

## Custom Essay

### Topic: Shakespeare's Hamlet and Existentialism

Existentialism pesters legion of philosophers with diversified questions like “Who am I?” or “What is the meaning of life?” and throughout centuries no one is even close to suitable answer. By scientific terms, existentialism is a “philosophical movement . . . centering on analysis of individual existence in an unfathomable universe and the plight of the individual who must assume ultimate responsibility for acts of free will” (“Existentialism”).

Shakespeare's Hamlet from same-name tragedy is a surpassingly existential character. He pursues existential questions while getting his father's death through his head.

Prince Hamlet is always rapt in contemplation with challenging philosophical issues, melancholic and ignores his emotions. His inexorable logic is a reason why he delays revenge against a murderer who killed his father. He wants to establish the guilt of his uncle himself after the Ghost of Hamlet tells him that Claudius is the murderer. His cogitations and penance of villain develop a truly existential character throughout the play.

Credence to pure intellect and logic suppresses instincts and emotions so Hamlet ignores the sight of the Ghost because it is adverse to logic. He says: “Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell / Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death, / Have burst their cerements . . . Say, Why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?” (I.iv.46-48,57).

At the beginning of the story Hamlet shows himself as an archetype of anti-existentialist, but with course of events his feelings and emotions slowly reveal themselves. “To be, or not to be: that is the question: / Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The

slings and arrows of outrageous fortune / Or to take arms against a sea of troubles” – the most famous lines that contemplate the thought of suicide. The depths of human life – one of the central assertions of existentialism and mind has nothing to do with it. (Bigelow, paragraph 6). Suppressed emotions do not encourage avenging for his father’s death and lack of emotions provokes him temporarily mad. And still he avoids the temptation to commit suicide, decides to stay alive and to take it out of Claudius.

War caused by over “a little patch of land / That hath in it no profit but the name” (IV.iv.98-99) shocks Hamlet and he is taken aback by the thought that Fortinbras would sacrifice the lives of the soldiers for no reason. No one is safe – one of the crucial ideas of existentialism flashed into his mind. Hamlet is impressed by the forcefulness of characters like Fortinbras and Laertes, who turn thought into action quickly (Phillips). Influenced by Laertes’ avenger on his father’s murderer, he begins to act more existential and less reflective.

Only death of his mother and Ophelia and only two minutes to survive bring him about to kill Claudius. End of the play shows a transformation of his character to existential one. Hamlet is shown as deliberating and slow-to-act character and still he is the only character fighting back against Claudius and he is ready for the outcomes of his actions. True existential character in an existential tragedy that was born before his time.

## Works Cited

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