

Is hamlet mad (his indecisive soliloquies)?

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Is Hamlet Mad (His Indecisive Soliloquies)? A controversy occurs over whether Hamlet's behaviour displays craziness or planned insightfulness when deciding on his revenge on King Claudius. Prince Hamlet's life unfortunately spirals out of hand when his father mysteriously dies. Suspicion of the possible murder of the king rises when his mother immediately marries King Claudius. Hamlet becomes extremely skeptical believing that his father did not die of murder and concludes that King Claudius could be held as a suspect. He contemplates his plans on revenge on many occasions alone, in literature, known as soliloquies. "major purpose of Shakespeare's use of Soliloquies in Hamlet is to provide views of the prince at crucial moments in the course of his experience"(Newell 134) His pursuit to find out officially causes Hamlet's change of behaviour, a crazy behaviour in which he claims he acts on purpose. Yet many in the story claim Hamlet's rash decisions, sudden hatred towards Ophelia, and the killing of Polonius, emerge out of a mental disease he developed naturally after his father's death. The reader makes their own opinions when observing how he acts by himself reflecting on his journey towards revenge. Hamlet progresses from indecisiveness and confusion when handling the matters of revenge towards King Claudius observed in Act 2, Scene 2; Act 3, Scene 1 and Act 4 Scene 2. This is due to his religious morals sometimes, and other times he's so blinded by revenge that he wants to kill the king when he's in a position of unholiness. Firstly, in act 2, scene 2, Hamlet shows vengeful confusion demonstrating himself as an avenger. The scene begins with Gertrude inviting Guildenstern and Rosencrantz to Elsinore in hopes to help Hamlet recover from his sudden change of behaviour. Since they have grown up with

him, they know his personality the best, thus Hamlet, Gertrude's "too much changed son" (2. 2. 36) contains fondness solely for his comrades, opening the gates for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to investigate secretly. Hamlet seems pleased about the arrival of his best friends, yet becomes skeptical over their reason for the sudden appearance. When they claim they came merely to revisit Hamlet, he strictly declares that he knows the king and the queen sent for them. After the players perform, giving an enlightening speech regarding the fall of Troy, Hamlet leaves his comrades, standing alone. Here, he formulates a plan to find out whether Claudius indeed killed his father. Forcing Claudius to watch *The Murder of Gonzago*, a play which may or may not resemble Claudius's own very life, Hamlet will scout his reaction of potential guilt written on his face- proof that Claudius did indeed murder the king. "Hamlet's fourth soliloquy may be seen as a link between the emotional turmoil of his previous soliloquy, after his encounter with the ghost and the level of intellectuality of the "to be or not to be soliloquy" shortly after it. "(Newell 56) In other words, this soliloquy could be considered as a bond connecting with chaos, his previous soliloquy, and intuitiveness, his subsequent soliloquy. Unfortunately, Hamlet displays illogicalness throughout his soliloquy. He uses contradicting analogies showing lack of commitment and certainty to act in revenge. line reads that he prevails "with eyes like carbuncles, the Hellish Pyrrhus old grandsire Priam seeks. So proceed you. "(2. 2. 466-468) Hamlet relates himself to Pyrrhus. Therefore, if "Hamlet is like Pyrrhus, then Priam is in avoidably an analogue for Claudius against whom Hamlet seeks revenge. " (Newell 59) If Hamlet committed to his quest for revenge, he would further his

commitment by similar analogies supporting his classification as the avenger. Instead, he then propels himself in the opposite direction, by using words "peasant slave" for himself and "kindles villain" in the rhetoric way" (Newell k). This also creates a controversy of perspective. First he calls himself a revenger like Pyrrhus. "But it comes from Aeneas point of view creating sympathy for Hamlet" (Newell 58) In addition, Hamlet's scheme he reveals in his soliloquy subsists as a flawed plan. Firstly, Hamlet claims "The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast" (2. 2. 453). "He compares Pyrrhus as a "Hyrcanian beast" a mistake because it reveals Hamlet's subconscious views of Pyrrhus as an avenger acting mindlessly with bestial ferocity" (Newman 57) Secondly, Hamlet's plan to "catch the conscience of the king" (2. 2. 610) is to trap the king by bringing out an emotional response. He plans to catch Claudius connecting emotionally with an actor who plays a killer, therefore revealing Claudius as the killer. However, this idea starts to become unsound because Claudius' feeling about the play could never have become a reliable source of truth about killing Hamlet's father. Many connect with movies because of the engaging actors and actresses, the angle of lights, and the overall atmosphere the director creates without actually going through the same situation the character did in the movie. Emotional responses should not be one's ticket to killing. Obviously, Hamlet's declaration "I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw" (2. 2. 381-382) could prove itself at such a crucial moment, questioning the truthfulness or reliability in this quote. If Hamlet chose to act "mad" at nerve-wrecking times in his life, then he would have turned off his "performance" and demonstrated sanity and

