

Main Ideas of Hamlet

1. Revenge isn't always sweet

Revenge isn't always sweet is a main idea of Hamlet because it clearly applies to two characters in the play. These 2 characters are Hamlet, of course, and Laertes. Both characters want to avenge their fathers' deaths, and end up doing exactly so, with deaths of other characters such as Ophelia and Queen Gertrude. Ophelia and Gertrude both greatly contributed to the revenge arc of Hamlet, but weren't targets for vengeance. Hamlet wants to exact his revenge upon Claudius for killing his father and marrying his father's wife. Hamlet's reason for revenge is more or less clear. In doing so, he accidentally kills Polonius, which allows for Ophelia to go mad; her brother starts to desire revenge, Hamlet left her, and her father just died, leaving no one she could turn to. Ophelia goes on to drown herself, causing Laertes to act blindly in revenge. In the end, Claudius tricks Laertes into being his lackey, Laertes poisons Hamlet, enacting his revenge. Hamlet turns the poisoned rapier back onto Laertes, poisoning him, and then poisons Claudius, enacting his revenge. In the end, Hamlet and Laertes both die, they both achieve their vengeance. On one hand everyone who wanted revenge exacted their revenge and got what they wanted; Claudius gets Hamlet dead by Laertes' hand, Hamlet gets his revenge since Claudius dies, Laertes gets his revenge since Hamlet dies.

Main Themes of Hamlet

1. Justice vs. Revenge

Justice vs. Revenge is a big theme in Hamlet, as this theme can generalize almost all the events in Hamlet. Hamlet, as charged by the ghost of his dead father, must kill Claudius, since Claudius killed Hamlet's father. That is simple justice; one person killed another, and justice can be applied as that person should also be killed. Hamlet's quest starts out about justice for his father, this is evident by the play that Hamlet puts on. The play is Hamlet's way of figuring out whether the ghost was telling the truth, and if justice truly needs to be served. However, justice clearly and quickly turns into personal revenge after some very obvious events. One of the most obvious events is when Claudius is praying and confessing his sins, Hamlet could very easily have killed Claudius right then and there, but doesn't, because Hamlet believes that would send Claudius to heaven. Claudius dies and justice is served so why doesn't Hamlet kill him there? Hamlet's quest would be over; his father could rest in peace, but of course, Hamlet wouldn't be able to live with himself. Hamlet believes that by killing Claudius when Claudius is praying, Claudius will be sent to heaven, and will not suffer. Hamlet won't allow for Claudius to go to heaven. That action, or lack thereof, clearly eludes to justice becoming personal revenge. Another event that may not be as obvious is when Hamlet kills Polonius, and doesn't really care about the repercussions of killing Polonius (Ophelia going mad and then Laertes vowed to avenge his sister). Hamlet follows the theme of Justice vs. Revenge, which is evident by the play Hamlet puts on, to not killing Claudius as Claudius prays, and feeling little to no remorse after killing Polonius.

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