

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

REVENGE AND EXISTENTIALISM IN HAMLET

MASTER THESIS

KAREEM AZAAM AMEEN SWEILEH

NICOSIA

JUNE 2019

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JUNE 2019

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Arts.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this study.

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ABSTRACT**REVENGE AND EXISTENTIALISM IN HAMLET****KAREEM AZAAM AMEEN SWEILEH****MA Program in English Language and Literature****Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kurt****June, 2019, 56 pages**

Existentialism as a philosophy gives us new interpretations for Hamlet. It gives us a deep understanding of the impulse of this bloody ending. Mainly, this study focuses on interpreting Hamlet's situation from multi-perspectives which are: Existence Precedes Essence, Being and Nothingness, and the spirit of revenge.

Some critics believe that Hamlet was an example of an existentialist hero who struggled because he was treated as an object. First, it interprets Hamlet' free will and how it played a role in his revenge. Also, some critics believe that Hamlet lost his freedom of choice. Later on, he knew that he must be a person who designs his destiny. Second, it interprets Hamlet through the role of the Oedipus complex and how it effected on Hamlet and forced him to take revenge. Many critics believe that Sigmund Freud gave us an important interpretation of Hamlet's psychological state of Hamlet. The Oedipus complex of Freud gives us a modern understanding of Hamlet. Forth, how the incestuous relationship, Libido, and the lack of the sexual needs of Hamlet impulse him to take revenge. It is recommended for any researcher to use the Qualitative method to give new deep perspectives for any literary piece of work.

Keywords: Revenge, Existentialism, Oedipus complex, Libido, Hamlet, Sigmund Freud, Sartre

ÖZ

Hamletteki İntikam ve Varoluşçuluk

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Varoluşçuluk felsefesi Hamletin yeni ve farklı şekillerde yorumlanmasına imkan tanır. Üstelik , hikayenin kanlı son ile bitme dürtüsünün sebebini anlamamızda yardımcı olur. Temel olarak, bu çalışma, Hamlet'in Varlık, Özden, Varlıktan ve Hiçbir Şeyden Önce Gelir ve intikamın ruhu perspektiflerden yorumlamaya odaklanmıştır. Bazı eleştirmenler Hamlet'in kendisine bir nesne olarak muamele edildiği için mücadele eden bir varoluşçu kahraman örneği olduğuna inanıyor. Aynı zamanda, varoluşçuluk felsefesi, Hamlet'in özgür iradesini ve intikamında nasıl bir rol oynadığını yorumluyor.

Bazı eleştirmenler Hamlet'in seçim özgürlüğünü kaybettiğini inanıyor. Daha sonra kendi kaderini kendisinin tasarlaması gerektiğini anlamıştır. Bu felsefe, Hamlet'in karakterini oedipus kompleksi açısından inceler ve bu kompleksin Hamlet'i nasıl etkilediği ve intikam almaya zorladığı açısından yorumlar. Freud'un Oidipus kompleksi bize modern bir Hamlet anlayışı sağlıyor. Varoluşçuluk felsefesi hikayede yer alan ensest ilişkiyi ve Hamlet'in cinsel ihtiyaçındaki eksikliği onu nasıl intikam almaya ittiğini analiz etmekte yardımcı olur. Araştırmacıların, herhangi bir edebi eser için yeni derin perspektifler vermek amacıyla Niteliksel yöntemi kullanması önerilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Revenge, Existentialism, Oedipus complex, Libido, Hamlet, Sigmund Freud, Sartre

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter defines the term literature, presents the life and works of William Shakespeare, Jean-Paul Sartre and Sigmund Freud. Furthermore, it presents the aim of the study, the research questions of this study, followed by the significance of the study.

What is literature?

It is hard to explain and define the meaning of literature. Since many critics, philosophers and other writers do not explicitly know the meaning of the term. Many definitions of literature exist. For Clarke (1927, p. 53) "literature is simply a writing (*littera*, a letter; in the plural, letters or learning)".

To try and understand the term literature Aristotle defined the term *tragedy*. "*Tragedy* is a form of drama, characterized by seriousness and dignity, and involving a great person who experiences a reversal of fortune (*peripeteia*). This reversal of fortune must be caused by the tragic hero's *hamartia*, which is often mistranslated as a character flaw, but is more correctly translated as a mistake" (Moore, 2008, p. 40).

Sidney Lanier when he was lecturing on Shakespeare at John Hopkins during the winter of 1879-80, he distinguished between two classes of humanity as regards to their respective attitudes toward literature. In scene 2 act 2 of the tragedy which bears his name, Hamlet, preoccupied with a book (perhaps Juvenal's tenth Satire), enters a room of state and is questioned thus by that would-be detective, Polonius: "What do you read, my lord?" To this query Hamlet replies with the famous iteration: "Words, words, words." "We have here," remarks Sidney Lanier, "the lowest possible ideal of Literature" (Clarke, 1927, p. 54). From

these words a very simple definition for literature is now defined. He further defined the term of literature as a jungle of words- "Literature is a blind tangle and jungle of words" (Clarke, 1927, p. 55).

Also, "consists of all the books and they are not so many where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, severity, and attractiveness of form" (Kent, 1895, p. 307). Channing defines literature as, "the expression of a national mind in writing." (Kent, 1895, p. 308).

According to Newman "Literature is the expression of thought in language ; . . . whereby ' thought ' I mean the ideas, feelings, views, reasoning, and other operations of the human mind" (as cited in Kent, 1895, p. 308).

Damrosch (2003) in his article believes that we have *world literature* because we have a verity of cultures, traditions and beliefs. The "masterpiece," "on the other hand, can be a recent or even contemporary work and need not have had any foundational cultural force." (Damrosch, 2003, p. 9). Furthermore, Damrosch (2003) believed that the word "masterpiece" was introduced after studying the Greek and Roman classics. The writer believed that Virgil Aeneid type is a timeless type as Gilgamesh, Odyssey, Ulysses, and Omeros are.

William Shakespeare's Life and Works

William Shakespeare is one of the best playwrights in the history of English. He was an actor and poet. He wrote 37 plays, two long narrative poems, and 154 sonnets. The genres of Shakespeare's works are comedy, tragedy, and historical drama (Moore, 2008, p. 1)

William Shakespeare's was born in 1564 in South-West England. His childhood was a simple and happy one. He got married when he was 18 years old (Moore, 2008, p. 7).

