Theme Of Personal Loss Which Lacks Emotional Support In Hamlet

The great writer Vicki Harrison is known for saying the famous quote “Grief is like the ocean; it comes on waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it’s overwhelming. All we can do is learn how to swim”. In the play Hamlet by William Shakespeare, Hamlet encounters the loss of many loved ones, but is revoked the opportunity to mourn sufficiently since he lacks emotional support from those close to him.

Consequently, he is not able to subsist with his grief which results in erratic behaviour. Hamlet suffers from the loss of his father who has been murdered. He goes through the tough loss of his mother who has married his despised uncle. Furthermore, he suffers the loss of Ophelia’s love. All these losses have a negative effect on Hamlet and his actions. Through the character of Hamlet, Shakespeare effectively develops the theme that personal loss which lacks emotional support from others during a grieving period can result in uncontrolled erratic behaviour.Moreover, Hamlet does not receive emotional support from his immediate family after the death of his father. As Hamlet is mourning over his father’s death, Claudius addresses Hamlet telling him “Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet, / To give these mourning duties to your father. / But you must know your father lost a father, / That father lost, lost his … We pray you, throw to earth This unprevailing woe, and think of us / As of a father.” [1.2.87-108]. Claudius shows a lack of sympathy towards Hamlet. Instead of understanding that Hamlet needs to have time to come to the realisation that his father is nolonger living, however he insensitively suggests that he should realise his father’s death is part of nature and now accept Claudius as his new father.

Likewise, Hamlet is hysterical by the fact that Claudius has married his mother, Gertrude, so soon after the death of his father. Moving on, these two factors affect Hamlet to the extent that he is considering to commit suicide , “Oh that this too, too sullied flesh would melt, / Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew, / Or that the Everlasting had not fixed / His canon ‘gainst self-slaughter! O God, God! / How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world!” [1.2.129-134]. Hamlet’s violent reaction to the death of his father, in wanting to end his life, is aggravated by the lack of sympathy on the part of his uncle and his mother.

Moreover, as Hamlet learns the brutal end of his father, he is prompted to take action against his perpetrator, Claudius, by avenging his father. While on his journey to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet encounters Fortinbras’ army who are en route to invade a small, valueless piece of land. Through this encounter Hamlet comes to the understanding his procrastination in avenging his father, “How stand I then, / That have a father killed, a mother stained, / Excitement of my reason and my blood, / And let all sleep… Oh, from this time forth, / My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!” [4.4.55-65]. The death of Hamlet’s father caused by his uncle has altered Hamlet’s behaviour and thoughts to only violent thoughts and actions.

Consequently, his motivation and energy is accumulated by his uncle’s public disguise of his crime. Hamlet’s only credible supposition is to quickly have revenge for his father’s cruel death by killing his uncle. All of Hamlet’s activities resulting from the loss of his father are negative by the absence of empathy from the loved ones in his life.In continuation, Hamlet feels that he has

lost his mother too, as she married Claudius so soon after his father's death, and he can feel no respect for her. Instead of mourning with Hamlet, Gertrude criticizes him for not being happy about her marriage. As he contemplates the marriage, he criticizes his mother's actions remarking that "yet, within a month / Let menot think on't. Frailty, thy name is woman! / … married with my uncle / My father's brother, but no more like my father / Than I to Hercules … O most wicked speed, to post / With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!" [1.2.145-157]. Hamlet is furious with his mother for her weakness and what he considers to be a betrayal of her father. Instead of trying to understand his mother's actions he berates her in very critical language and showing a lack of respect towards his mother. Later on, as Gertrude continues in her heartless behaviour towards Hamlet's grief, Hamlet castigates his mother for marrying Claudius, "In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed, / Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love / … A murderer and a villain, / A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe / Of your precedent lord, a vice of kings, / A cutpurse of the empire and the rule… " [3.4.93-100].

Hamlet reveals that he has completely lost all respect for his mother by using foul and shocking language. The loss of his mother to Claudius has created a behaviour which is incoherent with his characteristically polite attitude towards her.Furthermore, Hamlet is impotent to depend on Ophelia for emotional support which results in his erratic behaviour towards her. He believes he has lost her love. However, anonymous to Hamlet, Ophelia still truly loves him but has been forbidden by her father Polonius to return Hamlet's affections because the relationship will bring disgrace to her and her family, "Tender yourself more dearly, / Or not to crack the wind of the poor phrase, / Running it thus you'll tender me a fool." [1.3.107-109]. Ophelia assures her father that she will obediently follow his orders and will not further associate with Hamlet. If Ophelia had been allowed to express her love for Hamlet, then Hamlet might have found the condolences, he needs to grieve for his father, which would have modified his unusual conduct. Hamlet's bizarre behaviour, prompted by his unrequited love, manifests itself when he enters Ophelia's room "Lord Hamlet, with his doubted all unbraced; / No hat upon his head; his stockings fouled, / Ungartered, and down-gyved to his ankle; / … As if he had been loosed out of hell /To speak of horrors he comes before me." [2.1.78-84].

Hamlet's rumpled appearance is totally inadequate regarding a young man who is supposedly in love with a young woman. Ophelia is shocked and upset by this spectacle of Hamlet. Hamlet's perceived loss of Ophelia's love has produced this alarming behaviour. In conjunction with Ophelia hiding her love from Hamlet and Hamlet dreadfully needing someone close to him to grieve with, he has transformed into a distinct individual who is divergent of his common behaviour.In conclusion, uncontrolled erratic behaviour can be the outcome of lack of sympathy from loved ones during a time of great personal loss. Hamlet is feeling great loss due to the death of his father. He has lost his mother to his uncle whom he despises. In addition, he loses the love of Ophelia.

Consequently, all these situations combine to produce behaviour that is abnormal of Hamlet. Therefore, in times of grief, mourning the loss of a loved one is just the beginning towards being able to rebuild one's life. If there is no sufficient mourning the outcome can be tragic and destructive, impacting not only that individual and the good but rather affecting everyone around that individual.