

# Hamlet as a procrastinator

Experience, Anger



Hamlet as a Procrastinator Procrastination: the act of avoiding tasks that may be dangerous, boring, difficult or morally conflicting. For some, procrastination can be an occasional occurrence, and for others it has become a reoccurring habit. Sometimes, it can have serious consequences. In Shakespeare's Hamlet, many characters voice their opinions about procrastination including The Ghost of Hamlet's father, Claudius and Hamlet. Audiences are provided with many opportunities through a variety of characters to see Hamlet as a chronic procrastinator. The Ghost of Hamlet's father has few appearances throughout the play but they are significant moments. During Hamlet's heated conversation with Gertrude, The Ghost appears. This scene shows that Hamlet knows that his procrastination has not only hurt him, but other characters as well. This is clear when he asks The Ghost; " Do you not come your tardy son to chide, That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by The important acting of your dread command? " (III, iv, 108-110). Hamlet understands that The Ghost's frustration with Hamlet for failing to avenge him and he fears that he will be scorned for his indiscretion. The Ghost expresses his disappointment in his son when he says; " This visitation/ I but to whet thy almost blunted purpose. " (III, iv, 112-113). These lines reveal The Ghost's purpose for returning. He believes that Hamlet's drive has begun to dwindle and he has returned to provide him with both a reminder and some motivation. The play's antagonist, Claudius, shares his own thoughts on procrastination. He addresses Laertes after the death of Polonius his lines serve as dramatic irony. Only the audience is aware of the parallels between Laertes' and Hamlet's situations. When Claudius says; " We should do when we would, for this " would" changes And

hath abatements and delays as many As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents. " (IV, vii, 119-121) This idea is relatable to Hamlet's procrastination because it means that we should always do the things we intend to do the moment we intend to do them, something Hamlet has failed to achieve. When it comes to procrastination Hamlet acts as his own worst critic. Two months after promising his father's ghost to obtain revenge, Hamlet experiences excessive anger for not keeping his promise. When one of the actors delivers a speech, Hamlet becomes very emotional. He says; "What would he do had/ He the motive and the cue for passion/ That I have? " (II, ii, 536-538) It upsets Hamlet that an actor can show stronger emotion while playing a character than he can in his own life, especially because Hamlet has a reason to be so emotional. His anger continues to grow and he says; " Am I a coward? / Who calls me " villain"? Breaks my pate across? " ( II, ii, 547-548) At this point in his soliloquy Hamlet has become so enraged at himself, he believes he deserves to be physically punished for being a coward. This soliloquy leaves the audience feeling sad for Hamlet but also creates the idea that if he had not procrastinated he might not be in so much pain. It becomes clear to audiences that Hamlet has a bad procrastination habit throughout the play as he struggles with his morals. It is obvious that Hamlet is not the only character that thinks this, but they all agree that procrastination is sign of weakness.