

HAMLET: IMAGE ANALYSIS

Imagine that these images are all titled, Hamlet. There is something about the thematic message or the story of the image - photo, painting, drawing, design - that makes the artist and the audience recall the mood, atmosphere and ideas in the play.

1. Choose an image from the Hamlet package or find another image that you feel tells a thematic story similar to Hamlet (do not find an image that has been used for Hamlet posters, playbills, or covers).

2. Think about the following:

What is the thematic message and story of the image?

Why would this image be a good symbol for telling the thematic story of Hamlet?

3. Arrange your ideas into a thoughtful examination of the how the image relates to the ideas in William Shakespeare's, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Refer to the exemplar for guidance.

4. The examination must use/include the following:

- multiple balanced and anti-thesis sentence patterns
- climactic and parallel sentence patterns
- cacophonous alliteration
- euphonic alliteration
- metaphors
- direct and/or indirect references from the play
- a list of lines (partial) referred to throughout the examination

5. All rough work must be completed in class before it can be taken home to edit and finalize.

6. The analysis should be no longer than 750 words (1.5-2 spacing; 11-12 font).

7. Submit ALL of the material in this package with your final draft.

8. Create a title page. Use the format (attached) for guidelines.

TITLE (not Hamlet analysis. something's spicy or purposely obfuscated)

IMAGE

THESIS

NAME

9. The lines in Hamlet have been scholarly deconstructed thousands of times. The only sources that you need to consult are the text, your mind and a thesaurus. Forget about the rest.

I Am Afraid of My Mirror. I Am Afraid of Me. A Different Lens on William Shakespeare's, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

With devotion's visage, And pious action, we do sugar o'er the devil himself.
(3.1.53-5)

One may smile, and smile, and be a villain. At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.
(1.5.115-6)

The painting, if it were entitled Hamlet, tells a story that is honest, primal, and child-like. The raw, "antic disposition" (1.5.192) of a reflected pedestrian and his bicycle reveals a stark awareness of the psychic maelstrom that rages within the mind. It is not a posed profile or touched up masquerade. It is not a stylized black and white portrait. It is the carnival freak. It is the carnival freak in *us*. The painter, perhaps in homage to self-portrayal, is not meticulous and clear in the depiction of his image, rather, the painter represents "self" as the child-like, ill-defined, developing confusion that is often masked with age. The painting is thus a thematic/symbolic reflection of the layers - the masks - that we all wear, yet when stripped, reveal the true mind. The true self. The beautiful chaos of the forgotten child in us all. The painter is bare bones, incisive in the depiction of the mind within the maelstrom. The painter sees the chaos and embraces it. Flaunts it, even. Shakespeare does not. He depicts it as a molten cancer waiting to explode. And it does.

In William Shakespeare's, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, the "forgotten child" is not embraced. It is suffocated in a much more tragic, existentially angst-ridden wrapping. Where the painter masks nothing, Shakespeare's Hamlet is entangled in the universal conflict of a man trying to locate that forgotten, primal child by unmasking and stripping the mind of layers of obligations (3.1.64-96). Hamlet and his soliloquies are iconic and timeless because they spotlight man's perpetual discord between instinct and civility, desire and obligation, and the messy tragedies that result from this schism.

Shakespeare's depiction of a man staring at his own reflection is a less precise, and perhaps more real, look into the blurred mind that is a symptom of most of us. Psychic confusion. Hamlet is aware that when he looks at himself (the wealth of soliloquies are a testament to this) his masks look back. Hamlet is aware that these masks bind him and perpetuate the angst and cynicism that are eating away at him. Hamlet becomes acutely aware that he is not alone in the facade. It is a plague that is ruining a kingdom, Denmark, a name, Hamlet, and a mind, his own. Yet, Hamlet's solution to his internal dilemma. Add more masks. He "puts an antic disposition on" a ruse that puts his sanity under scrutiny. He desires to appropriate the mask of

his alter-ego, Fortinbras' bestial spirit (4.4.34-69), in place of his own encumbered mind. Hamlet, conscious of his own encumbrances, is hyper-sensitive - perhaps paranoid - to the masks that surround him. He sees the facade that is bloating an intoxicated and blind Denmark (1.4.15-41). He sees the act that his mother and uncle are staging. These masks unhinge him. Destroy him. Hamlet's search for the "devil", that child-like *id* that religion, morality and ancestry have encrusted and strangled within him, is the downfall of man and a society.

The veils. The cloaks. The facades that saturate Hamlet's psyche inhibit him from interacting with the world as his true self; a true self that, unlike the painter, he may have lost for good. The devil that Hamlet tries to manage and exorcise is shadowed by smiles and sugary facades. The devil is fear; the fear of what lies beneath. The painter's Hamlet has no fear because the devil is not the chaos. It is the mask.

LINES REFERENCED

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One may smile, and smile, and be a villain. At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark (1.5.115-6)

To put an antic disposition on (1.5.192)

To be or not to be... or lose the name of action (3.1.64-96)

How all occasions do inform against me me and spur my dull revenge... My thoughts be bloody or nothing worth! (4.4.34-69)

But, to my mind, though I am native here and to the manner born, it is a custom... The dram of evil doth all the noble substance of a doubt to his own scandal (1.4.15-41)

**I Am Afraid of My Mirror. I Am Afraid of Me. A Different Lens on
William Shakespeare's, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark***



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by: