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'A Comparative Study between Shakespeare's Characters "Hamlet" and "Macbeth"

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ABSTRACT- This research paper intends to conduct a thorough comparison of Hamlet and Macbeth, two iconic characters from William Shakespeare's well-known plays. In order to better understand how Shakespeare depicts human nature, ambition, and moral dilemmas, this study compares and contrasts the major themes, traits of character, psychological motivations, and tragic journeys of Macbeth and Hamlet.

KEYWORDS- Hamlet, Macbeth, tragedy, power, ambition, revenge, characters, revenge.

I. INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare is one of the most well-known poets and playwrights in English literature. Between 1589 and 1613, William Shakespeare wrote his most popular works. Some of his tragedies produced during these years are regarded as masterpieces in the tragedy genre, including Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth.

The two most well-known dramas by Shakespeare are Hamlet and Macbeth. The titles of both plays reflect the names of their leading men. Hamlet and Macbeth are linked through the background of the plays in both of Shakespeare's works, and these links are crucial to the plot of the plays.

Shakespeare uses many of the same ideas in his two tragedies Macbeth and Hamlet, making comparisons between them simple. Both plays share common themes such as power, ambition, and revenge, but the characters of Macbeth and Hamlet represent contrasting approaches to these themes.

This study aims to compare and contrast the characters of Macbeth and Hamlet, exploring their similarities and differences, and the ways in which they reflect Shakespeare's portrayal of human nature.

Characterization of Hamlet and Macbeth- Macbeth is one of the most complex and interesting characters in all of Shakespeare's plays. He is initially portrayed as a brave and honorable soldier who is deeply respected by his peers and loved by his wife. However, his ambition for power leads him to murder the king and seize the throne, leading to a spiral of violence and destruction. In the beginning of the play, Macbeth is presented as a loyal and patriotic warrior. He is fiercely committed to his country and to his king, Duncan. As the play progresses, Macbeth becomes increasingly ambitious and power-hungry. When he is told by the witches that he will become king, he begins to imagine himself in the role and becomes consumed by the desire for power. In the end, Macbeth's ambition and greed lead to his downfall. His tragic ending is a result of his own choices and actions, but it is also a commentary on the corrupting influence of power.

Hamlet is one of Shakespeare's most well-known characters, and he is often considered one of the greatest and most complex characters in all of literature. He is a tragic figure whose struggle with grief, revenge, and morality has captivated audiences for centuries.

At the beginning of the play, Hamlet is a young prince who is struggling to come to terms with the death of his father and his mother's remarriage to his uncle, who has taken over the throne. Throughout the play, Hamlet's character develops as he grapples with his grief and his desire for revenge. He becomes increasingly disillusioned with the world around him, and his thoughts and actions become more erratic and unpredictable. Hamlet's eventual descent into madness is one of the most iconic elements of the play. As he becomes more and more consumed by his grief and his desire for revenge, Hamlet's behavior becomes increasingly erratic. In the end, Hamlet's tragic fate is a reflection of the corrupt and flawed world around him, and his character serves as a powerful commentary on the human condition.

Plot analysis- In Macbeth, the title character is a Scottish general who is prophesied by three witches that he will become king. Driven by his own ambition and the urging of his wife, Macbeth murders King Duncan to seize the throne. However, he soon finds himself plagued by guilt and paranoia and commits further murders to maintain his

power. In contrast, in Hamlet, the protagonist is a Danish prince who is grief-stricken by his father's murder and seeks revenge on his uncle, Claudius, who has usurped the throne. Hamlet struggles with indecision and moral dilemmas before finally taking action, leading to tragic consequences.

Both plays feature characters who are driven to commit murder to achieve their goals, and both protagonists face obstacles and moral dilemmas along the way. However, the source of the characters' ambition differs. Macbeth is driven by his own desire for power, while Hamlet is motivated by his desire for revenge. The role of supernatural elements is also different in the two plays. Macbeth receives a prophecy from witches that he will become king, while Hamlet is visited by the ghost of his father who reveals that he was murdered.

Macbeth Vs Hamlet- In "Hamlet," the protagonist faces the challenge of fulfilling his promise to seek revenge for his father's death, but his tendency to overanalyze situations causes him to delay taking action. On the other side, Macbeth has a propensity for making snap decisions and acting rapidly. Hamlet is a generally amiable individual who meets a valiant end after finally keeping his vow to his father's ghost. By the end of the play, Macbeth is viewed as a bloodthirsty tyrant, so he passes away in a much less honourable manner. Consider it from the perspective of honour, for example. Only Hamlet is considered honourable despite the fact that both Macbeth and Hamlet fight and finally die. Hamlet's reluctance to kill his uncle stems from his ethical considerations and doubts about the appropriate course of action, while Macbeth ruthlessly kills multiple individuals in his pursuit of the throne. Ultimately, Hamlet succeeds in avenging his father's murder, but only after grappling with the weighty moral implications of his actions. In contrast, Macbeth's unchecked ambition leads to his tragic downfall.

Use of Supernatural- The narratives of Hamlet and Macbeth are heavily influenced by the ghost of the old king and the Weird Sisters, respectively. These characters also appear in the plays' opening acts and are crucial in creating the atmosphere of the works. Both of these great tragedies have supernatural aspects that interact with the religious discussions and debates of the time. As a result, understanding the theological settings can influence how readers react to the supernatural in Hamlet and Macbeth.

Hamlet and Macbeth as a tragic hero - Shakespeare's characters Hamlet and Macbeth are ideal examples of tragic heroes, each tragedy is unique due to the characters' motivations, personalities, and inner thoughts. However, these characters exhibit distinct personas in each tragedy due to their different motivations, dispositions, and inner thoughts. It is very clear that Hamlet is a venerable tragic hero while Macbeth is an unlikable character. The tragic weakness of Macbeth is his ambition. His "vaulting ambition, which o'er leaps itself" is the only explanation for the evil he commits. Macbeth will slaughter his friends and family members in order to fulfil his ambition of becoming king, which is so powerful.

Hamlet tragic flaws is indecisiveness. He makes a pledge to his father that he will "sweep to [his] revenge", "with wings as swift/ as meditation," but he waits until the very end of the play to murder Claudius. Despite the fact that his father was the one who was killed, this lack of action demonstrates that he is unable to keep his promise.

CONCLUSION- In conclusion, while both Macbeth and Hamlet are tragic characters created by William Shakespeare, they differ significantly in terms of their journeys and character development. Hamlet is characterized by his philosophical reservations and moral quandaries, which prevent him from acting decisively until it is too late, while Macbeth is consumed by his ambition and becomes increasingly ruthless in his quest for power. Both characters are haunted by supernatural elements that catalyze the tragic events that unfold throughout their respective plays, with Hamlet's journey beginning with the ghost of his father, and Macbeth's journey beginning with the witches. Ultimately, both plays serve as cautionary tales about the destructive consequences of unchecked ambition and the power of supernatural forces to influence human behavior. The two characters have different approaches to their inner turmoil. Hamlet's analytical and introspective nature leads him to constantly question his actions and the meaning of life, while Macbeth's impulsive and ruthless nature causes him to act before thinking and ultimately leads to his downfall. Shakespeare's masterful characterization and exploration of themes have ensured that these plays continue to captivate and resonate with audience centuries after their creation.

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