

Reactions to hamlet: two scenes that impact the play essay

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



“ Every new reading of Hamlet implies a reconsideration of the ways audiences value the play and respond to it.

” Discuss this view with reference to TWO scenes from the play and how these scenes impact on the play as a whole. Every new reading of the play Hamlet, written by William Shakespeare, implies a reconsideration of the ways audiences value the play and respond to it. Each medium, whether a play or film, centers the play on their own interpretation and through carefully observing the text, they imply a review in the way audiences value and respond to the texts, in particular, Act 3 Scene 2 and Act 3 Scene 4. Initially, Shakespeare illustrated the powerful components of a ‘ Revenge Tragedy’ reading of the play. The essential principles of tragedy were established by the Greek philosopher Aristotle in his work “ The Poetics”. Aristotle himself, as well as his work, was very influential during the time Hamlet was composed especially in the genre of Revenge Tragedy. Components of a revenge tragedy that are conveyed through the play include exposition, anticipation, confrontation, partial execution and completion.

The play centers itself around these components, although they are emphasized in Act 3 Scene 2. The scene holds both anticipation and confrontation, which are traits of a revenge tragedy. The scene establishes the anticipation Hamlet is experiencing, enforced by the line “ Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature”, awaiting the devised plan which will provide evidence and validate Claudius’s innocence or guiltiness. The play

within a play initializes the confrontation component of the revenge tragedy where Hamlet urges Horatio to carefully observe Claudius' reaction to spot any sign of guilt, portrayed by the line " Give him heedful note, for I mine eyes will rivet to his face, and after we will both our judgment join in censure of his seeming".

It seems that both Horatio and Hamlet are well aware that the play will be vastly confronting for Claudius, given his proclaimed guiltiness. If fate holds Claudius guilty of murder, Hamlet will fulfil his fate and duty and preform the final component of the revenge tragedy, that is, the partial execution, by fulfilling his father's will and the final completion. Within this particular scene, Shakespeare exhibits how reading the play Hamlet, illustrates how an audience values the play and responds to it with the interpretation of a revenge tragedy via the two influential elements of the interpretation, that is, the anticipation among Horatio and Hamlet prior to the play and the confrontation during the play within the play. The film Hamlet by Franco Zafferelli, views the play at a different angle although implies a reconsideration of the way audiences value and respond to the play.

Unique elements of the Oedipus complex have been displayed throughout the film. The aspects of the Oedipus complex portrayed within the film highlight Hamlet's suppressed incestuous and parricidal desires, the hatred he feels towards his mother's hasty remarriage and suspicion he feels from this marriage. This is evident in Scene 4 of Act 3, where Hamlet states " You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife, and—would it were not so! you are my mother. " This suggests Hamlet dislikes that fact Gertrude is his

mother, followed by acts of lust provide evidence to his incestuous feelings towards Gertrude and parricidal desires that he experiences which are recognized by the Oedipus complex. The line “ Heaven’s face doth glow / O’er this solidity and compound mass / With trustful visage, as against the doom, / Is thought-sick at the act”, highlights Hamlet’s abhorrence towards his mother’s hasty marriage after his father’s death. Through the use of body language and gestures, Zeferelli implies a reconsideration to the audience demonstrating the Oedipus complex strongly to the audience instigating a re-evaluation of the way audiences may value and respond to the play. The interpretation of the Hamlet theatre play directed by Naomi Edward also implies a reconsideration of the way audience’s value and respond to the text.

The protagonist, Hamlet, played by a female, is introduced to life outside of school. The female role of Hamlet brings to fruition the components of a Feminist reading of the play. Discrimination and inequities between men and women is emphasized within the feminist theory, both on stage as well as the marginalization of a female character. A female Hamlet and best friend Ophelia, frequently present on stage highlights the disproportion of appearance throughout the script between men and women.

The feminist theory is emphasized by the dominate male roles within the play, while the females remain minority and to an extent, perceived as a nuisance by male characters when their comments are overlooked or ignored. This is evident in the comparison of Scene 2 of Act 3. The original script incorporates inequalities between men and women, where women are

viewed as sex objects continuously ridiculed, portrayed by the lines, “ My lady, should I lie in your lap? ” and “ I mean, my heap upon your lap? ”. Within the theatre play, Edward gives the women a voice and the capability of acting on stage which was not socially accepted in the Elizabethan era. In fact, she focuses the play on the women characters. In Scene 2 of Act 3, the women stand on the stage, looking down to Claudius and Polonius, portraying the superiority given to them as well as demonstrating their social status within the play.

They are given freedom of speech to which they use to entertain the audience unlike depicted within the script version of the play let alone the traditional customs of the Elizabethan era. By interpreting the play, this again implies a reconsideration of the way audience’s value and respond to the text from their understanding of it. The play brings forth the issues concerning the inequality between men and women both on stage and in present society to a better understanding and accentuates the marginalization of characters. As demonstrated by the three variations of the play, Hamlet composed by William Shakespeare, the film by Franco Zeffirelli and the theatre play directed by Naomi Edwards.

They provide distinctive interpretations of the play from a variety of perspectives including the Aristotle Tragedy, the Oedipus complex and the Feminist Theory. By emphasizing the different interpretations from different perspectives and understandings, it has been demonstrated how the audience values the play and responds to it.