

By as he too would  
be considered to



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

By making Hamlet speak of his father in both Christian and Renaissance Humanism values, Shakespeare has highlighted Hamlet's religious confusion. By doing this he also leaves it to the audience to decide which set of values holds the most importance, making them understand the dilemma that Hamlet faces even more as it was a dilemma they too were facing. In the first quote Shakespeare has used an abundance of similes to compare his father to the Gods, giving the audience the notion that Hamlet senior lives on in a god-like state.

This would enable Hamlet to justify seeking revenge, as he too would be considered to be in a God-like state. In the quote below this Hamlet uses Christian values, saying that Claudius killed his father before he had had the chance to repent his sins on earth so his soul would be clean to enter heaven, reflecting that Hamlet senior could be in hell. By doing this Shakespeare highlights the fact that God alone should carry out justice.

In his book called, 'Shakespeare and the Renaissance concept of honour', Curtis Brown Watson states that, " In recent years critics such as S. N Bethell, Wilson Knight et al thus arrive at the conclusion that the Christian ethic provides the key to a proper interpretation of Shakespearean Tragedy" (page 283). If this were right the 16th century audience would have clearly seen that Hamlet's father would have been in hell due to being murdered by his brother before he had time to repent. But it would have also made the audience realise that God should be the only avenger.

This would emphasise Hamlet's sense of traditional family values and the audience would probably relate to his wanting to be the avenger and

appreciate his dilemma all the more. Again this would emphasise the dilemma Hamlet faces and would take the audience on a roller coaster ride along with him as he tries to discover which system of beliefs are the correct ones to live and die by. This would not make Hamlet be perceived as the rottenness in Denmark that would be aimed at Claudius. " While murderer and revenger thus merge into one another, likeness does not imply equation.

Pyrrhum, mercifully, is not Hamlet; and the guilt of Hamlet and Claudius is not the same", Harold Jenkins, *The Arden Shakespeare, Hamlet*, page 145. Hamlet sees Claudius as the source of the rottenness in Denmark and when the ghost claims he his Hamlet's father, killed by the hands of his brother, he is thrown into a world of bitterness, resentment and corruption. This is different to the contented life of learning at Wittenberg University. But this education prevents Hamlet from being rash.

It is his intellect and ethics that force him to seek the truth before he takes action. Shakespeare has placed Hamlet into a world of illusion and reality and he must discover which is which. In order to keep to his morals Hamlet feels the need to expose Claudius so he can justify taking revenge. This would make Hamlet the executioner and not an assassin, upholding his Lutheran beliefs that his soul would remain pure, enabling his entry to heaven when he dies. In his essay entitled, " The morality of Hamlet- 'Sweet Prince' or 'Arrant Knave'?

" (1963), Patrick Cruttwell wrote of Hamlet stating, " he has become a figure of myth; and just as Odysseus is the myth - character of the Traveller, Faust the seeker, Quixote of the Knight and Juan the Lover, so Hamlet has been

made the myth - character of the doubting, self- contemplating intellectual". This is mainly due to Hamlet's connection to Wittenberg, an emblem of Protestantism. Hamlet's dilemma stems from his protestant beliefs, as it is not a singular religion. It is, in fact, split into two belief systems, Lutheranism and Calvinism.

The Lutheranism belief system says that your soul must be clean to enable entry to heaven whereas Calvinism states that God has already decided your outcome before you are born, no matter how you behave in life. Then when the ghost appears to Hamlet he is thrown into further religious confusion, as the ghost of his father appears to be in purgatory, a Catholic belief. " I am thy father's spirit, Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night, And for the day confin'd to fast in fires, Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature Are burnt and purg'd away" Act 1, Scene v, lines 9-13.