Hamlet Essay, Research Paper

In modern times many crimes are exacted out of revenge. In the Elizabethan times, things were no different. Often times our feelings of unfairness and anger cloud our reasoning. The play Hamlet is an excellent illustration of this. In the play Hamlet revenge is the driving force behind the conflicts. The conflict between Hamlet and himself, the conflicts between Claudius and Hamlet, and the conflicts between Laertes and Hamlet are all in some way or another initiated by revenge. One of the examples that Shakespeare uses is when Laertes wants to avenge his fathers murder and his sister’s death, for which he thought Hamlet was responsible. His need for vengeance is kindled by Claudius who spurs him on saying, “To show yourself in deed your father’s sonMore than in words?”In this conversation Claudius draws Laertes into his plot, using him as a pawn in his cowardly scheme. Shakespeare uses this to create suspense for the upcoming duel, and more importantly, to show us how in Laertes quest for revenge his judgment has been clouded. When Laertes says, “And so I have a father lost…. …But my revenge will come”we get a clear impression of Laertes motives. Laertes conflict with Hamlet is driven by his need for revenge. Hamlet’s conflict with Claudius arises because of Hamlet’s need to avenge his fathers death. “Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder”As with Laertes, Hamlet is also spurred into revenge. His fathers plea for vengeance is initially what motivates Hamlet to get retribution. Claudius shows throughout Hamlet that he is aware of Hamlet’s plan, but is wary of killing him because Hamlet is Gertrude’s son. Hamlet’s attempt to establish Claudius’ guilt in the play warns Claudius of Hamlet’s quest for revenge. Because of Hamlet’s need for revenge Claudius must take steps to keep himself safe. The conflict between Claudius and Hamlet can be traced right back to Hamlet’s desire for revenge.

The last and most important conflict is Hamlet’s struggle with himself. In Hamlet’s quest for retribution, he becomes distracted and tries to rationalize his way out of it. The fire that once fueled Hamlet’s revenge has gone out and he is left with feelings of doubt and remorse. “O what a rogue and peasant slave am I”This shows Hamlet’s struggle with himself and his feelings of guilt.Once Hamlet has established Claudius’ guilt (the play) his plan goes into full swing. Unfortunately for Hamlet his next opportunity to kill Claudius is at the church. Hamlet once again convinces himself that he can’t do it. “Now might I do it….. Do this same villain send to heaven” Once again Hamlet is struggling with himself. Again he finds an excuse to avoid exacting revenge on Claudius. Hamlets need to have revenge creates conflict within himself. Throughout the play the revenge plot is prevailing. Each characters need for revenge is what creates the conflicts. Shakespeare has cleverly shown us how revenge can corrupt and destroy lives. Hamlet’s revenge destroys not only himself but Polonius, Laertes and Ophelia. In our modern times and even in Elizabethan times everyone feels a need to have justice. Often times people take matters into their own hands and take revenge. Unfortunately revenge often leads to disaster.