He gained a high reputation because of his amazing works. His plays were performed for Queen Elizabeth I. Then he was known as the King's Men. Shakespeare established his

own theatre and called it Globe Theatre (Moore, 2008, p. 19). The political side of Shakespeare was shady but he was a Roman Catholic (Moore, 2008, p. 15).

According to Farahmandfar and Samigorganroodi (2015, p. 26) “the age of Shakespeare was an age of expansion and colossal changes”. Shakespeare lived in the Elizabethan era which was the era of literature, poetry, and music. At that time religion was really important. This was seen to affect the writers in that era. We can clearly see in his works that Shakespeare was affected.

Some critics believe that Hamlet is Shakespeare’s masterpiece. ‘Hamlet’ is a tragic play. Many critics, psychiatrists, and academics wrote articles and dissertations regarding it. There are many summaries and analyses of this play. Hamlet is a story of a Danish prince who lost his father. Then the ghost of the dead king told him Hamlet that Claudius murdered and poured poison in his ear. Hamlet started his investigations to reveal if the ghost was honest. In other words, to see if the ghost was not lying.

Holland in his article "Freud on Shakespeare" believed that Shakespeare was influenced by his son Hamnet who died when he was young. This influenced Shakespeare to create a character called Hamlet and make him a miserable prince.

Jean-Paul Sartre’s Life and Works

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Jean-Paul Sartre was born on the 21st of June in 1905 in Paris, France, and died on the 15th of April in 1980 again in Paris where he was born (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d). Sartre was a novelist, playwright, and an Existentialist philosopher. He declined Nobel Prize.

Some of Sartre and Pucciani’s (1961) quotes with respect to literature and their philosophy are expressed as follows:

Sartre: “Yes. To an extent that is true. I remain convinced, however, that if literature isn't everything, it is nothing”(Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 12).

Pucciani: “What precisely do you mean by that statement?”(Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 12).

Sartre: “I mean that a writer, a novelist cannot deal with the slightest concrete detail of life without becoming involved in everything” (Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 12)

In addition, “Up to the age of forty I believed, as you say, that people could be changed through literature. I no longer believe that. People can certainly be changed, but not through literature, it would seem”(Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 13)

Pucciani: “Is it perhaps because literature reaches people within their essential solitude?”(Sartre& Pucciani, 1961, p. 13).

Sartre: “Yes. There is certainly that. But there is something, for example, in a political meeting-and I do not mean that political meetings are in any way superior to literature!-which has a more lasting effect. Direct political action seems to be more effective than Literature” (Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 13).

A question arose with the words of Pucciani regarding Frantz who committed suicide in his words of:“It seems to me that one might say in the final analysis that Frantz was a good man because he committed suicide”(Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 14).

Sartre: “Yes. provided you say because he committed suicide. Actually, the terms ‘good’ and ‘bad’ have no meaning in history. The more one goes along, the more one realizes that the ‘good’ were ‘bad’ and that the ‘bad’ were ‘good’”(Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 14).

As regards to Existential psychoanalysis, Pucciani put forth that: “I would like to ask you something about Existential psycho analysis. I am reminded of this because of Frantz's

‘madness’. Could one not say that Existential psychoanalysis is psychoanalysis for normal people whereas Freud requires a category of the “pathological?” (Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p.17).

Sartre: “Certainly Existential psychoanalysis is concerned with normal people. Conventional psychoanalysis as it is practiced today in America and France is a plague. It encloses the individual in his malady. There is no way out” (Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 17).

With respect to the importance of Existentialism in literature:

Pucciani questioned that “This brings me to a last question about engagement and the effectiveness of the writer. There is great interest in Existentialism. In California, for example, which is very remote from your world. I wonder if that interest could exist if you had not given literary form to your work” (Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 18).

Sartre: “Literature is certainly very important. Yes, I know what you mean. And I do believe that we must continue to give literary form to our work. It is the writer's only chance, as I have said everywhere. At the same time, literature is not the only way. This should not be taken to mean, however, that literature should not be engaged. I am not offering any alibis. I am less sanguine than I used to be, but I still believe the writer can help-if it is only to.” (Sartre & Pucciani, 1961, p. 18).

According to Farahmandfar (2015, p. 25) “It is not easy to define ‘existentialism’ in a few sentences or pages”. However, a simple definition of Existentialism lies in the words of Hossain, (2015) who defines Existentialism as “the philosophy that makes life feasible” (p. 5). Existentialism is a philosophical doctrine which is the freedom of thinking without any restrictions and the human being has the free will. . “but our learned journals have begun to take notice too, feeling the impact of the recent translations of Soren Kierkegaard's works, and the names of the German existentialists whom Kierkegaard partly inspired, Martin

Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, are becoming very familiar even beyond the circle of philosophers and theologians” (Nordmeyer, 1949, p. 583)

Sigmund Freud’s Life and Works

Sigmund Freud was born on the 6th of May in 1856 to a Jewish family in Moravia. When he came to the age of four he was taken to Vienna, his home (Tansley, 1941).

Freud “was strongly attracted by the theories of Darwin” (Tansley, 1941, p. 247). A study regarding the physio-logical action of cocaine was investigated in the year of 1884 which gained popularity (Tansley, 1941, p. 248). “In the spring of 1885 Freud was appointed lecturer on neuro-pathology” (Tansley, 1941, p. 249). According to Freud, “The effect of mental isolation is seen in the independence and separateness with which Freud's psychological theories were built up” (Tansley, 1941, p. 250).

In 1900, Freud published *Die Traumdeutung*, a large volume in “which he discussed very fully the nature of the work performed by the dreaming mind, not only in neurotics but in normal people, and constructed a scheme of the psychic 'systems' involved, distinguishing clearly for the first time between the 'preconscious' region of the mind containing material normally accessible to consciousness and the 'unconscious' to which such access is unobtainable, except indirectly by special methods, but whose contents lie 'at the root of all affective psychical activity, and thus constantly determine conscious thought, feeling, and behaviour. The great importance of Freud's work on dreams.” (Tansley, 1941, p. 260)

“The three essays of the *Sexualtheorie* deal respectively with the perversions, infantile sexuality, and the changes at puberty, and provide a convincing view of the psychogenetic factors and mechanisms concerned in the development of human sexuality as it is represented in the adult mind, both normal and abnormal” (Tansley, 1941, p. 261).

The Aim of the Study

The main aim of this thesis is to discuss how revenge and existentialism are employed in the play of William Shakespeare 'Hamlet'. In addition, the role of the death of the free will, the Oedipus complex, and how these made 'Hamlet' take revenge are also analysed.

