

"crime and punishment" and "othello"

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



" Crime and Punishment" and " Othello" In both Crime and Punishment and Othello there is a theme of necessary balance. Crime and Punishment's theme that man must be balanced in order to function properly is very similar to Othello's theme that, tragically, jealousy is destructive, even to the one that holds it. In Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov's extreme intellectualism caused him to stop functioning as a complete and balanced individual which ultimately cost him his freedom.

For Othello, it was his extreme jealousy that caused him to become emotionally unbalanced, which cost him both Desdemona and his own life. In both cases the extremes create unbalance which ends up costing a lot. There is a difference, however, and that too lies in the extremes; while Raskolnikov is too intellectual and lacks emotion, Othello is a rage of emotions and requires some intellect or rationality.

One stylistic device both authors used to demonstrate this unbalance is foreshadowing. On page 84 in Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov says, " If they question me, perhaps I will simply tell. Fall to my knees and tell." This foreshadows Raskolnikov's confession to the police and his subsequent sentencing to Siberia. Raskolnikov is obviously unbalanced if he can detachedly hypothesize about his confession. Similarly, Desdemona's willow song foreshadows her own death. In this way we realize Othello must be extremely unbalanced if his wife can foresee her own death when they are still newly wed. Both foreshadowed events would usually be considered as negative. The main difference is that while Raskolnikov's imprisonment is temporary, Desdemona's death is permanent. The interesting thing about both foreshadowed events is their irony. While both events are usually

construed as negative, good things come from both. Not until he has been in Siberia a year does Raskolnikov finally renounce his overman theory and become complete and balanced once again. Also, Desdemona will be able to forgive Othello and be with him throughout eternity. What makes these happenings different is their justness. Raskolnikov was rightfully imprisoned for his crime, while Desdemona was unjustly murdered for a crime she did not commit. Finally, both stories include a very important epiphany. Raskolnikov's acceptance of love and God at Sonya's feet is both similar and dissimilar to Othello's realization of his mistake near the body of Desdemona. They are similar because both men gain the quality they lacked; Raskolnikov gains emotion and Othello gains intelligence, or knowledge. These epiphanies are dissimilar, however, because Sonya is alive and Raskolnikov's story ends with a promise of renewed life, whereas Desdemona lies dead and Othello adds to the death count by taking his own life. Both Crime and Punishment and Othello speak of balance, but they definitely do it in their own unique way. Crime and Punishment gives us hope that we may find balance, while Othello warns against the consequences if we do not. Hopefully, we can find our own balance in life with less turmoil than they.