

The character of Claudius

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The character of Claudius can be recognized as the major antagonist in the play. Traits such as being cleverly evil, lustful, and conniving were the factors that won him the crown as the King of Denmark.

As a king, Claudius focused on protecting his throne from being relinquished from him. He was a smooth talker and had the ability to manipulate others as a façade of his corrupt nature as a politician.

There is great question when it comes for his love for Gertrude as it is seen to be a political move to gain power. Although, even if he did remotely cared about Gertrude, he still allowed her to drink from the poisonous goblet knowing that she would die so he would not be implicated in an attempted murder (Hylton 2000, Act V). His craftiness and love for power prevented him from showing that he sincerely cared for the people around him.

The random times that he had shown genuine emotions for other people than himself was when Polonius died and the kindness he had shown for Ophelia. He could not bring himself to kill Hamlet himself because of his feelings for Gertrude. He cannot resist worldly desires and choose them over his soul. He was not a monster with absolutely no moral fiber instead he was morally weak and unable to choose good over evil.

Q)2 Gertrude, Hamlet's mother was a beautiful queen of Denmark who remarried her late husband's brother Claudius shortly after her husband's murder. There are significant questions to her character in terms of the purity of her intentions in remarrying as well as her involvement in Claudius' murder of the king.

She was a woman with much love for her status in society, much like her new husband, and for affection and sexual attention. Hamlet was disgusted with her inability to exist without a man by her side and how she uses them for her own self-preservation and called his mother frail (Hylton 2000, Act I).

Hamlet was greatly distraught with how morally frail his mother was and was even in agony because of it. He was affected by his mother's lack of morality and suffered because of it. There was nothing exaggerated with how Hamlet felt about his mother. It would be disheartening for anyone who would see his mother be so sickening, what more to see a queen of a nation act in such a manner.

He was depressed because he had deep and genuine affections for his parents. He felt significantly associated to his mother because they were related and her corruption is directly his corruptions as well as they are family. He felt defiled by his mother's inability to uphold moral strength that he himself exhibited such weakness in his own relationship with Ophelia. Hamlet's focus on his mother's morality was aligned with a son's nature that cared about his mother's wellbeing.

Q3) There were so many similarities in the character of Hamlet and Laertes as men, although Hamlet holds some qualities that make him somewhat better than Laertes. They were both impulsive at different degrees when they are angered. They both sought revenge for revenge for the death of their fathers.

Laertes wanted to kill Claudius when he suspected him for killing his father, Polonius (Hylton 2000, Act IV). However, Hamlet could not bring himself to

kill Claudius to avenge his father without evidence sufficient for his intellect. He was always drawn to answering philosophical and difficult questions. He contemplated about a lot of things before acting on them while Laertes was impulsive and quick to act.

Although, there had been times when both acted spontaneously because of rage, like when Hamlet killed Polonius instead of Claudius. Both men shared great love for their families and exhibited domineering qualities in the women in their clans. Laertes warned Ophelia about Hamlet's intentions and Hamlet was troubled by his mother's marriage. However, it is still Hamlet's contemplative nature that wins out because it is always wiser to think before one act.

Reference:

Hylton, J. (2000). The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. From The Complete Works of William Shakespeare. Retrieved on August 23, 2007 from <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/full.html>.