

Shakespeare's "hamlet": looking at integrity assignment

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" This above all, to thing own self be true. " Hamlet shows that integrity is the most important personal quality to have in a world in which people are often not what they seem. " Discuss. William Shakespeare Hamlet, is set in a world much like an unwedded garden. It is a world full of treachery deceit, so much so that one may smile, and smile and still be a villain. However, amidst all this corruption, several characters of integrity, such as Hamlet, and his loyal comrade, Horopito, are still able to rise above the other characters in nature, and be true to their own selves.

Thus, Shakespeare assigns them with honorable ends, unlike the other members Of the Court, who are condemned with shameful deaths. Yet is integrity the most important personal quality to possess, in order to survive in such a rotten society? Through each individual character, Hamlet shows us how the personal quality of integrity is essential to the shaping of each characters destinies. Shakespeare tends to give characters the end which they deserve.

Even though Hamlet does commit some actions which are questionable, nevertheless, in the end, the play still inevitably sits y the idea that goodness and integrity will ultimately conquer evil, and justice will always be served. In Hamlet, characters who are portrayed as truly lacking in integrity are punished with shameful death. One such character would be Polonium. Although it is he who tells others to thing own sell(eves) be true. , he himself is superficial and devoid of much moral fiber. Hence, it is no wonder that in the end, he is rightfully condemned to a disgraceful death, where he is slain in the midst of his own treachery.

Polonius is a character who is devious to all who are around him, including his own family. Although he consents to his son Hamlet returning to Paris to study, he employs a spy to inquire of his behavior, by putting on him what forgeries you please. If he is unable to have an honorable and trusting relationship with his own son, how would he form any other relationships with integrity? Thus, we can see that Polonius is a man who by indirections finds directions out, and has a shrewd and cunning nature, which he seldom shows in public. Furthermore, his attitude towards Ophelia is also questionable.

So as to provide the king with news that is fruits of that great feast, and gain his favor, he simply parades round Ophelia love letters from Hamlet, and has no consideration for her feelings. He even offers to loose Ophelia to Hamlet, as part of a scheme, using her as a political pawn for his own gain. It is thus no wonder that Hamlet considers Polonius a tedious Old fool, and lacks respect for him, even in death. In fact, even Polonius himself is aware of his own villainy, knowing that with devotions visage/ and pious action we do sugar ore ' the devil himself.

Thus, when he is accidentally killed by Hamlet whilst eavesdropping from behind the arras, Polonius lack of integrity became his fatal flaw which must be punished, and thus in the play, justice is served. Another character who clearly lacks honor and veracity, and is punished for this, would be the blood bawdy villain, Claudius. On the surface, he may seem a virtuous king, who dies not alone, but, like a gulf, doth draw/what near it with it; however, as

the play develops, we learn that he is in fact a master manipulator and the murderer of his brother, the late King Hamlet.

His betrayal of his brother clearly establishes himself as somebody who is treacherous and lacking in integrity, as he had committed regicide simply for my rowan, mine own ambition, and my queen. By doing so, he has deceived not only Hamlet and Gertrude, but also Danish court and the state of Denmark. Thus, it is no wonder that under his rule, the court is seen as an ulcerous place, and Denmark is a prison. Moreover, although Claudius knows that his offence is rank, he is unwilling to give up the effects of his murder, instead, he continues to manipulate others in order to ensure his own victory.

We are able to see the damned Dane's abilities towards the end of the play, where he corrupts Alerter, using him as yet another agent of his own manipulative cause. Through skillful flattery, he convinces Alerter that revenge should have no bounds and that he should let the great axe fall, thereby presenting himself as judicious and righteous. It is clear that Claudius is indeed a murderous king who lacks integrity, hence, in the end, he is justly served by a poison tempered by himself, and punished with a shameful death.

Alerter meanwhile, had initially been a very noble youth, who is had presumably been an honorable figure throughout most of the play. However, when his father is murdered, as he tries to seek revenge for honor, he instead becomes an instrument for Claudius' evil plot. Thus, he becomes engaged in the immoral schemes of Claudius, and even though he does admit

that such doings are against my conscience, he still conspires to end Hamlets life in a dishonest manner. Thus, as a result of his lapse in judgment, he, like the other villains in the play, is condemned to death.

However, before his death, he is redeemed when he admits that he had been justly killed with my own treachery. Thus, in this case, his underlying integrity, in the end, is able to free him from heavens judgment, and a more honorable death is restored to him, as compared to the previously mentioned villains. Had Alerter taken his fathers advise and been true to oneself, he may have gained a more rewarding end. Thus, we are again able to the importance of integration the other hand, Aphelia is a green girl and a tragic figure, who has no control over her own situation, yet is still fated to a pitiable end.

Aphelia is torn between two sides, duty to her father, and loyalty to the man she loves. In the end she chooses her father, thus, in her case, she has no choice but to dismiss her integrity so as to serve him, as Polonium himself is a man of trickery. Through her obedience to her father, she must betray the man she loves, and deceive him. By doing so, she proves Hamlet right, when he says God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another. Indeed, she is ultimately unable to be both honest and fair.

