

Start here.

Plan

B 1 Ophelia & Hamlet - madness

B 2 Ghost & Play - Ambiguity

Essay

To describe Shakespeare's Elizabethan revenge tragedy ^{'Hamlet'} as 'a bleak portrait of a world in which the balance is disturbed' is highly accurate, especially given the context of the play. ^{although universal audiences can relate} In the pursuit of justice, a myriad of injustices may emerge, thereby disputing the original motive of action. Textual integrity of the five act structured play following the protagonist, Hamlet, in his pursuit for justice explores this ^{enduring message} disorder, ~~as~~ in a word at the junction between secular renaissance movements and medieval values.

Although one may proceed act with the greatest intentions, there is an unpredictability upon the ramifications it has on other individuals. Indeed, the ingenuinely mad Hamlet, who adopts an "antic disposition" in his method of enacting revenge,

can be compared to the genuine madness of "fair Ophelia", which came about by the loss of her lover to said ingenuine madness and murder of her father by the same man. ~~It is unjust that~~ In Act 4 scene 4, the stage direction of '[Enter Ophelia distracted]' and her repeatedly singing "He is dead and gone lady, he is dead and gone" in verse highlights her insanity - the madness stemmed from a combination of inferiority to take control of her circumstances due to the patriarchal nature of Denmark and Hamlet's madness. The symbolism of the flowers she hands out in the scene are highly significant in the portrayal of her world's imbalance, particularly "I would give you some violets but they withered all when my father died." Violets, ~~the~~ would be known to Shakespeare's Elizabethan audience as a symbol of faithfulness. Thus, its inability to grow in the "rotten" state of Denmark illuminates the lack of goodness in the world, consequently disturbing the balance. Examining the root of her madness in Act 3 scene 3, Hamlet is prepared to kill the Machiavellian antagonist, Claudius, in revenge. However, as ^{psychoanalyst} Sigmund Freud states, "~~Hamlet~~ he himself knows he is no better than the murderer whom

Additional writing space on back page.

he is required to punish" if he does kill. It is a dramatic irony that Claudius in the scene kneels, indicated by stage direction, as Hamlet, in the hypochora, says "And am I then revenged To take him in the purging of his soul and seasoned fit for his passage? No." especially when later in the play, Claudius ~~state~~ reinforces the theme of revenge in "Revenge should have no bounds" and "To cut [Hamlet's] throat with the church". The contrast of characterisation between "bloody, bawdy" Claudius and the rational humanist Hamlet thus emphasises the injustice of the world and the disturbed balance. Coupled with Ophelia's tragic insanity, ^{derived from Hamlet's actions} it is fair to claim that the repercussions of Hamlet's "madness in craft" ^{to pursue justice} has an ill ~~and~~ ^{chain} effect on other individuals, thus creating further disorder.



← Tick this box if you have continued this answer in another writing booklet.

Start here.

Where there is ambiguity in the truth, it is often difficult to decipher the morality of an action. Metaphysical doubt of Old King Hamlet's ghost has been a constant, timeless debate in the play, even for modern audiences, as he represents the vague knowledge of what can be true or false. In the Christian context of the play, ghosts are an evil omen, hence the Ghost's ^{conflicting} ~~status~~ of "spirit of ~~good~~ health, or goblin damned" in Act 1 Scene 5 becomes prominent. In a commanding tone, he orders Hamlet to "Revenge his ~~proul~~ and most unnatural murder" ^{by killing the murderer, Claudius,} however, as Sigmund Freud analyses, "Hamlet represents the type of man whose active energy is paralysed by excessive intellectual activity." Indeed, audiences must consider the inaction and delay of Hamlet's revenge in the play as a product of not knowing the Ghost's motives. Murder, in the Christian society, ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~a~~ ^{injust and} sin, ~~and~~ yet by medieval custom of filial obligation, Hamlet is required to do so. Nevertheless, Hamlet must question if a father would truly subject his son to the perils of hell, ~~and~~ ^{that's} consequently in Act 2 Scene 2, in Hamlet's ~~this~~ ^{second} soliloquy, he declares in a rhyming couplet "the play's the thing wherein I'll catch the

conscience of the king". The play, ~~is~~ 'The Murder of Gonzago', is metaphorically retitled as 'The Mousetrap' by Hamlet. It is a snare for both the ghost and Claudius, for a presence of a ghost alarming signals evil but should the ghost speak true, it is the presence of the now King Claudius that continues to threaten the Chain of Being. The Chain of Being is the social construct of Shakespeare's world, where divine right of kingship is placed on the king. Thus, ~~should the g~~ the ghost and Claudius represent a disturbance to the balance. ~~due to~~

in conclusion, the world of 'Hamlet' is indeed one in which balance has been disturbed. The injustice prominent in the whole play reinforces textual integrity, as it is ~~known~~ ^{timelessly} universal audiences realise the timelessness of conflict ~~between the~~ ^{in the} ~~injustice~~ to unjust consequences that may arise from pursuing justice.

Additional writing space on back page.