



"TIME WORKS WONDERS."

IAGO. (JEFF DAVIS.) "FOR THAT I DO SUSPECT THE LUSTY MOOR  
 HATH LEAP'D INTO MY SEAT: THE THOUGHT WHEREOF  
 DO'TH LIKE A POISONOUS MINERAL GNAW MY INWARDS?" — OTHELLO.

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"Time Works Wonders." By Thomas Nast. *Harper's Weekly*, April 9, 1870.

## ***Lesson...***

Political cartoons are forms of art that are not necessarily humorous, but provoke thought. This political cartoon by Thomas Nast appeared in Harper's Weekly on April 9, 1870.

### ***For Grades 5-8...***

Examine the cartoon closely. The subject of the cartoon is Hiram Revels and his election to the Senate to fill the seat of Jefferson Davis. Thomas Nast uses the two main characters of William Shakespeare's play, "Othello," to express the subject to the viewer. Davis represents Iago (the villain) and Revels represents Othello (the Moor). Davis, appearing in Shakespearian costume, looks on in envy of Revels. Contrarily, Revels sits poised, well dressed, and ready to work. Sometimes cartoonists use words, phrases, and symbols to communicate a message to the viewer. How does the storyline in the play "Othello" symbolize the event portrayed in the cartoon? Identify other symbols used in the cartoon. Think about facial expressions, body language, and other depictions used that represent an idea or thought. Draw your own political cartoon about a current event. Use words and phrases (sparingly) as well as symbols to express an opinion, idea, or thought about the event to your viewer.

### ***For Grades 9-12...***

Examine the cartoon closely. Thomas Nast uses symbols in the cartoon to represent emotions, ideas, events, even characters. The subject of the cartoon is the irony of an African American, Hiram Revels, and his election to fill the seat of Jefferson Davis, an owner of enslaved people. What other symbols are used in the cartoon and what messages do they convey? Draw your own political cartoon about a current event. Use words and phrases (sparingly) as well as symbols to express an opinion, idea, or thought about the event to your viewer.

### ***For the teacher...***

Set in the Senate Chamber, Nast depicts Sen. Hiram Revels sitting at Jefferson Davis's desk. Revels looks ready to work with written materials in front of him and books on the floor leaning against the desk. These objects are symbolic of education, something that enslaved people were denied for years. At the time, Revels was the only African American Member of Congress. He has the attention of onlookers in the gallery as well as four of his Republican colleagues who surround him (left to right): Sen. Henry Wilson (R-MA), Sen. Oliver Morton (R-IN), Sen. Carl Schurz (R-MO), and Sen. Charles Sumner (R-MA). Notice their facial expressions and body language. Ask students to consider this new environment for Revels and how he was received by his colleagues and the general public.

***Sources:***

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Philip Dray. *Capitol Men: The Epic Story of Reconstruction through the Lives of the First Black congressmen* (Houghton Mifflin: New York, 2008), 58-76.

HarpWeek Cartoons, "Cartoon of the Day," Harper's Weekly, <http://www.harpweek.com/09Cartoon/BrowseByDateCartoon.asp?Month=April&Date=9> (accessed, August 31, 2009).