

# Othello as Victim of Hamartia

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## Othello as Victim of Hamartia

By definition, a tragedy is a story that details the downfall of a protagonist. Most often, the protagonist (tragic hero) is a member of high society who is faced with an oppositional force, be it internal or external. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle states that "tragedy is the imitation of an action; and an action implies personal agents, who necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities both of character and thought; for it is by these that we qualify actions themselves, and these- thought and character- are the two natural causes from which actions spring, and on actions, again all success or failure depends...." This quote illustrates an aspect of tragedy upon which many works are based, including Shakespeare's [Othello](#). Aristotle has thus outlined the characteristics of a tragic hero. The tragic hero must be cursed with an overpowering "[hamartia](#)," or tragic flaw, which leads to his eventual downfall. Although he is a virtuous man, Othello is a tragic hero whose naiveté becomes his tragic flaw. Over the course of the play, the audience sees Othello crumble apart because of his over-powering jealousy. Despite his sins, the audience still manages to feel pity for Othello and his horrible [misfortune](#). In this case, the tragic h...

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