



“Hamlet” The Timeless Masterpiece of Shakespeare

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Abstract

There is no exaggeration when we say that the play of Hamlet provided an extensive study of the depth of human psyche, included the psychological, social, and moral aspects. There are thousands of books and articles on this subject, and though this modest research does not exceed what were written, but its importance lies in highlighting some important elements that the play contained. The research contains an introduction about the writer, Shakespeare, some important topics that the play included, analytical review to the main characters, and finally some critical views.

Keywords: Hamlet , Shakespeare

هاملت رائعة شكسبير الخالدة

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وزاره التربية – ثانوية الموهوبين - ميسان

المستخلص

ليس هناك مبالغة عندما نقول ان مسرحيه هاملت قدمت دراسة مستفيضه لعمق النفس البشرية شملت الجوانب النفسية والاجتماعية والأخلاقية. هناك الالاف من الكتب والمقالات حول هذا الموضوع وعلى الرغم من ان هذا البحث لا يتجاوز ما تم كتابته ولكن أهميته تكمن في تسليط الضوء على بعض العناصر الهامة التي تحتويها المسرحية. يحتوي البحث على مقدمه عن الكاتب شكسبير وبعض الموضوعات المهمة التي شملتها المسرحية ومراجعته تحليليه للشخصيات الرئيسية في المسرحية وأخيرا بعض الآراء الهامة.

1.Introduction

When we say Hamlet, the first thing that shine in our mind is the name of that great writer, William Shakespeare (1564-1616), who enriched the English literature with his timeless masterpieces. Shakespeare wrote all kinds of drama such as tragedies, comedies, and historical plays. His plays have vivid characters that can be seen in portraying the feeling, the suffering, and the troubles of a man. Through the different characters and protagonists of his plays, Shakespeare had exceptional skills in forming the dramatic plots (Hamash & others, 2008: X).

It is not strange that to all people who speak the English language, the genius of Shakespeare has made the world beautiful and worth living in. Even there is a large number of non-English speakers studying English for the purpose of knowing Shakespeare, how he came, how he was, what he did. All these interesting questions and more which never come to an end (Hudson, 1872: 4).

As mentioned above, Shakespeare wrote a variety of drama. His famous tragedies were Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, Othello, and Romeo and Juliet. He wrote many comedies such as Twelfth Night and A Midsummer Night's Dream, also



Shakespeare composed a number of historical plays like Julius Caesar, Richard III and Henry IV (Hamash & others, 2008: X).

The play of Hamlet was written in 1601. Shakespeare was at the age of 36 when he wrote the play. Hamlet may be considered his first major tragedy (Lall, 2012: 28). The source of the play was inspired by Shakespeare from the Danish Historian Saxo Grammaticus. Shakespeare did not re-wright the story of Saxo literally, yet he made from its theme a great and a rare masterpiece. Even the names of the characters of the story had been changed (Ibid, 2012:30).

Among the most famous plays that produced in the English-speaking countries was the play of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark. The play has been translated into hundreds of languages and has been seen by millions of people. This play has become a fertile field for critical writings and various interpretations. The play also added a stock of famous phrases to the English language, even there are some people who have not read or seen the play benefited from some of these verses, and phrases in their conversations. The secret of the great interest in this play is that it contains things that touch the different concerns of different people. Some people are found in ghost stories, others like fencing, some people interested in a tale of murder under also the play touch some social matters like revenge, love, madness, and lust and so on. All these things can be found in this play (Shepherd, 1998: X).

2. Main Themes

2.1. Hamlet as a Revenge Tragedy

Revenge may be defined as a tendency to retaliate against someone who has caused injury to others. It is prevalent among people now a day as it was prevalent in the ancient societies, and it exists everywhere (Lall, 2012:538). It could be in a bed-chamber or in a battlefield. Revenge has multiple resources and motivations, represented in personal, social, religious, and political conflicts. It is a living human feeling, which never fade. The theme of revenge is a good dramatic stuff that tempts many writers to employ it in their works. The concept of revenge was widely used by the Greek, and the Elizabethan playwrights inherited this concept as a part of literary inheritance (Ibid, 2012:539). The Roman playwright Lucius Seneca, who was an educated man, a man of state, and a philosopher with a wide knowledge in Greek literature, most of his writings were characterized by the style of revenge tragedy. He had nine tragic plays all dealing with Greek's myths, but he did not follow the disciplined manner of the Greek. He run his plays in a completely different way, adding terror, scenes of blood, and screaming in his plays (Lott, 1991: XViii).



