

Soliloquies in Hamlet: Necessary or Unnecessary In the Context of the Play

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Abstract: Hamlet (1600-1601), a world famous play, Shakespeare's most debated work and perhaps the longest play written by William Shakespeare (1564, 23 April-1616, 23 April) has given rise to radically different interpretations. Several soliloquies uttered by the hero, Hamlet, are considered one of the core themes of discussion and these interpretations. The paper tries to examine the necessity of the soliloquies which Shakespeare has mentioned through Hamlet in his famous play, 'Hamlet' as some critics think that the soliloquies are irrelevant, ambiguous not necessary in the context of the play. Mentioning some definitions of soliloquy and its necessity the paper will focus on the topics with some reference of the related lines of soliloquy from the play according to that perspective including some reference of great writers and critics. It is well-known that Shakespeare often has his characters spoken in soliloquies during the course of his plays. Besides, soliloquies are essential to the presentation of a story through the medium of a play because they provide the chance to tell the audience specific pieces of information which cannot be disclosed through normal conversation. In his work, 'Hamlet', Shakespeare's title character is shown to speak in seven soliloquies. Each soliloquy advances the plot, reveals Hamlet's inner thoughts to the audience and helps to create an atmosphere in the play.

Keywords: Character, Drama, Necessary, Revenge, Soliloquy, Tragedy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hamlet (1600-1601) by William Shakespeare (1564, 23 April-1616, 23 April) is 'often described in superlatives: the most popular, most often played and published drama of the past over four hundred years not only in England but also in Western culture' (Thompson and Taylor, 2006 P. 13) whose core themes are presented through several soliloquies. In Hamlet, Shakespeare gives soliloquies either to villain (Cladius) or to Protagonists (Hamlet's Ophelia). They are pertinent to the play because they are beneficial in disclosing the most intimate thoughts of the protagonists, Hamlet such as Hamlet's mental state; his changing attitude towards life and the other characters in the play; his dilemmas and fears on questions of morality and his reflection on the task of revenge that has been assigned to him. Perhaps the soliloquies of Hamlet apart from building the structure of the play can also suggest the complex and chameleonic beauty of the character. Actually the soliloquies of Hamlet are among the chief glories of the play according to Bealey. (XXXIII) However before discussing the significance of the soliloquies in Hamlet, taking a glance on the definition of soliloquy and its necessity is important.

2. DEFINITION OF SOLILOQUY

Soliloquy is a device according to which a character brings out the inner complex feelings by speaking to himself/ herself. The audience is supposed to hear it but not the other characters on the stage.

"A soliloquy (from Latin solo "to oneself"+loquor "I talk") is a device often used in drama when a character speaks to themselves, relating thoughts and feelings, thereby also sharing them with the audience, giving off the illusion of being a series of unspoken reflections." (Wikipedia)

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J.A Cudon defines “soliloquy” as a “speech, often of some length, in which a character, alone on the stage, expresses his thoughts and feelings” (1998 P. 838). But this definition is unsatisfying and inadequate. Shakespeare’s soliloquies are often deliberately theatrical and consciously aware of their dramatic setting, sometimes breaking the fourth wall between actor and audience, but always playing with the idea of what “seems” and what “know[s] not ‘seems’” (Hamlet I.ii.76).

Alex Newell gives us a deeper definition for soliloquies, mentioning on the notion of truth, and suggesting that the soliloquy gives the audience member the privileged position of knowing the character’s “truest self”:

“Sometimes a soliloquy reveals subconscious mental conflict in the subtext of the language of the soliloquist, conveying aspects of the character hidden from himself... it is the periodic revelation of a character’s mind in soliloquy that gives a sense of encountering the character’s truest self” (1991 P. 19).

W. Clemen (1987) sees soliloquies as “necessary”, especially for Hamlet, who “has put on a mask (the ‘antic disposition’) and is playing a part” to everyone, excepting perhaps Horatio (P. 119). The soliloquy is the only way in which he can, and needs to, “break out of this unnatural situation and... speak his mind. We share both the relief that he experiences in solitude and the need that he feels to watch his tongue in company” (P. 120). Furthermore, “without the soliloquies we would scarcely know anything of Hamlet’s self-accusations... [they] make us aware of inner conflicts” (P. 120-21). This suggests an intense reader- character relationship, or an obligation, even, on the behalf of the writer to allow us as audience to access the inner most consciousness of his characters.

