

Preoccupation with death in hamlet

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“ Hamlet” is a play permeated with death. Right from the opening scene of the play death is introduced, where the ghost of Hamlet’s father introduces the idea of death and its consequences. Preoccupation with death is a major theme in this play as shown in the numerous deaths of the main characters of Hamlet, Polonius, Gertrude, Ophelia, Claudius and Laertes. Taken off the web accurate definitions of “ preoccupation” are the following: 1)a state in which you think about something so much that you do not think about other things; 2)something that you think about and want to do because it is important.

This is exactly what the main characters are preoccupied by-death. An example would be that Hamlet is preoccupied by death throughout the story. It is apparent that Hamlet is haunted by his father’s death. When Hamlet encounters the ghost of his father, their conversation raises all kinds of unthinkable questions, for example murder by a brother, an unfaithful mother, that triggers Hamlet’s obsession.

He feels compelled to determine the reliability of the ghost’s statements so that he can determine how he must act.

Ultimately, it is his obsession with death that leads to Hamlet avenging the death of his father by killing Claudius. Although Hamlet’s preoccupation is deeply rooted in his character’s fascination with death, it could be a product of his grief. Hamlet’s most potent consideration of death comes in Act 4, Scene 3. His almost gruesome fixation with the idea of death is revealed by his mockery and such when asked by Claudius where he has hidden

Polonius' body. Hamlet's answers seem to reveal an extremely morbid state of mind.

Hamlet exclaimed how once the body dies, it goes through a cycle where it is eaten by worms, these worms are used to get food for another person therefore, that person digests the dead body. Finally, the graveyard scene shows how Hamlet views death and that he fears how no matter who you were or what you did that someday you too, will be at one with the earth and dirt only to become decayed, fed upon and then nothing.

“ No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was ured, Alexander returned into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop at a beer-barrel? ” (Act 5, Scene 1 Lines 201-206) As Hamlet continuously postponed the death of Claudius he became more preoccupied with the various ways he could have his revenge. Hamlet has completed his transformation from an unhappy young man to a hardened killer. He has no hope and despite Horatio's praise, by this time he would not have made a good king.