Doubtless, when Shakespeare wrote Hamlet he follows the dramatic tradition in writing revenge tragedy. Shakespeare had previous experiences in writing such kind of tragedies, so Hamlet was clearly written in the same way of writing the previous plays. In fact, choosing the theme of revenge is very important; it gives the writer a wide area to show emotional feeling, rhetorical questions, and act of violence. Moreover, revenge tragedy provokes emotional irritations more than regular plays (Lall, 2012:539).

Shakespearean tragedies, almost all dealing with a great man of high standing falls in an unusual ordeal leading to his death. The man must be of a high rank and the ordeal must be extraordinary in order to provoke a case of pity, terror, and emotional irritation, so the play of 'Hamlet' is of such kind. Hamlet was a beloved prince who hold a prominent in political life of Denmark at that time, found himself in a big problem because of his mother's misconduct and her quick marriage within two months after the death of his father, king Hamlet. She married a man of lesser rank than her first husband. Worst of all he discovers that his uncle, the new king, is the one who killed his father. The play accurately depicts the mental suffering of Hamlet. The following lines from his first soliloquy show the plight of Hamlet.

How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,

Seem to me all the uses of this world! (Act 1, Scene ii) (Ibid,2012:74)

The triangle of powers in this play is three characters, each one of them seeks revenge from the murderer of his father, with different motives. Hamlet wants to avenge himself from his uncle as mentioned above, Laertes seeks revenge from Hamlet who mistakenly killed Polonius, Laertes's father, and Fortinbras who leads a long army to take revenge from the king and the princes of Denmark because the ex-king of Denmark killed Fortinbras's father, the ex-king of Norway. Laertes is a young man at the earliest age and longing for life. He loves his sister Ophelia and fight for her honor, he obeys his father very much, but he does not care for his father's instructions. This man receives the king's attention because he has a good insight into political affairs of the state. Laertes returns to Denmark quickly in order to revenge his father's death and drowned sister. Laertes is a man of action; he begins his retaliation without hesitation (Ibid, 2012: 152).

Fortinbras, the second foil to Hamlet, though his appearance is a little in the play, but he has an important role as opposed to Hamlet. This young prince has many good qualities; he is sensitive, ambitious, and a knight. He is also a man of action. Fortinbras obediently responded to his uncle's call to withdraw from the battle of Denmark to save the name and honor of his father. Then he appears in the last scene to hear from Horatio the tragic story of Hamlet and orders to carry Hamlet,



and honors him as a valiant soldier and puts the kingdom of Denmark under his command (Sen&Chopra, 2011:82).

The following elements of melodrama may serve to consider the play as a revenge tragedy. There are many scenes in this play contain some elements of melodrama such as the appearance of the Ghost in the opening scene which evokes a case of scare, and a bloody scene of murder of Polonius who was hidden behind the curtain to overhear the conversation between Hamlet and his mother. There is also the scene of screaming and shouting by Laertes when he turns against the king, and finally the scene of Laertes puts his sister in her grave provokes a state of mourning (Lall, 2012, 74).

As discussed above through the definition of revenge and its existence as a humanitarian instinct which cannot be resisted. Revenge can be existed in both societies ancient and modern. Literature has addressed this issue extensively especially in drama. The way of dealing with the issue of revenge depends on the individual differences, some people initiate retaliation without thinking just to put down their mental revolution, others think long before doing this work in order not to put themselves under the effect of law or the blame of others. In this play, there are three characters and almost all of them have the same educational and social level, but their way in dealing with revenge is different. The behaviors of Laertes and Fortinbras were hasty, but Hamlet wanted to satisfy this desire through putting it in the right place without committing follies. It may seem to some people that he is inert and unable to take revenge, others may see him as a coward and hesitant, but Hamlet thinks thoughtfully, he carried out revenge after a long series of justifications.

