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Literature

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Hamlet and Revenge

The stories and novels from the Elizabethan era mostly revolve around taking revenge for the fallen fathers. The play Hamlet of Shakespeare is, therefore, not different. Throughout the story, the theme of revenge has remained dominant (Eliot). Shakespeare’s Hamlet is also different in many other aspects, from other stories of t Elizabethan era. For example, Hamlet talks about emotions, rhetoric and climax of the acts. The characters had employed their powers to abort and to subvert the moments of revenge. Shakespeare employs that it is not necessary for anyone to ultimately sort for the tool for vengeance, rather revenge must be left for those in heavens to decide (Eliot). He therefore, argues that revenge is considered as a return of evil for evil. In Shakespeare’s play, Hamlet first aspires to limit the revenge in a swift manner and believes that the ghost is actually a devil, who is imitating him to take revenge for his father’s death, which will be bad for his life after death.

The only thing Hamlet want to gain, from taking revenge is the honor, he wants to pay his father. As Hamlet is a true believer of the fact that his father was killed, when he was not committing a sin, therefore he would be rested in heavens. However, when he finds Claudius committing a sin, he decides to take revenge, but it leaves him in an uncertain and difficult situation (Neill). Claudius who is his enemy comes in a more favorable position to get rid of Hamlet. Many critics and evaluators of this play argue that no matter, how just is the cause, but the person who decided to avenge is always in a bad situation. Although Hamlet decides to take revenge, when he is not feeling good to do that, for this reason, he kills a bystander Polonius, which makes Hamlet as bad as Claudius (Neill).

Generally, while taking revenge, the revenger tries to limit the casualties and work to inflict as many damages over the foe, as possible. In Hamlet’s case, it is different. Whenever he decides to avenge, he becomes a killer of those, who had not been involved in any incident against him before. For example, Hamlet becomes the reason for the death of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz. Much importantly, Hamlet’s desire of taking revenge from Claudius results in being a cause of madness of Ophelia. In making her feel, that he is not Hamlet, she had been looking toward, and he becomes the reason of Ophelia’s madness (Skulsky). Ophelia starts to think that Hamlet had rejected her love and is interested in pursuing other objectives. Finally, when Hamlet kills Polonius, he pushes her away from him both physically and mentally. Shakespeare’s characterization of Hamlet’s revenge shows that once anyone decides to avenge, it narrows down many options for him, and the case of Hamlet is the same (Neill).

Although during the end of the play, Hamlet becomes some bit successful in avenging his foes, it costs him his life. In the end, he was surrounded by guilt, anger and regret and nothing else. He becomes negligent of his beliefs that if the avenger left taking revenge to God, it becomes much relaxing and pleasing, but throughout the story Hamlet had the search for easy ways, to take revenge from Claudius (Skulsky). This aspect is also shown in Hamlet right after the performance of the mouse, where Claudius is praying. On his own part, Claudius is ashamed of killing his own brother, and therefore, he does what he can do to please God. These all incidents show how Hamlet’s desire of taking revenge finally led to his own downfall.

Works Cited:

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