

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GHOST APPEARANCE IN *HAMLET*

FRANÇOIS P. AGBOIGBA

Lecturer, English Department, University of Abomey-Calavi, Republic of Benin

ABSTRACT

The careful observer can easily realize that certain cultural practices from afar look strangely like those performed in his/her own culture. As an African, I definitely perceive this reality through Shakespeare's works. The appearance of a ghost is highly significant since it may reveal hidden facts. The one presented here - King Hamlet - has a matter to settle with his murderer and brother Claudius. And to achieve this, he confides in his son Hamlet. Its recommendation is clear: give me justice. Its repeated appearance prompts this son, so dull and brooding, to pass to the act. What if the latter had other reasons to do so! That is what this article will consider, focusing on *Hamlet, prince of Denmark*. Our goal is to reveal these hidden reasons.

KEYWORDS: Appearance, Phantom, Revelation, Revenge, Killing

Resume

L'observateur attentif peut aisément se rendre compte que certaines pratiques relevant de la culture d'ailleurs ressemblent étrangement à ce que présente sa propre culture. L'Africain que je suis le remarque fort bien avec les œuvres de Shakespeare. L'avènement d'un fantôme par exemple est chose curieuse et redoutée car ce 'revenu' a certainement des choses cachées à révéler. Celui que nous présente le dramaturge - King Hamlet- avait un contentieux à régler avec son meurtrier et frère Claudius. Et pour y parvenir, il se confie à son fils héritier Hamlet. Sa recommandation est claire : rends-moi justice. Son apparition répétée finit par décider ce fils- trop pensif et timoré- à passer à l'acte. Et si ce dernier avait aussi d'autres raisons de le faire ! C'est ce que cet article étudiera en s'appuyant sur l'œuvre *Hamlet, prince de Danemark*. Notre objectif est de révéler ces motifs dissimulés.

Mot-Cles: Apparition, Fantôme, Révélation, Vengeance, Meurtre

INTRODUCTION

The Elizabethan belief in the supernatural is the prolongation of the main religious beliefs or the superstitions of the middle Ages. There is a survival of diverse beliefs. For example, as E.M.W. Tillyard puts it, "The Elizabethans kept the main medieval beliefs about the angels, but omitted or confused many of the details"¹. They are convinced of the existence of angels and clearly believe that the angels "are intermediate between God and man; that their nature is purely intellectual; that they possess free will like man, but that never conflicts with God's will; that they can apprehend God immediately and not by figure or symbol; that they are God's messengers, and that they act as guardians of men"².

The supernatural plays an important role in the Elizabethan era and sometimes is referred to in the works of some writers. Among the latter, we have William Shakespeare (1564-1616). He embodies his century. He does nothing but exploit the cultural patrimony of his country about beliefs and superstitions. He introduces the supernatural into some of his tragedies; he introduces ghosts and witches who have supernatural knowledge. In *Hamlet*, the play under study, a ghost is referred to. I will focus on the significance of its appearance. How far does it contribute to the action?

The supernatural gives a confirmation and a distinct form to inward movements already present and exerting an influence to the sense of suspicion in *Hamlet*.

THE THREE ELIZABETHAN IDEAS ABOUT GHOSTS

In *Hamlet*, all three of the standard Elizabethan ideas about ghosts are represented:

- The soldier's, taking the catholic view that it is a soul come from Purgatory.
- Horatio coolly sceptical about the folklorish superstitions, reluctant to commit himself to an opinion on the theological question.
- Hamlet (later), making the Protestant assumption that it may be an angelic or devilish spirit but not any man's soul.

There is a feeling of a supreme power or destiny. Hamlet is brought back to Denmark by the chance meeting with the pirate ship. Hamlet is in the hands of Providence. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends", (v-ii-10) he declares to Horatio, speaking of the fighting in his heart that would not let him sleep and his rashness in groping his way to the courtiers to find their commission. Soon, he answered "why, even in that was Heaven ordinaunt" (V-ii-49) to Horatio who asked him how he managed to seal the substituted commission; and when he did not want to yield the fencing-match, he replied "we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow...The readiness is all". (V-ii-201-205), showing thus that he believed in predestination, the divinity which puts a final polish on the course of our lives. When he says:

"Let Hercules himself do what he may. The cat will mew, and dog will have his day", (V-i-272-273).

