

## The Art of Persuasion

**What skills and advantages does Iago have which make it possible for him to be so successful in what the critics call 'the temptation scene'?**

Iago has Satanic powers of both linguistic and psychological manipulation. The sheer weight of words needs also to be taken into account, since Iago has 90 lines to Othello's 60, giving him the upper hand in the dialogue in which the content and reactions are determined by Iago and have been planned and scripted by him in advance. Iago also has the advantages of fluency of expression and of ideas, a slickness of tongue and mind and such a skill of insinuation that what is implied can neither be disproved nor held to Iago's account. As an actor he also has confidence in delivery, the ability to put on a mask and the gift of improvisation to enable him to take advantage of any opportunity. In addition, Iago is a soldier who knows from experience when to feint a retreat in order to further advance.

**Read Act 3 Scene 3 and find an example for each of the persuasive techniques listed below.**

1. Seed-sowing: planting a suggestion to bear fruit later
2. Avoidance: refusing to give an answer to create anxiety
3. Insider knowledge: implying there is a secret the speaker is privy to
4. Unwelcome reminder: bringing up a forgotten fact or painful idea
5. Telling lies: knowingly stating a falsehood
6. Foregone conclusion: giving surmise the status of fact
7. False denial: drawing attention to its opposite
8. False praise: giving the impression of being well-disposed
9. Gross image: providing a disgusting vision
10. Elaboration: extension, giving emphasis to an idea
11. Questions: implying and leading
12. Echoing: repeating the words just spoken
13. Blocking: answering a question with another question
14. Delaying tactic: changing the subject
15. Fake reluctance: pretending to be unwilling to give information
16. Implication: choice of a suggestive word
17. Transferred responsibility: not to blame for divulging unwelcome news
18. Challenge: pretended refusal to share information
19. Twisting: description which shows something in a worse light