

Each group will be given one of the readings below to justify to the rest of the class. This means going through the play carefully, Act by Act, to find references and quotations that support your particular reading. You will then present your case to the whole class, with the supporting evidence.

1. 'By far the most romantic figure among Shakespeare's heroes ... he does not belong to our world, and he seems to enter it we know not whence – almost as if from wonderland.'

A. C. Bradley *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Palgrave Macmillan)

2. 'Othello's nature is all of one piece. His trust where he trusts is absolute. Hesitation is almost impossible to him. He is extremely self-reliant and decides and acts instantaneously. If stirred to indignation ... he answers with one lightning stroke. Love, if he loves, must be to him the heaven where either he must live or bear no life. If such a passion as jealousy seizes him, it will swell into a well-nigh uncontrollable flood.'

A. C. Bradley *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Palgrave Macmillan)

3. 'He really is, beyond any question, the nobly massive man of action, the captain of men he sees himself as being ... In short a habit of self-approving self-dramatisation is an essential element in Othello's make-up.'

'Diabolic intellect and the noble hero' by F R Leavis
in *The common pursuit* (Hogarth Press 1982)

4. 'Othello's tragedy is that he lives according to a set of stories through which he interprets the world – an ideology – but it is a world that has been superseded. He cannot see that this is so, and the contradictions within his ideology destroy him. He is living the life of a chivalric warrior in a world run by money and self-interest.'

Sean McEvoy *Shakespeare: The Basics* (Routledge (UK))