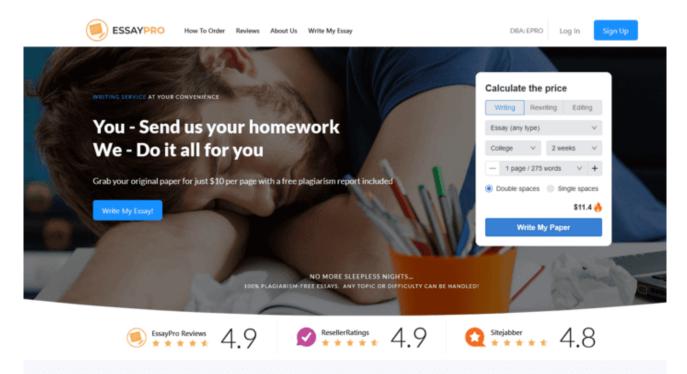
Soliloquy Essays - Analysis of Hamlet's Soliloquies



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Analysis of Hamlet's Soliloquies

"To be or not to be--that is the question..." Many people incorrectly interpret those famous words of Hamlet's, not knowing the true meaning or background behind his speech. In his soliloquy, Hamlet contemplates whether or not he should take it upon himself to act accordingly to his uncle's/step-father's crime against his own father. However, later on in the play, Hamlet realizes Fortinbras' resolve and his quest for victory. By witnessing Fortinbras and his actions, Hamlet comes to realize that he has no inner struggle and sees the actions that he must take in order to bring inner peace to himself and avenge his father's murder.

In his most famous soliloquy, Hamlet ponders whether he should take action against his "sea of troubles" and seek revenge for his father's death or live with the pain of his father's murder. Hamlet's weakness is later illustrated when he passes up the opportunity to kill Claudius by rationalizing that he has made peace with God, therefore sending him to Heaven if he were to be slain. In <u>addition</u> to his proposal of vengeance, he also contemplates whether it is better to stay alive or commit suicide. "To die, to sleep--/No more--and by a sleep to say we end/The heartache and the thousand natural shocks/That

flash is heir to--'tis a consummation/Devoutly to be wished" (III,i,68-71). If he were to sleep, he feels that all his troubles would vanish, and this would not be such a bad thing. However, he says that if he were to sleep, he might have disturbing dreams while in slumber which would be wholly undesirable. Hamlet knows that what he wishes to do to his uncle is sinful and wrong, but it is this train of thought that leaves him in a state of anxiety. This soliloquy portrays Hamlet as a sort of coward because he can not act upon his own emotions and desires. In order to escape his heartache, he cowardly thinks about killing himself. Nevertheless, Hamlet's resolve makes a dramatic turn by the time he recites his soliloquy of Act IV, Scene iv.

In his last soliloquy, it is obvious that Hamlet's state of mind has gone through a metamorphosis. Unlike his "To be or not to be" soliloquy, Hamlet knows how much of a coward he has been and illustrates this in his final soliloquy by comparing himself to Fortinbras.

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