

# Example of essay on hamlet

Literature, William Shakespeare



In the play Hamlet, William Shakespeare aptly portrays the theme of illusion and reality. The play goes on to delve deep into the stark contrasts between the notions and realities in relation to events and characters. Various characters wear the garb to portray themselves as different to what they actually are in reality. Hamlet comes to know about the truth behind his father's assassination throughout the play. He vows to avenge his father's assassin, Claudius, his uncle who had been crowned the king. The characters of Polonius, King Claudius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern remain shrouded by the veil and appear to be sincere and honest. In reality, their hearts nurture deceit.

Claudius' loyal councilor, Polonius, appears to be a loving and trusting father who readily supports his son Laertes' decision to go abroad. He blesses his ward as he embarks upon the journey. He expresses the feelings of his heart: " This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man. Farewell. My blessing season this in thee" (Act I, Scene III, Pages 84-87). In stark contrast to his words, he then sends his Reynaldo, his servant, to spy on his son as he does not trust him.

Later, he goes on to discourage his daughter, Ophelia to keep ties with Hamlet and declares his distrust on him. He believes that Hamlet is using her as a pawn. His words in the play are extremely strong: " Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers, Not of that dye which their investments show, But mere of unholy suits, Breathing like sanctified and pious [bawds]" (Act I, Scene III, Pages 136-140). However, the reality lies in the fact that is greatly inclined not to find him getting embarrassed owing to his daughter's

relationship with Hamlet. He spies on Hamlet many a time to find evidence of his insanity. Though the man appears to be noble on the outside, behind the garb is hidden a soul who only cares about himself and nothing else. The author questions the sanctity of every relationship in the play. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet's childhood companions are sent on the prowl by Claudius to comprehend the reason behind Hamlet's insanity. They veil their true intention behind the institution of friendship. Knowing the fact that the two were assigned by the king, Hamlet readily makes fun of the two and turns them down. He refuses to speak of his insanity. Both seem to be extremely concerned about Hamlet and exude amiability and kindness. However, the reality is far from what is apparent as all the while they are only doing it as a favor for the king.

Claudius, in a bid to attain kingship, assassinates his brother and then betroths his brother's widow, Gertrude. He is then crowned as the ruler of Denmark. The inception of the play quotes Claudius speaking highly about his brother: "and that it us befitted To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom To be contracted in one brow of woe.." (Act I, Scene II, Pages 3-4). This garb provides him the acceptability as the king of Denmark. After the death of Polonius, he intends to send Hamlet off to England showing his immense concern for his safety. He goes on to say: "Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety" (Act IV, Scene III, Pages 44-48). But, he is sending Hamlet into the clutches of his doom. He even declares Hamlet to be the heir to the throne and consoles him for the demise of his father. He thus endeavors to accumulate the support of the council posing as a humane individual.

All these characters appear as honest and earnest individuals, while the reality is far from this. The brutality, disloyalty and dishonesty they nurture in their hearts get exposed to the audience in the course of events. Thus, the stalwart playwright accentuates the theme of illusion and reality in this play, Hamlet.