

*Hamlet* AP Essay

I have given you four prominent soliloquies from *Hamlet*. You are to construct an essay in which you argue (and here I mean YOU MUST USE KEY QUOTATIONS FROM the four soliloquies) which of the four soliloquies is most central to the tragedy of the Shakespearean play, *Hamlet*. You should make sure to make connections between your analysis of the speeches and other key events in the play to show how the key idea dominates and influences the tragedy. Don't forget to include why the other soliloquies are not the most central as well.

**Deadline: Feb. 6, 2015, Turnitin.com**

**Act 1 Scene 2: O That This Too Solid Flesh Would Melt (Spoken by Hamlet)**

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!  
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:  
So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month--  
Let me not think on't--Frailty, thy name is woman!--  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears:--why she, even she--  
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,  
Would have mourn'd longer--married with my uncle,  
My father's brother, but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules: within a month:  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not nor it cannot come to good:  
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

**Act 2 Scene 2: O, What A Rogue And Peasant Slave  
Am I (Spoken by Hamlet)**

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!  
For Hecuba!  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,  
Upon whose property and most dear life  
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?  
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,  
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?  
Ha!  
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be

But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
I should have fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
O, vengeance!  
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,  
A scullion!  
Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;  
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be the devil: and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds  
More relative than this: the play 's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

**To Be, Or Not To Be (Spoken by Hamlet, Act 3 Scene 1)**

To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of  
time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's  
contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.--Soft you now!  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd.

**Act 3 Scene 3 : Oh my offence is rank, it smells to heaven (Spoken by Claudius)**

O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will:  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;  
And, like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offence?  
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;  
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul  
murder'?  
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
Try what repentance can: what can it not?  
Yet what can it when one can not repent?  
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,  
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!  
Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of  
steel,  
Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe!  
All may be well.