

# The parent-child relationship as portrayed in shakespearean classic, hamlet

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



Hamlet is among the most seriously, examined works of William Shakespeare. Over the year Hamlet has become one of the most utilized plays in contemporary adaptations and remakes, which entails how substantial and prominent Shakespeare's works are to today's generation. Hamlet ended up being preferred for its very special and catchy plot that includes fantasy in addition to tragedy, love and epic altogether. The characters, that were all molded based from the vibrant context of the Elizabethan period, have also been perceived as a few of literature's most intriguing personalities.

Nevertheless, apart from these, the themes and signs employed in this story likewise contribute to the overall literary performance and beauty of this play. In this light, among the most primary themes used in this story is the very fascinating principle of the parent-child relationship. The majority of the themes and symbols made use of in this play can be observed to follow some Elizabethan tradition and standard, which makes them more interesting to scrutinize.

Nevertheless, apart from this, the fascinating and seemingly distinct characteristic of the author likewise provides the styles and the plot rather a more interesting look.

Hence, this discussion will focus on discussing the significances behind the style of parent-child relationship as represented in Hamlet. This conversation will likewise try to prove that although the discussion of this theme has been considerably affected by the author's strange tendency to be unpredictable and unusual, it is nonetheless based on the preexistent Elizabethan

traditions that guided and molded the author's generation- which was when this story was produced.

After numerous decades of being offered worldwide's bin of literary classics, Hamlet is not one of the most typically adjusted and remade stories in stage plays. Although the setting has actually developed based on the development of the society, the plot was nevertheless the very same.

Hamlet speaks about the life of a prince who was previously haunted by his own dad's ghost, who eventually obliged the previous to retaliate for its expected pre-planned assassination. Hamlet has been considered by a lot of critics as Shakespeare's longest play (" To be or not to be").

Due to the complexity of the interwoven sub plots, the author must have had a difficult time compressing the story into a succinct tale like Romeo and Juliet. However, although this appears to be the most common impression, from beginning to end, the existence of the theme which delves on parent-child relationship was notably consistent. In the beginning, this concept was already very evident. The first parent-child relationship which can be observed in this story is that of prince Hamlet and his father, King Hamlet.

Lieberman (2008) notes that since the beginning the relationship of the too was portrayed as " fairly positive" (Lieberman). Very little detail was actually given about the relationship of these two characters in the beginning, but towards the end, it was nevertheless made clear that the two characters had a notable father-son bond which has been apparent from prince Hamlet's

immediate resentment about his father's assassination. This death of King Hamlet can be regarded as one of the story's greatest tragedies.

This event did not only entailed the loss of a king, a father to prince Hamlet but also the breakage of an intimate relation, specifically that of a parent-child. This father-son metaphor in Hamlet was also seen with deeper meanings as per Stephen and Bloom's studies on parent-child metaphors in literature (McKenna 159). Stephen suggests that this relationship between King Hamlet and prince Hamlet suggests a severed continuity, which was actually brought by the sudden breakage of connection due to King Hamlet's death.

Stephen notes one reason why Shakespeare desired to depict this kind of relation is, "to establish a connection with his (King Hamlet), which indicates that Shakespeare creates continuity through artistry that real life had severed" (Stephens, qtd. in McKenna 159). Holzberg and Waldeck (1973) supported this claim as they note that prince Hamlet was actually in deep desire for a reunion with his father.

This desire beyond chance and death, the author preferred creating a possibility of a father-son reunion so as to emphasize on this deep wanting. The authors note, "Hamlet is not a parent, but a child. He does not for a moment acknowledge a guilt that might beg forgiveness. But his language does express a deep desire for spiritual rapprochement, for reunion, after the agonized months of the disunion to which his first soliloquy testifies and which

hi vituperation earlier in this scene has witnessed” (Holzberg and Waldeck 65).

Considering these affirmative and similar claims on Shakespeare’s intention in depicting this peculiar father-son connection after death, it can be said that indeed, the author appears have a particular belief about the power of such relationship which may surpass the limitations set by chance and death. However, this amazing relationship between prince Hamlet and his father was not the only notable portrayal of parent-child relationship in this story. Aside from Hamlet’s relationship with his father, his connection to his mother, Gertrude also appears notable in this discussion of the parent-child concept in Shakespearean works.

Although prince Hamlet previously did not approve of Gertrude’s marriage to Claudius, they were nonetheless able to preserve an amenable relationship as mother and child. However, since Gertrude and Claudius’ life are then already intertwined, a comparison between their relationships with their children is inevitable. Although Gertrude presents a considerably pleasant treatment towards Hamlet, Claudius on the hand appears to be in contrast with this seemingly positive relationship (Lieberman).

This complex and interwoven relationships eventually created what readers may perceive as the roots of animosity and revenge in this tale. Hence, this can be considered as another distinct and intriguing Shakespearean artistry I depiction. As what can be observed in the abovementioned analysis, Shakespeare appears to hold a particular penchant for unique and quite out-

of-the-ordinary relationships between his character — like prince Hamlet obeying the orders of a ghost, and his mother marrying his own uncle who ordered the assassination of his father.

However, it is also important to note that the generation or era from where the context of this story was created also has to be considered. The historical context from where this tale was created is from the Elizabethan era in Denmark (McWhorter 4). One of the most notable features of this era, as what can obviously be seen in people's traditions and behaviors is the bond between parent and child.

Basing it from the works that have been published during this generation, it can be noted that the Elizabethan society has a particular valuation for children's respects for their parents. All children were actually obligated to follow their parents' commands (10). And this can be seen to be clearly depicted in this story. As it appears, prince Hamlet was bound to obey his father, despite him being dead, as one factor which actually affected was a societal norm. Moreover, this can also be seen in one of Shakespeare's other work, Othello (Goddard 69).

Hence, after going through this analysis on the portrayal of parent-child relationships and connections in the Shakespearean classic, Hamlet, it can nonetheless be resolved that although it may easily seem like this kind of depiction of such theme was just out of Shakespeare's unpredictable and quite out-of-the-ordinary way of internalizing his ideas, by analyzing the historical and cultural contexts of this work, it is found that it was actually

base more on the then existent rules and norms of the Elizabethan empire which paid considerable valuation to the children's courtesy to their parents.