To be able to reach the aim of this study the following research questions are posed:

1. How does existentialism explain Hamlet as an existential hero and a revenger?
2. How does the death of 'free will' affect Hamlet?
3. How does Oedipus complex influence Hamlet to take revenge from his uncle?
4. Was Hamlet a revenger or a punisher?

The Significance of the Study

This study will pinpoint a new perspective on the masterpiece 'Hamlet' (Shakespeare). This study will thereby highlight how Oedipus Complex controls the character Hamlet subconsciously which causes Hamlet's misery.

To the best of my knowledge the research questions aforementioned have not yet been answered. Therefore, this study is important as it will fill the present gap in the literature.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents the literature in relation to the present study. An analysis of studies with respect to the current study followed by related studies are discussed.

An Analysis of Studies

Harries(2004)discussed the deepest source of human self-alienation and declared that nobody understood Sartre more than Ron Santoni in his book “Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy” (Harries, 2004, p. 32). Other philosophers also talked about self-alienation. Sartre in his book ‘Being and Nothingness’discussed nihilism regarding its inability of freedom (Harries, 2004, p. 25). All the meaningless things will have a meaning as long as there is freedom. He coined a concept called “an ideal image of man” (Harries, 2004, p. 27). Sartre believed that there is no reconciliation of spirit and flesh. Santoni commented on the relationship between Sartre and Nietzsche's 'spirit of seriousness’ (Harries, 2004, p. 36). Santoni believes that Nietzsche’s expression ‘spirit of revenge’ is a paradigmatic expression. He found that humans must accept the lack. We can find a net of arguments about freewill and determinism. According to Determinism, the human being is not free. Thus, Naturalism believes that fates are already written. However, in the Renaissance period people believed that they can do what they want, if they have the will(Harries, 2004).

Hossain (2015) focused to present ‘Hamlet’as the play ofa literary existentialist. Shakespeare wanted to present howpeople live in this world. Shakespeare alsoportrayedhowpeople live together, how they deal with their life, and how they choose

their needs in this world. Shakespeare's works are full of pain, misfortune and hardship.

Existentialism changed the perspectives of literary critics. "Existentialism is the philosophy that makes life feasible" (Hossain, 2015, p. 205). Existentialists believe that we should live a meaningful and real life. Before the industrial revolution, people believed in what religious authority told them. However, following the industrial revolution, people became aware of the truth regarding values and concepts. Shakespeare "knew the view that man is thrown into the world, abandoned to a life that ends in death; but he also knew self-sufficiency. He had the strength to face reality without excuses and illusions and did not even seek comfort in the faith in immortality" (Hossain, 2015, p. 206).

According to Glicksberg,(Hossain, 2015, p. 208)"the Existentialist novelist is the philosophical Hamlet of our age, suffering from spells of nihilistic madness, metaphysical nausea, and ontological colour". Hamlet believed that the world was out of joint, so he wanted to set it right as it was. Hamlet realized that he could not escape from choosing his destiny. So, Hamlet had an existentialist nature. The play is seen to remind us of our weak existence (Hossain, 2015).

Farahmandfar and Samigorganroodi (2015)in their article aimed to explore the key concepts of existential studies in Hamlet and Blind Owl. Shakespeare and Hedayat were concerned in death and the free will.Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Emerson and Freud referred to Shakespeare to support their ideas and philosophies. The writers tried to open the doors of the existential thought in Shakespeare. They gave us the basic of existential thought: Existence precedes essence, humanism, freedom/responsibility, and authenticity."Existential thought emphasizes the value of self-knowing, self-becoming and individualism"(Farahmandfar & Samigorganroodi, 2015, p. 29). Farahmandfar and Samigorganroodi (2015, p. 29) put forth that all of the mentioned are presented in the writings ofShakespeare. In addition, Shakespeare dealt with the matter of self-knowing. Existentialism believes that people

are responsible for their choices and we can see this in Hamlet and Macbeth. According to the writer, Hamlet was an Existentialist hero. The play started with “Who’s there?” This question is the idea of identity. The idea of comparative literature gives us a door to understanding the idea of similarity among cultures and thoughts of the literary writers (Farahmandfar & Samigorganroodi, 2015).

Tekinay (2001, p. 115) believes that the play Hamlet gives us an existential reading, but we cannot say that this play is an existential tragedy. Hamlet was waiting for a chance to prove that he was a hero. The reason behind Hamlet’s delay was because Hamlet did not know his unique personality. If Hamlet killed his uncle while he was praying, he would be a punisher, not a revenger. Tekinay (2001, p. 123) argues that Hamlet is not an “Aristotelian hero” because the play ends with the failure of the world.

Damrosch (2003) in his article believes that we have world literature because we have a verity in cultures, traditions, and beliefs. “Goethe, for example, clearly considered his own best works, and those of his friends, to be modern masterpiece” (Damrosch, 2003, p. 9) claims that the word “masterpiece” came after studying the Greek and Roman classics. The writer believes that Virgil Aeneid type is a timeless type as are “Gilgamesh, Odyssey, Ulysses, and Omeros” (Damrosch, 2003, p. 9). The writer claims that if we want to understand the world of literature “we need more a phenomenology than an ontology of the work of art” (Damrosch, 2003, p. 14).

Clarke (1927) believes that it is hard to know the meaning of literature. Since many critics, philosophers and other writers did not know the meaning of literature. The writer wonders about the meaning of literature and the core of it before inventing printing and the art of writing. The writer believes that literature is nothing if it is not art. “Literature is nothing if it is not an art; that Art is one; and that its oneness is of ideal, of spiritual, birth and being” (Clarke, 1927, p. 53). According to Clarke we have two views of how to define

literature. The first one is of Sidney Lanier's. When he was lecturing on Shakespeare at Johns Hopkins during the winter of 1879-80, he distinguished between two classes of humanity as regards to their respective attitudes toward Literature. "In the second scene of act 2 of the tragedy which bears his name, Hamlet, preoccupied with a book (perhaps Juvenal's tenth Satire), enters a room of state and is questioned thus, by that would-be detective, Polonius: "What do you read, my lord?" (Clarke, 1927, p. 54). To this query Hamlet replies with the famous iteration: "Words, words, words." (Clarke, 1927, p. 54) "We have here," remarks Sidney Lanier, "the lowest possible ideal of Literature" (Clarke, 1927, p. 54). The second view is that the literature is a jungle of words. "Literature is a blind tangle and jungle of words" (Clarke, 1927, p. 55). Clarke (1927) believes that if we want to answer the question of what is the meaning of life, we should answer the question of what Art is and if we want to define the meaning of Art we should define the meaning of Life. Herbert Spencer, a philosophical scientist, claims that "Life is the constant effort of an organism to adjust itself to its environment" (as cited in Clarke, 1927, p. 56). George Henry Lewes similarly asserts that "Life is a series of definite and suggestive changes, of both structure and composition, which take place within an individual without destroying its identity" (as cited in Clarke, 1927, p. 56).

