Hamlet 3 Essay, Research Paper

Hamlet

“Hamlet is the inner person of all mankind” as stated by actor Alan Bates. What did Mr. Bates mean by this? Could he be referring to the love, the corruption, the revenge, or the insanity displayed by Hamlet; or was he referring to more than we know. What did Shakespeare know about the depths of man and the battle inside to write a play that would captivate every generation to come from then on. What would we learn if we analyzed Hamlet?

Shakespeare decided to set corruption in Elsinor, a royal castle in medieval Denmark. Prior to the first act Hamlets mother, Queen Gertrude is widowed to King Hamlet. When this tragedy starts, we are introduced to Marcellus, Bernardo, and Francisco who guard the castle at night. While on watch an apparition of King Hamlet appeared to them and they then knew something was wrong, the question is what should they do. Soon after Hamlets best friend, Horatio, learns of the apparition and decides to inform Hamlet. Once Hamlet learns of his fathers return, he at once insist that he go on watch to witness his fathers appearance. The next night Hamlets father does appear and commands Hamlet to avenge his death. Is this where corruption could take affect? Perhaps Mr. Bates was thinking about this scene when he made his statement. Hamlets father tells him what corruption has taken place behind the walls of Elsinor. He tells Hamlet of his uncles rage and what it has lead him to do. He tells Hamlet of the serpent that stung him. He tells Hamlet that the serpent goes by the name of Claudius. Hamlets composure, wit, and strength would now be tested to their limits. With one wrong slip of the tongue, one wrong hateful glance, Hamlet would go straight to his death. What could Hamlet do, what will he do? A clever wit and common sense are his only hope to avenge his fathers death. Hamlet then lives in madness and by that madness hopes to force Claudius to confess his sin.

Through the second act the plot thickens as Hamlets mind begins to ponder the possibilities of confession by the king. His love for Ophelia is also strongly noticed by all. The nobilities of Elsinor also notice the love he shows and they begin to realize the possibility that Ophelias love for Hamlet would benefit them both. Queen Gertrude wishes to use Ophelias love to bring her only son out of madness. Claudius wishes to do the same. His reason, however, is to end the threat of his life. Once the king and queen realize this remedy they quickly act to use it by persuading Ophelia to court Hamlet.

In this Scene true madness comes into play. Once Ophelia meets Hamlet and speaks with him her love abandons her. Hamlet realizes that his mother and step father are aware of this love and might use this to end his threat. Hamlet must end their thoughts of using Ophelia to rid him of his condition. To do this he must destroy all the current feelings Ophelia has for him and he does so very well, perhaps too well. Now that Ophelia feelings for him have lessened, he must work quickly to obtain his uncles confession that he might again have Ophelia love. Hamlets plan develops when actors arrive in Elsinor. He uses their skill by relieving the mystery of his fathers death in a production with hopes of getting his uncles confession. “The play is the thing where in I ll catch the conscience of the king, Act II scene 2.”

Act III deals with the confession of the king and what he must do in order to remedy the situation. While watching the play, the confession comes out. Now the corruption is real and proven. The king, now concerned about the awareness of Hamlet, must protect himself against Hamlet Claudius knows that Hamlet has learned of the sins he has done. Hamlet quickly takes action now enraged at the confession confronts his mother in chambers where he is ready to condone his mothers actions and kill Claudius. What Hamlet does not know is that Polonius has seen his mother and now hiding. Inside that room Hamlet confronts his mother and she screams for him to stop, “These words are sharper that daggers to my soul,” Polonius in fear of the queens life shouts for help. Hamlet still engaged dashes to where the shout came from, draws his sword, and without glancing kills who he thinks is the king. Actually he killed the body of Polonious and the soul of Ophelia. There may be no return for Hamlets life as the king

dom learns of Polonius death. The king sends Hamlet to England for his unknowing execution. Once again with Hamlets quick thinking and wit escapes death and returns to Elsinor enraged at the king. Claudius, knowing the disturbance he has caused must act quickly and harshly to save his own life. While gone to England Ophelia has gone mad and killed herself by drowning. Claudius uses this to gain the help of Ophelia brother to kill Hamlet with a poisoned sword and a deadly drink.

In the final scene the duel becomes deadly. Laertes poisons the sword and Claudius poisons the wine. Queen Gertrude, without knowing, drinks the wine and is almost instantly killed. At that same time Laertes cuts Hamlet and he is infected with the deadly poison. When Hamlet finds out what has happened he stabs the king with the poisoned sword and forces him to drink the poisoned wine. The king dies, Hamlet dies, Gertrude dies, and Laertes dies from the same sword as Hamlet. All of the fatalities are victims of the absolute corruption that the king brought into Elsinor.