Hamlet: Main Characters Analysis

English essay

Introduction

William Shakespeare was extremely popular as a poet, playwright, and actor. Famous for his plays such as Mcbeth, Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet. The question that is being asked is from Mcbeth, “and nothing is but what is not”, meaning everything is not as it seems. Throughout Hamlet, that quote can be related to many characters and events, and Shakespeare likes giving the audience the feel that they understand characters and their traits and behaviors, then flipping them on their head with a lie or deception. Such as Hamlet acting crazy to find out how the death of his father really occurred, or not knowing if Gertrude really does love Claudias and how she moved on so quick. Also such as not knowing if Claudius is a good or bad king, if he really did kill King Hamlet. These questions are often asked through the play leaving suspension from Shakespeare.

Hamlet

Before the play starts King Hamlet is murdered, Hamlet's father. This creates the question of who killed his father. Hamlet decides to go crazy to find out who did it, after finding out Claudias was the man who killed his father, he wanted revenge. He started making things to expose the new king of the murder such as making people peform a play in front of the new king, about Claudius killing the king and marrying his wife. Hamlet says “the body is with the King, but the King is not with the body” to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. His words sound like an example of madness, and his two companions appear to take it as such. Although there is a method to Hamlet's apparent madness. In this quote Hamlet refers to the philosophical contrast between the physical body of the king and the state body for which he is the head. The first half of the sentence may refer to either of these two body comprehensions, but the second half seems to refer specifically to Polonius, a 'king' separated from his body by death. Shakespeare shows the original quote in Hamlet, as while her acting mad, is he really actually mad. Just as the quote refers to is it really what it seems.

Gertrude

Gertrude is Hamlet's mother, and the ex-wife on King Hamlet who she very swiftly moved on from after his mysterious death. The quote “and nothing is but what is not” is well represented in Gertrude, as you wonder how she moved on so quick, merely weeks after the love of her life's death. Is her love for Claudia's real or has she been ushered into the relationship? In answer to Hamlet, who just asked her if she likes the quality of a play he chose for the similarity it bears to the real-life events taking place in Elsinore, Gertrude utters this line, “the lady doth protest too much, methinks”. He hopes that the reactions of Claudius and Gertrude to Hamlet's play will reveal whether they have conspired to kill the former king. The queen in the play is pledging herself earnestly to her husband, who is about to be killed. In the quote she replies back to Hamlet, Gertrude suggests that what she says is not really meant by the actor Queen, her expressions are too serious to be believed. Gertrude may be tacitly implying that the vow of

marriage is not sacred, in which case the audience may realise that she is defending Claudius. This shows that everything may not be what it seems with Gertrude, is she protecting herself and Hamlet from Claudias, maybe her love for King Hamlet was fake or maybe she may really love Claudias.

Claudias

Claudias is the new King, the man Hamlet blames for the death of his father. The way Shakespeare's quote of “and nothing is but what is not” is very relatable to Claudias actions, as the question of is he really a good king. Claudias seems like a very respectful king. Does Claudias really love Gertrude, or, is it all an act to become king. While shown are a merciless killer by Hamlet, Claudius can actually be compassionate and gentle as well. He's extremely sad about the death of Polonius, and he really loves Gertrude. He has to kill Hamlet, but for Gertrude's sake he refuses to do so with his own hand. He always loves Ophelia deeply and treats her with the respect she ought to receive from her great love, Hamlet. But after being exposed for the death of King Hamlet he seems to change actions and he also tries to kill Hamlet But ends up dying as well. The words “my words fly up; my thoughts remain below.

Words without thoughts never to heaven go” are said by Claudias after the scene of Hamlet bringing in a sword intending to kill Claudias, but decides not to as Claudius is praying and this means if killed he will go to heaven, something Hamlet did not like the thought of. He wants to know if he can still be forgiven for his crime, “May one be pardoned and retain th’ offense?” Claudius remains in question at the end of the scene, and the words quoted here indicate how far he has no trust in his own feelings. The question of did he really kill king Hamlet is the way the quote relates to CLaudias.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Shakespeare loves adding hidden characteristics that are questioned by the audience. The quote in question “and nothing is but what is not” meaning everything is not what it seems is scattered throughout the book. Relating to Hamlet by Hamlet asking if he really is going insane or its all an act, Gertrude in why she moved on so quick and if she really likes Claudias and Claudias, is he really a good king or is he the killer of King Hamlet.