He foresees the inevitability of his destiny. In fact, very early in the play, in his first soliloquy, he made his first comparison of himself to Hercules, the archetypal man of action, the God-like son of God, the man who accomplished twelve supernatural labours, and in the end, conquered itself. Hamlet's task is Herculean, that he knows, and knowing himself no Hercules, he groans under the load. By Act V, however, his attitude is different. Belligerent Laertes is now the Hercules figure, and clearly is less capable than Hamlet of cleaning out the Danish stables. Hamlet knows that he has a better grasp of the situation than Laertes. It is not the expectation of death at the cry of "one" which has altered Hamlet's attitude to the Herculean nature of his task. That was a consummation long and devoutly wished for. What has changed in Hamlet is that now he will accomplish his task.

The problem of thought has been set aside. Action is a matter of readiness to act on impulse, of responding to the occasion without time for thought. That is what Polonius's death has taught him. It committed him to serve as God's scourge, destined for death himself, and minister, agent of the good. And it taught him the means. All the morality of revenge killing, and all the doubts that make him hesitate, can be ignored by acting on impulse. The readiness for murder and for death is all.

THE GHOST: THE ONLY PROMPTING FORCE IN *HAMLET*?

Seeing that the coming of the ghost appears as a determining fact which urges the hero Hamlet to act, one may ask: Is a ghost a motivating force behind the expected revenge?

To answer this, it would be interesting to talk a little about the ghost symbolism. According to the general impression, a ghost is a bad omen. According to the various beliefs currents in Shakespeare's day, a ghost could be either an illusion, "a Phantom seen as a portent of danger to the state"³, a spirit come from the grave because of something left undone; a spirit come from purgatory by divine permission, or a devil disguised as a dead person in order to lure the living into mortal sin. All these theories are tested in the course of the play. Horatio, abandoning the idea that the ghost is an illusion, assumes first that it has come as a portent, and then, that it can be laid if they carry out its wishes. When the ghost appears to Hamlet himself in the fourth scene, both Marcellus and Horatio are afraid that it is a goblin damned rather than a spirit of health, and that it will drive the prince into madness and suicide; and, although Hamlet, after he has listened to the ghost's message, is fully convinced that it is indeed his father's spirit, later on he has moments of doubt when he thinks it may be the devil. He has, in any case, to obtain confirmation of the truth of the ghost's story.

Coming now to the question as to whether the ghost is the only motivating force behind the revenge tragedy or not, we can notice that Hamlet appears for the first time in the second scene of the play, dressed in black, which is an implied criticism of the royal marriage which has just been celebrated. Although Hamlet dislikes Claudius and regards him as a usurper, the latter appears to be a competent and even an amiable ruler. After referring diplomatically to his marriage, dispatching ambassadors to Norway and giving Laertes permission to return to France, he urges Hamlet to stop his excessive mourning, and not to return to Wittenberg. The audience, having already seen the ghost, is aware that "something is rotten in the state of Denmark", (I-v-90) and will sympathize with Hamlet's feelings about his mother's hasty re-marriage, especially as marriage with a deceased husband's brother was not permitted without a special dispensation.

Hamlet's first soliloquy is designed to show his state of mind before his interview with the ghost. He is profoundly shocked by Gertrude's marriage to his uncle in less than two months after her first husband's death, although he has no conscious suspicion that his father has been murdered or that his mother had committed adultery. He wishes suicide were permissible, he compares the world to Eden after the Fall, he contrasts Gertrude's two husbands, the godlike one and the bestial one, and, with a tendency to generalize characteristic of him, he assumes that all women are like his mother: "Frailty, thy name is woman" (I-ii-146).

We learn later that the melancholy and disillusionment apparent in this soliloquy are not part of his normal state of mind. It is necessary to emphasize this, because those critics who form a low opinion of his character tend to forget that his behaviour in the play is partly explicable by the successive shocks he receives.

His depression and his tears are underlined by his initial failure to recognize Horatio; but he rouses himself sufficiently to make the bitter witticism about the funeral baked meats, and his cross-examination of the three men who have seen the ghost reveals that his intelligence has not been blunted by his grief. It is apparent from the four-line soliloquy at the end of the scene, in which he speaks of "foul play" and "foul deeds", that he now suspects that his father has been

murdered.