intrusiveness when alone, developing a significant plan that may alter his life. Consequently, Hamlet's soliloquy reveals carelessness and illogicalness, pushing his reflections on a negative note upon his act towards revenge.

Secondly, Act 3 of Hamlet opens with Guildenstern and Rosencrantz meeting with Gertrude and Claudius, discussing Hamlet's behavior. The trio has come to the conclusion that no one can explain his bizarre change, so Claudius dismisses the other three, saying that he and Polonius intend to spy on Hamlet's confrontation with Ophelia. While Polonius and the king walk around the lobby, they hear Hamlet coming and decide to hide behind the tapestry. Not detecting their presence, Hamlet wrestles with the decision to commit suicide. "To be or not to be, that is the question" (3. 1. 56) He believes suicide will end the pain of his existence for good. "Between the sick soul and the knowledge and of love here are interstellar spaces that divide Hell from Heaven." (Bloom 56) This means to the ordinary eye, Heaven and Hell stand tremendously far away from each other. However, when considering into account a question like this, one can make the gap seem much smaller. Although the consideration of suicide from any character is daunting at the very least, Hamlet still approaches the question with eloquence and logical thinking. Initially, Hamlet attempts to pose one such a question in a rational, logical way. He ponders why or how the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" (3. 1. 58) can be borne out since life after death is so uncertain. Hamlet considers that suicide would not seem as big of a deal if one knows his death or her afterlife. because Hamlet believes one does not know what happens after death, he or she would rather "bear those ill we have, then fly to others that we know not of" (3. 1. 81-82) Many

struggle with this issue of what happens after people die, and even base many decisions upon it. For Hamlet to recognize this uncertainty as a significant fact in the idea of suicide rather than ending some sort of "everlasting" pain, shows complete logical reasoning. In fact, by the time most conclude that their life must end, they too senile have become already mentally unstable and crazy to even formulate why suicide remains a controversial issue. Hamlet explains that if everyone knew about his or her afterlife, most suicides will indeed occur and the issue would not seem contentious. Furthermore, Hamlet shows his intelligence in depicting his decision about suicide in his "to be or not to be" soliloquy. Although at this moment, Hamlet realizes that many choose life over death because of the inability to know one's afterlife, the speech remains a deep contemplation about the nature and reason for death. After posing this complex question and wondering about the nature of the great sleep, Hamlet goes on to list many sufferings which men are prone to in the midst of life's rough course of life, which makes it seem as though he is moving toward death yet, again. By the end of this soliloquy, however, he finally realizes "But the dread of something after death, the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns, puzzles the will, and makes us rather bear those ills we have". (3. 1. 78-81) Additionally, the way Hamlet even poses the question of suicide as a matter of Philosophical debate shows intuition. He does not express himself at all during the soliloquy, never uses the words "I" or "me" in the entire speech, setting it up as a controversial question upon which people can voice their opinions. "When we shuffled off this mortal coil must give us pause" (3. 1. 67) ... "when he himself might his quietus make" (3. 1.

