

# A critical analysis of hamlet's constant procrastination in shakespeare's hamlet

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[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



It is of diminutive doubt that Hamlet is one of the most controversial characters ever created by William Shakespeare. Due to his complexity in persona, critics have over the years ever since the play's premier varied in opinion over the true essence of Hamlet. More importantly, procrastination, which was Hamlet's most conspicuous flaw, has had its predisposition debated over since it was first observed.

The reasons for the procrastination vary within different schools of thought with some arguing that it is due to " Oedipal Complex", a theory conceptualized by Sigmund Freud who considered Hamlet to be in love with his mother. A supportive argument is based on the fact that Hamlet is provided with numerous opportunities to slay Claudius but always passes them on even when ordered to do so bearing in mind he deeply loathes Claudius.

Thus it is highly likely that Hamlet advertently keeps Claudius alive so as to buffer Hamlet's predilection towards his mother. Others critics argue that he is never availed with the opportune moment to revenge of his father's murder since he is usually preoccupied whenever such a scenario presents itself. Either way, Hamlet's procrastination to a variable extent identifies his unstable mental condition which leads to a detrimental finale not only for Hamlet but those surrounding him as well.

Claudius is guilty of killing Hamlet's father king Hamlet, who is also his own brother in order to gain access to the throne by marrying Gertrude, mother to Prince Hamlet.

Claudius is successful in his ambition and Hamlet is left with the decision on whether or not to kill his uncle so as to avenge his father's death (Burnett 49). Hamlet finds himself in a dilemma that ultimately leads to his procrastination because he is aware of the fact that if he kills Claudius, his companions will avenge Claudius death by killing him.

Claudius is also a member of his family and so the monarch remains in possession of the throne and the crown and killing him would amount to treason, a serious crime. On the other hand, Hamlet is influenced by the urge to avenge his father's death which further aggravated by the appearance of his father's ghost that asks him to kill Claudius (Johnson 265).

Hamlet however doubts the actuality of the ghost and is confused on whether it was the spirit of his late father or just an evil spirit. " Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell, Be thy intents wicked or charitable, Thou com'st in such a questionable shape" (Johnson 262).

Hamlet is left with a tough decision to make that ultimately puts him at a crossroads between upholding morality or standing up for his father's legacy (Neal 1). Such a decision becomes difficult for Hamlet to make and ponders over it for a long time leading to several incidents of procrastination with reference to the murder of Claudius (Burnett 53).

Hamlet is attracted to his mother Gertrude but the presence of Claudius condenses the possibility of intimacy with his mother. Even though Hamlet believes in the vengeance of his father's death by executing Claudius, he is

afraid that the void that would be left would inevitably lead to a mutual closeness between him and his mother.

The fear of such an occurrence leads Hamlet to procrastinate the death of Claudius through self deception. He begins by investigating whether or not Claudius was responsible for killing King Hamlet not so much to find the answer since he already knew, rather to pass off time. Once he is satisfied that Claudius was indeed his father's murderer, he embarks on a pious duty to kill him but even when presented with an opportunity, he finds a reason not to kill Claudius (Burnett 52).

During his first attempt he finds Claudius in prayer and avoids killing him alleging it is not devout to kill one in prayer. The only occasion when Hamlet does not waver to kill is when he is in the bedroom with Gertrude and stabs the man behind the curtain. Unfortunately it turns out that Polonius is the man behind the bedroom curtain (Neal 1).

It is likely that Hamlet stabs Polonius impulsively because he is in the presence of his mother and is still possessive over her. Hamlet is able to postpone killing Claudius in all other instances due to the fact that he lacks an emotional driving force at that moment akin to his mother.

Hamlet is a noble and sophisticated prince who allows his deceptive attitude corrupt his mentality. Being a man of thought rather than action, Hamlet focuses his thoughts on evil leading him to become suspicious of everybody around him, and doubt every decision he makes (Johnson 262).

Deep within him Hamlet is of high moral standards and entirely despises evil but the death of his father exposes him to the need to become evil. He attempts in numerous occasions to suppress his decency and the constant conflict between his mind and conscious precipitates the procrastination evident in his demeanor.

The resultant outcome of Hamlet's procrastination is diverse in its reach and effect thus many individuals surrounding Hamlet are negatively affected by his inaction (Johnson 264). Hamlet at the outset is able to conceal his true affection for Ophelia hence postponing the appropriate moment to declare his true affection for her. Hamlet tries hard to identify with a mad and careless character overlooking the affection and adoration Ophelia has for him (Burnett 55).

To stay in character, Hamlet rejects her and this breaks her heart which consequently leads to Ophelia's insanity and eventual suicide. He rejects those he claims to love including his mother whom he shouts at. Hamlet's mad man charade arouses the curiosity of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who keep on enquiring about the logic behind the play as they endeavor to find out hermit's long term ideology (Neal 1).

Hermit is however not pleased with the questions and he becomes highly suspicious of them, which culminates into intense rage when he discovers their true motives. He holds this against them for a long time and finally has them killed in England as a result of his built up rage and malevolence.

Hamlet's deferment to kill Claudius puts Polonius in harm's way when Hamlet stabs him in Gertrude's bedroom on suspicion that he is Claudius.

Hamlet's procrastination could have been attributed to either his obsession with his mother, his way of thinking, his father's death or all of the above. However, the fact is that the habitual deferment of his duties eventually led to the death of most of the people who closely associated with him. His attempt to be an evil person predisposed him to a different kind of reasoning that transformed him to be more comfortable with evil which eventually culminated in his demise.

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