The Tragic Hero (According to Aristotle)

A tragic hero is a literary character who makes a judgment error that inevitably leads to his/her own destruction.

**Characteristics**

Aristotle once said that "A man doesn't become a hero until he can see the root of his own downfall."

An Aristotelian tragic hero must possess specific characteristics:

1) Hero must be noble in nature, but imperfect so that the audience can see themselves in him.

2) Fatal flaw or error of judgment (hamartia).

3) A reversal of fortune (peripeteia) brought about because of the hero's error in judgment.

4) The discovery or recognition that the reversal was brought about by the hero's own

actions (anagnorisis)

5) Excessive Pride (hubris)

6) The character's fate must be greater than deserved.

7) Hero's story should arouse fear and empathy.

Initially, the tragic hero should be neither better nor worse morally than normal people, in order to allow the audience to identify with them. This also introduces pity, which is crucial in tragedy, as if the hero was perfect we would be outraged with their fate or not care especially because of their ideological superiority. If the hero was imperfect or evil, then the audience would feel that he had gotten what he deserved. It is important to strike a balance in the hero's character.

Eventually the Aristotelian tragic hero dies a tragic death, having fallen from great heights and having made an irreversible mistake. The hero must courageously accept their death with honour.

**Let’s Apply it to *Othello***

1) How is Othello noble in nature, but imperfect so that the audience can see themselves in him?

2) What is Othello’s fatal flaw or error of judgment (hamartia)?

3) What is Othello’s reversal of fortune (peripeteia) brought about because of his error in judgment?

4) How and when does Othello discover or recognize that the reversal was brought about by his own actions (anagnorisis)?

5) In what way does Othello have excessive Pride (hubris)? And how does it contribute to his downfall?

6) How is Othello’s final fate greater than he deserved?

7) How does Othello’s story arouse fear and empathy?