2.2. Soliloquies in Hamlet

Soliloquy may be defined as a dramatic means through which a character, alone on the stage, addresses the audience and discloses to them his real feeling, thoughts, and motives in clear and audible speech. In its simplest form, such device may be used in Elizabethan time before Shakespeare by some unskillful playwrights to convey the information that has not appeared in the course of the plot, it was no more than an alternative way to fully writing (Childs&Fowler, 2006:221). In Shakespeare's plays there are nothing non-productive, so the use of soliloquies is to uncover the thoughts that going on in the mind of the characters. There are some soliloquies in the play belong to Hamlet only, the central character of this play. His first soliloquy starts in the second scene of Act one; when he speaks sadly and painfully;

“O that this too too solid flesh would melt,



Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew! -----“

His voice is sad, his words are shocked, no one knows what makes him sad and his strong longing to death is difficult to explain. What drives Hamlet to commit suicide neither the death of his father nor his loss to the throne, the real reason is the quick marriage of his mother with his uncle. His mother's marriage has been done within a month after his father's death. The strange sensual actions of the mother, and her quick forgetfulness for husband, who died recently, distorted the respectable image of mother in the mind of Hamlet and led him to a profound grief. Until this moment, Hamlet did not know anything about the murder of his father and the adultery of his mother.

The second soliloquy of Hamlet appears at the end of Act 2 of the play when Hamlet says in the beginning of his Lament. "O, what a rough and peasant slave am I? ". Here, Hamlet's polite morality receives three painful blows represented in the idea of incest between his mother and his uncle, which captured his mind completely and the improper behavior of his mother especially her fast and suspicious marriage. The second blow is the information he received from the ghost that his mother married the person who kills Hamlet's father, and the third devastating blow his sense that Ophelia is no longer faithful in her love to him especially her sudden stop seeing him and not receiving his letters without convincing justifications. These things have a great impact on him and his wonder becomes unlimited, he forgets his role as a man of action and indulges in thinking and reasoning. Two months have passed since he promises the ghost to take revenge from his father's murderer and the promise has not been fulfilled. He is aware of reality though his unnatural state. Some critics see that there is no any delay in Hamlet's revenge but when they read these lines of soliloquy sure would realize they are wrong. Doubtless, that Hamlet has significant responsibility in delaying the action of revenge when he offers an excuse after another, as he says;

“-----the spirit that I have seen

May be the devil; and the devil hath power

To assume a pleasing shape-----“(Bhatia, 2008; 92).

Hamlet may be deceived himself and attributed his delay to his doubts about the truth of the ghost. However, these doubts contracted with some facts such as his constant blame for himself and cursing his enemy which confirms that he is fully convinced of the story reported by the ghost) (Ibid,2008:93).



The third soliloquy takes place in the third act at the beginning of scene one. It is the most important and the most famous one because it is a philosophical argument and the mental conflict here reach its peak.

“To be or not to be----- that is the question”

Through the above phrase, Hamlet puts himself between two choices and asks himself, which one of them is more honorable, either to suffer silently from the severity of fate or to wage a war against the ordeals of life. Then he leaves the two options and thinks about committing suicide, but he retreats because he is afraid of what will happen to him after death. This soliloquy reflects the troubled mood of Hamlet, his hesitation, and his inability to do anything. The importance of this soliloquy lies in the fact that it may carry an appeal to all humans. Each man sometimes has the ability to put an end to a fateful issue, but he cannot do so for several considerations. The recruitment of soliloquy in the play mainly to show why Hamlet is late in completing his mission, plus it shows the pain suffered by the hero (Lall, 2012: 120).