In the fourth scene, before the appearance of the ghost, Hamlet is given a speech of the drunkenness of the court, which leads him to generalize on the way “some vicious mole of nature” (I-iv-24) or some bad habit outweighs a man’s good qualities and destroys his reputation in the eyes of the world. Hamlet had already referred in the second scene to the drinking habits of the new court, and one function of this speech is to show the deterioration of Elsinore in the reign of Claudius. Another function, equally important from the theatrical point of view, is to distract the attention of the audience so that they are surprised by the reappearance of the ghost, and this function is aided by the extreme complexity of the syntax, which would require the undivided attention of the audience.

He is, apparently, released from purgatory, although Shakespeare makes use of some of the characteristics of the classical Hades. He speaks of his “foul crimes”, which suggests that Hamlet has idealized his character; and it is stressed that he has been sent to his account “Unhous’led” disappointed, unanel’d” (I-v-77) without having taken the sacrament, unprepared, and without having received extreme unction. Hamlet promises to sweep to his revenge, and the ghost leaves him two cautions: “Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive against thy mother aught” (I-v-85-86).

Gertrude is to be left to the prickings of conscience; but the meaning of the first four words of this sentence is ambiguous. They could refer to Hamlet’s attitude to his mother, or they may have a more general application: he is to execute justice on Claudius, without allowing his own mind to become tainted with evil. It is important to realize that Hamlet’s task is almost impossible. How can he kill Claudius in such a way that justice appears to be done, without at the same time exposing the guilt of his mother? It is apparent from the speech Hamlet utters immediately after the ghost’s disappearance that he is more concerned with his mother’s guilt than with his uncle’s blacker crime: he speaks first of her. It is also clear from this soliloquy and from the scene which follows that Hamlet’s mind is reeling in the distracted globe of his skull. Knowing that he will be unable to behave normally till his vengeance is accomplished, he decides to “put an antic disposition” (I-v-172).

How near to breaking-point Hamlet is after the revelation by the ghost is made apparent by his inability to stand, by his “wild and whirling words” (I-v-133) to his friends, and by the hysterical remarks about the “fellow in the cellerage”, (I-v-151) which are not a sign of his egotism and callousness as Madariaga and Rebecca West assume, “Madariaga and Rebecca West believe that Hamlet delayed because he was essentially an egotist”⁴, but which may well make his friends suspect that the ghost is the devil in disguise. The antic disposition is not merely a defence mechanism. It also enables Hamlet to play the role of a Fool as fools have the quality of dissimulation, of “putting an antic disposition on”, and so make remarks which will appear mad to everyone except the guilty King, and which are a means of undermining his self control, so that his conscience will be caught by the performance of “*The Murder of Gonzago*”. (II-ii-511)

Hamlet prevents himself from revealing the ghost’s secret first, when he breaks off to inform Horatio and Marcellus that

“There’s never a villain dwelling in all Denmark but he’s an arrant knave”, (II-ii-124-125)

And secondly when he begins: “It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you...” (II-ii-138)

And then finishes: "For you desire to know what is between us, O'ermaster it as you may". (II-ii-139-140)

Later on, off stage, he makes Horatio his confidant; but he keeps the secret from Marcellus because he realizes that his own safety depends on secrecy. The scene ends with a significant couplet:

"The time is out of joint. O cursed spite / that ever I was born to set it right" (II-ii-189-190).

These lines, in which Hamlet both accepts and revolts against his mission contrast with his earlier promise to "sweep to his revenge", (II-ii-31) and with his determination to confront the ghost, when his fate cries out: they prepare the way for the long months of inaction.

When the ghost appears again, in the Closet scene, it is to remind Hamlet of his unfulfilled task, and to protect Gertrude from the knowledge of Claudius's crime.

The visitation of the ghost confirms the prompting of his prophetic soul that some foul deed has been committed. The ghost has then cast Hamlet in the role of avenging angel, when all his faculties cry out for him to be a moral scourge. The ghost has asked him to be active, but his disposition is to be reflective, intellectually questioning, and in moral terms, admonitory.

THE OUTCOME OF THE GHOST'S APPEARANCE

One may wonder: why does Shakespeare make the ghost so majestic a phantom, giving it that measured and solemn utterance, and that air of impersonal abstraction which forbids, for example, all expression of affection for Hamlet and checks in Hamlet the outburst of pity for his father? Whatever the intention may have been, the result is that the ghost affects imagination, not simply as the apparition of a dead king who desires the accomplishment of his purposes, but also as the representative of that hidden ultimate power, the messenger of divine justice set upon the expiation of offences which it appeared impossible for man to discover and avenge a reminder of a symbol of the limited world of ordinary experience with the vaster life of which it is but a partial appearance.

