

# [Melancholy, anger to ophelia because even though many](https://assignbuster.com/melancholy-anger-to-ophelia-because-even-though-many/)

Melancholy, grief, and madness have enlarged the works of a great many playwrights, and Shakespeare is not an exception. The mechanical regularities of such emotionalmaladies as they are presented within Hamlet, not only allow his audience to sympathizewith the tragic prince Hamlet, but to provide the very complexities necessary inunderstanding the tragedy of his, ironically similar, lady Ophelia as well. It is the poorOphelia who suffers at her lover’s discretion because of decisions she was obligated tomake. Hamlet provides his own self-torture and does fall victim to depression and grief, however, his madness is fictitious.

They each share a commonconnection: the loss of a parental figure. Hamlet loses his father as a result of a horriblemurder, as does Ophelia. Her situation is more severe because it is her lover whomurders her father and all of her hopes for her future as well. Ultimately, it is also moreharmful to her character and causes her melancholy and grief to quickly turn to madness. Critics argue that Hamlet has the first reason to be hurt by Ophelia because she followsher father’s wishes regarding Hamlet’s true intentions for their beginning love. In Act 3, Hamlet begins with his spiteful sarcasm toward her. “ I humbly thank you, well, well, well,” he says to her regarding her initial bantering.

(III, i, 101) Before this scene, he haslearned that the King and Polonius have established a plan to make reason of his unusualand grief-stricken behavior. Hamlet is well aware that this plan merely uses Ophelia as atool, and as such, she does not have much option of refusing without angering her fatherand the conniving King as well. Hamlet readily refuses that he cared for her. He tells herand all of his uninvited listeners, “ No, not I, I never gave you aught” (III, i, 105).

Somecritics stress, as does J. Dover Wilson, that Hamlet has a right to direct his anger toOphelia because even though many critics “ in their sympathy with Ophelia haveforgotten that it is not Hamlet who has ‘ repelled’ her, but she him” (Wilson 159). But it ispossible that Wilson does not see the possible harm to Ophelia if she were to disobey theauthority of her father and the king.(i. e. her father and her king).

She is undeniablycaught in a trap that has been layed, in part, by her lover whom she loves and idealizes. Her shock is genuine when Hamlet demands “ get thee to a nunnery” (III, i, 131). Theimplication of the dual meaning of “ nunnery” is enough itself to make her runmalcontented from her prince, and it is the beginning of her madness as well. Hamlet’smelancholy causes and provokes him to show manic-depressive actions while Opheliasstate of mind is much more overwhelming andpainful. “ Shakespeare is ambiguous about the reality of Hamlet’sinsanity and depicts him as on the border, fluctuating between sanityand madness” (Lidz 156).

Hamlet mourns for his father, but it is thebitterness and ill-will that he harbors towards his mother for herhasty marriage to his uncle that is his most reoccurring occupation. His thoughts of Ophelia are secondary at best. When it happens thatHamlet accidentally slays Polonius, he does not appear to be thinkingof the potential effect of his actions on Ophelia.

Hamlet has sealedher fate, and along with the “ vacillations in his attitude andbehavior toward her could not but be extremely unsettling to the veryyoung woman who idolized him” she does not have much in the way thatis positive for her (Lidz 157). Throughout the entire murder scene inAct 3, Scene! 4, Hamlet does not remark about the damage he has doneto Ophelia. His emotional upswing is devoted entirely to his mother, and while his emotions are not an imitation, he does admit that he” essentially is not in madness,/ But mad in craft” (lines 187-188). Ophelia is then left to mourn her father, but it is not his death alonethat spurns her insanity.

Her predicament is such that she is forcedto fear and hate her father’s murder who is also her lover and the oneperson to whom all of her future hopes were pinned -Prince Hamlet.” Her entire orientation to the future has suddenly been destroyed,” andwith her brother gone, Ophelia has no one to turn to for comfort (Lidz157). Hamlet then delves further into his manic feigned madness