According to Morner & Rausch (1998), “Soliloquy is a dramatic convention in which a character in a play, alone on stage, speaks his or her thought aloud.” (P.26)

All the definitions of soliloquy are almost same. So in a word it can be cited soliloquy is a dramatic speech spoken by a character who is alone on stage or believes themselves to be alone. It helps to bring to light the private side of a character’s personality.

2.1 Role of Soliloquy in a Drama:

The soliloquy is generally used as a means of revealing working of the mind of character. It helps the dramatist to expose the motives, plans and actions of the character. It is a device by employing which the dramatist can communicate to the audience or the readers the secret thoughts of a character while at the same time preserving the secrecy of those thoughts. By thus communicating to the audience or the readers the secret working of a character’s mind, the dramatist throws additional light on the mental make-up of that character as also the mental progress or deterioration if any, of that character. A soliloquy is thus a means of character-revelation. Besides unfolding the inner life of the speaker, a soliloquy may also throw some light on another character or other character by disclosing to us what the speaker thinks of that other character or those characters.

“Playwrights employ the soliloquy as a device to provide the audience with information about the characters’ motives, plans and state of mind, to explain earlier events and action that have occurred offstage, or to fill in other necessary background.” (Morner & Rausch, P.206) This device allows a character in a play to speak directly to the audience about their motives, feelings and decisions. They reveal the characters innermost thoughts and traditionally contain no lies or deception as the character is revealing their true thoughts and emotions. Hamlet’s soliloquies give the impression of a man discovering himself as he speaks. The importance of the soliloquies is therefore crucial to the development of his character and of course the development of the play. Hamlet’s soliloquies are of immense importance as they show a large development in his character; from a bloodthirsty revenger and a self-critical performer, to a thoughtful academic. Hamlet’s soliloquies are so effective that they view the mounting and changing thoughts of character capable of ending the play so early when he first has reason to; maybe that is why Shakespeare chose to make his character an apparently weak-willed. Dover (1996) thinks, “The essential purport of the world famous soliloquy in Hamlet is it tells us that this is not so, that this is not the end of things, that death is not an absolute annihilation.” (P.324) Now, the importance of soliloquy with some lines is discussed from the above point of view:

3. SOLILOQUIES IN THE PLAY

Reading the play minutely it can be learnt that there are seven important soliloquies in the play uttered by the protagonist Hamlet himself. Besides them, there are some other minor soliloquies. Through these soliloquies, Shakespeare shows the portions of Hamlet’s personality. The analysis of the soliloquies help readers better understand the exact mind of Hamlet.

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At the conclusion of the play, the readers feel as if they know Hamlet and his soliloquies contribute too much of that understanding. Hamlet's soliloquies show a progress in his power to convert the personal into general. (Spenser, 1942:108) To justify the necessity of the soliloquies, they should be mentioned with discussion.

3.1 The First Soliloquy: Anger, Frustration & Deceit:

The first soliloquy (1.1.129-159) of Hamlet gives the audience their first glimpse of him as a character. Hamlet is reflective and depicts the way he views his own position; He tells of his father's death and then his mother's quick remarriage. He says, "It is not, nor it cannot come to good" (I, ii, 163), when referring to the marriage of his mother. This gives the audience a hint of foreshadowing because it is the first time when Hamlet mentions the future. This speech also reveals his thoughts further when he says that his mother is frail because she is a woman, while he also admits that he knows he must hold his tongue. All of this information put together gives the audience a very strong first impression of Hamlet as a character. This soliloquy was necessary for the context of the play; otherwise Hamlet's personality, expression remained unexposed. This strikes a starting note of intense despair, evoking an atmosphere of pathos in the audience —

"How weary, state, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world." (133-134)