Thus, in this case, although, she had originally been a woman of moral fiber, she is weak against the deceptive world, and unable to be true to herself, thus condemning her to her own pitiful end. Again, Shakespeare shows us that ones integrity is an important characteristic which one should not dispose of, despite the deceptive and rotten world we live in. Yet one

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character who in the end, is able to achieve an honorable death, would be the sweet prince Hamlet.

Here is a man, who recognizes that to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand, and for the most of the play, Hamlet seems to strive to be that one honest man in this stale and corrupt world. Thus, when he is burdened with the task of revenging his father, he is contemplative, and thinks through the many moral consequences which his actions could lead to. Although he recognizes that his fathers murder is indeed more than natural, he still considers the possibility hat the spirit that I have seen may be the devil.

Thus, Hamlet puts on an antic disposition so as to allow himself to investigate thoroughly into the murder, and make a wise decision based what is right. Like Alerter, he is a son seeking revenge, however, he is not as rash and hot-blooded as the latter, and constantly reminds himself to be cruel, not unnatural. Thus it is clear that Hamlet is a character who has the quality of integrity, and is a man of noble heart and noble mind, hence his heroic death at the end of the play. However, even Hamlet commits actions which can be seen as dishonest.

Towards the end of the play, Hamlet becomes disgusted at his own inaction, and deems that conscience does make cowards of us all. From this point onwards, one could argue that Hamlet tries to block out his own goodness, so as to rally himself to carry out dishonest deeds. One action which is morally debatable would be how he sends his good friends, Reassurance and Guilelessness to their death. Although these two characters may be seen as

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obsequious youths who are sponges that soak up the Kings favor, yet to a certain extent, they may have been forced into their own situation.

It must be noted that they were summoned by the King, who has sovereign power over all his subjects, consequently, Reassurance and Guilelessness would have had no choice but to obey him. Thus, Hamlets integrity in scheming the murder of these two characters is questionable. Similarly, his putting on of an antic disposition can also be questioned. Is feigning madness not also an act of deceit? Is he not being deceptive, and in the process, harming those that he loves?

His forged madness is no doubt a key trigger to Ophelia's later real madness, and even Hamlet himself admits his guilt when as he jumps into her grave. Thus, even though for most of the play, Hamlet is presented as a wise and honorable person who is very wise and contemplative, yet he later on commits certain acts which makes us question whether or not his victory in the end is truly a result of his integrity, or rather, his final rash actions. Had he not acted against Reassurance and Guilelessness, would he have still been able to survive in the Danish court?

In this case, we wonder whether or not Shakespeare is emphasizing to his audience the importance of the personal quality of integrity, or confidence, and question whether or not Hamlet truly serves the honorable death he was rewarded with in the end. Yet perhaps the reason Hamlet had died at the end of the play, instead of taking the throne, would be due to the boldness he develops at the end of the play. Shakespeare is critical of Fortifiers

brashness and self-assurance, and defines him as a man whose spirit with divine ambition puffed, will even fight for an eggshell.

Because Hamlet also takes on these characteristics towards the end of the play, and gives up his integrity in some of the actions which he commits, he is subjected to death, instead of life. Thus, although Hamlet to an extent, is rewarded for his integrity with an honorable death, yet the fact that he does die punishes him for any crimes which he had committed. Furthermore, in the end, Hamlet, like Alerter, admits to having done wrong and proclaims that he has disclaimed himself from a purposed evil, thus his integrity is returned, and he is able to acquire a heroic death.

Hence at the end of the day, uprightness and honesty is still an important characteristic, which must not be forgotten. Ultimately, the character who most epitomizes the true meaning of integrity would be Hamlets most loyal friend, Horopito. Throughout the play, he acts as the calm observer, whose loyalties, unlike Polonium, are determined by neither ambition nor deceit. His integrity and goodness is acknowledged, when at Hamlets death, he is trusted with the heavy task of finding the words that will divine the truth. Yet is he happy?

As Hamlet said his dying words, Horopito had originally wanted to join him in death like an antique Roman, yet instead, he is given the task of retelling the story of Hamlet. Perhaps to Shakespeare, Horopito is rewarded in terms of his reputation he is able survive the many unnatural acts as a victor, and emerge glorious. It is solely because of his goodness, that his name will forever be associated with honesty and integrity. Thus, it is evident that in

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Hamlet, such characters are indeed deemed important qualities conclusion, Hamlet is most definitely a play which emphasis the importance of being true to oneself.

Through most Of the characters, Shakespeare successfully conveys the idea that it is integrity which is of utmost importance in a corrupt society, and generally rewards those who inherit this characteristic. Although some of the actions of Prince Hamlet are questionable in terms of morality, yet for the most part, as marred to the other characters, he shows a good nature which sets him apart from the other corrupt members of the Danish court, and thus deserves his heroic burial.

Yet it must also be noted that Shakespeare had also seen other characteristics such as confidence and decisiveness as important characteristics, but ultimately, it is because of Hamlets honesty and integrity that he is able to have a glorious end. Otherwise, he too would have become a villain condemned to a tragic end. Thus, Hamlet is most definitely a play where integrity is portrayed as the most important characteristic to posses.