The appearance of the spectre means a breaking-down of the walls of the world and the germination of thoughts that cannot really be thought; chaos is come again. It is clear now that the ghost is solely concerned to speed Hamlet to revenge and to protect the queen (which is the purpose of the second visitation by the ghost). But the ghost, through all that precedes, seems not to be the only instigator of the revenge tragedy in Hamlet. Jealousy seems to be another cause.

In fact, Hamlet's attitude to Claudius and to his mother before he has heard the ghost's story is that of a malcontent. What he has to say cannot be part of the ordinary discourse of the court at Elsinore now that his father is dead. His first words are spoken aside: they are ostentatiously not part of the business being transacted, just as he is separated from the rest of the court by his mourning dress. He speaks the ironic speech of the underdog, asserting his superiority by thinking it, and leaving it to others to see that this is what he is doing. His resentment is plain; and it is equally plain that what he resents is his mother's remarriage. Our understanding of this resentment depends on our grasping Hamlet's own interpretation of his situation, as it appears in the speech he makes after the king and his company has withdrawn:

"O that this too too sullied flesh would melt

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew..." (I-ii-129-130)

What reason has Hamlet to feel that his mother's remarriage has sullied his flesh?

The answer to this question cannot lie simply in his dislike or distrust of Claudius, nor can it altogether depend on Hamlet's grief for his father and the feeling that his memory is undervalued by what his mother has done. None of these would result in a sense that his own flesh was sullied. Revulsion from sexual feeling might. His mother's sexuality, presumed cause of her hasty remarriage and of the slight upon the father he loved, might appear to her son loathsome now that his own body, distinguished that sexual appetite of hers, could seem tainted by it. His reaction here would then anticipate the cruel treatment meted out to Ophelia by him later on.

Yet if we understand his feelings to be of this kind, we risk viewing the soliloquy as (in Eleanor Prosser's words quoted by Martin Dodsworth, not that this is an account to which she herself would subscribe) "the tortured writings of an unbalanced neurotic who is over-reacting"⁵. The view does not recommend itself, simply because it involves dramatic miscalculation. To start the play at such a pitch leaves little room for development. We need therefore to consider whether there is not an alternative reason for Hamlet to feel that his flesh has been sullied.

One alternative, taken by Prosser, is to deny that it has been sullied at all and to suppose that what Hamlet says is that his flesh is "too too solid". "As yet", Prosser argues, "Hamlet seems only shocked by her indecency and repulsed by her grossness. There is no suggestion that he feels himself corrupted. The wider implications come later"⁶. The fact that Hamlet is considering suicide, however, does suggest that he feels tainted by the world's being too much with him, and that his "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable"⁷ feelings are a reflection of this. We are willy-nilly thrust back upon the idea that Hamlet does feel his flesh to have been sullied (we can still find a half-upon on "solid", which the context also implies).

Gertrude's marriage to Claudius is, of course, incestuous, but it would be unwise to build too much on this as a basis for Hamlet's feelings if, that is, it is agreed that interpretation that does not present him as indulging a neurotic excess of feeling from the start, is to be avoided. Hamlet and the ghost are the only characters to remark on the incest, and this might imply that the others are partners in a conspiracy of silence not to name the shameful aspect of the royal passion; but they might also be understood not to question it at all. Neither Gertrude nor Claudius is troubled by the fact that their liaison is incestuous, though other things do waken guilt in them. It has been argued on historical grounds that, whatever the feelings expressed by characters, the audience was expected to be disgusted; Henry VIII divorced his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, on the grounds that she had been his brother's wife.

But this shows the case whereby an incestuous marriage could be entered into (that is, the weakness of the taboo) just as much as the revulsion it was supposed to engender. It is interesting that in Shakespeare's depiction of the divorce in Henry VIII, he makes Henry's alienation from his queen not a violent turn into abhorrence, but a gradual process. The word "incest" with its associates is never used in that play. Historical argument, as so often, is not very helpful here. What the text itself suggests is that Hamlet and the ghost both use the idea of incest merely to reinforce their horror at the sexual passion that sends Gertrude "with such dexterity to incestuous sheets"⁸. It is the dexterity that matters; the incest is a second thought. Similarly the ghost deplores the transformation of his bed to. "A couch for luxury and incest"⁹ incest

figures only as another way of speaking of her “luxury”. Incest, then, takes a subordinate place to the indecent strength of Gertrude’s desires as a motive for outrage for the ghost and Hamlet. This would have seemed quite natural to anyone with a concern of honour.

