

### Exercise 7

Put out the light, and then put out the light!  
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
I can again thy former light restore  
Should I repent me. But once put out thy light,  
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,  
I know not where is that Promethean heat  
That can thy light relume: when I have plucked the rose  
I cannot give it vital growth again,  
It needs must wither. I'll smell thee on the tree;  
O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword! Once more, once more:  
Be thus when thou art dead and I will kill thee  
And love thee after. Once more, and that's the last.

-*Othello* 5.2.7-19

#### 1. (vowels)

u ou e i a e u ou e i  
i i ue ee ou ai ii e  
i a a ai y o e i e oe  
ou i ee e u o e u ou y i  
i o o e ei a oe ea ea  
a a y i eue e i ae u e e oe  
i a o iei ia o a ai  
i ee u ie i e ee o e ee  
o a y ea a o a o e ua e  
u ie o ea e o o e oe o e oe  
e u e ou a ea a i i i ee  
a oe ee a e o e o e a a e a

2. (liquids and sibilants)

l l  
 r r l r r  
 sh c l  
 s r c ll r  
 r s r  
 l r l l r  
 l r s l s rs  
 s c r r s c r c r  
 s r ll ll  
 l r c r s l s

3. (plosives, nasals, fricatives)

p n n p  
 f n f m m n  
 n n f m  
 p n m b n p  
 nn n p n f n  
 n n p m n  
 n m n v pl  
 nn v v n  
 n m m n  
 b m b m p  
 b n n m n m  
 n v f n m n

4. (dentals, dental fricatives, palatal-alveolar affricates)

t t th t d th t t th t  
 ch th th t  
 th t t t th t  
 d t t t th t  
 th t tt t  
 th t th t  
 th t th t d th  
 t d t th th t  
 t d t t th t  
 j t t d  
 th th t d d d th  
 d th t d th t th t



often thought it has a special music; this is partially a result of Othello's internal rhyming and entranced repetitiousness, but I wondered if its sounds contributed more directly to its distinct strain or melody.

I have tried here to provide a series of soundscapes. Using Courier, a font that has equal spacing for its characters (unlike the variably spaced Times New Roman), I have rewritten the text five times, each time erasing all the sounds not in a particular category. A student of linguistics, which I am not, would probably take issue with my groupings—which are neither comprehensive nor wholly rationally motivated. (Said student would also rely less on the Wikipedia articles on phonetics.) My sense is that some sounds “feel” harsher than others—I faintly remember this being born out in actual linguistic research—and my five soundscapes are arranged from most gentle (the vowels) to most harsh (the velars, i.e., the gutturals). In all honesty, I'm not sure you could derive any solid conclusions from my very unscientific efforts: this is really a project for computational linguists and digital humanists, who would be able to determine how phoneme frequency in Othello's speech conforms to the “cunning'st pattern” of sound in other Shakespeare plays and in Tudor English more generally. That said, I will point out the sparse velar soundscape and what seems to me like a high frequency of “soft” sounds (liquids, mutes, and unvoiced consonants). Despite their lack of precision, I also find these graphs accidentally beautiful, with a music of their own in much the same way that the visual shape of a score can give you a certain feeling even if you cannot hear the music it represents in your head.