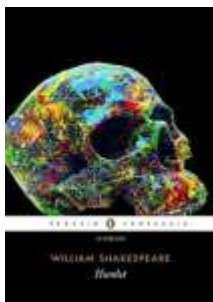


**THE KINGDOM: THE PLURAL ADMINISTRATIVE POLITIC
IN “HAMLET” (2014) PIECE**

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William Shakespeare, in his theatrical piece “Hamlet”, presents a character who manages the Danish kingdom in a manner and model that differ from the previous ruler described in Saxo Grammaticus’s writings. The kingdom, shown through the lens of 1600 and medieval customs, features a complex prince who prompts numerous interpretive directions.

To gain a deeper understanding of Prince Hamlet, the reader may look to Harold Bloom’s (2001) interpretation. This critical work develops the character of King Claudius as a figure whose behavior influences the prince’s actions. Bloom’s analysis positions the prince’s performance as a primary reason for Shakespeare’s place at the center of the Western Canon.

Considering the literary criticism of this American writer and applying it to King Claudius’s administrative incompetence, it appears that Claudius failed to secure trustworthy and valid information during negotiations with the Kingdom of England. This lack of information is evident in the scenes involving the subjects Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as well as Prince Hamlet.

Since Shakespeare does not specify the exact scene where King Claudius writes the letter sent to the King of England via the aforemen-

tioned subjects, the reader is left with the interpretation of a point of corruption among the involved characters. This concept of corruption aligns with Elinor Ostrom's (2021) work; in other words, the failure to form a central agency to negotiate with the English kingdom led to corrupt actions among the characters.

The reader may ask: how did this failure in the negotiation center occur? It is possible to trace this failure back to King Claudius himself. Given that the letter contained two possible actions in England – one of which was unknown to the subjects – the King seemingly sought to involve everyone only in the collection of tributes from the English kingdom.

For the reader, the lack of valid information provided by King Claudius, in his primary role as King, created a vengeful opportunity and a path toward corruption for the prince. This opportunity can be viewed beyond the act of fratricide committed by Claudius against King Hamlet, the prince's father.

As Prince Hamlet becomes aware of his first international mission under Claudius's reign – the collection of tributes in England – the possibility of monetary corruption arises. It is plausible that the prince modified the contents of the letter to ensure the financial reception of these tributes for himself. This modification, which the reader can infer from Act IV, Scene VII, may have facilitated monetary gain and a form of corruption, at least to the modern reader.

Prince Hamlet's duties under King Claudius's administration are also marked by defection. This is seen in the intentional abandonment of established practices, as Ostrom (2021, p. 11) writes: "Let us assume that the central agency punishes defections with probability...".

The probability that influenced Prince Hamlet – acting as a representative of the Danish central agency in negotiations with England – was to allow the death of the royal subjects in exchange for monetary gain. These advantages encouraged the prince to abandon the requests originally written in King Claudius's letter.

In addition to this sense of probability, there are the interpretations of Bloom (2001) and George Wilson Knight (1970), as well as the less direct perspectives of A.C. Bradley (1991) and Mendes and Prado (2019). Knight (1970), like Bloom (2001), sought to provide a less rigid critical interpretation of Prince Hamlet for the reader. Bradley (1991) of-

fers an even less complex interpretation, yet one that provides a vast number of questions centered on both King Claudius and Prince Hamlet. On the other hand, Mendes and Prado (2019) focus their literary criticism on all characters, while specifically addressing King Claudius as their central point of analysis.

King Claudius, in his political administration, sought to implement a more common modality of rule; in other words, he attempted to bring the Danish population closer to a form of “governing the commons”. His administration scheduled and held meetings designed to foster this approximation among the Danish people.

The royal administration of King Claudius promoted, through this governance of the commons – as theorized by Ostrom (2021) – the multiplication of individuals utilizing the resource system. The reader can identify this system within his political administration when the King modifies kingdom customs in contrast to medieval Danish traditions. These modifications range from international administrative functions (territorial and financial negotiations) to leisure activities, such as theater, sword fighting, and social gatherings for wine.

In the “Hamlet” (2014) text, set within the Renaissance Era, the King seeks to create what could be metaphorically termed an “irrigation system” within his government. According to Ostrom (2021), an irrigation system is something a national government must create to ensure that all involved parties succeed in their functions.

This concept of an “irrigation system” in the royal administration is identified when King Claudius assigns functions to a large portion of Elsinore’s society. This shift toward a systematic organization is evident when comparing the two brothers’ forms of governance: King Hamlet’s rule in Saxo Grammaticus’s (2022) writings versus King Claudius’s rule in Shakespeare’s work. While the original King Hamlet ruled in a more singular, traditional form, Shakespeare’s Claudius feeds this more complex administrative concept to the reader.

Through Ostrom’s (2021) critique regarding the relevance of negotiation as a multi-layered strategy, the reader can identify a failure in Claudius’s staging. Driven by the need to conceal his fratricide – the act that led to his command – he failed to share or think through long-term negotiation strategies, such as those involving the Kingdom of England. As Ostrom (2021, p. 24) writes: “The power of theory is exactly proportional to the diversity of situations it can explain.”

A reader focusing on King Claudius and Prince Hamlet will find significant nuances regarding the temporal politics of this production. Each reading makes the work more significant, reinforcing Harold Bloom's sense of Shakespeare as the center of the Western Canon.

In Claudius's administrative framework, we can also highlight the roles assigned to the subjects Voltimand and Cornelius in Norway. Similarly, administrative functions are extended to Gertrude and Ophelia. This division of labor is most representative in the figure of Polonius, the King's most relevant subject. Thus, Claudius's kingdom operates a political administration akin to Ostrom's (2021) modern critique of the Common Pool Resources (CPR) method.

Despite the Renaissance setting, the medieval culture in "Hamlet" still carries a legacy of physical aggression. This is visible due to the clash of two worldviews around the year 1600. Ostrom's (2021, p. 89) words reflect this modern view: "The difference in the particular rules take into account specific attributes of the related physical systems, cultural views of the world, and economic and political relationships that exist in the setting."

In Act V, Scene II, the reader witnesses the presence of external governmental authorities from Norway and England. Following Ostrom's contribution, the reader identifies that these external royal authorities only assert their power after the King's death, setting new rules. As Ostrom (2021, p. 101) warns: "But if external governmental officials presume that only they have the authority to set the rules, then it will be very difficult for local appropriators to sustain a rule-governed CPR over the long run."

The infractions committed by Prince Hamlet served as the catalyst for King Claudius to identify him as a threat to be eliminated. As a Renaissance administrator, the King sought to delete this "offender" to protect his political propositions. For Ostrom (2021, p. 186): "When an individual's rules infractions are discovered, the probability increases that others will reduce their rates of rule conformance to the detriment of that individual."

Finally, the actions of these characters evoke Thomas Hobbes's theories in *Leviathan*. This is addressed by Ostrom (2021, p. 41) regarding the practice of fear, which the reader observes in many of Shakespeare's subjects: "[...] individuals who independently engage in protec-

tion activities overinvest in weapons and surveillance and consequently live in constant fear.”.

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Picture 01: Hamlet confronts his guilty uncle Claudius in Hamlet, Prince of Denmark by William Shakespeare.

AUTHORS, Lebrecht. Hamlet confronts his guilty uncle Claudius in Hamlet, Prince of Denmark by William Shakespeare. Lebrecht Music & Arts: London, 2019.