Hamlet, deeply sorrowful at the death of his father, has to contend with the feelings of utter disgust at his mother's haste to 'incestuous sheets' (127). "Hamlet is, essentially, a portrayal of a tortured, depressed young man who loses his way in the labyrinth of his negative thoughts." (Morin, 1992: 2) This demonstrates to the audience that he is an intelligent young man. This clearly shows the audience that his heart is breaking not only for the loss of affections towards his mother but the fact that she does not seem to care about this loss. Mabillard thinks "Hamlet's passionate first soliloquy provides a striking contrast to the controlled and artificial dialogue that he must exchange with Claudius and his court. The primary function of the soliloquy is to reveal to the audience Hamlet's profound melancholia and the reasons for his despair." (2000) According to Tillyard's (1949) thought, "Hamlet is animated by Shakespeare's consciousness of man's being in action like an angel in apprehension like a god, and yet capable of all baseness" (76). This soliloquy in Hamlet shows that the Prince, "after his mother's re-marriage, becomes a prisoner of the curious perspective' in which 'everything seems double'" "The conscience (consciousness) of Hamlet caught in the collusion of these double-images [e.g. reality/dream, waking/sleeping, action/inaction, reason/madness] is imprisoned in a labyrinth of mirrors." (Nojima 1995, 28-29)

Structurally, this soliloquy acts as an exposition in its forthright presentation of information as to the whole plot. This was really important to the connection of the play. Shakespeare's use of juxtaposition and contrast to enhance Hamlet's feelings of contempt, disgust, and inadequacy is important here. "The counterpointing between things divine and things earthly or profane is apparent from the opening sentence of the soliloquy, in which Hamlet expresses his anguished sense of being captive to his flesh. His desire for dissolution into dew, an impermanent substance, is expressive of his desire to escape from the corporality into a process suggestive of spiritual release. Immediately juxtaposed to this notion, and standing in contrast to "flesh", is his reference to the "Everlasting", the spiritual term for the duality. Paradoxically, in his aversion from the flesh, his body must seem to him to possess a state of permanence, closer to something everlasting than to the ephemeral nature of the dew he yearns to become" (Newell 1991, 35).

3.2 The Second Soliloquy: Meeting the Ghost:

In act I.V-92-112, the second time the audience sees Hamlet speak in a soliloquy. This is the time when Hamlet just met the ghost of his father and received the news that he was murdered by his own brother. He left in solitude on the stage in the wake of the ghost's departure swears an oath of vengeance —

"And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain
Unmixed with baser matter, yes, by heaven!"

This soliloquy reveals Hamlet's thoughts when he says he is going to wipe away all trivial knowledge from his brain and live by thy commandments. When he says, "Now to my word ... I have sworn it" (I, v, 116-119), he is letting the

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audience know that he will avenge his father's death therefore creating anticipation as the audience wonders how he will achieve retribution. While speaking, Hamlet creates an atmosphere because he repeats the last words the ghost has told him, "Adieu, adieu, remember me" (I, v, 118). This line is important because the ghost does not want to be forgotten and Hamlet does not want to forget him. The repetition makes the audience realize the significance of this line because the ghost wants his true story to be told and he wishes to be remembered as a hero and someone who was wronged. There is also contrast present when Hamlet talks about smiling and being a villain. This shows that Hamlet is now aware that people may not always be as they seem and one must be careful. His attitude has changed because now Hamlet has even more of a reason to despise his uncle and the audience is now caught up in the moment of surprise and suspense. According to Beatly, through these lines of soliloquy, his course of action is determined. His feeling towards his father, 'poor ghost' (96) towards his mother 'o most pernicious woman; (105) and towards his uncle, 'smiling damned villain' (106) are sharply indicated.

In this soliloquy, Hamlet also questions the illusively deceptive nature of man with his 'one may smile and be a villain.' (108) Actually here Hamlet's dilemma is not founded in self but rather in the epistemological conceptualization of the world.

3.3 The Third Soliloquy: Hamlet's Hesitation:

In act II through the next soliloquy, the audience sees Hamlet alone when he delivers his longest soliloquy (II.II.549-607) with more information about himself, his character through pretending madness—

"O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here
But in a fiction, in a dream of profession."