After Hamlet realized that his uncle was the murderer through Claudius reactions to the play within a play arranged by Hamlet, and after Claudius himself admits his guilt in the prayer scene. The fourth soliloquy of Hamlet emerges in the fourth scene of fourth act. Hamlet is now heading to the ship to travel to England, but he does not know that this trip is a hoax for salvation of Hamlet. In this soliloquy, Hamlet compares himself with Fortinbras. Fortinbras is a young man who is confident of himself, and he is creeping now to victory and glory, while Hamlet is helpless and he cannot do anything but thinking (Bhatia, 2008: 95).

The Soliloquies of Claudius

Claudius also has soliloquies in this play through which Shakespeare wanted to highlight the truth of Claudius. Actually, Claudius has three soliloquies, which reveal the truth of his despicable behavior, in addition to the good aspect of his personality, he is an ordinary man committed his sins because of his lusts. Through the first soliloquy, we know that Claudius suffers from the great burden on his heart because of the crime he committed against his brother, the former king. In his second soliloquy, he confesses his sin and wishes to be cleansed of his sin. In the third soliloquy, he plans to get rid of Hamlet. Before he relaxes from the difficulties of the first crime, he returns to commit another crime (Lall, 2012:123).

The Soliloquy of Ophelia

Through her soliloquy, Ophelia demonstrates her deep sorrow for Hamlet and his miserable state. This soliloquy emerges at the end of nunnery scene; it also shows



Ophelia's grief as a woman forbidden from her lover. Another point in this soliloquy, Ophelia highlights Hamlet's character before his fall in his dilemma she says;

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
Th' observed of all observers.

The dramatic purpose of using soliloquy in the play is to reveal more information about the hero's character; soliloquy also supports the development and the evolution of the plot (Sen&Chopra, 2011: 438).

Soliloquy is a dramatic means used by a character when he is alone on the stage to communicate with his audience directly. This feature allows the character to deliver his ideas, his motivations, and his decisions to the audience. In this play particularly, the use of soliloquy is very necessary. It reveals Hamlet's vision of life as well as it reflects the philosophy of this controversial character and this of course is difficult to be achieved in an ordinary dialogue.

2.3. Hamlet's Madness

The problem of madness is the most controversial problem in the play, and there are many questions among critics about Hamlet's madness whether it is real or pretending. Even those who think that Hamlet claims madness are not in a full agreement, they differ in the reasons and the motives behind this claim. The character of Hamlet before his fall in his dilemma was brilliant and shining, he was courteous, sensitive, witty, poet, scholar, and a philosopher. No doubt, that Hamlet is an educated and perfect man who enjoys unlimited qualities indicate that he has a full control over his feeling and emotion, but we do not find such a man through the course of the play. Now we have a man who is hesitant and delusional. Some critics attribute Hamlet's tragic condition to his occurrence under the influence of two consecutive shocks, the first being his mother's hasty marriage from his uncle, and the second is the story of the ghost that revealed to him the truth and circumstances of his father's death. Especially the second shock was served as "the straw that broke the camel's back"; it drove him into a confused state of mind. It was a state so closer to madness (Sen&Chopra, 2011:427).

Polonius misunderstood Hamlet's case, he relied on Ophelia's description when she met Hamlet she says that Hamlet grabbed her hand, stared at her face in passion and sighed deeply. Polonius deluded this case to Hamlet's intense love for Ophelia.



The idea of madness is reinforced when Hamlet insults Polonius and describes him as a “fish monger” a word, which means a pimp in Shakespeare’s time. In addition to this Hamlet’s strange behavior during the scene of burial of Ophelia supports completely the idea of madness, but in other situations Hamlet appears very natural (Ibid, 2011:428). As Granville Baker points out:” when he is alone, we have the truth of him, but it is his madness which is on public exhibition”¹ (Ibid, 2011:431).

There are some indications that Hamlet is creating madness. Through his logical thinking (Bhatia, 2008:99) and by his normal dealing with his close friends like Horatio, he proves to be perfectly normal person. Even before lost his confidence in Ophelia, he was acting with her naturally. There is no doubt he is creating madness. It is clear that madness is Hamlet’s mask, which protects him from the plots of others. The king and his spies repeatedly trying to uncover the truth of Hamlet, but it seems that he is witty enough to fail their plans (Ibid, 2008:100).

