

# Timeless revenge essay examples

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



Revenge is one of the most powerful feelings that people can experience in their lives. It is not surprising that writers, film makers and other representatives of the art actively use it in their work. In the past we can find such works as Shakespeare's Othello and Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, and the recent film V for Vendetta continues developing on this theme. By analyzing these stories, we can see how depiction of revenge and, consequently, its perception by people has changed over time. In each of these plots there is a character that is so absorbed by this feeling that even decides to ignore the rules of morality. Nothing can stop these characters until they feel redeemed. It is interesting and informative to study the heroes and see where revenge can lead people and what consequences it can bring.

The first character that will be presented is Othello's Iago, who is one of the main heroes exhibiting clear manifestations of revenge. It is an individual seething with revenge towards those who he feels he has been disparaged by, including Othello. He is so furious that ignores what it means to be a virtuous person, and plans the demise of his leader, Othello. In the beginning of the play, Iago reveals that his "outward action doth demonstrate the native act and figure of my heart" (I. i. 57-65), which foreshadows his harmful actions to come. Shakespeare uses specific diction to show Iago's dark intentions, which can be seen in every character's dialogue. He admits his plan of revenge and states that he has a "jealousy so strong/That judgement cannot cure" (II. i. 3). Within this quote, Shakespeare uses a metaphor in the word "cure" by comparing Iago's jealousy to a sickness. It shows the intensity of the feeling and creates a good visual image for the

readers. Another way Shakespeare uses metaphoric language is evident in the way Iago calls himself a villain, which shows that he understands his despair and where it has led him to. This character can be called a dark symbol of hatred and revenge, which is represented through his actions, and Shakespeare's specific use of diction and imagery. Such representation can be seen in the way Shakespeare uses gloomy and unsettling images to represent Iago's dark emotions. To make the image more vivid, Shakespeare uses different techniques apart from metaphors. One of the most representative among them is hyperbole (e. g. "Heaven is my judge"), which is very characteristic for such dark images as Iago's. By reading various hyperboles said by the character, it becomes difficult to believe him and to like him, and it is exactly what is needed from the readers. When analyzing the text, we can also find numerous repetitions and antitheses, such as "In following him, I follow but myself", "O, Sir, content you: I follow him, / To serve my turn upon him". /We cannot all be masters, nor all masters/ cannot be truly followed". Such techniques add to the general impression from the character, show the depth of their feelings and are very interesting to interpret. Owing to the vivid and powerful language in Othello, it is easy to understand the revenge experienced by Iago and to compare it to the other characters analyzed below.

Similar to Iago within Othello, Roger Chillingworth can be studied as an example of how *The Scarlet Letter* is a story showing the concept of revenge. He is a man stricken with revenge. His estranged wife, Hester, has had an affair and got pregnant by another man. Because of this, Chillingworth is sick with revenge, not for his wife, but for the man who got

her pregnant. He makes it a secret mission to seek revenge upon this person. Not only does he feel evil and act evil because of this, but his physical appearance actually begins to deform: his face and body become “misshapen” because of the evil revenge he feels (102). This physical transformation is a symbol for the evil inside his soul, and it is manifesting as a physical materialization. Through the description of the physical appearance of Chillingworth, and his negative attitude and attributes, the author creates a dark tone that allows the reader to feel a sense of tension. Within the book, the author also uses the juxtaposition of Hester and Chillingworth showing how Hester’s sin is not nearly as evil as Chillingworth’s revenge. He even admits to have been seeking for revenge, when he cries out “If that have not avenged me, I can do no more!” (158). The author also utilizes hyperbole to emphasize the severity of Chillingworth’s emotional state, which can be seen in such phrases as describing Chillingworth as having “cold blood”. Thus, similarly to Iago in Othello, Chillingworth is a man who is so consumed by his desperate need for revenge that he is willing to go to any lengths to achieve it. He is not afraid to ruin the lives of the people around him in order to feel redeemed. He, like Iago, is one single character whose quest for revenge is the driving motion within the story. These two stories show similar concepts of revenge, even though they were written centuries apart.

The film V for Vendetta is also interesting to analyze, as there is also an individual whose revenge drives the story line. Within this movie, the main character is V, who is fighting against the government. V’s motivation to rebel against the government is because he feels hatred for them, for both

political and personal reasons. V freely admits to the fact that he is in search of revenge, and like Iago and Dimmsdale, he is willing to go to any lengths to achieve this revenge. Like Iago, he is seeking both power and revenge, and will do anything to achieve it. The directors of this film utilize the allusion to the Gunpower Plot to foreshadow the violence that will occur, and also sets the stage for V's language and appearance. This use of vivid and violent imagery depicts the violent emotion that occurs within the character V. V is juxtaposed next to Guy Hawkes to show how both men are fighting for opposing sides of the same cause. The directors specifically utilize this juxtaposition to show the paradox between these two characters.

This film is a modern example of the revenge concept, which allows us to compare it to the ones in Othello and The Scarlet Letter. The word 'vendetta' used in the title of the film is a metaphor for V's crusade for vengeance. He calls himself "a man within a mask," which means that he has deceitful and hidden emotions deep within him that are seeking revenge. V's mask is a symbol for the hatred that he feels for the government, because it is so dark that he feels the need to hide himself. Within the movie, he says "The only verdict is vengeance; a vendetta, held as a votive, not in vain, for the value and veracity of such shall one day vindicate the vigilant and the virtuous". This shows how the only 'verdict,' or outcome, will be vengeance, and that he does not care what destruction occurs in order for him to feel redeemed. The word "verdict" is an example of irony because a verdict represents justice having been served, but all V has done is created more havoc.