This soliloquy conveys Hamlet's touching turmoil at the events around him. Hamlet stingingly accuses himself of cowardice (Am I a coward? 566) for failing to mete out revenge. This soliloquy also creates atmosphere because of the way Hamlet talks about himself; He uses unsympathetic language and calls himself names such as rogue, peasant slave, ass, and whore. This language makes the audience sympathize with Hamlet because he has a lot to worry about with his mother marrying too soon and his uncle possibly having married his mother. It gives Hamlet a reason to be acting so mad because there is a lot to deal with in his life, his character becomes relatable to the audience because he is overwhelmed therefore allowing there to be some justification of his actions. "Hamlet's sense of himself as a coward is derived from a crude, simplistic judgement turning on whether or not he has yet taken any action against the man who murdered his father." (Newell 1991, P.61) So, importance of this soliloquy can't be ignored to the whole context of the play.

3.4 The Fourth Soliloquy: Hamlet's Resolution:

At the end of his emotional journey, it takes him from self-disgust to solving the act and he actively makes a plan to test the king's guilt. The soliloquy ends on a note of triumphant anticipation:

"The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king." (606-607)

After much analysis, confusion and internal chaos, Hamlet is finally resolved to act, ironically within the act of the players. It is interesting that he essentially looks to act as a mediator between the doubt of certainty and uncertainty to distinguish and establish the truth. His action here parallels to that of Ovid's Philomel who fashions a work of art as a medium to become the agency of her liberation, her absolution, Hamlet, too, is seeking this, albeit ironically from the clutches of his ownself.

3.5 The Fifth Soliloquy: Philosophy of Revenge:

The most famous of the soliloquies "To be or not be that is the question/ Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer (56-57) occurs in III.I 56-8 "The speech does very little to advance plot. The tone of this soliloquy is a searching and meditative one. It has a universal and timeless quality that suggests a core of stillness at the very heart of the play. It is this soliloquy that more than any other, that creates the image of "the melancholy Dane (Beatly, xxxiii). Here Hamlet

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ponders whether he should take action against his sea of trouble' (59) and seek revenge for his father's death on live with the pain of his father's murder. In addition to his proposal of vengeance he also contemplates whether it is better to stay alive or commit suicide – "To die to sleep" (64/60) If he were to sleep, he feels that all his trouble would vanish and this would not be such a bad thing. He also thinks while in slumber he might have disturbing dreams which would be wholly undesirable. Actually all the metaphor of this soliloquy seems to suggest that Hamlet's choice is between suffering the ills of this world and taking resolute action against them. This soliloquy is especially important to the play because it is written with masterful language and reveals a new side of Hamlet. This soliloquy shows Hamlet's softer emotional side when he speaks of suffering and lists multiple opposing things, showing once again the inner turmoil that Hamlet is facing. So it can be easily understood its importance to constitute the whole plot of the play.

According to Bugliani (1995), Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy is "a deliberation on the conflict between reason and passion" (11). After surveying the Elizabethan scholarship on passion, it examines how Shakespeare "modelled Hamlet according to Elizabethan and Jacobean ideas of melancholy." (11). What prevents a man from committing suicide is that he does not know what is the result for him after death. It is the fear of what may happen to us after death that makes us endure the ills and injustices of life. (Encyclopedia, 2011: online)

"Both the play and the soliloquy are animated by the conflict between the ideal of Socratic or, more precisely Stoic, imperturbability cherished by Hamlet and his guiltless, inevitable and tragic subjection to the perturbations of the mind" (Bugliani, 26). The soliloquy ends on a strong note giving the audience pause to consider his actions as he says, "be all my sins remembered" (III, i, 98). This quote tells the audience that Hamlet has decided that seeking revenge is in fact a noble deed and justifiable. This creates atmosphere for the audience and prepares them for the actions that Hamlet will take in the near future. If the soliloquy is not mentioned, the play remained unfinished about the deed of Hamlet. So, for the context of the play, the soliloquy was necessary.

