

Hamlet vs don quixote

Literature, British Literature



Both Don Quixote and Hamlet are exceptional examples of madness being used to drive a narrative. Their madness speaks to all of us through a multitude of different means. Showing us that there is reason behind their madness, despite what first impressions give us. Asking important questions we all deal with, from what does it mean to be mad, the place of justice, and the value of hope.

What is reasonable is subjective, to how one thinks. It is when one acts in a way that the majority doesn't understand that one is deemed mad. However the driving ideals of these two "mad men" are hardly ones that most people would say are strange or even abnormal, but it is how they act to achieve them that bewilders others. Hamlet wants justice for his father's murder, and his mother's betrayal. While Don Quixote strives to punish all evil deeds done, and to protect the innocent. Not so strange is it? There is little debate about Don Quixote's madness as it is stated out right "...and thus, through little sleep and much reading, his brain was dried up in such a manner, that he came at last to lose his wits." (pg. 25) While there is some debate over Hamlet's sanity because Hamlet states after talking with the ghost of his father that, "...As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet to put an antic disposition on,..." (pg. 953)

Some argue that this statement proves that he wasn't truly mad. That would overlook the warning Horatio gives Hamlet before Hamlet followed the ghost, "...Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason, and draw you into madness?" (pg. 951) and he was right all along, Hamlet fell into madness after following the ghost. Even in both stories someone recognizes that there is reason to their madness. In Hamlet, when trying to discover the cause of <https://assignbuster.com/hamlet-vs-don-quixote/>

Hamlet's madness Polonia examines Hamlet's interaction with Polonia's daughter Ophelia. In which he admits that " Though this be madness, yet there is method isn't."(pg. 956) Don Quixote after setting lions loose in a city, Don Diego de Miranda ends up admitting that everything in Don Quixote's explanation for his actions was measured on " The scales of reason."

While both books question what it means to be mad, Don Quixote had a great explanation and question for all people to think about when it comes to what we deem to be madness. " When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies? Perhaps to be too practical is madness. To surrender dreams — this may be madness. Too much sanity may be madness and maddest of all: to see life as it is, and not as it should be!" Ironically enough it is when Don Quixote returns to " sanity" that he is seen to be near his own death.

Under the guise of madness both heroes explore the themes of justice. The first time in Hamlet we are shown Hamlet that he values Justice is when he meets a ghost that claims to be his recently murdered father. While Hamlet believes the ghost's claim that his uncle had murdered his father, Hamlet refuses to act without have definitive proof, just in case he is wrong. So Hamlet claims to act mad to make his uncle let down his guard around him. Hoping that his uncle will let it slip that he did indeed murder his father. Even when Hamlet has enough evidence to convince himself of his uncle's guilt, he still seems to be hesitant to avenge his father, still worried that he has over looked something. Hamlet through his constant need for proof,

reinforces that fact that he does believe that one is innocent until proven guilty.

The issue that Hamlet runs into is that he holds this ideal to an extreme standard, which prevents him from acting. When he does act without any evidence for his suspicion, he accidentally kills Polonia. This in the long run also leads to Ophelia's suicide, and the entire bloodbath at the end of the story, all of them casualties of Hamlet's rash action. This tragic consequence shows how when misguided, justice can destroy many innocent lives.

Showing the need to have proof, before one commits punishment in the name of justice. Don Quixote shows how prospective affects what one views as justice.

Here is one situation Don Quixote encountered; a princess kidnapped by a band of bandits armed with weapon. So Don Quixote charged in to rescue the princess from the bandits. No one would disagree that Don Quixote's actions are just, in that situation. Now if that was the end of the story that would be a clear cut case. However that was what he saw, not reality. The reality was that the princess was a woman being escorted to the nearest town by a group of monks. Now it seems that he was clearly in the wrong, but this example shows how prospective is an important part of justice. Here is another example, of prospective; Don Quixote sees a group of giants roaming in a field. Don Quixote to protect the public from this menace he charges in to do battle with these giants.

Now I'm sure you can tell that wasn't reality that Don Quixote saw. Those giants were really windmills, so in short Don Quixote attacked a windmill not

a giant. Again Don Quixote acted to protect the innocent, but like Hamlet failed, instead he ended up hurting everyone including himself. Here we see two extremes; Hamlet who needed too much info before he would act, and Don Quixote who acted without any proof to support his claims. We need both to deliver justice appropriately.

Hope is the biggest reason why the two ended up so different. Both value hope as a gift to humanity, and one of the greatest ones at that. Throughout Hamlet, Hamlet as clearly given up all hope after the death of his father. It has gotten so bad he has started to question if there was any reason to continue living. The most famous example of this is his "To be, or not to be..." (pg 960) monolog. In which he questions whether it is nobler for the mind to suffer physical pain, or a "sea of troubles" (pg. 960). Showing that he has given up, and is now trying to find what will make his own death nobler. Even in death he doesn't cling to life, instead saying "I am dead" (pg. 980). He has accepted death before his story even began, yet his madness kept him ending it all. Because his madness made him ask why he should continue living, his answer was his need to enact justice for his father, which was what caused his madness in the first place.

Hamlet's madness made him seek justice, and gave him the hope to continue living, even if it was unpronounced to him. Unlike Hamlet, Don Quixote was overly hopeful. He had the hope and drive to attempt to achieve his dreams, but he wasn't grounded in reality like Hamlet was. It was thanks to both luck and his absurd amount of hope the Don Quixote was able to return to "sanity." The one thing Hamlet was unable to do. Thought out Don

Quixote's journey he slowly loses hope that he will be able to become this legendary knight. However he chose to swear off all that was chivalrous and knightly before he lost all hope in life.

Hamlet and Don Quixote both are mad; however that isn't a bad thing in and of itself. For there is much one can learn from these two madmen. From what is important in regards to justice, to the importance of hope in one's life. In the end I'm glad that I have met these two wise " madmen."