

# Hamlet as an anti hero essay



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Hamlet, can be considered an Anti-hero. An Anti-hero is best described as the protagonist of a story who does not maintain all of the same qualities that a conventional hero would. For example, an Anti-hero can be rude, violent, and motivated only by their own needs, as well as lacking heroic qualities such as courage, nobility, and fortitude. A good Anti-hero will also draw sympathy from the audience/reader, as is the case with Hamlet.

Throughout the play, Hamlet's overall intentions are mostly good, such as avenging his father by killing Claudius.

However, his negative, anti-heroic side also shows up constantly. He is ill-mannered at times, and also acts violently on several occasions without showing any signs of remorse. Like any good Anti-hero, Hamlet has the reader/audience show sympathy for him. We sympathize because of his father's death, along with the burden and complications of avenging his father's murder. The point in the play in which the most sympathy is shown for Hamlet is the final scene, where both Claudius and Gertrude plot against him and plan to kill him.

Claudius states: To exploit now ripe in my device, under the which he shall not choose but fall, 2 And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe; But even his mother shall unchanged the practice, And call it accident. (47. 65-69) To Claudius, Hamlet is a threat, and he is willing to eliminate him by any means possible. Here, Hamlet is depicted as the victim, causing the reader to take his side and feel bad for him, and eventually when Hamlet faces death, he takes the role of the hero and is willing to die to do what is right.

The sympathy shown for Hamlet by the reader is a very good indication that Hamlet is in fact an Anti-hero and not a villain. There are several occasions in which Hamlet uses violence in the play without showing remorse.

This is a major character flaw that distinguishes Hamlet as an Anti- hero, not a hero. The first occurrence of such violence is when Hamlet stabs and kills spying Polonium, thinking that he is Claudia. After killing Polonium, he has no regrets and nonchalantly says, " Thou wretched, rash, Intruding fool, farewell! / I took thee for thy better.

Take thy fortune; / Thou fiend's to be too busy in some danger," (3.

4. 36-38). A hero would have not shaken off the murder of an Innocent human as easily as Hamlet did here, thereby further backing up the idea of hamlet being an Anti-hero. Another instance of Hamlet using violence, although indirectly, is when he changes the orders on a letter from killing him, to killing the messengers, Reassurance and Guilelessness. Hamlet could have rewritten the name of anyone, but Instead he chose to have two of his former friends killed, again without guilt or remorse stating " They re not near my conscience.

Their defeat / Does by their own Insinuation grow," (52. 62-63). Hamlet does not take responsibility for his actions, and this happens to be another characteristic of anti-heroes. 3 caring for people other than himself. For example, in the second scene Hamlet acts arrogantly and behaves very poorly in front of Reassurance and Guilelessness, saying to them " That I can keep your counsel and not, mine own. Beside, to be demanded of a sponge, what replication should be made by the son of a king? " (4.

2. 12-14).

With his insult Hamlet is basically telling them that they are the equivalent of sponges. Another example of Hamlet's inherent rudeness is when he refuses to marry Ophelia and lists his own poor qualities: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, / with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put / them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them / in...

. Go thy ways too nunnery. (3. 1.

131-136). This is not the way he should be treating someone who loves him, and is not how a hero would act. An anti-hero on the other hand, would do something like this.

I have come to the conclusion that Hamlet is an Anti-hero because although his intentions may be good, he is unnecessarily violent, ill mannered, selfish, and does not take responsibility for his actions.

Throughout the play, Hamlet kills many people and hurts several more, and where he should feel guilt and shame, there is instead denial and apathy. He even blames the people who he killed for their own deaths. Hamlet displays some of the attributes of a hero, but with all of his negative character and personality traits he cannot be considered a hero, only an Anti-hero.