3.6 The Shortest Soliloquy: The Mousetrap:

The next soliloquy in which the audience sees Hamlet is at the end of scene 3 act 2, in which he has just watched the play which he composed to get a reaction out of Claudius to see if he is guilt-ridden or not. During the course of the play, Hamlet makes uncouth comments to Ophelia and Claudius has rushed out of the play. Gertrude is angry with Hamlet and wants to see him instantaneously. The audience can see how Hamlet actually feels about these events during the course of the soliloquy. In the wake of the success of the "Mousetrap" prior to his interview with the queen, Hamlet delivers another soliloquy, the shortest in the play (III.II 380-92) –

"Tis now the very witching time of night

To give them seals never my soul consent."

His feeling is evident within the first line. It indicates that Hamlet is conscious that it is time to take action because he has figured out the truth what his uncle has done. Hamlet's use of 'The Mousetrap' suggests a hope "not simply to kill but to redeem" Claudius and "to rediscover the goodness he seeks so desperately in those around him." (Porterfield 1995, 87) "The Mousetrap succeeds in provoking Claudius, the closet scene is a "continuous of the play within the play in so far as it is now Gertrude's turn to reveal her guilt." (Ahernds 1993, 100). Hamlet goes on to say his feeling about his mother when he says, "I'll speak daggers to her, but use none." (III, ii, 429) Essentially Hamlet vows to not bodily hurt his mother but to do so psychologically. This expresses superb consciousness of his mental faculties. Again a delicate cruelty is revealed in the character of Hamlet. He is very much aware of the modern psychology. "Ultimately, Hamlet cannot avoid violence, but he gives us courage, generation after generation, to attempt the ideal while existing with the sometimes nearly unbearable realities that life imposes." (Porterfield 1995, 97) Though the soliloquy is short in size, it has a depth hit for the atmosphere of the play.

3.7 The Sixth Soliloquy: Opportunity of Revenge:

Hamlet delivers his sixth soliloquy (III.III 73-96) on his way to his mother's closet and he finds Claudius at prayer:

"Now might I do it Pat, now is a praying

And now I'll do't."

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Hamlet at first thinks this will be the perfect opportunity to murder his uncle and gain his revenge but his soliloquy quickly reveals that his thoughts have brought him somewhere else. He makes the momentous decision not to kill him. He thought if he killed him just at the moment it will not be punishment for the act which he has committed. Though this was the best opportunity Hamlet could execute his revenge, he spares the king because he appears to be praying, when in reality he is just going through the motions, merely acting. "Now might I do pray" is a soliloquy in which we see a shift in Hamlet's rationalization. But he makes the momentous decision not to kill him. If Hamlet kills Claudius while he is praying Claudius would go to heaven ensuring his eternal salvation:

"A villain kills my father, and for that
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven." (76-8)

Here we see a shift in Hamlet's rationalization. Actually Hamlet wants Claudius to be eternally damned. This is shown when he says:

"Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell, whereto it goes." (93-95)

The above metaphor 'as damned and black as hell' gives an atmosphere that Hamlet compares his uncle's soul to blackness and hell. He then decides that he will kill him at the time of drinking or when he will be in incestuous bed filled with pleasure. If he can kill in that way, he will go to hell not heaven. Hamlet is essentially caught up in an intricate plot of revenge, one that is beyond the realms of the physical. Through this soliloquy, Hamlet shows the audience when and how he will achieve his ultimate revenge. This is also important for the structural construction of the play.

3.8 The Last Soliloquy: Taking revenge:

In the last soliloquy (iv. iv 32-66) it is obvious that Hamlet's state of mind has gone through a metamorphosis. Here he feels ashamed for his cowardice and by comparing himself to Fortinbras, he finally vows to act upon his feelings and states:

"O, from this time forth
My thought'd be bloody or be nothing worth"

This is the last time when Hamlet appears on the stage and it takes place after Hamlet has encountered Fortinbras's army and talked with Fortinbras himself. Through this Hamlet reveals to the audience that he feels that if a man has no purpose, he is no better than a beast. So he must encounter with Fortinbras to spur his revenge. It is at this pivotal moment where Hamlet no longer has an inner struggle and determines the actions he must assume in order to restore his family honour and his father's honour and bring an inner peace to himself. This soliloquy gives the audience a chance to connect with Hamlet because it is easy for one to understand feelings of being wronged and wanting to get revenge. "This soliloquy again emphasizes Hamlet's irresolution and his reflective nature. His conscience keeps pricking him and urging him to his revenge but a natural deficiency in him always thwarts his purpose." (Jillal, 1987: 120)

