

Hamlet

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



HAMLET The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is a tragedy by William Shakespeare. Set in the Kingdom of Denmark, the play dramatizes the revenge Prince Hamlet exacts on his uncle Claudius for murdering King Hamlet, Claudius's brother and Prince Hamlet's father, and then succeeding to the throne and taking as his wife Gertrude, the old king's widow and Prince Hamlet's mother. Hamlet is a play written by William Shakespeare between 1601 and 1603. Hamlet is Shakespeare's longest play and among the most powerful and influential tragedies in all literature. The play was one of Shakespeare's most popular works during his lifetime[2] and still ranks among his most-performed. The play explores themes of madness, revenge, mortality, religion, art and culture, lies and deceit, sex, gender and family. Madness — both real and feigned — is at the heart of the play. At times Hamlet pretends to be mad and at other times behaves in ways that suggest that he really is mentally unstable. The complexity and sheer ambiguity of Hamlet's mental state and erratic behavior is compelling and seems to speak to the play's overall atmosphere of uncertainty and doubt. The concept of revenge is present from the very start. Mortality is also present in the play. Hamlet's musings on suicide, especially the "to be or not to be" speech, are legendary and continue to direct discussions of the value of life and the mystery of death. Hamlet registers many of religious ideologies and spiritual anxieties of the 16th century. Christian ideas about "Mortality" and the afterlife have been explored. The play weaves together Christian attitudes toward murder, suicide, and revenge. Hamlet, more than almost any character in literature, hates deception and craves honesty. However he is trapped in a political world where Deception is necessary for

and used by every character for various purposes. In the play, sexuality is frequently associated with deception, sin, and a seemingly fallen world. The young prince is disgusted by his aging mother's sexual appetite and his attitude eventually infects his relationship with Ophelia and his attitude toward all women in general. Hamlet's attitude toward women is notoriously sexist and stems from his disgust at his mother's sexuality and seeming unfaithfulness to his dead father. This outlook eventually spills over to include all women. To some extent, the play also considers notions of masculinity (or lack thereof). Claudius warns Hamlet that his grief is "unmanly" . Family is a significant theme in Hamlet. The play is notorious for the way it dwells on the issue of incest — Gertrude's marriage to her dead husband's brother, Hamlet's fixation on his mother. The Ghost in the play is dead King Hamlet who appears at different points. King Hamlet appears as a Ghost four times in the play: in Act I Scenes i, iv, and v, and Act III Scene iv. The Ghost appears first two soldiers—Barnardo and Marcellus—and a visitor to Denmark, Horatio. In his second appearance the ghost talks to Hamlet when alone and claims: 1) he's Hamlet's father 2) The ghost also says that he was murdered by his brother, who happens to be Hamlet's uncle Claudius, the guy who's now married to Gertrude and sitting on the throne of Denmark; 3) The ghost also claims he's "doomed" to suffer in "sulph'rous and tormenting flames" until the "foul crimes done in [his] days of nature / Are burnt and purged away" (1. 5. 2-5). He asks Hamlet to avenge his death by killing Claudius. In the third appearance, Hamlet is confronted by the ghost in his mother's closet, and is rebuked for not carrying out his revenge and for disobeying in talking with Gertrude. The ghost plays an important role in the

play as the whole story is based on his demand on his son. A lot of things make Hamlet doubt the Ghost's genuity. First, purgatorial spirits weren't supposed to ask people to commit murder and that's what the ghost wants Hamlet to do. (Remember, he tells the prince he's doomed to suffer until Hamlet takes revenge on Claudius.) Second, Protestants don't believe in the doctrine of Purgatory and Hamlet is a Protestant. . He goes through a lot of confusion as he dearly loved his father and wants to carry out his request but cannot decide if it really is his father's ghost or it is an evil spirit disguised as his father. Hamlet also feels guilty for deliberating and not carrying out his father's revenge soon. This leads to a lot of confusion and turmoil for Hamlet. the ghost's appearance sets the revenge plot into motion, the uncertainty surrounding the specter is what delays the play's action. The ensuing mental dialogues and confusion is clearly depicted in the play. The ghost also cements Hamlet's view of his mother's disloyalty. This in turn leads to more trauma for the young Hamlet because he becomes distrustful and aversive of his mother. He is seen expressing disgust over women's sexuality which finally gets generalized to Ophelia also. Even though Hamlet loves Ophelia he cannot trust her and is disgusted by all women and their sexuality so much so he asks Ophelia to " Go thee to a nunnery". A lot of literary critics notice that the ghost has a whole lot in common with young Hamlet. They talk alike (mostly about Gertrude's "unnatural" and " incestuous" relationship with Claudius) and they also kind of look alike at one point. Remember when Ophelia describes the way Hamlet appeared when he showed up in her room looking all ghostly " pale," almost " as if he had been loosed out of hell" (2. 1. 1)? Some speculate that the

ghost could be a figment of Hamlet's imagination. Even though other characters see the ghost (the castle guards and Horatio, for example), Hamlet's the only one who ever has a dialogue with it. It's also worth noting that Hamlet's the only character who sees or hears the ghost when it shows up in Gertrude's chamber to remind Hamlet to be nice to his mom (3. 4. 18). Has Hamlet been imagining his conversations with the ghost the whole time? Does this have anything to do with the fact that Hamlet says to Horatio " My father!--methinks I see my father [...] in my mind's eye" (1. 2. 12) before he even finds out that the ghost has been appearing on the castle walls? Some critics like to think that the ghost isn't real after all and just a figment of Hamlet's imagination. However, it appears to me that the ghost was real because he was first seen by the guards and not Hamlet, He is visible to a lot of people and not just Hamlet. The Ghost also tells Hamlet how he died. This was an information that Hamlet had not known previously and could not have concocted it from his imagination. Hamlet even tries to verify this information and Claudius reacts with guilt during the play. As for the similarities between Hamlet and the Ghost go , it seems to reflect the attitude of men towards women and their sexuality in those times. I say this because only Hamlet is not obsessed with the idea of female sexuality, at some points Ophelia's brother is also concerned about Ophelia's sexuality. However, it is very clear that the Ghost plays a very important role in the whole play. The confusion and turmoil in Hamlet's mind regarding mortality, revenge, suicide etc start after the appearance of the ghost and the course of a revenge tragedy is set by the ghost by his demands.