are only trying to feed me with these bits of jealous inputs then perhaps you may have to regret.

If you do not provide a proof for me, then it is better for you to have been born a dog than answer my wrath. This incident, the segment also catapults Iago into some action. He needs to do something, otherwise his own stand is going to be under threat.

(Refer Slide Time 33:31)

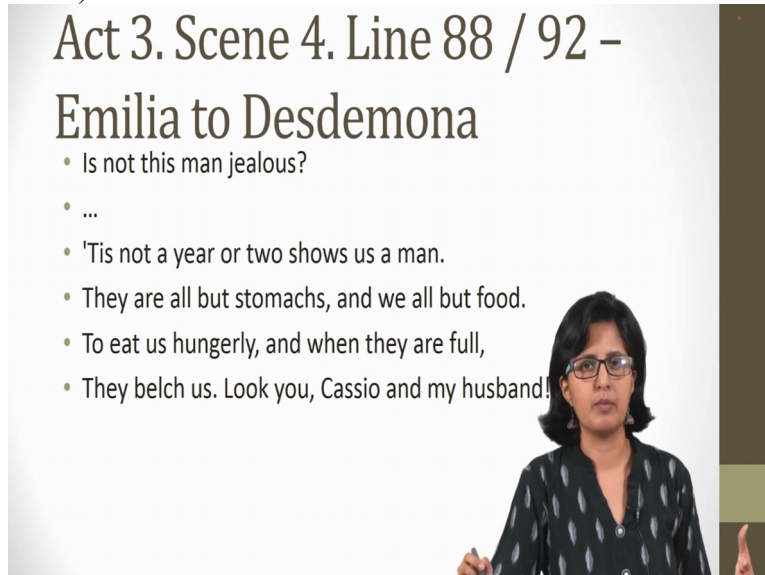


And immediately he produces this handkerchief and after a while he produces this handkerchief, this napkin which he had strategically placed in Cassio's quarters and from there, he finds Cassio holding it and he also very tactfully gets it from Cassio saying that he will return to the rightful owner.

And this is what Iago says. I know not that but such a handkerchief. I am sure it was your wife's. Did I today see Cassio wipe his beard with. He is placing this very tentatively. Maybe it is that handkerchief that you had gifted to your wife. I saw Cassio wiping his beard with it. I am not

very sure but is that your wife's? So it is in a very tentative way as well as in a very firm way that he is presenting this.

(Refer Slide Time 34:22)



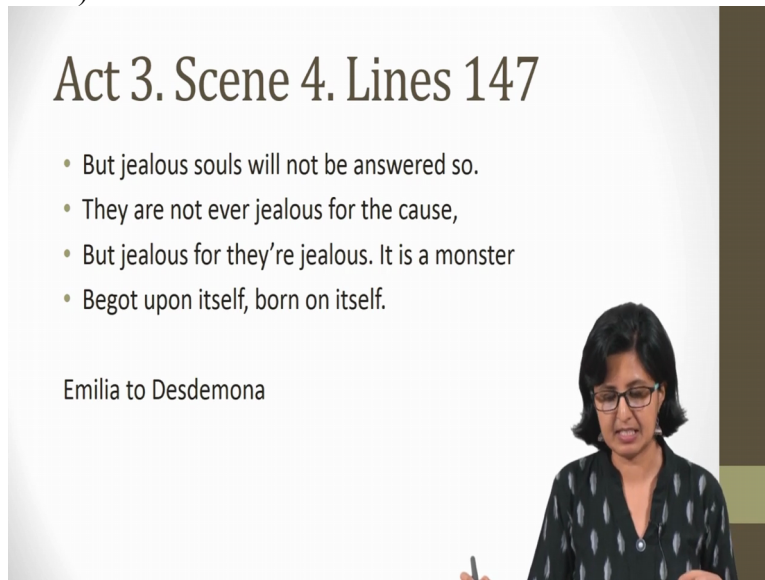
Act 3. Scene 4. Line 88 / 92 -
Emilia to Desdemona

- Is not this man jealous?
- ...
- 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.
- They are all but stomachs, and we all but food.
- To eat us hungrily, and when they are full,
- They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband!

The slide features a video inset in the bottom right corner showing a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a black patterned top, gesturing with her hands while speaking.

And in act 3, scene 4 after having witnessed a change of behaviour in Othello, Desdemona is upset Emilia is telling, is not this man jealous? It is not a year or two shows us a man, they are all but stomachs and we all but food to eat us hungrily and when they are full, they belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband. So he is actually telling she seems to be wiser than Desdemona and well-known with the ways of the world and she is also telling Desdemona to be careful about the man who is married to her and she has also trying to tell her that perhaps they are all just the same and once they satisfy their desire, they do not care at all and they become different men altogether.

(Refer Slide Time 35:08)



Act 3. Scene 4. Lines 147

- But jealous souls will not be answered so.
- They are not ever jealous for the cause,
- But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster
- Begot upon itself, born on itself.

Emilia to Desdemona

The slide features a white background with a dark brown vertical bar on the right. A small video inset in the bottom right corner shows a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark patterned top, speaking.

And Emilia also telling Desdemona but jealous souls will not be answered so. They are not ever jealous for the cause but jealous for they are jealous. It is a monster begot upon itself, born on itself. So here as today we wrap up this lecture for the day, I want you to notice how this emotion, jealousy plays a significant role throughout and some characters are aware of it and some of them are victims as far as this is concerned and some of them are perpetrators too. But we find that jealousy becomes a strong emotion and just like Iago presents himself as the physical villain, as the real villain of this play, we find jealousy, the emotion of jealousy emerging as this abstract villain.

And once he, Iago manages to plant the seeds of jealousy in Othello's mind, we then get to know that Iago has to do very little work. There is hardly anything much that he is being made to do and we find jealousy working its way into Othello's heart and steering his actions, steering his thought process this the way Iago wanted him to be. And this, for the same reasons considered as one of the finest plays as told before where the emotion of jealousy is being dealt with in a wonderful way.

So we wrap up this lecture for today and we will continue to look at the remaining 2 scenes in the following section. Meanwhile, I will also encourage you to take a look at the play in the original so that you will also be able to follow the discussions that we have here. I thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing you in the next session.