3.9 Some Minor Soliloquy:

There are three soliloquies by King Claudius which throw more light on his villainous and wicked behaviour. His first soliloquy (iii.i 50-54) shows that the memory of the murder that he has committed still haunts him and he is not at peace. In the next soliloquy (iii.iii.36-72) the king, for the first time repents for his sins and wants to pray to God to purge his sins. But his guilty conscience does not allow him to do so:

"Pray can I not
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent."
"By letters congruing to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England." (67-8)

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And in the third soliloquy (iv. iii) (57-67) he schemes to kill Hamlet in England. Actually through Caludius' soliloquies Shakespeare shows that he is not only a hardened criminal but also an ordinary man with no peace of mind on account of his evil deeds.

Again in (iii.i 152-63) there is a soliloquy by Ophelia:

O what a noble mind is here O'erthrown!

The' observ'd of all observers." (52-56)

Here, Ophelia expresses her grief over what she thinks to be Hamlet's loss of reason, and she gives us some further idea of the great qualities of Hamlet — the courtier, scholar, soldier and thus enhances his images in our eyes.

4. ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

There are different opinions about hamlet's soliloquies — Some critics argue that the speech "to be or not to be" is not meant to be taken as soliloquy at all, rather as a further act of feigned madness and melancholia directed towards Ophelia, particularly which Hamlet's resolute passion either side of this scene is considered. Voss (2001) thinks "The soliloquy promotes punning between prey and pray because such a pun 'captures a central ethical debate surrounding the revenge tragedy' (to avenge or to wait for God's justice?), 'makes the reader aware of Hamlet's primary dilemma shortly after the appearance of the ghost.'" And 'helps finally to concentrate the distinction between mercy and vengeance, meditation and action, reflection and instinct.'" (P.59)

Again some critics argue that the king's first soliloquy is not exactly a soliloquy; it is an aside because the king is not alone on the stage at this moment. Polonius is not expected to hear what the king says to himself. It is apparently obvious that the soliloquy is an indispensable means in the story of Hamlet. It gives the readers a further understanding into Hamlet's personal and rational behind his actions which steer the course of the tragedy. Actually, without the soliloquies, the play, Hamlet, would lose its vital meaning. "The Soliloquies of Hamlet are among the chief glories of the play, according to Betty Bealey. Dr. Bealey goes on to add: "Of the 4,000 lines in Hamlet, about 40 per cent are delivered by Hamlet himself, and of these, his seven soliloquies make up 210 lines. These soliloquies may be compared to seven pillars that hold up the arches of the play. It is significant that there is no soliloquy in the last act.'" (Bealey, xxxii) From this point of view, the soliloquies are structural constructs of the play. Yet, the same can be said in relation to the characterization of the Danish prince. The many facets of Hamlet's personality, the kaleidoscopic selves he confronts and reveals are portrayed in his soliloquies.

Through the first soliloquy, themes such as anger, frustration and treachery are developed. Shakespeare uses Hamlet to express their views, in the form of a soliloquy. From this it is clear that Hamlet is becoming depressed with the situation that he has found himself in, "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable" All of these words are negative and create an angered tone of voice, this would have been evident to the audience. The way that Shakespeare allows the audience to see what is happening in Hamlet's mind, leads them to anticipate what will happen in the rest of the play, which would obviously endure their interest.

A release from the 'whips' 'scorns' 'insolence' and 'pangs' annexed to a 'weary life' has become something 'devoutly to be wished.' Integrity is especially important to him and he agonises over which is 'nobler'; to endure life's ills with patience, or to 'take arms' against them in intrepid defiance. This value also links to his struggle to define 'truth'. While some regard Hamlet as enigmatic and profound, others interpret Hamlet's soliloquy as little more than another example of extreme introversion. We also realise how prone he is to making sweeping statements, using the pronouns 'we' and 'us', when his observations on human sociology apportion mainly to himself. This links to next passage, when he remarks to Ophelia that men are 'arrant knaves, all of us.'" Thus we can say soliloquies are just important to play action as other sections because they illustrate crucial character features. If the soliloquies are not mentioned, logical coherence would be lost.

