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SOLILOQUIES OF HAMLET

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Soliloquy:

A soliloquy is a literary device in the form of a speech or monologue spoken by a single character in a theatrical play or drama. The purpose of a soliloquy is for the character to express their inner thoughts and feelings that are not intended to be heard or known by other characters in the play or the audience members. A soliloquy (pronounced so-LILL-oh-kwee) is a kind of monologue, or an extended speech by one character. In a soliloquy, though, the speech is not given to another character, and there is no one around to hear it. Instead of another character, the soliloquy is delivered to a surrogate, to the audience, or to no one in particular.

Keywords- literary, monologue, gnawing, theatrical

William Shakespeare and Soliloquy:

William Shakespeare (bapt. 26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) was an English playwright, poet and actor. He is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. The most famous Shakespeare soliloquies (and indeed, the most famous soliloquies in the English language) are found in a handful of his plays.

Shakespeare soliloquies by play:

A Midsummer Night's Dream soliloquies, Hamlet soliloquies, King Lear soliloquies, Macbeth soliloquies, The Merchant of Venice soliloquies, Othello soliloquies, Romeo & Juliet soliloquies, The Tempest soliloquies.

Hamlet Shakespeare's first major tragedy:

Shakespeare wrote Hamlet in 1600 or 1601 when he was 36 years old it was his first major tragedy, although Julius Caesar may have been written slightly earlier and it ushered in the decade of the great tragedies Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus.

Hamlet though tragic in its effect does not perfectly fit this pattern. Hamlet's greatness is an inward greatness of spirit. He is not externally active in character; his power and his opportunity are very limited. It is one of the great unsettled problems of the play that rather than struggle towards his goal, Hamlet seems to delay and delay to avoid it; he seems often to be uncertain as to what his goal really is. His very virtues are such as to weaken his capacity for forthright action. His nature on the other hand is interesting and attractive, his suffering is profound and the pity and sympathy of the beholder are powerfully aroused so are the emotions of fear for Hamlet and horror at the dire events.

Hamlet's soliloquies:

In the course of the play Hamlet has seven long soliloquies. The first of these occurs before he has seen the ghost. In this soliloquy, Hamlet reveals the grief that has been gnawing at his mind. He wishes that religion did not forbid suicide so that he could kill himself and be rid of this grief. He feels disillusioned with the world:

How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, seem to me all the uses of this world!

He deplores the fact that his mother should have remarried barely two months after the death of her first husband. The soliloquy shows Hamlet's meditative nature. It also reveals his filial attachment to his dead father of whom he speaks highly and his scorn of his uncle to whom he refers in disparaging terms.

Hamlet's second soliloquy comes just after the ghost leaves him, after charging him with the duty of taking revenge upon the murder of his father Hamlet resolves to wipe out everything else from his memory and to remember only the ghost's command. The ghost's revelation has stunned him and he refers to his mother as a most pernicious woman and to his uncle as a smiling damned villain.

In his third soliloquy, Hamlet bitterly scolds himself for having failed to execute his revenge so far. He calls himself a dull and muddied mettled rascal for his failure accusing himself of being pigeon-livered and as an ass who like a whore can only unpack his heart with words and fall a cursing like a very drab.

Hamlet's fourth soliloquy, his most famous and most celebrated is the most philosophical of all. Here we have a mental debate with the speaker on the horns of a dilemma: "To be or not to be that is the question". Hamlet asks himself whether it is noble to suffer the cruelties of fate silently or to put up a fight against the misfortunes of life. It would be better perhaps to commit suicide if death were to mean a total extinction of consciousness but the fear of what may happen to us endure the ills and injustices of life. This soliloquy partly explains Hamlet's delay in carrying out his purpose and shows at the same time the mental torture that he has been undergoing because of that delay.

In his next soliloquy, Hamlet describes his mood as one in which he could drink hot blood and do such bitter business as the day would quake to look on. In this mood he can even kill his mother but we also know that the man who has not yet been able to kill his uncle will be incapable of killing his mother because apart from the fact of her remarriage she has done nothing to deserve that punishment.

The sixth soliloquy shows Hamlet shrinking from an act for which he has long been preparing and for which he now gets an excellent opportunity. Hamlet's reason for not killing his uncle at this moment is that his uncle is at prayers and that by killing him at such a time Hamlet would be sending him straight to heaven. So Hamlet decides to wait for an opportunity.

Hamlet's last soliloquy is again full of self-reproach:

"How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull courage!"

Three parts of his failure, he says, are due to cowardice and only one part due to wisdom.

Having rebuked himself in strong terms, Hamlet forms the following resolve:

"Oh, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!"

This soliloquy once again emphasizes Hamlet's irresolution and his meditative temperament. His conscience keeps pricking him and urging him to revenge but a natural deficiency always obstructs him.

Introspection:

In these soliloquies, Hamlet is constantly analysing himself inwardly. He forever looking into himself.

Nothing about Ophelia:

In none of these soliloquies does he say of his feelings or thoughts about Ophelia. On the other hand he talks much about his mother and his uncle.

Conclusion:

From the soliloquies of Hamlet it becomes clear that Hamlet is suicidal. He longs for death but on the other hand he strongly believes in the existence of an all powerful God and so he always thinks about God. Hamlet's greatest fear is the repercussion of doing what is wrong. He wants to be sure of what he does, which explains why he has to investigate everything before he acts. Hamlet's ultimate goal is justified revenge. He believes in revenge, but he also acknowledges that unjustified revenge is sinful and it would attract God's wrath. In all his soliloquies, even in the face of obvious facts, he still investigates everything. He is a talented critical thinker but unfortunately his talent becomes his greatest flaw. He is a deeply religious person who never wishes to do wrong deeds for taking blind revenge.

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