75)...Soft you now! " (3. 1. 88) Instead, Hamlet purposely uses words such as we, us, you, he, and his to disguise what he is really thinking about, acting cautiously but very smartly. " His words at the end of the scene are indeed ' wild and whirling'" (Bloom 87) towards Ophelia. As a result, Hamlet shows confusion to end his life or not, yet in a very intellectual manner, presenting his saneness to the audience. Lastly, act 4 scenes 4, focuses back to Hamlet's pursuit to revenge Claudius officially. Hamlet encounters with the Norwegian captain who shows forcefulness and courage in taking action. This discourages Hamlet and his commitment to revenge. Hamlet stands awestruck by the willingness of Fortinbras' devotion and energy towards his entire army. When left alone, Hamlet the moral doubt of Fortinbras' deed, but his dynamism impress him to a point of a firm decision on one last attempt. Here he analyzes his patience yet forcefulness like Fortinbras' and his patch of land, toward King Claudius. Actually, " His previous two soliloquies provide clarifying context for the defective working of his mind in the present one, for his reason is in fact, no less subjected by passion here than in the other two. " (Newell 134) Here, Hamlet utters great emotion towards his stagnant plans on revenge and expresses them in this soliloquy. To begin with, Hamlet's logical reasoning becomes apparent in his last soliloquy because he develops dramatically indeed in the play-" The subjugation of Hamlet's reason by his passion for revenge" (Newell 133) For one, Shakespeare reestablishes Hamlet's preoccupation with revenge as tragic. It subsists as a " Necessary soliloquy after accidentally killing Polonius by mistake in pursuit of revenge; unlike the last two, people sympathize with him and view him tragically. " (Newell 134) Sympathizing with Hamlet's

confusion and distress compels the reader to classify him as a logical person, not as a mad man, who needs support when going through a very upsetting time in his life. In relation to this, it helps that Hamlet uses " the language of Elizabethan spirituality of the mind, the engaging of thought and unlike before, finding him repulsive by the close scene with Gertrude, hide and seek with school fellows and the interview with Claudius. " (Newell 135) Next, the audience believes he displays logical reasoning because his thinking and reasoning correspond. He reveals jealous rage while simultaneously, finally planning his overdue act of revenge on Claudius. " My thoughts be blood, or be nothing worth! " (4. 4. 66). In other words, Hamlet exclaims my thoughts be bloody, my deeds be bloody also, giving some consistency with his preparation. His logical thinking steer him onto the right path of revenge. Moreover, Hamlet exposes his brilliance through his soliloquy of " discursive reasoning, in a way that heightens one's tragic view of the character before he leaves" (Newell 133) Firstly, his " soliloquy makes him less vengeful and more patient for an opportunity for revenge" (Newell 135) showing personal growth in the matter. He knows revenge lies as his only option, yet instead of rushing it with a quick spontaneous plan like before; he takes a different approach and develops patience revolving around the issue. " Of thinking too precisely on the event- A thought which, quartered hath but one part wisdom and even three parts coward. " (4. 4. 41-43) This means, if he thinks too long and critically, he will become anxious and a coward, but if he waits patiently and stop the rash aggressiveness clouding his mind, revenge will fall into place. Secondly, " the reoccurrence of " beast" and " discourse" and " reason" in a cluster brings to mind the forceful phrase " a beast that wants

discourse of reason" from the first soliloquy" (Newell 133) This presents Hamlet intelligence, relating his last soliloquy with his first because a confused madman could not possibly remember what he reflected upon by himself, many times ago, this gives Hamlet some credit of existing as normal. Therefore, Hamlet shows logical thinking and intuitiveness in his last soliloquy, ending his reflections on a positive note on his pursuit towards revenge, also presenting himself as not a completely crazy man. Hamlet progresses from indecisiveness and confusion to logic when handling the matters of revenge towards King Claudius observes in Act 2, Scene 2; Act 3, scene 1; and Act 4, Scene 2 soliloquies. The opinions on where he really developed a mental disorder if he played it off towards only his friends, remains debatable; for in three main soliloquies he acts either wise or cultivated. An act or not, nobody should judge someone after going through a loss like Hamlets'. Even if one's behaviour changed for the worse after a parent's death, many should sympathize and support him or her through his or her loss. A loss of a close family member is one of the most difficult situations one goes through. One must remember that everyone is a unique individual. Therefore, many cope with the tragedy of death differently. Works Cited Bloom, Harold. *The Embassy of Death: An Essay on Hamlet*. Hamlet. 1990 ed. Print. Lamb, Sidney ed. *Shakespeare's Hamlet*. Hoboken: Wiley Publishing, Inc. 2000. Print. Levin, Harry. *Interrogation, Doubt, Irony: Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis*. Modern Critical View William Shakespeare: The Tragedies. 1959 ed. Print. Newell, Alex. *Passion and Reason. The Soliloquies in Hamlet* 1935 ed. Print. Newell, Alex. *The mind O'erthrown: Reason Pandering Will. The Soliloquies in Hamlet*. 1927 ed. Print.