The supposed dishonour to her kinsmen which follows when a widow remarries is a central concern in the *Duchess of Malfi*, and scholars have demonstrated some of its manifestation in the life and literature of the times in illustration of that play. The feeling that there was something wrong, excessive or shamefully comic about the widow who married again was apparently based on the view of sexual identity which “delegates the virtue expressed in sexual purity to the females and the duty of defending female virtue to the males”¹⁰, a principle to which both Polonius and Laertes, representatives of honour, subscribe.

The widow who marries again threatens the division of the sexes necessary to the sense of honour by appropriating to herself the sexual aggressiveness which is supposed to be the property of the male. “Once the sexual division of labour breaks down, women become men and where this occurs there can be neither honour nor shame”¹¹. The speed with which Gertrude remarries only adds to the offence to honour which that marriage represents. In some countries, at some times, repugnance for hasty remarriage has been expressed in the laws themselves. In thirteenth century Castile, for example, it was decreed that “a woman who cohabits with a man less than a year after her widowhood”¹² should incur infamy. But the feeling exists at a level distinct from law in an honour-culture; Julio Caro Baroja says that the premature remarriage of widow was still, in 1965, regarded as a cause of dishonour in certain parts of Spain.

There is then, nothing extraordinary or pathological in Hamlet’s feeling that his honour has been slighted by Gertrude’s remarriage, since both the speed with which it took place and with his father’s death, he was to become head of the family. Thus, he was responsible for the protection of that weak and vulnerable woman, his mother. Hamlet feels this dishonour in his own body in just a way as Laertes feels the effect of Polonius’s death; only his repudiation of his “flesh” reflects the fact of his past failure to maintain honour and a dispirited acceptance of the newly established status quo.

Hamlet’s despondency would nevertheless alienate the whole-hearted subscriber to the values of honour; he ought to react in the forthright way of Laertes, instead of moping about in conspicuous corners. The scene of Laertes departure makes a very forceful point about a difference in temperament between the prince and the young nobleman. The obscurity that covers Hamlet’s actions at the time when his mother’s marriage was proposed (was he at Wittenberg or not?) does not make it easier for a reader or an audience to trust in his reactions now. Even for Horatio he is “young Hamlet” (I-ii-170), the impression given by his first scene is that he is young absolutely, not merely in relation to his father. Was his failure to act over the marriage then, the product of his youth rather than of a real deficiency of character? The question is not urgent to be answered, but it does put us at some distance from simple identification with Hamlet; and all the more so, of course, if we already have our reservations about the values associated with a dedication to honour. There is nothing historically implausible about such reservations.

In its outcome, the *Duchess of Malfi*¹³ does not endorse the view- of Ferdinand and the Cardinal- that the Duchess's marriage to Antonio was wrong (despite the official ecclesiastical disapproval). All this suggests that Shakespeare intended Hamlet's situation to be recognizable within the honour tradition. But he was not relying on a specific view of the tradition to determine a response to Hamlet at the opening of the play. Since Hamlet is "young", he is supposed to grow up while dealing with his dilemma. However unfavourable or unsympathetic our original response might be, it is held in check by this consideration.

Hamlet has asked to go "back to school in Wittenberg" (I-ii-113) and so to avoid Elsinore, the scene of his disgrace. It is equivalent to the wish to leave his sullied flesh behind him. He wants to creep away and forget ("Must I remember") (I-ii-143). It is hardly surprising that he himself omits to mention his honour, since all his plans tend to the further diminution of it. On the other hand we know, and he does not, that the ghost has appeared. The merely hysterical energy of his soliloquy may be converted to action as the consequence of Horatio's news. Our interest in Hamlet's situation thus depends on both positive and negative feelings about it, and these feelings focus upon the matter of honour. Hamlet and the ghost have this much in common.

To come back then to the motivating forces which incite Hamlet to revenge, we might assert that jealousy should not be excluded. Hamlet probably loves his mother and cannot bear the idea of his uncle Claudius sharing this love with him. Through his mother's remarriage with Claudius, he sees his eviction. And, of course, when you are conscious of your honour like Hamlet, and you have been wronged, you cannot help ruminating on your revenge.