Kent (1895) attempts to define the term literature. "John Morley affords our best point of departure. 'Literature', he says, 'consists of all the books' and they are not so many where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, severity, and attractiveness of form". Kent also gives us some definitions of literature, Newman's definition: "Literature is the expression of thought in language ; . . . whereby ' thought ' I mean the ideas, feelings, views, reasoning, and other operations of the human mind" (as cited in Kent, 1895, p. 308). Kent (1895) suggests that we must find a limitation for Schlegel's words like 'We embrace'. "A closer approach to a logical definition is made by Channing,

who considers national literature to be ‘the expression of a national mind in writing’” (as cited in Kent, 1895, pp. 307-308).

An Analysis of Related Studies

Ezeh, (2015) asserts that the person has a free will since birth or s/he is a person who will face his written destiny. Rene Descartes, argued that “human choices are the product of non-physical spirit-mind, not the function of brain activity”(Ezeh, 2015, p. 42). Descartes believed that the will is free and it has no restrictions. However, Determinism believes that people are not free to choose what they want since their destiny is already written for them. In classical literature, we can see many examples that claim that people are fated. Nonetheless, the Renaissance era was the turning point which told people that they can draw their own fate since they are free to choose what they like. Commentators believed that Macbeth is a shady character. Ezeh’s article discusses whether Macbeth was responsible for his actions and if he had the freedom of choice. Macbeth could be a miserable person and a self-centered person who could be weak when it comes to his dreams and ambitions. Others believe that Macbeth is an ethical traditional person. The perspective of the three witches is a perspective of the death of the free choice Macbeth was pushed. At the same time, Macbeth was planning to murder the king. Lady Macbeth did not control her husband because she chose to die because she could not bear the decision of killing the king. It was written for Macbeth to be a king but he killed Duncan instead (Ezeh, 2015).

Glicksberg (1949) believes that people enjoy doing nothing more than doing a thing because we refuse to face reality. People refuse to face reality and they run away from their life issues like death. For instance, if we were to have a third world war, the bombs will not be able to differentiate between communists and capitalists but we refuse this reality.

Meanwhile, existentialism faces our reality. The Reprieve is an example of changing through

the use of movement. It suggests some international forces and how they can affect people from different environmental frames. People do not know how chaos could change their life or at least affect them. One of the characters called Mathieu in the novel (*The Reprieve*) used to ask himself a question, what is the thing that I should live for? This is because of the effect of a chaotic world which Sartre drew for this novel. Sartre faced in this novel the problem of not facing problems in his own life (Glicksberg, 1949, p. 13).

Stearns (1949) believes that Freud drew a path for us to interpret Shakespeare in a new way. Stearns believes that Shakespeare did not have a mind of a pervert. Stearns (1949) believes that Hamlet had sex-nausea. Campbell and others believe that Hamlet was an example of humour. Hamlet suffered from excessive sexual needs. Smith and Wilson believe that Shakespeare did not get affected by the Freudian thought because Freud came after Shakespeare. Thus, Hamlet did not have an Oedipus complex. Stearns (1949) believes that we cannot say that we cannot apply Freud on Shakespeare or even ignore Freud's interpretation on Hamlet because Freud gives an amazing strong interpretation for Hamlet.

Polka (2008) believes that Hamlet was forced to surrender for his written destiny since there is no need to change, which agrees with the opinion of the Protestant determinism. Curran believes that there is a misreading on the nature of the philosophical and theological conflicts. Shakespeare did not show the difference between Protestant predestination and Catholic contingency. However, he added to his masterpiece a biblical drama.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will present the methodology of this study. The research rationale, followed by the design of the study will be presented.

Research Rationale

There are various perspectives to discuss Hamlet. For example you can Study Hamlet according to school of Feminism, or according to Marxism, or the religious speeches in Hamlet. However, this study focuses on Hamlet and Existentialism, and the role of the death of the 'free will' and Oedipus complex in Hamlet's revenge. Hamlet's speeches were interpreted to reveal new perspectives for this masterpiece.

This study highlights three important perspectives, which are an amazing combination to understand revenge in Hamlet. Hamlet is a negotiable character. He is the prince who struggled with the death of the free will. He found out that his mother became his uncle's wife. He did not know what to do. However, after talking to the ghost of the dead king he knew what to do. Following this scene, he decided to choose or to invent his new path.

Design of the Study

A qualitative research design is employed in this study. The study was designed to interpret and describe the soliloquies, dialogues, monologues, and speeches of other characters and Hamlet in the play in order to get new interpretations for this masterpiece. The study also contains psychological interpretations of Hamlet, for these reasons a qualitative research design was preferred. McMillan and Schumacher defined qualitative research as,

“primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among categories” (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993, p. 479). It is thus, a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning.

CHAPTER IV

REVENGE AND EXISTENTIALISM

Introduction

This chapter discusses the three themes existence precedes essence, being and nothingness, and the spirit of revenge.

Existence Precedes Essence

“Existentialism is the philosophy that makes life feasible” (Hossain, 2015). The core of existentialism is existence precedes essence. “What you are (your essence) is the result of your choices (your existence) rather than the reverse. Essence is not destiny. You are what you make yourself to be” (Farahmandfar & Samigorganroodi, 2015). This means Hamlet was filled by the experiences which made him take revenge. He was the person who came to a big prison which is called life to revenge for himself and live for himself because he lived most of his life for others.

This sentence was the base of this bloody play.

“Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.”(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 3.4.2).

Hamlet started to think about life from different perspectives. He was in a chaotic world.

“O God, God, / How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world! / Fie on't, ah, fie, 'tis an unweeded garden / That grows to seed. / The things rank and / gross in nature / Possess it merely.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.326-331).

Hamlet realized that he can control his life and be the decision maker through realizing that he is a human being. He realized the meaning of the word ‘being’.