The genius of Shakespeare was able to make the reader or the viewer realizes that Ophelia’s madness is real while the madness of Hamlet is fabricated. The symptoms of madness of Hamlet were not only Shakespeare’s fictions, but also his observation to these symptoms and behaviors of people in real life. (Blackmore, 1917)

Furthermore, scholars and those people interested in Shakespearian literature and precisely in the case of (Hamlet’s madness) differ in that, Hamlet is insane or pretends to be mad. From the point of view of medicine, Hamlet’s condition is described by the psychiatrist Robert M. Youngson in his book the madness of prince Hamlet as Ganser Syndrome. Doctor Youngson says that this case happens to soldiers in wars and people who are subjected to emotional trauma such as Hamlet’s case. This condition in brief can be described as mental illness in which a person deliberately and consciously acts as if he or she has a mental or physical illness (Youngson, 1999: 1). Hamlet himself admit his trick to his trusty friend Guildenstern;

I am but mad north-north-west;

When the wind is southerly

I know a hawk from handsaw (Act 2 Scene 2)

Here Hamlet declares that he does not lose his mind completely, he is able to differentiate between two kinds of birds (Ibid, 1999: 3)

3. Analysis of the Major Characters

3.1. Hamlet



Hamlet is the protagonist of the play, and most of the action of the play was built on his tragedy. Hamlet does not appear before his father's death so the information about his character have been gathered by the other characters (Jeffares, 1998: XIX). Hamlet's character is the pivot in the play that gave the tragedy its intellectual and philosophical dimension. Despite its ambiguity there are many bright aspects can be seen easily in it.

He is that the ideal young man who represents the youth and refinement of a noble man in Renaissance. His high morality can be observed through his actions and eloquence. He is courteous when he rejects the behavior of Claudius, the drunkard and profligate. His extreme sensitivity is clear seen in his angry feeling towards his mother's hasty marriage. His humanity is reflected in his great love for Ophelia despite the class differences between them. Hamlet was hit by two severe shocks, which make him loss his temper and his view of life has changed so much. He says that the world is "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable----- an unweeded garden". Moreover, the ghost that appeared to him in the form of his father threw a heavy task upon his back, it asks him to avenge himself from his uncle and not let the throne of Denmark in the hand of such a luxury man. The prince's mind at the height of his revolution is not balanced because of the deep grief and the request of the ghost is greater than his ability, he immediately realizes the great responsibility lying on him. He says, "The time is out joint. O cursed spite/ That ever I was born to set it right!" (Zia'ee & Shamsa'ee, 2005:167).

Hamlet's sense of weakness made him different hero of Shakespeare's, the other Shakespearian tragic heroes tend to act quickly and immediately. Hamlet is burdened with a task, and he does not know how to accomplish, as a result, he is uncertain about decisive decision. Hamlet has a good chance of getting rid of Claudius but he does not do it in the prayer scene, he is well aware of his regression and hesitation, and he often compares his weak personality with the powerful personality of young prince Fortinbrass. Actually, the real problem is the duty of revenge assigned to Hamlet is strange to his nature, he is not that the emotional man who could not do such action, but he believes that the moderation and logic must prevail. He sees that amnesty is better than vengeance, so he is looking for deceptive mechanism that justifies his delay in fulfilling the duty of revenge, he pretends madness, sometimes he looks really mad but in fact, he has a full control over himself. He acts normally whenever he wants. The idea of madness gives him a good chance to hide the truth of his intension until he reaches appropriate decision. Madness also gives him the opportunity to meditate on the futility of life, and the hypocrisy of people (Ibid, 2010: 168).



It is clear that Hamlet is a loved and respectable man by his people and he enjoys a great deal of integrity, but the issue of his mother haste marriage from his uncle and the death of his father are his main concern, the duty of revenge led him to sacrifice everything even his love. The idea of revenge lingers in Hamlet's mind without implementation. Finally, it leads him to his death. Really, Hamlet is a tragic hero (Roberts, 2010:63).

