

# Othello as shakespeare's tragic hero essays example

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According to Aristotle's theory, a tragic hero is a character that falls from glory to misery and suffering. He usually makes a tragic mistake that becomes fatal for his destiny. Then, a hero understands his mistakes, recognizes them and eventually the audience stops feeling any negative emotions towards the hero. Shakespeare's Othello is one of the greatest tragic heroes of all times.

Othello is a bright example of a tragic hero. He experiences a moral downfall. In the beginning of a play he looks very confident and strong. Othello is respected even by his enemies. People see him as a reliable and brave man. When he is in danger for getting married with Desdemona, he never loses his temper. Othello is calm and acts like a noble man. In the beginning of the story Othello is a powerful man that proves Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero.

As every tragic hero Othello has a tragic flaw that leads him into suffering. The first flaw is in trusting Iago too much: "A man he is of honesty and trust. To his conveyance I assign my wife" (I. iii. 282-283). Othello should have been more judgmental. Iago was a dishonest man and he made Othello's life miserable. Othello was too gullible.

Another Othello's tragic flaw was being madly in love with Desdemona. This love was taking him over so much, he couldn't bare the thought of her being with another man. This is why Othello became so jealous. His love was unconditional, so he made a fatal mistake of not trusting his young wife. She begged him to believe her, but Othello was blind. He treated Desdemona as a possession. So the husband decides his wife has to die, because he doesn't want her to be with another man.

Othello is a very insecure man. Such jealousy cannot exist on its own. There should be some feeling, which could make it bigger. For Othello such feeling is insecurity. He was a victim of racism - people didn't approve his marriage with Desdemona, because she was of a noble family, and Othello was just a Moorish general. He didn't have a rich family or a widely recognized family name. Othello had to prove people he was worth trusting and respecting. So when he married such beautiful and noble girl as Desdemona he might have felt he wasn't just "good enough" for her. Deep inside Othello was afraid she could have found another man. Someone, who could fit her rich and well-known family. This insecurity led him into darkness. Othello should have trusted his wife's love.

Iago made Othello furious and suspicious. This character experiences downfall, he doesn't look like a confident leader anymore. He acts irrationally and angry. Othello can't see clear and his actions become self-destructive. By the end of the play, he completes his downfall by murdering his innocent wife, who was begging him to believe her. A man loved his wife very much, but he chose to trust another person's lies. Even when he decided to murder Desdemona, he explains it by good intentions: "But she's got to die, or she'll cheat on other men" (V. ii. 6). He wants to save her soul and doesn't want her to live in dishonesty. When Othello enters her room, he doesn't want to kill his wife, but he thinks of this act as mercy for Desdemona's soul. Othello thinks he will purify it by murdering her.

Every tragic hero has to learn the truth about his flaws and understand what went wrong. He should see the reasons of his suffering and accept his own mistakes. Othello finds out that Iago was lying on him the whole time. The

truth is discovered and he is desperate, because his flaws made him kill the only person he truly loved. Moreover, his wife was innocent, and he had to believe her in the first place. But Iago implanted ideas of revenge and vengeance into Othello's head. And there was no way back for poor Othello. So when he finds out he trusted the wrong person, he feels deceived and manipulated. Othello is a respected military man and he never felt so hurt in his whole life, even in the battle field.

In the end, Othello understands who the real villain was, but it was too late. He can't live with such guilt, so he decides to kill himself. So the audience starts to feel sorry for the main character. Even after Othello murdered his wife, he still remains a victim of misconceptions and wrong judgement. Of course, he was easily manipulated by a villain, but he understands his mistakes. That makes Othello a tragic hero.

This play is a tragedy of deceived trust, not jealousy. Othello wouldn't kill his wife without this blind trust to Iago. Othello thinks of Desdemona as ultimate sin, and sacrifices her life to purify her and save her soul from self-destruction. His wife made his life brighter, he saw the world in a different way. When Othello started to think she was a cheater, everything around him started to turn into chaos. Desdemona was a guiding light for Othello, his star, so when he thought she was sinful, this light disappeared and left Othello without a purpose in life.

Othello is a classic definition of a tragic hero. He experiences a downfall from glory - from being a respected general to an insecure murderer. Othello finds out the truth - Iago was a true villain of the story and made him blind. The Moorish general admits his mistakes and cannot cope with such suffering. He

kills himself, because of his misery. This is why, Othello can certainly be defined as a tragic hero of the play.

### **Works cited**

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Othello: The Moor of Venice*. Ed. Tucker Brooke and Lawrence Mason. New Haven: Yale UP, 1947. Print.