“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 / And, by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep— / No more—and by a sleep to say we end / The heartache and the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to—’tis a consummation / Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep— / To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the rub, / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, / Must give us pause. There’s the respect / That makes calamity of so long life. / For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, / Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely, / The pangs of despised love, the law’s delay, / The insolence of office, and the spurns / That patient merit of th’ unworthy takes, / When he himself might his quietus make / With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear, / To grunt and sweat under a weary life, / But that the dread of something after death, / The undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveler returns, puzzles the will / And makes us rather bear those ills we have / Than fly to others that we know not of? / Thus conscience does make cowards (of us all) / And thus the native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought, / And enterprises of great pitch and moment / With this regard their currents turn awry / And lose the name of action.—Soft you now, / The fair Ophelia.—Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 3.1.1762-1796).

Hamlet the nerdy student became the lost person who would start discovering that life is not an idealist one. “In Sartre's vision, man is born into a kind of void, a mud.” (Tekinay, 2001). Hamlet had the choice of being a prince but at a point, he became a tragic hero who led this family to their graves.

Hamlet is an example of a Sartrean person who has a dilemma. Hamlet felt that he was in a dilemma and he must do a new thing to be Hamlet the free person, not Hamlet the prince.

“What is a man, / If his chief good and market of his time / Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more. / Sure He that made us with such large discourse, / Looking before and after, gave us not / That capability of godlike reason / To rust in us unused.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 4.4.2865-2871).

Being and Nothingness

He says “which reveals that the world is out of joint” (Hossain, 2015, p. 206). It is evident from this part of the soliloquy that Hamlet was an existentialist hero. By starting this soliloquy Hamlet decided to convince himself that he is a hero. He drew his fate.

“The time is out of joint. O cursed spite / That ever I was born to set it right! / Nay, come, let’s go together.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.5.928-930).

Hamlet won as an existential hero. In the end, Hamlet filled himself with what he wanted without any control from anyone. “Existentialism is a philosophy of freedom. Its basis is the fact that we can stand back from our lives and reflect on what we have been doing. In this sense, we are always ‘more’ than ourselves. However, we are as responsible as we are free” (Farahmandfar & Samigorganroodi, 2015). Hamlet had two stages in his life. The first one was nothingness, Hamlet was less than a dull. Meanwhile, the second stage was being. He woke up from his sleep and declared that he will draw his destiny. Nobody cared about this. Existentialism explains such a situation for a miserable hero.

We can find this act in many cultures. For example, revenge is a concept which is so full of honour in some countries. However, other countries like South Egypt viewing revenge from an Arabic point of view, if a man killed another man, one of the family members of the murdered man would take revenge and kill the murderer. They consider this action as the key to getting back their good reputations and they believe this revenge will make the murdered person feel comfortable, happy and in peace.

Revenge is a reaction towards a bad thing that has happened to you which prevents you from thinking of what you are doing. The play within the play reflects that Hamlet did not take revenge because revenge 'makes you a blind person'. In the book "Being and Nothingness", Sartre and Pucciani (1961) put forth that "Human nature cannot receive its ends, as we have seen, either from the outside or from a so-called 'inner' nature"

"How is it that the clouds still hang on you? / Not so, my lord; I am too much in the sun." (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.258).

Hamlet was a furious and a melancholic person at this time. This hasty marriage made him irritated.

"My lord, I came to see your father's funeral. / I prithee, do not mock me, fellow student. / I think it was to see my mother's wedding. / Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon. / Thrift, thrift, Horatio. / The funeral baked meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. / Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven / Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio! / My father—methinks I see my father." (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.373-381).

Hamlet struggled with the death of the free will. When Horatio told Hamlet that he saw the ghost of king Hamlet the previous night, Hamlet became a different person who was pushed to live for others. He wanted to make sure that Horatio was not lying. Here is a

question, did his friends lie to him to direct him to the road of madness? Or did the new king tell Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo to do so.

“My lord, I think I saw him yesternight. / Saw who? / My lord, the King your father. / The King my father? / Season your admiration for a while / With an attent ear, till I may deliver / Upon the witness of these gentlemen / This marvel to you. Hamlet / For God’s love, let me hear! / Two nights together had these gentlemen, / Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch, / In the dead waste and middle of the night, / Been thus encountered: a figure like your father, / Armed at point exactly, cap-à-pie, / Appears before them and with solemn march / Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked / By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes / Within his truncheon’s length, whilst they, distilled / Almost to jelly with the act of fear, / Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me / In dreadful secrecy impart they did, / And I with them the third night kept the watch, / Where, as they had delivered, both in time, / Form of the thing (each word made true and good), / The apparition comes. I knew your father; / These hands are not more like.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.387-412).

Spirit of Revenge

The feast of Hamlet’s uncle raised the misery and the need for revenge. “The phrase ‘Spirit of Revenge’ is taken from Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*” (Harries, 2004, p. 25). According to Sartre, life will be precarious, if we determine values by our choices. Freedom gives people a long time to decide what to do at the right time, but Hamlet lost this.

So what if Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo were lying or hallucinating? People must think logically in such situations. Hamlet did not take the whole situation wisely because he believed that his uncle was sinful even before entering the ghost’s scene.

“So oft it chances in particular men/ That for some vicious mole of nature in them, / As in their birth (wherein they are not guilty, / Since nature cannot choose his origin), / By the o’ergrowth of some complexion / (Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason), / Or by some habit that too much o’erleavens / The form of plausible manners—that these men, / Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect, / Being nature’s livery or fortune’s star, / His virtues else, be they as pure as grace, / As infinite as man may undergo, / Shall in the general censure take corruption / From that particular fault. The dram of evil” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.4.642-655).

Horatio tried to force Hamlet to seek the ghost after seeing the ghost of the murdered king.

“What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord? / Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff / That beetles o’er his base into the sea, / And there assume some other horrible form / Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason / And draw you into madness? Think of it. / The very place puts toys of desperation, / Without more motive, into every brain / That looks so many fathoms to the sea / And hears it roar beneath.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.4.693-702).

Marcellus knew how to make Hamlet really curious. To complete this trick, they told him not to go, but he insisted to go after the ghost of the dead king. Hamlet became a small child who wanted to discover this new object.

“You shall not go, my lord./ Hold off your hands.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.5.704-705).

The ghost knew how to convince Hamlet to take revenge. This is evident in his first speech to Hamlet.

“Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. / Murder? / Murder most foul, as in the best it is, / But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.5.749-752).