The Mousetrap through which Hamlet makes a profound decision to use a play to determine the validity of the ghost and "catch the conscience of the king" is of course necessary for the context of the play. This decision leads to a vital turning

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point, and dictates the plots direction from there on. The third soliloquy follows the second without any section in between where Hamlet interacts with other characters. After indulging in this prolific amount of self-pity and arousing acute melancholy, his abnormally violent reaction to Ophelia's rejection is not so surprising-especially when he just reflected on the "pangs of dipriz'd love." Plot fluctuations hence are highly dependent on Hamlet's soliloquies, and therefore play a significant role in the action of the play. Hamlet's character is filled out and further clarified through his soliloquies, and hence the interpretation of our hero very much depends on them. These intimate revelation permit the audience to examine and discern Hamlet's true emotions.

Again, they also aid in the creation of atmosphere in the play, both in terms of the cultural and the artistic. According to the philosophy of the Elizabethan period, it is the ability to think and reason which determines the place of man in the chain of being, within its concept of the universal order. It is this dialectic which separates man from the animal. It can thus be said that man traverses the realm between angel and beast, in terms of his consciousness. According to E. M. W. Tillyard: "The conflicts of mature Shakespearean tragedy are those between passions and reason. Shakespeare animates these conflicts by stating with unique intensity the range of man's affinities whether with angel and beast...in other words by his living sense of man's key position in the great chain of being." (Tillyard, 1949, 76).

4.1 Importance of Soliloquies in the Play:

Numerically and structurally, then, there is already something interesting to say about the importance of soliloquy. The mind and the words of soliloquies are very much connected. Discounting those words spoken upon the invasion of Fortinbras, all of Hamlet's soliloquies occur within the first two thirds of the play. There is a link here between inaction and action, demonstrated through the pattern of soliloquies. Once Hamlet has decided to act, he shrugs off the need to soliloquize. His obsession with the solitary acts as his tragic flaw, disabling him from the ability to act and keeping him in a perpetual state of thought. Alternatively, Alex Newell (1991) sees Shakespeare using the soliloquy as more than a dramatic function, but using the collection of all seven to create "an intense dramatization of the human mind as the innermost realm of consciousness" (18) and as such, "Shakespeare makes the mind itself and what happens to it a major focus of the tragedy" (19). According to Newell, Hamlet's mind is the main focus, and this is more focused on his solitary state and his own metacognition than on seeking revenge.

If the structuring and positioning of the soliloquies reveals a clash between the public and the private, then the language and meaning within them does also. The Penguin dictionary highlighted an explanatory function for soliloquies, with thoughts and feelings at the heart. Contextually, private thought had previously been accessed by the audience via actions, with different symbols for different states of mind. Gurr states, in exploring acting styles from 1574- 1643 that the soliloquies would have assumed responsibility for explaining thoughts and emotions through language, not pantomimic action. Clemen (1987) finds a different purpose behind each soliloquy, each private. The first he titles "Hamlet's rejection of the world" (126)- a rejection of his self, yet acknowledging the impossibility of "self-slaughter", a rejection of his mother and the "incestuous sheets" she shares with his uncle and, in some criticisms, a rejection of all women, correlated here with "frailty". This is easily interpretable as a continuation of his visible mourning- commented on and disapproved of by King Claudius. His words become laden with grief, and his brief exclamations, questions and repetitions ("Must I remember?"; "Within a month?") emphasize this. His final thoughts return back to his own heart and a further insular retreat: "I must hold my tongue" (all I.ii.129-159).