3.2. Gertrude

Who is Gertrude? She is the mother of the prince Hamlet, the hero of the play and the ex-wife of the former king Hamlet, and now married to new king Claudius. Her words limited, yet she plays an important role in the play. Moreover, she takes a great deal of attentions of the critics and writers. Most of their interests focus on her sexuality, and the relationship between her and her son Hamlet. The observant to this character finds that she has something to say but she does not or rather she does not have a real chance to protect herself against the charges and the descriptions addressed to her by the critics (Gunenc, 2015:167).

After the death of her lover and husband, king Hamlet, soon she marries his brother Claudius who sets up as a king of Denmark. Gertrude loves her son, the prince very much. However, she has a weak personality and immature thinking; she prefers social status and influence to moral integrity. Gertrude believes that Hamlet is mad especially when the ghost of the former king appears to Hamlet. She does not see the ghost so Hamlet seems to be talking to himself. At the end of the play, she becomes a victim of the plot of Claudius when she drinks a cup of poison prepared for Hamlet by mistake. The strongest statement by Hamlet against his mother when he condemns women in general as, "Frailty, thy name is a woman!". This statement reflects the equilibrium of Hamlet's mind. Gertrude is really weak, because she neither defends herself nor does respond to the criticism addressed to her personality. We always find her with the safe side and this is what we notice when she comes to be with Claudius after her confrontation with Hamlet. It seems that her beauty and her charm are only her capital, and her reliance on men is her only way to show ability (Zia'ee& Shamsa'ee, 2005: 169).

Gertrude is the victim of the oppression and the guardianship of the masculine world that surrounds her in the play. Gertrude should not be seen as erotic body, it must be taken into consideration her suffering and her worry over her son who is acting madly. Her people are unaware of her suffering, her actions, and even her words. They make different interpretations about her and even without asking her.



There are so many facts about this Lady, that are not seen and what appears only the poor interpretations (Gunenc, 2015:170).

3.3. Claudius

Claudius is the new king of Denmark, a brother of the former king, and uncle of the prince Hamlet, the hero of the play. It could be said that Claudius has a face (of a lamb and a heart of a wolf). He is deceptive and delusional “smiling damned villain”. Claudius is an elusive politician with long experience in adapting people and exploiting the circumstances. Though he possesses an evil spirit, yet there is an emotional and humanitarian aspect in his personality represented in his real love to Gertrude also his remorse over his crime (James, 2003: 5).

Claudius is a real villain lacking courage, ambition, and passion. His courage is the courage of wicked and his ambition is illegitimate and unjustified while his emotion seems to be a result of ardent desire and lust. He killed his brother in order to seize power and he repeats the same act with Hamlet for the same purpose as well. His love for Gertrude seems to be a secondary goal while his love to power is his main concern (Bhatia, 2008:130). It is very clear that Claudius is a strong man and the ghost has described him as someone who enjoys a strong and confident self, but we do not see any of this strength throughout the play. He also has a high level of intelligence, but he has exploited this insight in the negative aspects, where he seizes the throne by trick and is able to seduce the queen and force her to fall in love with him. Claudius can also coax and deceive all people in the play. His veneration is due to his royal status and this is clear through the following lines:

“There is such divinity doth hedge a king
That treasure doth but peep at what it would,
Acts little of his will” (iv.v.120-122)

It was said that these verses had been added to the dialogue in the play later on for the purpose of praise the king James I who was said about him that heaven intervened in his inauguration as a king, yet Shakespeare does not want Claudius to be completely evil. In his first talk, he appears to be a politician and he was a control over foreign affair. Despite this, he is deceitful villain and his crimes unforgivable (Ibid, 2008:131). Every action of his indicates his deception. He manages to win Hamlet’s friends and makes them spy on the prince. He makes Polonius watching his daughter Ophelia in her most romantic emotional state. He tricks Laertes and orders him to put the poison on the sword to get rid of Hamlet while he puts the poison on Hamlet’s sword to get rid of Laertes and even when he comes to pray, his prayer is bot for contrition but it is perhaps as thanks to the



profit he has earned his evil deeds. He prays but his prayer does not reach the Lord because he does not clean his heart from sins (ibid, 2008:130).

