

Hamlets madness

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I do not believe that Hamlet is going mad nor insane. I think that he was just putting on an act of madness to convince people he was going insane in order to carry out his revenge on Claudius. If it wasn't for Hamlet's feigned madness the Claudius would have obviously known that something was up and would have possibly had Hamlet killed. Hamlet only acted mad or insane around certain people. In his private conversations with Horatio there was no signs of insanity with the way he was talking to him.

Hamlet tells Horatio “ How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself, As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet To put on an antic disposition on, – That you, at such times seeing me, never shall, With arms encumber'd thus. Or this headshake, Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase. “(Ham. 2. 5. 170-175). In this phrase He is telling Horatio that he is going to feign madness, and that if he notices any strange behavior that he is putting on an act.

This is proof that he is neither mad nor insane. He basically has stated he is going to act mad.

As soon as someone appears, whom he wants to convince he is mad, he changes his behavior to put in his or her minds different explanations of his irrational behavior. He changes from rational speech to irrational conversations with those he wishes to convince he is mad. With Rosencrantz and Guildenstern he makes them believe that the reason for his behavior is frustrated ambition. In act 2 scene 2 Rosencrantz says “ Why, then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind. “(Ham. 2. 2. 241-242).

Then Hamlet says “ O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. “(Ham 2. 2. 243-244) Then Guildenstern states “ Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; fro the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream. “(Ham. 2. 2. 245-246). Hamlet wants to make the King and Queen believe that the death of his father and their marriage is the reason for his madness. The Queen states “ I doubt it is no other but the main, – His father’s death and our o’ hasty marriage.

(Ham. 2. 2. 56-57). Hamlet want s to make Polonius and Ophelia believe that it is his love for Ophelia that has driven him mad. This is revealed when Ophelia speaks with Polonius about Hamlet’s encounter with her (Ham. 2. 2 75-108). In the phrase “ I am but mad north by northwest, when the wind is southernly I know a hawk from a handsaw”(Ham. 2. 2. 347-348) Hamlet is stating that North is normal and that “ North by Northwest” means that he is only slightly insane. Once Claudius thought he was insane he was safe to carry out the rest of his plan.

In the Soliloquy, “ To be or not to be” (Ham. 3. 1. 56-90) Hamlet knew that he was being watched by the King while talking to Ophelia. This was his chance to convince the King that he was insane. I believe that Hamlet may have crossed the line into true madness a few times. For example when Hamlet slays Polonius he has no feelings of remorse. This is evidenced by Hamlet’s words “ Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell! I took thy fortune thou findst to be too busy in some danger”(Ham. 3. 4. 32-34). After Hamlet kills Polonius he will not tell anyone where the body is.

Instead he says “ not where he eats, but where he is eaten, a certain convocation of political worms a e’en at him”(Ham 4. 3. 20-21). Hamlet also is aware of his dissolving insanity as he tells Laertes that he killed Polonius “ in a fit of madness”(Ham. 5. 2. 236-250). In the scene where he is with his mother he also has a violent out burst. He is very cruel towards her and clenches her throat in anger. He sees his father’s ghost while with his mother. His mother does not see him. All of the other times someone has seen the ghost when it has appeared. This may be a sign that Hamlet is experiencing true madness.

“ On him, on him: Look O you how pale he glares! His form and cause conjured, preaching to stones would make them capable (Ham. 3. 4. 126-128). In conclusion I believe that Hamlet’s madness or insanity throughout the play is being acted. However I do believe that in the end Hamlet drives himself over the edge when he kills Polonius and his true anger shows. Hamlet crossed that line into true madness a few times in this play. I believe that this was not a good way to go about getting revenge on Claudius. There was too much of a delay and in the end Hamlet lost by losing his life too.