His soliloquy after the confrontation with the ghost of his father (I.v.97-118) is memorial. He swears obedience to "remember". His anger is directed more harshly and emphatically towards mother and uncle: "O most pernicious woman! / O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!", and his penultimate sentence begins "Now to my word"- a promise of ensuing action. However, action does not ensue. The soliloquies act as caesuras to the action, providing breaks and pauses as Hamlet doubts, decides, stalls, and doubts again. His II.ii soliloquy, although ending actively ("I'll observe his looks..." (528), is the most critical self- assessment of his character in the play. He wonders that he can be so cowardly, and swears again to immediate action. What follows next in the folio is of course not action, but his "To be" soliloquy (III.i.62-96), the most renowned soliloquy in all literature. This speech would seem to be the most private of them all. But "seeming" is always at the centre of this play. For whilst his reflections are self- reflective, they deliberate over the consequences of his soul not just after death, or suicide, but after his not-quite determined course of action.

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According to the discussion and definition of soliloquies, we came to know that Hamlet's soliloquies reveal to the audience his thoughts and feelings which are unable to express to other characters in the play. So in other words soliloquies give a voice to Hamlet's thoughts. This is why soliloquies are so important, because a character can express his most inner thoughts without judgement from fellow character in the play. There is no opportunity to consider the soliloquies of Hamlet to be unnecessary.

The soliloquy shows the importance of turning thoughts into actions which is still significant in people's lives today. It gives a clear insight into the character's thoughts, character and intentions, all of which can be withheld from the other characters in the play, often creating dramatic irony. In Hamlet's soliloquy, Hamlet always tells the truth, but only the partial and subjective truth he himself knows and believes, so the audience can hear different opinions of the same events. Hamlet's soliloquies are varied, each having different purposes, and the large number of soliloquies in Hamlet indicates the importance of Hamlet's thoughts in the play. During a soliloquy, a character such as Hamlet can reveal a lot of information. He can inform the audience about himself, including his character, his mood, his opinions and his relationships with other characters in the play. He can also reveal what has happened in the play so far and fill in gaps in the audience's understanding of the plot. In the same way, he can hint at what is to come in the future. Richardson's highly popular theory refers to that "this is a soliloquy, and soliloquies do not lie. On the contrary, their function is to reveal the motives of the characters to the audience." (P.159)

Hamlet's soliloquies are vital in establishing the mood and themes of the play. "Without the soliloquies, Hamlet would remain an entertaining revenge drama." (Dreams, 2008) Hamlet's soliloquies constitute a crucial and dramatic part of plot dynamics. Often highly intimate, they do not merely reflect on the plays general happenings but are interwoven into the action. Acting as portals into Hamlet's psyche, they establish crucial elements of character. Furthermore, they are infinitely important in the interpretation of plot, especially through exploring the theme of Hamlet's procrastination. The tumultuous state of his mind affects and explains some of the important actions. Additionally, important decisions are made which steer the course of the play. If the audiences weren't privy to the hero's agonizing thoughts, no doubt the play would have only half the reputation it holds today. "He thinks too much and cannot go into action without which revenge cannot be taken. His philosophical soliloquies make it a poetic play rather than a realistic one." (Ford, 1961: 82)

5. CONCLUSION

In these seven soliloquies, Hamlet shares his inner feelings, thoughts, and plans for the future. These soliloquies are the pivotal pillars of the drama and are still considered some of Shakespeare's most brilliant writings. Without reading these seven soliloquies, one cannot enjoy the true experience of this amazing drama. Gary Taylor explains. "Soliloquies are a convention; conventions are a code; if we don't accept the rules of the code, we will mistranslate the message; [...] against a Shakespeare soliloquy there is no appeal." (P.233) So, the soliloquies in Hamlet do not, as soliloquies sometimes can, hold up the action of the play. Again they are in the fullest sense, dramatic, part of the action. Shakespeare's soliloquies in Hamlet differ radically from their common convention as inessential speeches to augment audience understanding. On the contrary, they are just as important, if not more so, as the segments where character interaction occurs. Without the soliloquies, the play would be inane and sporadic. Highly dramatic, they give momentum; impel it forward to new and exciting leveled by influencing plot, characterization and mood, as well as expressing key themes. Hamlet's highly dramatic second and third soliloquies are two such arias. Hence, in Hamlet, soliloquies should not be considered separate speeches as they are essential to play action.

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