

Hamlet: prince of denmark essay sample

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William Shakespeare's play *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* can be considered one of the most influential and powerful tragedies that the English language has been blessed with. Shakespeare's longest play embellishes the revenge that Prince Hamlet must partake in by killing his uncle for murdering his father, King Hamlet of Denmark. This tragedy, which was first performed between the years 1600-1601, is still considered one of Shakespeare's best works and still ranks among his most-performed, topping the Royal Shakespeare Company's performance list since 1879. With *Hamlet* written during a time of religious upheaval and the wake of the English Reformation, Shakespeare wrote this play with more purpose of Catholic and Protestant views. Major connections shown in the play, which shows Catholic characteristics, is the Ghost and the burial ceremony that is given to Ophelia. Some scholars have observed that revenge tragedies are native to traditional Catholic countries such as Italy and Spain; and they present a contradiction, since according to Catholic doctrine the leading responsibility that a Catholic has is to God and family.

Hamlet's challenge, then, is whether he shall be avenging his father and killing his Uncle Claudius, or to leave this vengeful act to God, as his religion requires. Religion also embodies on a major part in this play through Hamlet's procrastination. Prince Hamlet delayed killing his uncle due to religion portrayed in this play *Dealing with Procrastination of Skills Ahead* touches on the fact that Hamlet's famous soliloquy, "to be, or not to be," shows the struggle of the Prince of Denmark with procrastination throughout this play. With the longing answer on whether Hamlet eradicates the king, his uncle Claudius, from the throne is shown through the prince's

philosophical soliloquys of uncertainty. As a major theme of this play, Hamlet's well known lines express why he delayed or procrastinated this act (" Dealing with Procrasination," 2010). English playwright and possibly one of the greatest writers known, William Shakespeare, makes the case in Act 3. 3 that Hamlet almost avenges his father and kills King Claudius before noticing that Claudius was in prayer. Prince Hamlet procrastinated the act of committing regicide due religion.

Hamlet draws his sword but hesitates by the concern that by killing Claudius he would in fact go to Heaven and not Hell. Hamlet then pulls down his sword and says that he will wait till the circumstances fit. For he doesn't want his uncle to just to go to Hell but to catch the King while he is drunk and committing a sin so that Hamlet has full confidence that Claudius will not only go to Hell but will take a dive towards Hell (2003). Poynting (2005) agrees and believes that Hamlet failed to kill King Claudius with this vengeful act because he was praying. Sarah Poynting, an English researcher at Keele University and the managing Editor of The English Review, interprets Shakespeare's lines from Hamlet: " If thou hast any sound or use of voice. Speak to me. If there be any good thing to be done that may do thee ease, and grace me, speak to me," as reminder of the words used to reflect that of religious belief. Poynting also emphasizes the word " grace" used in these lines to illustrate the connection that grace has with religion and how important it is. With the Ghost appearing in the first act, Poynting mentions that the Ghost might be returning to haunt Denmark.

She uses lines from the play to support the idea that the Ghost is corrupt because it disappears as the dew becomes present and as it changes from night to dawn, putting the instantaneous hypothesis that the devil could be taking the form of King Hamlet and could be essentially playing on the vulnerable Prince Hamlet (2005). Margreta de Grazia, a professor at University of Pennsylvania, agrees by saying that the Ghost of King Hamlet is an example of neither life nor death, but the midpoint between man and earth and that purgatory is an example to justify why the ghost appears. The Ghost gives examples clarifying why he is in purgatory (2001). Shakespeare deciphers Hamlet's thoughts as he ponders on whether to kill Claudius in Hamlet's soliloquy at the end of Act 2. Hamlet discusses that he is going to have the players put on a play that will bring out the truth of King Hamlet's murder. Hamlet will observe Claudius throughout the play to determine if he is guilty. If Claudius has even a twitch or drop of sweat then Hamlet knows that what the Ghost said was true and that he must avenge his father and where he will catch the conscience of the king (Shakespeare, 2003). Alison A. Chapman writer of Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England disputes and lists religious questions that have come up while analyzing Hamlet.

One example is when Hamlet goes into extraordinary detail in which everyone dies and decomposes becoming a maggot's meal and also how Hamlet imagines an afterlife for everyone after they die. All these questions that connect with religion surround only Hamlet and no other character. Hamlet is the only one that connects with the Ghost and contemplates about death in the play through his perceptive views on the subject displayed in few of his soliloquys in the play (2007). Hamlet learns after he escapes his

requested execution by Claudius that God will guide him wherever he wants Hamlet to do or go and that Hamlet must take this as a sign and an advantage and finally kill Claudius and avenge his father death (Poynting, 2005). Emeritus professor of English literature, Michael Hattaway compares the justice shown in Hamlet. Hattaway explains how the religious views during the time that Hamlet was a written might collide with what Shakespeare wrote. Orthodox believers that followed St. Paul dispute that the power and justice in the court were intended for God and that know king whether if they were bad should be killed but shadow Christ and apostles agonize passively (1987).

Author Shigeo Kikuchi states that Hamlet never had hard evidence and had to be pragmatic to a fault about Claudius committing this cruel act and that any evidence obtained from a Ghost wasn't considered as proof but if used as a tool for future evidence it could be used to obtain further evidence to prove that Claudius killed his brother. (2010). Hattaway explains the contradiction of Hamlet fulfilling his dead father the Ghost with religious views. Whether he is doing God's work by ridding Denmark of a brother who would kill his brother to become king or if it was simple as Hamlet holding bad faith and morals, Hamlet stills justifies his father's vengeance as the play nearly ends by killing his uncle (1987). Martha Zenet Maher, author of *Modern Hamlets & Soliloquies*, interviews Kevin Kline, famous actor who both directed Hamlet and played Hamlet. Kline deciphers the soliloquy where Claudius attempted repentance and Hamlet's soliloquy that follows right after. As Claudius is praying, Kline directs Hamlet's character to start off his

line " Now might I do it pat. Now he is praying." Hamlet then moves into motion with his sword drawn, ready to strike Claudius's life away.

Hamlet then realizes that killing his uncle while praying was not the answer. Hamlet expresses why he shouldn't kill Claudius then with his line " Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge." With King Claudius kneeled as if he was in prayer, Hamlet walks around with no signs of Claudius knowing that he is present. Kline directed this knowing that realism wouldn't be faithful. He has Hamlet circle his uncle and convey his lines while looking Claudius openly in his face. This was used to show how far from realism the scene has gone and how it slips into something more surreal.

This unreal scene is also compared to moments such Hamlets encounter with his dead father say Kline (as cited in Maher, 2002). Bearing in mind that many assumptions occur when determining why Hamlet procrastinated killing his uncle, and that it was as simple as having cold feet, it is not factual. Prince Hamlet murdered King Claudius due to the religious aspects shown in this play and that is why he procrastinated till the last act of the five-act tragedy. Hamlet doubts this cruel act many countless and Shakespeare supports this quoting " Now might I do it pat, now he is praying." If Hamlet wasn't raised with such robust religious views, then Shakespeare's play The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark would have ended with Hamlet killing Claudius, reducing this five-act piece of artwork into a two-act melodrama.