

Lack of Reason in Shakespeare's Othello

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William Shakespeare presents the character Othello as an excellent leader in the play, Othello. The hero has strength, charisma, and eloquence. Yet Othello cannot reason. The battlefield and Senate are, at least in Othello, depicted as places of honor, where men speak truly. In addition, the matters of war and state are relatively simple; no one lies to Othello, all seem to respect him. He never even has to [fight](#) in the play, with the enemy disappearing by themselves. This simplistic view does not help him in matters of the heart. His marriage is based on tall tales and pity and his friendships are never examined; he thinks that anyone who knows him love him. Thus the ultimate evaluation of Othello must be that, although he leads well and means well, he lacks good judgment and common sense. This becomes most plainly obvious in his final two speeches, where even though the play ends properly, and in a dignified way, Othello never fully realizes or takes responsibility for what has happened.

These two last orations of Othello are noble in speech and purpose, but lack [comprehension](#). He uses the first to attack himself for his horrible deed; certainly this is the first reaction of anyone who has wrongly killed his beloved. He delivers condemnation

upon himself with eloquence and anguish. The latter speech he gives in his final role as a leader, directing the men who remain about how to deal with what has happened and showing them he has purged the evil.

In his initial self-loathing and [remorse](#) at realizing the truth of Desdemona's innocence, Othello is genuinely anguished. "This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven, / And fiends will snatch at it." (V.2.325-326) It is clear t...

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...this, Othello dies not as a tragic hero, but as someone destroyed by circumstance and evil. But the superficiality of his marriage and the fact that if he had only been honest to his wife and lieutenant he would have found out the truth point in another direction. Othello could lead, but he could not reason.

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