Moreover when you have been wronged by a rival who loves the same woman as you, jealousy and honour incite you to revenge. Thus, jealousy and honour are two other motivating forces which incite Hamlet to revenge. But the first and main motivating force is the ghost, because only the latter keeps on reminding Hamlet of his duty of revenge. And that may be the reason why the ghost appears only to Hamlet at the decisive moment.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of the play, Hamlet knew nothing about his father's murder, but already showed a rancor against both his mother and his uncle Claudius, because of their hasty marriage, but also because he might have felt love for his mother. Then the ghost reveals to him that his father has been murdered and that the villain, the murderer, is his uncle, the usurper of the crown and of his mother: "The serpent that did sting thy father's life / Now wears his crown" (I-v-38-39).

To cut a long story short, it is incontestable that, with Polonius's murder, starts the real tragedy and the denouement of the play. And if we take into account the motives of the deaths of so many persons, we can then assert that the tragedy was inevitable. Nevertheless, the ghost has played an important role in it because it revealed- to young Hamlet- Claudius's crime against his father, old Hamlet. Had the ghost not visited Hamlet, the latter would have gone on brooding because his mother has remarried; he would probably not have had any real intention of revenge and would not have been so hard to his mother in the closet-scene, and then would not have had such an opportunity, as he had, to kill Polonius. Thus the tragedy would not have claimed so many victims.

And especially the second appearance of the ghost in *Hamlet* occurred to wake Hamlet up to a task he was forgetting and maybe to chastise him. Although it remained the first and main motivating force, one needs to keep in mind that jealousy

and honour were the other motivating ones which prompted Hamlet to revenge.

END NOTES

- ¹ E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, Chatto and Windus, 1973, p.36
- ² Ibid, p. 37
- ³ Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare, Hamlet*, Edward Arnold, 1973, (I.1-14-15) p.20
- ⁴ Quoted from Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare: Hamlet*, Edward Arnold, 1973, p.13, (I-1-1-2)
- ⁵ Martin Dodsworth, *Hamlet Closely Observed*, The Athlone Press, 1985, p. 46, (I-1-31-34).
- ⁶ Ibidem, p.46, (I-1-31-34)
- ⁷ Martin Dodsworth, op. cit. (I-37).
- ⁸ Martin Dodsworth, op.cit. p. 47, (I-26).
- ⁹ Ibid, p. 47, (I-1, 28-29).
- ¹⁰ Ibid, p.48, (I-1, 1-3).
- ¹¹ Ibid, I-1 (7-9).
- ¹² Ibid, I, (14-15).
- ¹³ Martin Dodsworth, op.cit.,p. 49 (I-1, 9-17).

REFERENCES

Shakespeare's Plays

1. SHAKESPEARE, William: *Hamlet*, Longman, 1983.
2. SHAKESPEARE, William: *Hamlet*, Wordsworth Classics, 2000

Other Works that have Contributed to a Better Understanding of *Hamlet*

3. BROWN, John Russell. *Hamlet: A Guide to the Text and its Theatrical Life*. Shakespeare Handbooks ser. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
4. DODSWORTH, Martin: *Hamlet Closely Observed*, The Athlone Press, 1985.
5. E.M.W. Tillyard: *The Elizabethan World Picture*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1973.
6. "Humor in Shakespeare's Plays." *Shakespeare's World and Work*. Ed. John F. Andrews. 2001. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. eNotes.com. December 2005. 14 June 2007.
7. MATHESON, Mark. 1995. "Hamlet and 'A Matter Tender and Dangerous' ". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46.4: 383–397
8. MAURER, Margaret (2005). "Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquies". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56 (4): 504. doi:10.1353/shq.2006.0027
9. MUIR, Kenneth: *Shakespeare, Hamlet*, Edward Arnold, 1973.
10. ROSENBERG, Marvin. 1992. *The Masks of Hamlet*. London: Associated University Presses. ISBN 0-87413-480-3
11. SHAUGHNESSY, Robert. 2007. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*. Cambridge Companions to Literature ser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-60580-9
12. THOMPSON, Ann. 2001. "Shakespeare and sexuality" in Catherine M S Alexander and Stanley Wells: *Shakespeare and Sexuality*: 1–13. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-80475-2
13. WELLS, Stanley, and Gary Taylor, eds. 1988. *The Complete Works*. By William Shakespeare. The Oxford Shakespeare. Compact ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-871190-5

