



**EXISTENTIALISM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF WILLIAM  
SHAKESPEARE'S 'HAMLET'**



**Ms. Manisha Sitaram Kirwale**  
Research Student  
Dr. B. A.M. University, Aurangabad.



**Dr. Sandip Krishna Kotkar**  
J.N.E. College Aurangabad,  
MGMs Deem to be University, Aurangabad.

**ABSTRACT**

*This research discusses Hamlet's work from a theoretical standpoint, in order to find new analytical interpretation of William Shakespeare's characters in his work, yet to get to know him from an interdisciplinary approach to an individual. This paper analyses the indecision of Hamlet with that of existentialism to achieve these goals. Whose nihilism is stained? Interdisciplinary cooperation between literature and perspective shows in a dialectical relationship the logical and irrational aspects of human existence. Tragedy speaks of human survival and simultaneously calls for people to understand the barrenness of their lives. It is nevertheless the same rigidity that drives human beings to build up their own being by using rationality in their lives as a complex instrument.*

*Reason is putting uncertainty in order. It's a loop that does not stop but still creates new questions that increase understanding of truth. This dialectic clashes of rational and non-logical components. In Shakespeare's Hamlet these elements are performed.*

**KEYWORDS**

*voluntarism, psychoanalysis, vitalizes, existentialism, nihilism, dialectic method.*

## RESEARCH PAPER

The *Hamlet* play of William Shakespeare Tragedy and satire is life. Smiling and sorrow are a result of the very essence of an individual, who like to represent these potentialities in a tragedy, satire or drama, in order to convey them, which synthesizes all emotions into one broad affluent. Tragic and comic are not only categories of aesthetics or art; they are expressions of man's beloved reality. On the first look, the exact opposite of the tragedy might appear to be health, but not only health but the tragedy is just the one willing to waste life's enthusiasm. It needs that we realize that we're safe and at the same time have sympathy for when we're actually ill. The luxury of life cannot eradicate the misery of this life, doomed to fatal and necessary devastation in advance. Pessimism and tragedy. In short, the indissoluble comrades of life are disease, childhood age, grief and death. Maybe there's a fitness neurosis. This is what is secret and cannot be avoided in all life. Cynicism is what we will see in Shakespeare's work *Hamlet* as an acknowledgement of the presence of an irrational undertone in human culture.

The calamity of *Hamlet* is the calamity of a man with a fragile life point of view. *Hamlet* is a real man fighting in a red country. He wants to find out beyond the looks the true truth. Having been disappointed by his mother, he wants to disguise men, remove and show them in their true colors, from their fine appearances. He understands, though, that the job is not easy to do, which is why he can talk vaguely and mask his aims. Psychotic's in *Hamlet* is not a mask, but a lack of cover-up. *Hamlet's* "*To be or not to be*" speech expresses a feeling of thrones. He believes like he is plunged into life for nothing and that the reality and non-existence are separate until he applies his own arbitrary sense on the life itself.

As the creative philosophy suggested by Plato saw, painting cannot be seen as a simple replication and replication of nature, but rather as a representation of nature, as Aristotle thought it. Why is this possible? Because art surrounded the terrible, scandalous and sorrowful of human life with its shielding of elegance. This is the only way that a man can withstand and, in some way, transcend suffering. Art is a stunning look that makes the life of a man worth living and inspires him to live instantly.

According to the Akal Philosophical Dictionary, existentialism was promulgated in Europe during the 20th century as a philosophical and literary phenomenon. This existential view does not reduce a person and his conduct to any post. A rational animal, social animal, psycho-bio-entity should not be reduced to an individual. Man is not a material that can be statistically measured. Man is his own being himself. This advancement will allow man to understand himself and his condition with others and with the world in the field of clarity. In a different view, the central rights to life are, in a world in which we are afraid and predestined to be fully responsible for our free acts and for the principles which govern our actions, to live without defense (absurdity).

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, "man freely chooses his own goals" (Olson 53). Man is "condemned to freedom", and as there is no justification in adopting any value in this world of absolute subjectivity, "the price of human existence is alienation from God, from nature, and from society" (Olson 57). Existentialism includes a life that leads to spirit, that is man may put his own spirit, his own being and his own significance in the universe on the basis of goals and ethics.

Kierkegaard is widely considered to be the first philosopher of existentiality. The theory of Kierkegaard is notorious for its criticism of objective structures of speculation (in particular Hegel, which he believed to posed a threat to the individuality of man), but also for its significance of 'subjective thought,' trust, promise and responsibility. His main themes are fear, anguish and culpability. His spitefully complete rejection of justification into the religion has censured him.

