

Textual integrity in hamlet essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ How has your understanding of the play’s structure, dramatic techniques and language helped you appreciate its textual significance and importance?

‘ Playwright William Shakespeare created the revenge tragedy Hamlet over 400 years ago and yet it remains still, a forerunner in its genre because it is more than just a revenge tragedy; it is the first existential play to dramatize the human condition in all its complexity and depth.

Through the play’s structure, dramatic techniques and language, Shakespeare deeply explores concepts of verisimilitude being the quality of realism in something, and morality in a world which has lost its ethical bearings. It is through analysis of these ideas that an appreciation of the texts significance and its importance to responders is evidenced, resulting in an appreciation of the play irrespective of time. The craftsmanship of dramatic techniques within ‘ Hamlet’ provides a constructural gaze into the multi-faceted nature of humans thus exploring the concept of appearance versus reality.

Shakespeare is famous for dramatizing social identity in many of his plays. Just when a character seems to identify completely with their social identity, Shakespeare strips away the appearance of social status and order and then begins to unravel the psychological order, expressing, ultimately, the multifaceted face of corruption in his characters.

“ You are the Queen, your husbands brothers wife, And, would it were not so, you are my mother. Such scenes explore the deeper paradoxes of identity. Shakespeare challenges the significance of appearance through the constant distinction between appearance and reality by the unprecedented use of the

aside and the soliloquy. The soliloquy is a continual reminder in Shakespeare that the inner life is by no means transparent to one's surrounding world.

This analysis of the multifaced nature of humans provides us with a window in which we observe our own nature, our own human traits.

This exemplifies the effect Shakespeare's techniques have on the responder, establishing the play's great importance and textual significance through analysis of the concept of appearance versus reality. It is through Shakespeare's language that the true contradiction of ones appearance and their identity is challenged. Hamlet's ironic reference to Gertrude as his "most seeming virtuous Queen" foreshadows the coming events of the play, thus through language planting the seeds of deception within the minds of the responder.

Hamlet later scrutinises Gertrudes true identity as he metaphorically sets her up a "glass" where she may see the "inmost part" of herself. Through a feminist view, Gertrudes weakness and inability to control her emotions and appearance, are reflective of views and beliefs of the Elizabethan period.

Thus, as Hamlet penetrates Gertrudes regal facade, she confesses "Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul, And there I see such blank and grained spots As will not leave their tinct".

Shakespeare's use of emotionally charged language, deepens and intensifies the scenes imaginative and dramatic impact on the responder. The disillusionment of Gertrudes persona presents to the responder, the ability of a person to hide such an interior even from ones self, by means of falsehood

and deception. As Gertrude's facade falters and her true identity is revealed, we as the responder reflect on our own persona and question the authenticity of those around us. It is through a deep understanding of Shakespeare's language that a great appreciation of the play and its concepts is achieved.

The importance of morality is made meaningful within 'Hamlet' through Shakespeare's exploration of the consequences of a disrupted natural order. Within morally-corrupt Elsinore, Shakespeare plants the seeds of disease within the first act as Marcellus speaks "something is rotten in the state of Denmark". The use of "rotten" to describe Hamlet's environment is symbolic of the decomposition of Elsinore and its moral bearings. As Hamlet becomes increasingly aware of his perverted surroundings, he exclaims in his soliloquy "to be or not to be".

From a humanist perspective the repetition of "to be" presents the complexity of the mind in sorting between rationality and morality. Hamlet's morality deprived environment and disrupted natural order has led him to contemplate the purpose of life, death and existence. Thus one can see the true implications of such a morally disturbed world and the "disease" which emanates from such an environment. In observing Hamlet's state the modern responder is able to identify and reflect on their own morality and place in the cosmos, revealing the text's enduring significance.

Shakespeare's analysis of the significance of morality in such a morally-corrupt world is generated from the instinctual drive for revenge. The procrastination throughout the play, acts as a motif in reflecting Hamlet's

inner moral conflict in killing Claudius. In Act 1 Hamlet vows "that I, with wings as swift/As meditation or the thoughts of love/May sweep to my revenge." Shakespeare's use of simile presents the speed at which Hamlet will face morality and avenge his father's murder.

However, this is later juxtaposed against Hamlet's complete inaction until the final scenes of the play whereby Hamlet kills Claudius by means of circumstance and not as part of his own plan.

Coleridge's assertion that no intellectual argument can replace the need for action to achieve morality is reflective of interpretations taken from Hamlet's moral and rational conundrum. It is through the responder's scrutiny of Hamlet's predicament that light is shed on morality, not just being black and white but also subject to circumstance.

Thus Hamlet's predicament becomes our own as the concept of morality transcends time proving the play's immortal influence. The timeless notion of themes in Hamlet create memorable and challenging ideas to the post-modern world, ideas that resonate within the responder, allowing them to objectify their own world, challenging the natural order.

This is the essence of what makes Hamlet an immortal text, as its universal themes and enduring values resonate throughout society irrespective of time. Hamlet stands between a medieval world of faith and a modern world of sceptical uncertainty. Hamlet's dilemma is our own.