3.4. Polonius

Polonius enjoys a high-class home in the court, for he is the close minister to the king Claudius. He is beneficiary and fawning. As for his private life, he is a compassionate father, and keen on his children Laertes and Ophelia. Most of his interests is to please the king and the queen. He is prudent, and rational, he advises his son Laertes who wants to leave the country for completing his studies, to build great friendships, and not to be an enemy to anyone. He also recommends his daughter Ophelia not to love a man higher than her in a rank as Hamlet for he would not marry her. All that Polonius seeks for is to win the favor of the king and his wife and this leads him to his death. Because of his stupidity, he hides himself in agreement with the queen to overhear the conversation between Hamlet and his mother. Hamlet kills Polonius by mistake. Hamlet thinks that Claudius hides himself behind the curtain (Roberts, 25:2010). in fact, the queen respects and appreciates Polonius a lot. She says about him (“the good old man”). She hopes to marry her son Hamlet from Polonius’s daughter, Ophelia. Although he is funny in some of his actions, yet he enjoys a bureaucratic status (Zia’ee & Shamsa’ee, 2005: 170).

3.5. Ophelia

Ophelia is that charming girl with a wonderful female personality. She is the daughter of Mr. Polonius who serves as a chamberlain to the king Claudius. Ophelia enjoys a respected place in the royal family, but at the same time, she is constrained by the roles and the traditions of the royal court. She could not live her life as she likes. The role of the woman is generally formalizing by the patriarchal community at that time (Gunenc, 2015:165).

Ophelia is an innocent girl, she loves Hamlet, but she falls under the influence of different wills. She is prisoner of the conflicts between her lover and her family. Actually, Ophelia is not that powerful woman who can make a decisive decision, either to stand with her lover to the end or to bow to the will of her father and her brother. Her negativity led her to surrender, and made her a mean exploited by Claudius to spy on Hamlet. Ophelia is like Gertrude. She is subjected to the pressure of Claudius without knowing his real intentions. The similarity between Ophelia and Gertrude reinforces Hamlet’s view of women in general and generalizes the idea that all women are weak and in the same time, it increases his hatred to women. Hamlet gets angry of Ophelia when he finds out that she spies on him. Hamlet’s refusal for love and friendship (except his friendship to Horatio of



course) seems to be illness in his character, but to some extent justifies the fact that most people around him conspire on him to know what he will do (Bevington& Kastan 2005:7) .

Hamlet's madness contributes to the confusion of her thoughts and then it has become a source of concern and fear to her.

Although Ophelia shows a great deal of intelligence especially in her conversation with her father and her brother, and in general through her actions throughout the course of the play. She is frank, honest but deceived. She is quite unable to understand the plot of palace men against Hamlet and she also does not understand Hamlet's turbulent actions. Many factors gathered with the sudden death of her father made her mad and then caused her suicide. The Queen described this suicide as a result of not assimilate a naive girl the difficulties and complications of life (Roberts, 2010: 65).

3.6. Horatio

Horatio is the closest friend of Hamlet and he is the only person who remains faithful to him until the end. This person enjoys a high degree of culture and education and possesses a rational and thoughtful thinking. Horatio is the most prominent person in this play. He is a loyal man with a wonderful ethics. He proves that he is the only friend of Hamlet who deserves Hamlet's trust, while others have failed to win this honour. Hamlet loves and admires Horatio. Hamlet impressed by Horatio's honesty, sincerity, and perseverance. The truth is that Horatio is not only a faithful friend of Hamlet but also a friend of all who need help, a good example in this respect is when the queen refuses to speak to Ophelia, Horatio beseeches the queen to see Ophelia and talk to her because he thought that would humiliate Ophelia and ease her grief. Horatio devotes himself completely to Hamlet. In his association with Horatio, Hamlet Returns to normal wit, and fun. Horatio is the opposite of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who are Hamlet's fellow; they betrayed Hamlet (Sen&Chopra, 2011:74).

