

# [Hamlet within hamlet, not only allow his](https://assignbuster.com/hamlet-within-hamlet-not-only-allow-his/)

Hamlet and OpheliaMelancholy, grief, and madness have pervaded the works of a great manyplaywrights, and Shakespeare is not an exception.

The mechanicalregularities of such emotional maladies as they are presented withinHamlet, not only allow his audience to sympathize with the tragicprince Hamlet, but to provide the very complexities necessary inunderstanding the tragedy of his lady Ophelia as well. It is the poorOphelia who suffers at her lover’s discretion because of decisions shewas obligated to make on behalf of her weak societal position. Hamletprovides his own self-torture and does fall victim to melancholia andgrief, however, his madness is feigned. They each share a commonconnection: the loss of a parental figure. Hamlet loses his father asa result of a horrible murder, as does Ophelia. In her situation ismore severe because it is her lover who murders her father and all ofher hopes for her future as well. Ultimately, it is also moredetrimental to her c! haracter and causes her melancholy and grief toquickly turn to irretrievable madness. Critics argue that Hamlet hasthe first reason to be hurt by Ophelia because she follows her father’sadmonitions regarding Hamlet’s true intentions for their beginninglove.

In Act 3, scene 1, line 91 Hamlet begins with his malicioussarcasm toward her. “ I humbly thank you, well, well, well,” he saysto her regarding her initial pleasantries (Johnson 1208). Before thisscene, he has heard the King and Polonius establishing a plan to deducehis unusual and grief-stricken behavior. Hamlet is well aware thatthis plan merely uses Ophelia as a tool, and as such, she does not havemuch option of refusing without angering not only her busybody fatherbut the conniving King as well. Hamlet readily refuses that he caredfor her.

He tells her and all of his uninvited listeners, “ No, not I, Inever gave you aught” (lines 94-95). Some critics stress, as does J. Dover Wilson, that Hamlet has a right to direct his anger to Opheliabecause even though many critics “ in their sy! mpathy with Opheliathey have forgotten that it is not Hamlet who has ‘ repelled’ her, butshe him” (Wilson 159). It is possible that Wilson does not see thepotential harm to Ophelia should she disobey her authority figures(i. e.

her father and her king). Furthermore, Ophelia cannot know “ thatHamlet’s attitude toward her reflects his disillusionment in his mother. . . to her, Hamlet’s inconstancy can only mean deceitfulness ormadness” (Lidz 158). She is undeniably caught in a trap that has beenlayed, in part, but her lover whom she does love and idealize.

Hershock is genuine when Hamlet demands “ get thee to a nunnery” (line120). The connotations of the dual meaning of “ nunnery” is enough inand of itself to make her run estranged from her once sweet prince, andit is the beginning or her sanity’s unraveling as well. Hamlet’smelancholy permits him the flexibility of character to conveymanic-depressive actions while Ophelia’s 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