

Joe Student

Mr. Fannon

Shakespeare Period 2

22 October 2020

To Be Flawed, or Not To Be Flawed?

“Crippled things are always more beautiful. It's the flaw that brings out beauty.” (Black)

(BKG 1) Often times in our society we only notice how people are flawed. We fixate on the imperfections in people. This might be because, inherently, humans are all flawed. No one is perfect and people are constantly striving to erase these imperfections. They go to the gym to sculpt their bodies, or they go to a plastic surgeon to “fix” their nose because it is too big, or small, or wide. Fixating on flaws can be the undoing of many people. (BKG 2 & 3) Writers have forever presented the world with stories that reflect how flawed human beings really are. They have presented these characters with flaws that can ultimately create the downfall of the character. The most significant writer in the history of the English language is William Shakespeare. Shakespeare wrote three types of plays: Histories, Comedies, and Tragedies. There are flawed characters in each type of play; however, these flaws are most detrimental in the Tragedies. In fact, in the Tragedies, the main character’s downfall is ultimately created by his tragic flaw. This is never more prevalent than in Shakespeare’s greatest play *Hamlet*. Shakespeare wrote this play a few years after the death of his own son and he is clearly presenting a character who is struggling with loss and an inability to act that leads to many other losses in his story. This tragic flaw in Hamlet the man cripples him in so many instances, but also leads to a reflective nature that generates some of the greatest speeches in the history of literature. Ultimately, these plays are labeled as Tragedies for a reason: there is loss. There are

downfalls. **(THESIS)** Hamlet's tragic flaw is his inability to act and this leads to the many aspects of his downfall.

Sample Body Paragraph

(TS) Hamlet's inability to act creates his downfall by leading to the loss of people he loves. **(CD)** In the play, Hamlet tells Ophelia, "Get thee to a nunnery, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell" (3.1 148-152). **(COM 1)** In this part of the play Hamlet is having a conversation with Ophelia. He feels betrayed by her because he knows that she is not reciprocating his love at her father's request. He knows that she is having this conversation with him in order to spy for Claudius. Instead of confronting her about this, he continues his pattern of not acting on information that he knows to be true. **(COM 2)** This inability to act will be one aspect of his downfall in this play. This tragic flaw, Hamlet's inability to act, will cause him to lose the woman he loves. Instead of having an honest conversation with Ophelia, he instead attacks her. In fact, he tells her that she should never marry, or she should marry a fool who will not mind being abused by her. This attack causes Ophelia to view Hamlet as mad. It drives her away. **(COM 3)** If he only spoke to her honestly, rationally, he might have been able to salvage his relationship. Unfortunately, he will lose Ophelia because he does not act the way he should. He continues to be inactive when he should act with conviction. **(PT)** Hamlet's inability to act also leads to the loss of his mother. **(CD)** Towards the end of Act 3 Hamlet confronts his mother and asks her "This was your husband. Look you now what follows. Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes? Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed and batten on this moor? Ha! Have you eyes?" (3.4 74-77) **(COM 1)** Hamlet is clearly upset with his mother at this point in the play. He can't

believe that she was once married to a great man and now she has lowered herself to marry Claudius. It would seem like Hamlet is acting crazy at this point in the play. He is confronting his mother. He accuses her of not loving his father. (COM 2) However, this confrontation may have never happened if Hamlet had acted on information that he had very early in the play. He knows how his father died and yet here he is accusing his mother of something instead of doing something about how his father died. This confrontation drives a wedge between Hamlet and Gertrude and is just another aspect of his downfall created by his inability to act. (COM 3) If he would only do something with the information he has, this loss would not have occurred. He could have shared the information that he had with his mother. The Ghost tells Hamlet not to make his mother a part of his revenge, and had he followed the Ghost's advice, and perhaps involved her in his pursuit of justice, Gertrude may not have been lost to Hamlet. (TRANS) The loss of people Hamlet loves is not the only aspect of his downfall created by his inability to act.

Sample Conclusion

(RVT) Hamlet's ultimate downfall was caused by his incessant hand wringing and inability to act. (SUM) During the play Hamlet loses so many things that are important to him. He loses the love of his life, his mother, and the opportunity to follow in his father's footsteps to lead Denmark as its' king. He also loses the opportunity to defend his people against other countries who would seek to conquer Denmark. Ultimately the most devastating aspect of his downfall created by his inability to act, is his own demise. Hamlet spends much of the play looking for answers that he already has. He does not trust his gut and instead seeks validation throughout the play. Hamlet's inability to act paralyzes him when he clearly should be acting. (REL) This is typical of so many people in the world. It is so easy to sit and watch life unfold all around us. People are hesitant to step outside of the safe little bubbles they build around

themselves as protection. People are afraid to take chances because they do not want to make mistakes and experience loss. It is too hard to deal with. What they don't realize is that they are losing so much more by attempting to live safely, instead of living with conviction and intent.

(CS) History has shown us that people who act, even at their own peril, change the world, they are truly alive. People who sit on their hands and do nothing are not living at all.