

The soliloquies of hamlet

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



Authors use various literary elements to give insight into the mental composition of their characters. In Shakespeare's "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," we can trace Hamlet's mental process through his soliloquies. Hamlet's first soliloquy reveals him to be thoroughly disgusted with Gertrude, Claudius, and the world in general. "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, seem to me all the uses of this world" (1284), he said. He is saddened by the death of his father, who he admired as a king and husband to his mother.

His grief over his father's death is compounded by his mother's hasty marriage to Claudius. Hamlet protests, "a beast, that wants discourse of reason, would have mourn'd longer" (1285). The worst part is that he cannot tell them how he feels. In his second soliloquy, Hamlet becomes curious and suspicious after hearing of the ghost. "My father's spirit in arms! All is not well; I doubt some foul play" (1287), he said.

Hamlet feels that the presence of the ghost indicates that his father died due to dubious circumstance. After talking with his father's ghost, in the 3rd Soliloquy Hamlet is angered by the news that Claudius had murdered his father.

Hamlet assures that he will think of nothing but revenge. "I'll wipe away all trivial fond records...and thy commandment all alone shall live within the book and volume of my brain" (1296), he proclaims. In Hamlet's fourth soliloquy, his mental state shows signs of declination. He castigates himself for not taking action to avenge his father. He realizes that he has cause to kill Claudius, but cannot muster the chutzpah to go through with it. He said, "

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave, that I...must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words" (1314). He also expresses some doubt that the ghost was telling the truth. He said, " The spirit that I have seen May be the devil: and the devil hath power T'assume a pleasing shape..." (1315). However upset he is with himself, Hamlet is sure that the play he has arranged will reveal Claudius' guilt. In the fifth soliloquy, Hamlet hits upon a mental nadir. As he contemplates suicide, Hamlet asks himself if it is more honorable to live with life's misfortunes or to die young and bypass all the hardships.

Hamlet suggests that the reason we choose life is because we know nothing about death, except that it is final. It is " the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns" (1317). He goes on to say, " Thus conscience does make cowards of us all" (1317). Subscribing to this theory, Hamlet takes the coward's way and does not take his life. Hamlet's mental status shows some promise in his sixth soliloquy. Extremely resentful toward Gertrude, part of Hamlet really wants to hurt her. Sensibility prevails as he admits that it is not his nature to harm. He resolves to " speak daggers to her, but use none" (1328). In his seventh, and final, soliloquy, Hamlet gains the courage to finally avenge his father. After talking with a captain in Fortinbras' army, Hamlet is inspired by the men going off to Poland to fight for not much more than pride. Hamlet then feels ashamed of his unwillingness to go after Claudius. It dawned on Hamlet that he had been thinking too much and acting too little. " Now, whether it be bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple of thinking too precisely on th' event, A thought

which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom and ever three parts coward, I do not know why yet I live to say, " This thing's to do" (1342).

With his newfound determination to avenge his father's murder, he vows, " O, from this time forth, my thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth" (1342).

There is no doubt that movies and television shows have replaced plays as main sources of entertainment. Unfortunately, modern entertainment sources rarely utilize important forms of discourse, such as the soliloquy. The soliloquy can be a powerful tool used to gain access into the deepest thoughts of a character. I submit that without it, " Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" would have had a different effect. Instead, Hamlet's soliloquies gave depth to his emotions, making the audience aware of his internal conflicts. The Soliloquies of Hamlet Authors use various literary elements to give insight into the mental composition of their characters. In Shakespeare's " Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," we can trace Hamlet's mental process through his soliloquies. Hamlet's first soliloquy reveals him to be thoroughly disgusted with Gertrude, Claudius, and the world in general. " How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, seem to me all the uses of this world" (1284), he said.

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