

Hamlet structural essay

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Hamlet Shakespeare is arguably the most influential playwright in the history of theatre. Hamlet could possibly be called one of Shakespeare's most recognizable and greatest creations of his lifetime. To truly be able to understand Shakespeare, you have to know how his structure fits into the plot, characters, thoughts, diction, music, and spectacle of his plays. These six structural terms are what will lead us in the right direction to analyzing this play. Shakespeare sourced this play from a Danish prince whose father was killed by his uncle, who then married the prince's mother. The prince acts insane to throw his uncle off and finally gets his revenge by killing him. Shakespeare flourished this true story by adding the theme of uncertainty. Hamlet has many chances to take his uncle's life yet he stalls because he is uncertain of whether or not the Ghost has given him the correct information. Other situations in the play that also demonstrate this "uncertain" quality include the audience not knowing for sure if Gertrude also feels guilty about the untimely marriage of her and Claudius; Hamlet not differentiating between love and hate for Ophelia; Hamlet not knowing for sure if the Ghost's information is credible; and at the end of the play the audience is left not really knowing for sure if justice has been served. (Sparknotes) I'll begin the analysis by talking about the plot of the play. Hamlet is a tragic play based around the central theme of vengeance, which is brought forth by Hamlet's father being killed and Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, marrying Gertrude, the queen. Hamlet finds out that the watchmen have seen a ghost three nights in a row that looks like his father. Hamlet goes the next night to the watchtower that the ghost was sighted.

The apparition turns out to be the ghost of Hamlet's father. The ghost tells Hamlet that he was murdered by his brother Claudius and urges Hamlet to take vengeance for him. Hamlet pretends to be insane to throw off Claudius and makes the new king very nervous.

He also scares Ophelia, his once lover, away. While Hamlet is planning to kill Claudius, he procrastinates too long and gives Claudius enough time to become uneasy which pushes him to make plans to kill Hamlet also. In the end, Claudius gets Laertes to challenge Hamlet to a fencing match. Claudius gives Laertes a poison-tipped foil which is meant to pierce and kill Hamlet. They also create a backup plan by having a poisoned glass ready for Hamlet to drink should he not be harmed by the foil. In the end everyone pays for Claudius' crimes, Hamlet is stabbed with the poison foil, Laertes is killed by Hamlet, Gertrude drinks the poisoned glass, and Claudius also is run through with the poison foil by Hamlet and made to drink the poisoned glass. The structure of the plot is very basic and straightforward.

Something wrong happens and the hero tries to get revenge and make everything right, but everyone ends up suffering. Act I deals mostly with the setting of the play, the conflict, and introducing the main characters. The rising action takes place in Acts II, III, and IV where the conflict is developed mostly in Hamlet's mind.

In Act V is the climax, falling action, and denouement, where Fortinbras takes over as King of Denmark. There is a linear tendency associated with the plot. Although there are a couple of flashbacks, everything pretty much happens in chronological order. (Pinkmonkey) Next I will talk about the main

characters of the play. One of the best things about this play is that it takes a dull story about a Danish prince and makes it interesting because we see the real human emotions that were felt about such a situation in that time. The characters in Renaissance drama were inspired by the efforts of the leaders of this new beginning because they were obsessed with studying human behavior and the extent of such.

(Sparknotes) The title character, who fits into the structure as the protagonist of the play, is about thirty years old when the play begins. He is a very angry and depressed person because of the things happening lately. He is very educated and perhaps thinks things through a little too much, for it was his procrastination in taking revenge that ultimately caused his downfall. There is more to Hamlet than meets the eye, this is apparent in Shakespeare's speeches for Hamlet.

When he talks it seems like there's something important that he's not saying, possibly something he doesn't even know about. The antagonist of Hamlet is his uncle, Claudius. Claudius is a cunning man who uses his words as poison on the ears of his people just as he poured poison in King Hamlet's ear to kill him. Claudius really only thinks about himself which is what sets him aside from the other male roles in the show.

It could be interpreted the Claudius only married Gertrude as a strategic move to keep Hamlet from taking over the throne as rightful heir. Even if his love for Gertrude is genuine, he has gained her hand under false pretense by means of murdering her husband. Gertrude is the mother of Hamlet and

Queen of Denmark. She marries her late husband's brother not even a month after the funeral.

Gertrude has many possible hidden motives that are not mentioned in the play. For example, is it possible that Gertrude and Claudius had been together before King Hamlet died? And if so, was she a conspirator of the murder? Gertrude, although powerful as Queen, seems very weak in her decision making. It's very possible that Gertrude is the kind of woman who follows the safest choice, no matter what the consequences, which is evident in the fact that she doesn't think about how her son would feel about her marrying his uncle.

It would seem that she married Claudius to keep to the pretty picture of the King and Queen, showing that she cares a lot about her image. The character's thoughts play a major role in this play. Hamlet is tortured by his thoughts because he cannot bring himself to take revenge on Claudius until he has evidence that he killed his father. These doubts that Hamlet has allow the plot to thicken and if it were not for them there might have been a higher survival rate at the end. Claudius knows he has done the wrong thing by taking the life of his brother to become King of Denmark. Claudius begs God for forgiveness but knows he will not get it. He knows in his mind that if he doesn't give up the things that he gained from his sin, such as power, becoming King of Denmark, and marrying the queen, he will go to Hell.

Murder is an unforgiveable sin to the Catholic church, especially brotherly murder. Even knowing this he does not give up anything, he would rather burn than give up his worldly possessions. This, along with Hamlet's insanity,

fuels Claudius more than ever to get rid of Hamlet. Gertrude does not seem to have too much of a mind of her own. She seems to not be able to figure out situations, but rather flees to the safest choice made for her. This is a major factor in the way that her character acts toward Claudius. In her mind, because Claudius is the safest choice for her next husband as the late King's brother, she immediately gives in to that decision, which makes it impossible for her to sympathize with Hamlet because she thinks it's right. Music and Spectacle are open to interpretation really.

It depends on the conceptualization what kind of music and spectacle are used. There is one major sound effect that plays a pretty big part, which is the rooster crowing at dawn when the guards confront the Ghost. This is when the Ghost exits and they talk about how ghosts have to be away before sunrise. Spectacle really depends on the concept. I think that the colors would be really dark to convey the tragic and frightening atmosphere.

When we look at the structure of a play it can tell us a lot about some of the hidden meanings behind the words. Understanding the structure of a play will make it much easier, in the long run, to be able to look at the plot from different angles and think outside the box. And isn't that what drama is all about?