When the ghost of the murdered king told Hamlet that he got murdered by Claudius, he became the unfair investigator. He was looking for the evidence to be certain of the ghost’s claims. What if Hamlet was hallucinating because he got suppressed by the death of his father?

The ghost enhanced the hatred in Hamlet toward his uncle by claiming that the incestuous relationship was founded in Prince Hamlet’s dynasty. This means that his uncle was a cursed member of the family and a murderer. Hamlet believed the ghost after seeing it for the first time. In the Dark Ages, Europeans believed in the presence of the ghosts, exorcism, and witches. Hence we can find many books which talk about ghosts and how to summon ghosts to use their power to be the strongest person in the world.

Hamlet told his friends not to tell anybody about the ghost. This is proof that Prince Hamlet was sure that the whole ghost story was not real. Maybe he was hallucinating, or he took this lie as an excuse to kill his uncle because he stole his mother’s love. We can also believe that Hamlet created the ghost to win the support of some people and help him take his revenge.

He drew their attention to the letter which he gave to Ophelia because Hamlet wanted to have more time to set a plan to take his revenge.

“Doubt thou the stars are fire, / Doubt that the sun doth move, / Doubt truth to be a liar, / But never doubt I love.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 2.2.1188-1191).

In the most famous soliloquy, Hamlet believed that afterlife is an uncertain thing and he was wondering what the nature of death was. In addition, he tried to give a moral attribute to the suicide by cursing the God. This soliloquy portrays Hamlet as a confused man.

“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 / And, by
 opposing, end them. To die, to sleep— / No more—and by a sleep to say we end / The
 heartache and the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to—’tis a consummation /
 Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep— / To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the rub,
 / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, / When we have shuffled off this mortal
 coil, / Must give us pause. There’s the respect / That makes calamity of so long life. / For
 who would bear the whips and scorns of time, / Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s
 contumely, / The pangs of despised love, the law’s delay, / The insolence of office, and the
 spurns / That patient merit of th’ unworthy takes, / When he himself might his quietus make /
 With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear, / To grunt and sweat under a weary life, / But
 that the dread of something after death, / The undiscovered country from whose bourn / No
 traveler returns, puzzles the will / And makes us rather bear those ills we have / Than fly to
 others that we know not of? / Thus conscience does make cowards (of us all) / And thus the
 native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought, / And enterprises of
 great pitch and moment / With this regard their currents turn awry / And lose the name of
 action.—Soft you now, / The fair Ophelia.—Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins
 remembered.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 3.1.1762-1796).

The following dialogue between Hamlet and Ophelia shows that prince Hamlet did not love Ophelia and he did not trust her anymore. He started his mad mentality game, and he could not trust anyone anymore. “Naturalists maintain that people are fated for whatever station in life their heredity, environment and social conditions prepare for them. Numerous people use external forces or fate as a cover up in order to take less responsibility over their actions or decisions” (Ezeh, 2015, p. 43). We should take the consequences of our decisions in

such situations, and this was exactly what Hamlet did. Everyone believed that the prince of Denmark was crazy now he had drawn his path to take his revenge.

“My honored lord, you know right well you did, / And with them words of so sweet breath composed / As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost, / Take these again, for to the noble mind / Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind. / There, my lord. / Ha, ha, are you honest? / My lord? / Are you fair? / What means your Lordship? / That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 3.1.1804-1816).

“I have heard of your paintings too, well / enough. God hath given you one face, and you / make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and / you lisp; you nickname God’s creatures and make / your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I’ll no / more on ’t. It hath made me mad. I say we will have / no more marriage. Those that are married already, / all but one, shall live. The rest shall keep as they are. / To a nunnery, go.”(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 3.1.1852-1860).

When Hamlet saw the ghost for the second time he was at his mother’s sleeping room. The Queen told her son that she did not see anything. This made her believe that Hamlet has become mad. Meanwhile, the ghost came back to remind Hamlet of his wish.

“Alas, he’s mad.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 3.4.1852-2557).

“Do not forget. This visitation / Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose. / But look, amazement on thy mother sits. / O, step between her and her fighting soul. / Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works. / Speak to her, Hamlet.”(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 3.4.2562-2567).

After murdering Polonius, Hamlet predicted that his future would be a bloody one. After committing the first crime, it became easier to kill another one, and the killer would

never feel remorse. The person who is in love will suffer from losing his partner, but Hamlet did not get affected by this death.

CHAPTER V

DEATH OF THE FREE WILL AND REVENGE

The Free Will

It should be mentioned that the death of the free will was one of the reasons behind taking revenge. “Descartes opined that our physical bodies are indeed constrained by natural laws but our spirits have unbounded freedom and it is our spirits that are ultimately behind the free actions that we perform” (Ezeh, 2015, p. 43). On the other hand “As a theory, Determinism denies that man is really free” (Ezeh, 2015, p. 43). In the light of these, the prince of Denmark was forced to live on others’ decisions. Although it is a fundamental nature for humans to have a free will.

The Prince of Denmark hated his uncle from the first moment he became the new king of Denmark.

King Claudius and Hamlet’s mother told Hamlet that they did not want Hamlet to go back to school in Wittenberg. Prince Hamlet refused their request. Hamlet was already controlled by the decisions of the people. As his free will was already dead, his freedom of choice was dead too.

“Than that which dearest father bears his son / Do I impart toward you. / For your intent In going back to school in Wittenberg, / It is most retrograde to our desire, / And we beseech you, bend you to remain / Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye, / Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son”(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.305-311).

This is the first soliloquy which shows that Hamlet wanted to commit suicide. Again it is evident that this play is an existentialist play. Committing suicide will be committed by a

person who feels desperate about life. This is a decision that people make or do not. He will flee instead of facing life issues. For Hamlet the wheel of fortune was not changed, it dipped him in misery and sadness.

“O, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt, / Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew, / Or that the Everlasting had not fixed / His canon ’gainst self-slaughter! O God, God, / How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world! / Fie on ’t, ah fie! ’Tis an unweeded garden / That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature / Possess it merely. That it should come to this: / But two months dead—nay, not so much, not two. / So excellent a king, that was to this / Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother / That he might not beteem the winds of heaven / Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and Earth, / Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him / As if increase of appetite had grown / By what it fed on. And yet, within a month / (Let me not think on ’t; frailty, thy name is woman!), / A little month, or ere those shoes were old / With which she followed my poor father’s body, / Like Niobe, all tears—why she, even she / (O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason / Would have mourned longer!), married with my uncle, / My father’s brother, but no more like my father / Than I to Hercules. Within a month, / Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears / Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes, / She married. O, most wicked speed, to post / With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! / It is not, nor it cannot come to good. / But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.323-354).