The role of Horatio is not limited being an antithesis of the hero, but as an active favorable component in the whole tragedy. In a dramatic world filled with opportunities and fortunes, evil emotion and mischief, uncertainty and apprehension. Horatio may seem far from evil and suffering of all others and this is of course more difficult than the suffering of any character in the play. Horatio remains in a lofty position while he is surrounded by a society filled of vice, the king is guilty and accused of killing his brother and taking over power, the former virtuous queen is captive to her snobbery and lust. Friends betray their friend for reward, the innocent girl is forced to spy on her lover and the noble prince is



prisoner of his delusions and confusion for this reason Hamlet assesses Horatio as an ideal and a wise friend (Desai, 125).

4. Selective Views About The writer and The Play

Dover Wilson on “Hamlet”

Hamlet is a tragic story of a hero from a high rank falls as a victim to the compelling circumstances. The writer in his high professionalism reveals the nature and the magnitude of the burdens placed on the hero gradually, and sequentially, in order to make the reader feel that the protagonist of the play is in a real distress. In the first scene the ghost shows that there is a danger surrounding the state, in the second scene follows that, the prince discovers that his uncle loots his right to the throne. The hero then shows his deep sorrow over the death of his father and his mother's sin all that make the life in his eyes useless (Lall, 2012: 162).

Edward Hubler on “Hamlet”

The play is characterized by violent events and many horrific scenes as the multiple appearance of the ghost, people are killed by poison or stabbed with sword, suicide, scene of burying dead and digging graves, armies are creeping, and finally the play ends with great massacre, but in no way can this play be considered as a play of war. There are some comic scenes but are closely linked to support the main dramatic events (Ibid, 2012:161).

Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare's Plays

Johnson sees that Shakespeare is distinguished poet among other poets. Shakespeare is interested in nature and he is able to put in front of his readers an honest mirror that reflects the way of life and reality. Johnson thinks that Shakespeare's characters are not ordinary people, those characters are not local and not understood by a limited number of readers in other words they are immortal characters (Lall, 2013: 133). Johnson says there is no writer before Shakespeare except maybe Chaucer was able to portray a character in the same size and quality as Shakespeare did. Shakespeare's source of information by which he paints his characters is derived from his personal knowledge and careful observation of the details of life (Ibid, 2013: 134).

Shakespeare wrote his timeless play (Hamlet) in the Renaissance era for an audience who was eager and accustomed to seeing a scene of revenge, pain, and betrayal. The conventional genius of Shakespeare was able to refine the original text and turning it from a mere tale about the idea of revenge to an influential literary text that evokes the reader's mind and makes him dive into the depth of human soul, examining, and contemplating the philosophy of life. Shakespeare



wanted this play to read in different ways and to take multiple colors and different interpretations. The play has become a favorite and prominent source for many writers to get out of it. Many ideas to produce new movies and play.

Conclusion

The genius of Shakespeare is manifested in this play. This great writer was able to conduct a comprehensive survey of all human tendencies. He was able to create a dramatic plot reflecting human reality. Through reviewing all the positions and personalities, we realize that Shakespeare in his high professionalism was able to portray every minute details in the lives of the characters especially the character of the hero, prince Hamlet. Hamlet who reflects all possibilities and reactions that can be performed by any individual placed in the same position that Hamlet finds himself.

Many interpretations and criticism have faced this play, but its immortality lies in the enormous amount of interest that has accompanied it since its first inception so far. This timeless play has opened up the talent of the critics and those interested to produce a huge number of books that included analysis and detailed explanations of each word and phrase. Whatever of what have been written, and whatever of what is written about this play, it remains like a sponge that absorbs and contains all the interpretations and criticism, and this is the secret behind its immortality.

Notes

¹S . Sen & J. K. Chopra. *Hamlet*, (London: Unique Publishers, 2011.), p. 431.

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