

Hamlet wishes to get revenge when Claudius'

*Soul may be damned and black*

*As hell, whereto it goes*

(Shakespeare 3, 3, 94 – 5)

By waiting for the right time, Hamlet loses his chance to achieve revenge. This ignoble act does add to the theme of proper revenge, not in the primary plot, but when all three revenge sub-plots are considered together. Aristotle also believed in heroes that are First and foremost good (Aristotle 51). Although Hamlet spends much time deliberating good and evil, and what the greatest good is, when it comes time, he cannot act. Laertes does act, but he acts rashly, and cannot perform well either. Fortinbras is the type of hero that Aristotle would have preferred, although from Fortinbras' point of view the play is not tragic. Instead it is a comedy where all of the other characters run about and in the end through no fault of his own, Fortinbras receives the kingship of Denmark. The plot events with which Aristotle disagrees give meaning to Hamlet's theme. Shakespeare uses the plot to help create the mood of Hamlet by incorporating subplots and by having his tragic hero do things which are particularly unheroic. Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia is particularly barbaric. By the same token Ophelia's unstinting devotion to her father, and by that, her poor treatment of Hamlet, causes us to question which of the two is not the worthier, but the least evil. Both of their actions invoke disgust. Aristotle would have objected to Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia because of his aforementioned belief in the character attributes of the hero. The only characters who act particularly heroic are Horatio, who is devoted to Hamlet, and Fortinbras. These two characters are the only ones who survive. The rest of the characters are left dead and bleeding. As another classical critic, Horace, wrote in *Ars Poetica*,

*I shall turn in disgust from anything of this kind that you show me*

(Horace 85).