

2023: In many works of literature, characters choose to reinvent themselves for significant reasons. They may wish to separate from a previous identity, gain access to a different community, disguise themselves from hostile forces, or express a more authentic sense of self. Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which a character intentionally creates a new identity. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character's reinvention contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.

Write your essay here:

In the play *Hamlet*, by Shakespeare, the reinvention of Hamlet adds to our interpretation of the play by clarifying the themes of morality and indecisiveness. When Hamlet reinvents himself it is because he cannot decide whether he should kill his uncle-father, Claudius, or not. The ghost of his father persuades him to kill Claudius, but Hamlet's morals prevent him from doing that. Unsure of what is right or wrong, he reinvents himself as a person who is willing to follow his father's command to kill his mother's new husband.

With his reinvention, Hamlet acts crazy. He turns away the people that he loves and makes them think that he is not really himself. This act allows Hamlet to feel like any action he takes is not one of his own, but one of the madman who he has become. He is cold and ruthless when he talks to people who he loves, like Ophelia, and says things that he would not say otherwise, like, "Get thee to a nunnery." This is very unlike how Hamlet usually is, before he changed himself, he was loved by the madness for his charisma and charm. His parents and Polonius start to worry about him because he is seeming to get worse as time passes instead of better.

Hamlet faces indecision with his new identity. He is unsure of whether he should kill Claudius or not. He knows that that is what the ghost of his father has told him to do, and he knows that he trusts his father, but he does not know whether to trust the ghost of his father. Hamlet contemplates killing himself at one point, stating, "To be, or not to be." Those 6 words are the basis of Hamlet's internal conflicts. He does not know what to do. He does not know whether it is right to kill himself or not. He does not know whether it is right to kill his father or not. Even though Hamlet took on a new identity to be able to kill Claudius, he was still subjected to his own morals and ideals.

Hamlet also faces indecision about whether he should be reinventing himself or not. He continually switches from his madman persona to his authentic self. This shows that he has not truly committed to the idea of killing Claudius and is facing indecisiveness on who he should be. As the play continues the switch between his authentic self and his acting self becomes more apparent, especially after he finds out that the funeral he was watching was Ophelia's. The high emotions that he feels make it increasingly difficult for him to not act like himself, and as he continues to switch, his energy depletes.

Hamlet's morality is something that is never stated directly, but it is clear that he has strong moral support. He cannot bring himself, or even a maddened version of himself, to kill Claudius even though he wanted to see Claudius dead. There are several points where he contemplates completing the act of killing Claudius, and even a point where he kills a man who he thinks is Claudius, but ultimately Claudius dies when Hamlet has him drink the poison that Claudius prepares for Hamlet. Even though Hamlet is the person who persuades Claudius to

drink this poison, Claudius still completed the act of drinking it. The act of Claudius drinking the poison, allows Hamlet to become himself again, and though he dies, he is buried with the honor of a soldier and a hero. This marks the final transition of Hamlet from being a mad man to being himself.