Name

Instructors’ Name

Course Title and Code

Date

Father and Son Relationship in Hamlet

The relationship between the father and son is one of the most important aspects of Shakespeare's play Hamlet. The dramatist has based the play on a son, named Hamlet, who is trying to avenge the unjustified death of his father. On the other hand, the author has also introduced two other sons in the play, who are Laertes and Fortinbras and they also want to avenge the killing of their fathers. The death of the three father figures is connected in one or the other way to Hamlet senior, who was the father of Hamlet and the now the sons want to take their revenge from Hamlet junior. The play sheds light on the faithfulness of the characters towards their fathers, as well as their willingness to sacrifice their own lives for the sake of avenging their father's death. Including two other pairs of father-son, apart from king Hamlet and prince Hamlet, may have been the attempt of the author to show the faithfulness of the charters towards their father and willingness of sacrificing their lives for them, while comparing it with the attitude of Hamlet.

The play reveals the grievance of Hamlet over the death of his father, as he was unable to return to the normal life, even after mourning his father for two months. Till that time, he believed that his father had died in a natural death and he was unable to bear the loss. In the meantime, his uncle married his mother and got control of the position of his deceased father. Hamlet was least interested in the position of the ruler and was unable to celebrate the wedding of his mother, due to his grieving and mourning. It was due to his great attachment and love with his father, that he was able to see his ghost and know the true source of his unjustified death. He became convinced of avenging the death of his father and did not accept the new status of his form uncle and present stepfather, named Claudius (Kang, 153). He kept delaying his plan of killing Claudius, as he tried to get the proof of his guiltiness and then was trapped in the situation, which further delayed his revenge. He tried to conduct performance, based on the supposed scenario of his father's killing and from the reaction of Claudius became sure that he had killed him without any doubt. Instead of killing him at the moment, Hamlet spares the life of his stepfather, because he was praying. The excuse sheds light on his reluctance, as he was unable to accept the present situation and take the swift action which any other son would have taken in a similar scenario (Erlich, 65).

On the other hand, the author of the play has also provided examples of Laertes and Fortinbras, who emerged as more faithful and concerned sons, as compared to Hamlet. In the case of Laertes, his father Polonius was killed by Hamlet, when he was spying on the conversation of Hamlet and his mother. Hamlet actually killed him due to a misunderstanding, thinking that he was his stepfather. Claudius, who just wanted a reason to kill Hamlet, got it and sent Claudius to a foreign land. On the other hand, Laertes came from a foreign land in order to avenge the death of his father. Instead of making the coward hidden moves, he publically announced that he would take the revenge of his father's death. He was also not concerned about the fact that his father was killed on the basis of suspicion as he was spying on Hamlet. He just wanted to kill the person who had killed his after, without caring about the guilty circumstances of his death. His faithfulness, loyalty and over towards his father forced him to overlook his flaws and avenge his death in any way (Curran Jr., 45).

Another father-son pair depicted by the author in the play is that of late and young Fortinbras. The old Fortinbras was killed by Hamlet's father, as he tried to capture his land. At the time, Hamlet was fighting with Laertes, Fortinbras invaded Hamlet’s land with his army. He was also deeply concerned about avenging the death of his father, therefore, led the army to win the rule of the land where his father was killed. The situation turned in the way that Hamlet succeeded in killing Laertes, as well as his stepfather, and became the victim of his stepfathers' plan. Claudius planned the fight of Hamlet and Laertes in the way that he poisoned their swords, in order to ensure that Hamlet would die after getting even slight cut (Mosley, 185). He also prepared a poisoned drink for Hamlet, which he wanted him to drink when he felt tired of fighting, however, Hamlet refused to drink from that. His mother drinks from it and dies. On the other hand, Laertes lost the fight and just before dying, he told Hamlet that his mother was killed by his stepfather, who had added poison to the drink. Then Hamlet forces Claudius to drink the same, after which he dies and Hamlet also dies because of the poisoning of the cuts he got during the fight. Fortinbras showed his mighty heart by allowing mighty last rites of Hamlet, after gettingthe control of the land (Bergmann, and Green, 26).

The relationship between fathers and sons depicted in the play highlight the willingness and action of the sons to avenge their father's death. Out of the three pairs, Hamlet was the grieved on the death of his father and due to the tragic incidents, he also proved to be the most reluctant of taking swift action and avenge his father's death. On the other hand, the two other sons came from the foreign lands and courageously announced that they were there to get their revenge. The coward nature of Hamlet is also evident from the fact that he lost the perfect chance of killing his father's killer by saying that he does not want to kill him while praying as he would go to heaven. He would not have been able to think to that extent if he was determined to avenge the death of his father. While the other two sons was courageous enough to take the action while knowing that their fathers were guilty at some point (Román, 564).

The father-son relationship depicted in the play Hamlet, actually shed light on the laid back, reluctant and hesitant nature of Hamlet, who kept delaying the revenge of his father's death. The play depicts that he may have been the most grieved and affected one, however, he was not courageous enough to take the swift action, or he was trapped by the situation and faced the tragedies which proved him a coward. His actions were compared with those of other characters of the play because they were not left with any other thing to protect, therefore took the swift actions and appeared to be more courageous and daring than Hamlet.

Works Cited

Bergmann, Martin S., and André Green. "Hamlet: the inability to mourn and the inability to love." *The Unconscious in Shakespeare's Plays*. Routledge, 2018. 15-37.

Curran Jr, John E. *Hamlet, Protestantism, and the Mourning of Contingency: Not to be*. Routledge, 2016.

Erlich, Avi. *Hamlet's absent father*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

Kang, Misook. "Lawrence and Lacan on “The Transformation of Hamlet”." *The DH Lawrence Review* 41.2 (2016): 145-159.

Mosley, Joseph Scott. *The Dilemma of Shakespearean Sonship: An Analysis of Paternal Models of Authority and Filial Duty in Shakespeare’s Hamlet*. Diss. 2017.

Román, David. "Hamlet by William Shakespeare, and: Hamlet by William Shakespeare." *Theatre Journal* 70.4 (2018): 563-568.