As a dialectical poet Kierkegaard views himself. He says that philosophy must be inseparable from the existential state of life and the human being. He refused, however his dialectic was drastically altered, although he rejected his substance of Hegel's idealism. Instead,

his dialectic moves from universality to particularity, a dialect of dedication, will and choice. There are no dialectical categories such as these for him, antithetical and antithesis. Conferring to this, three stages of conflict may be distinguished:

1. **The aesthetic stage:** The aesthetic person is not directed in this stage by moral norms or religious dogmas; instead, imagination, emotion, impulses and senses are guided. In order to attain self-disposal, he tries to resolve and transcend any constraint of his individuality. Therefore, his independence is expressed. The expedition to the endless or innumerable, however, turns out to be tricky and meaningless, and leads to suffering. Therefore he must stay or agree to make the leap to the next step in this state of diversion.
2. **The ethical stage:** The individual acknowledges moral norms and obligations. This determination implies that his impulses should be rejected and he could become a tragic hero. But moral man, though at first such actions seem to affirm his autonomy, can tell he's inadequate and his natural irreverence and culpability has not been overwhelmed.
3. **The religious stage:** Man is committed to the personal and transcendental God by a further leap. God is not discovered by a speculative explanation or ratio in Christianity, according to the author, but is implicating in the conscience of man's failing and remorse. According to Kierkegaard

It is not totally irrational to move from one point to another but the logical will is subject to choices and commitments. According to Kierkegaard, at every moment in his life the man deliberately seeks to dedicate himself. The truly existential person is still in the act of becoming or being in relation to God. Man is an actor, not an observer, an agent, not an actor. He remains exposed to the idea of liberation and is thereby drawn by the unrealisation, but at the same time becomes repelled by it, so he sees himself springing into the wild or renouncing his desires. This is what Kierkegaard means by dread; he calls it a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy.

This peculiar question is Kierkegaard's thinking: whose self is there when a person has all but hasn't lost him? In other words, this question asks what he is, not man himself, but this mysterious man who exists after he has lost everything but himself. Sartre founded his hesitation on human free will from existentialism. Individuals are free from the moment of conception; they describe their essence in life; this is the disposition of a person who has been and is what the person is doing in the past. When self-definition stops, no-one is complete before death.

He proclaimed that human beings deserve a logical foundation for their lives; his philosopher was expressly atheistic and cynical. Still we can't do it, then human life becomes a vain passion. However, he insisted on his hesitation about existentialism as a kind of humanism and stressed the dignity, preference and obligation of human beings. The philosophical philosophy of life, art, psychology and political activism has attracted the attention of many people, which has become a global revolution. When viewed within the framework of the human condition, the idea of freedom acquires a new meaning. I am in a world I was eternally released. I can't help seeing my life like that and being something else. I don't. There are rocks and houses around me and there is towns I need to love dislike or look at with ignorance in, or to go or go back. There are my positions, there are mailboxes I have to address, there are theses I have to do, etc. Within a certain time even with the impression I cannot do so, I must do so with existentialism. I must do so.

What is terrifying for Sartre is the free choice itself when it has an unjustifiable and ridiculous consciousness, but the ideals that make my life the world must inevitably be formed or created by myself and myself alone.

The agony of freedom is therefore an identity which daily deceives and overshadows the tragedy of the individual's loneliness; I am the person who takes sense of the world I live in. I stand alone

on the surface and face the project to make my own life. I must make sense of the world and of my own essence; I alone, without reason and excuses, am the one who determines. Existential rationality is due to physical and mental influences of all decisions on others. The interdependence of people results in social responsibility.

The character of Hamlet is usually classified as a vengeance tragedy, but it's far more than a vengeance hero. Baugh tells us that "...the proverbial Hamlet without the character of Hamlet has become the classic way of describing a literary vacuum" (528).

*[...] Hamlet was really no longer a play of revenge; it was a play of life and death and of man's ambiguous relation to them both. It was the passionate protests of a keen and honest thinker against the inescapable sophistications of thought, which make everything, seem and yet can give no assurance that anything is absolutely true". (Baugh 528)*

Hamlet can be approached in many directions. One way is from an existential point of view. Because of his pain and uncertainty, Hamlet retards the action and does not act at once. Hamlet's delay stops him from falling below his enemies' spiritual level, so that Hamlet is a boss rather than a murderer.