Living for Others

Hamlet's dissensions show that he lived for others. After seeing the ghost, Hamlet decided to kill his uncle. This sudden decision is the core of existentialism, and this is proof that Hamlet is an existential hero because he decided to be a free person and choose freely. The conscious always takes the first impression. If anyone believes in something after a happening of a metaphysical situation, it will be hard to deny it.

“So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word. / It is “adieu, adieu, remember me.” / I have sworn ’t.”(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.5.323-354).

We have many situations which show that Hamlet did not have a free will and lived for others because he chose the easy option for a long time. Thus, he decided that the Mousetrap play will be played the next day. The play was inspired by what the ghost told Hamlet.

Hamlet hesitated to murder his uncle three times and then chose not to take revenge. Although he heard his uncle praying to God to forgive his bad deed which was murdering his brother, he chose not to kill him. This means Hamlet was controlled by others' decisions. In addition to that, if Hamlet killed Claudius while he was praying Hamlet would be a punisher, not a revenger.

In his article, Tekinay (2001) claimed that “Hamlet is the modern European man who struggles in a 'rotten' world.” So, we cannot expect from a person who lost his free will to be a logical person but this yields conveniently to a personality of revengers. Hamlet rebelled against his life when he felt that chaos and others' will were controlling his life. The person has an angel and a beast inside him and the clash showed Hamlet what he was. Hamlet rebelled against his life when he felt that chaos and ‘others will’ were controlling his life.

CHAPTER VI

OEDIPUS COMPLEX AND REVENGE

The Incestuous Relationship

The Oedipus complex was a part of the revenge. We can see that Hamlet did not trust his friend Horatio when he said that he came from Elsinore to attend his father's funeral. He thought that everybody was in love with his mother. Hence, he was really jealous because he was in love with his mother and he felt that he owns her. This means he believed that his mother was an object who has no feelings or a brain to have a free will. This made Hamlet a revenger.

“My lord, I came to see your father's funeral. / I prithee, do not mock me, fellow student. / I think it was to see my mother's wedding. / Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.”

(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.373-376).

It could be said that there is an incestuous relationship between Hamlet and the queen. In addition, the queen was also in love with her son. She told him not to leave the country but he was insisting to do so.

“Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet. / I pray thee, stay with us. Go not to Wittenberg. / I shall in all my best obey you, madam.”(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.312-314).

Hamlet described his mother's marriage as an incest. This proved that Hamlet was in love with his mother and hated Claudius because he stole his mother's heart. A person who could describe his mother's marriage as incest is a person who lost his pity and is a Sartrean human being.

“She married. O, most wicked speed, to post / With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!”

(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.351-352).

Here, Hamlet felt that the funeral was for declaring his marriage to Hamlet’s mother. It is evident how much Hamlet was affected by his father’s death.

“I prithee, do not mock me, fellow student. / I think it was to see my mother’s wedding. / Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon. / Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. / Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven / Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio! / My father—methinks I see my father.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.2.374-381).

The same sad scenario was happening with Hamlet. Hamlet had nothing to do but murder the others. He was not a logical person that could be able to solve his problems in a diplomatic peaceful way. He was full of incest, misery, and a blood drinking appetite. There was an obvious belief that there was an incestuous relationship for Hamlet’s family by the ghost. Thus, this made Hamlet more and more in love with his mother.

“O horrible, O horrible, most horrible! / If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not. / Let not the royal bed of Denmark be / A couch for luxury and damnèd incest. / But, howsoever thou pursues this act, / Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive / Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven / And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge / To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once. / The glowworm shows the matin to be near / And ’gins to pale his uneffectual fire. / Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.5.805-816).

Libido and Sexual Needs

The sudden hatred of Hamlet toward his mother was because of the sexual need. Sigmund Freud believes that sex is the source of evil. In *Die Traumdeutung* (1900), Freud

suggests that Shakespeare took the idea of Oedipus complex in Oedipus Rex and applied it in Hamlet.

Hamlet suffered from his excessive sexual needs. “Logan Pearsall Smith (as cited in Stearns, 1949, p. 123) argued that “if any deductions are to be made from Shakespeare's writings about his nature, an excessive and almost morbid sensuality must have been part of his endowment”. The propensity for violence in Prince Hamlet was because of the lack of sexual satisfaction. He ignored Ophelia’s love because he was not ready for this natural relationship and because he was in love with his mother. Shakespeare also applied the Libido theory on Hamlet to be blood thirsty and psycho.

“O most pernicious woman! / O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain! / My tables—meet it is I set it down / That one may smile and smile and be a villain. / At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.5.830-834).

When Hamlet’s friends came to see him in Elsinore he admitted that he was not enjoying his delights and delights were not for such a person like him. He did not believe in the reality of love anymore.

“Man / delights not me, no, nor women neither, though by / your smiling you seem to say so” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 2.2.1396-1398).

Hamlet blamed his mother on this hasty marriage because he was in love with her. The taboo was preventing him from telling his mother about his love.

“Now, mother, what’s the matter? / Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended. / Mother, you have my father much offended. / Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue. / Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue. / Why, how now, Hamlet? / What’s the matter now? / Have you forgot me? / No, by the rood, not so. / You are the Queen, your husband’s brother’s wife, / And (would it were not so) you are my mother. / Nay, then I’ll set those to you that

can speak. / Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge. / You go not till I set you up
a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you. / What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not
murder me? Help, ho!” (Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 3.4.2447-2463).

There is a conclusive proof that Hamlet had Oedipus complex, a mind of an
existentialist person. One of the purposes of his revenge was to get rid of his uncle who
share the queen’s heart with Hamlet. Hamlet decided after being nobody to be a murderer.

“What shall I do? / Not this by no means that I bid you do: / Let the bloat king tempt you
again to bed, / Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse, / And let him, for a pair of
reechy kisses / Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers, / Make you to ravel all this
matter out / That I essentially am not in madness, / But mad in craft. ’Twere good you let him
know, / For who that’s but a queen, fair, sober, wise, / Would from a paddock, from a bat, a
gib, / Such dear concernings hide? Who would do so? / No, in despite of sense and secrecy, /
Unpeg the basket on the house’s top, / Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape, / To try
conclusions, in the basket creep / And break your own neck down”.(Shakespeare, trans. 1603,
3.4.2638-2654).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this chapter, the conclusions which reflect the research questions of this study will be presented followed by the recommendations for further studies.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How does existentialism explain Hamlet as an existential hero and a revenger?
2. How does the death of free will affect Hamlet?
3. How does Oedipus complex influence Hamlet to take revenge from his uncle?
4. Was Hamlet a revenger or a punisher?

First, “Existentialism is the philosophy that makes life feasible” (Hossain, 2015). This means Hamlet was filled by experiences that made him take revenge. He was the person who came to a big prison which is called life to get revenge for himself and live for himself because he lived most of his life for others. The core of Existentialism is that the person is free, he has the freedom of choice, and he has a free will. Hamlet took revenge and he became a murderer by his free will. At the end of the play, all the murdered characters were killed according to Hamlet’s decisions and choices. Hamlet chose this bloody ending to prove to us that he can choose his own fate, and to stop people from controlling his life. Hamlet experienced the chaotic world because he realized that he can control his world, he realized the meaning of the word “being”.

Hamlet as a nerdy person experienced the world from a theoretical perspective. Later, he became a tragic revenger. Hamlet is an example of a Sartrean person who has a dilemma; “in Sartre's vision, man is born into a kind of void, a mud” (Tekinay, 2001).

A perfect proof that hamlet is an existentialist hero is the following soliloquy:

“The time is out of joint. O cursèd spite / That ever I was born to set it right! / Nay, come, let's go together.”(Shakespeare, trans. 1603, 1.5.928-930).

It is also revealed that existentialism is a philosophy of freedom. Its basis is the fact that we can stand back from our lives and reflect on what we have been doing. In this sense, we are always ‘more’ than ourselves. However, we are as responsible as we are free (Farahmandfar & Samigorganroodi, 2015). Hamlet had two stages in his life. The first one was *nothingness*; Hamlet was less than a dull. While, the second stage was *being*.

Many cultures experience the activity of revenge. In the Arabic culture there is revenge. In the period before Islam, the history tells us that two tribes were in war for 40 years after deciding to compete between the two strongest horses of the two tribes. The tribe who lost started the war. So, revenge is a reaction towards a bad thing happened that happens to a person which prevents the person to think about what he is doing. The hasty marriage of Hamlet's mother is one of the reasons behind Hamlet's revenge.

Horatio wanted to force Hamlet to seek the ghost to show Hamlet proof that there is something important that he ought to know. The presence of the ghost enhanced the hatred in Hamlet toward his uncle by claiming that the incestuous relationship was founded in Prince Hamlet's destiny. He drew their attention to the letter which he gave to Ophelia because Hamlet wanted to have more time to set a plan to get his revenge. Hamlet was wondering what the nature of death was. This is evident in the words of Shakespeare's most famous soliloquy: “*To be or not to be—that is the question:*” (ACT 3., SC .1).

Second, the fate of the Prince of Denmark could have been so different if he was able to choose with a free will. He was controlled by many characters, for example, the ghost, his mother, the new murderer king, and his subconscious mind.

Another reason behind getting revenge was the death of the free will. “Descartes opined that our physical bodies are indeed constrained by natural laws but our spirits have unbounded freedom and it is our spirits that are ultimately behind the free actions that we perform” (Ezeh, 2015, p. 63). On the other hand, “as a theory, determinism denies that man is really free” (Ezeh, 2015, 64). It is obvious that the Prince of Denmark was forced to live on others’ decisions. It is a fundamental nature for humans to have a free will. The new king and Gertrude tried to isolate Hamlet but in a smart way, through telling Hamlet to go back to Witten berg.

Other evidence that this play is an existentialist play is that the person who commits suicide is the person who feels desperate about life. This is a decision that people make or do not make. After seeing the ghost, Hamlet decided to kill his uncle. This sudden decision is the core of existentialism. One of the proofs that shows Hamlet did not have a free will is, when he decided that the Mousetrap play would be played the next day. The play was inspired by what the ghost told Hamlet (Tekinay, 2001). Hamlet hesitated to murder his uncle three times but he chose not to get revenge. Although, he heard his uncle praying to God to forgive his bad deed which was murdering his brother, he chose not to kill him. This means Hamlet was controlled by others’ decisions. In addition to that, if Hamlet killed Claudius while he was praying, he would be a punisher, not a revenger. The sudden hatred of Hamlet toward his mother was because of his sexual need. Sigmund Freud believes that sex is the source of evil. In *Die Traumdeutung* (1900), Freud suggested that Shakespeare took the idea of Oedipus complex in *Oedipus Rex* and applied it in *Hamlet*.

Third, Hamlet was in love with Gertrude. This reason was behind the death of the new king, Hamlet, and Gertrude at the end of the play. Drawing on from this conclusion- What is the action which had the biggest effect on Hamlet?. The answer thereby to this question will be Gertrude's marriage. Hamlet did not care that much about King Hamlet's death as he became suppressed by the fast declaration of his mother's marriage. Hamlet's excessive sexual needs affected some of his decisions. If Hamlet, for instance, was sexually satisfied he would not kill Claudius, he would put him in prison or he could make a fair trial for Claudius.

Hamlet also believed that everybody was in love with his mother. So, he was jealous because he was in love with his mother, too. For this reason, it could be said that there is an incestuous relationship between Hamlet and the Queen. We cannot forget that Claudius shared a part of this love. There was an obvious belief that there was an incestuous relationship for Hamlet's family by the ghost. One of the conclusive proofs that Hamlet had Oedipus complex was his revenge to get rid of his uncle who shares the Queen's heart with Hamlet.

Forth, Hamlet is a revenger. He chose not to kill the murderer of the King while he was praying. If he had killed the murderer of the King, he would have been a punisher. Shakespeare wanted to tell us through this decision that Hamlet wanted to get revenge when he knew that his father (King Hamlet) was murdered by Claudius.

Recommendations for Further Studies

A study on how the absence of women's role which led to this bloody ending in Hamlet and how this absence played a role in revenge in Hamlet can be conducted.

Investigating the presence of the religious ideas in that era and how Shakespeare was influenced by the Christian beliefs in Hamlet or even in Macbeth can also be an interesting study.

Examining the capitalist and imperialist effects on Claudius's decision to murder his brother would also be an effective study.

The relation between schizophrenia and revenge in Hamlet would as well be worth researching.

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APPENDIX A

Turnitin Report

REVENGE AND EXISTENTIALISM IN HAMLET

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