Hamlet's nausea has to do with his exhaustion and contempt for a corrupt existence, speaking in Sartre's words. In other words, he was interested in finding out what was beneath the looks, in unmasking men, in stripping them of their beautiful appearances and in seeing them in their true form. However, it wasn't easy to do this monumental work; it would speak out with ambiguity, and cover up his intentions with puns and parables.

Hamlet stresses the disruptive facets of life in his first speech:

*HAMLET "...O God, God, How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable Seem to me all the uses of this world! Fie on, ah, fie, ties an unwedded garden that grows to seed. The things rank and gross in nature possess it merely". (1.2.132-137)*

Hamlet rebels against the chaotic life, but at the same time, he has to solve the problematic nature of reality and reevaluate his trust in human nature since he has seen how "one may smile and smile and be a villain" (1.5.109). In this context, his trust in man and in life was shaken, and on top of all, it was expected for Hamlet to act in this commotion. But where is Hamlet going to find the truth? And on top of all, the ghost is somewhat real, or it may be an apparition. From this point on, doubt pervades Hamlet's actions.

In Shakespearean critique, Hamlet's approach to Ophelia has several interpretations. Some commentators have pointed out that in this connection the misogynist instincts of Hamlet are clearly shown. Misogyny, however, is not women's sheer hate. Life and misogyny are non-exclusive concepts for one another; a man may love and need a woman, but hates and detests that he is on her. Maybe Hamlet wants Ophelia, but he hates that he needs her, which is why he treats her so poorly. Hamlet might love Ophelia passionately, but he couldn't trust her entirely, as "Nausea" pervaded his life.

Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech is a clear manifestation of the existential man. In Kierkegaard's terms, I could say that Hamlet felt that "thrones"; he felt that he was thrown into life with no purpose at all and that there was no distinction between existence and non-existence, "to be" and "not to be" in Hamlet's words unless the individual himself imposes his own subjective meaning onto life.

The major theme is anguish or dread; the anguish of being (Why do I exist, and how?), the anguish of death (according to Plato, is to learn how to die, and according to Tolstoy, is only to think of death), the anguish of here-and-now (why am I born here and now, within this particular time and place, and why not other possibilities?), and the anguish of freedom (man is free to choose, and this causes hesitation).

The spirit of Hamlet was exonerated by the weight of the existentialism that cannot be resolved. In other words Hamlet's deception and anxiety is delayed by an alleged folly resulting from the inconceivable universe. The folly of Hamlet is not a mask, nor his lack of masks. A lack of masks hurt the disillusioned Hamlet.

Claudius, who was considered logical, common sense, and straightforward, dominated the seemingly real world. This world contrasted with the ghost's warped, intangible world, made up of just appearances. Hamlet felt the tragic strain, as an existential being, between choice and the limits of human condition. He realized that if he had chosen to believe the ghost in the apparently true world portrayed by Claudius, he would have been discredited. The ghost is, however, Hamlet's motivation to seek the facts and to unmask Claudius, the one who incarnates the mistakes, hypocrisy and duplication.

Hamlet designed a game in the game to test the ghost and to check Claudius's hypothesis, and thus to unmask it and to validate, in general, the universe of falsehood in which he lived. The play ensures that Hamlet is responsible for the murder of Claudius. Hamlet is free to avenge his dad; but he delays the assassination of the king again. He is waiting for a suitable time when the king will not have time to seek forgiveness for his sins.

Hamlet doesn't even know who he is, faced with this question. We just find a transformed Hamlet in the last act. Certainly he's still, maybe because at least he's not hurt by grieving and melancholy, murderous envy and fury any more. His dad's ghost no longer haunts him. He's now a smart passiveness; his character is dominated by a mystery and disinterest:

*HAMLET* "...If it is now, 'tis not to come. If it is not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all". (5.2.166-168)

Hamlet will now be in the third level, the religious one, according to Kierkegaard's philosophical dialectic. Man must at this point suspend, as a personal and religious development, abstract and impersonal ethical rules that call for choice without external requirements, which is to be seen as a leap of faith.

The existential hero finds little significance in the cosmos until he takes a leap of faith. Evidently, Hamlet has gained crucial knowledge, but knowledge of what? And faith in whom? Perhaps Hamlet expresses some kind of resignation, but the question is, what kind of resignation? Is it of a religious kind or not? Is it an absolute faith in Providence? Or is it mere fatalism? What is it?

These lines may mean that the true screen is void and silent, according to some critics. Man is the entirety of his acts and his works, and playing with words, the general tongue, is just a mask used to perform the brief comedy of life.

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