

Student Essay on Hamlet's Insanity

Hamlet's Insanity by William Shakespeare

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Essay

In Shakespeare's Hamlet, Hamlet's state of mind has spurred out of control, leading us to believe that he is truly insane. Early on, we can infer that Hamlet appears distraught over his father's death and his mother's hasty remarriage. Despite these hardships, Hamlet still appears sane although he is deeply mourning and even contemplating suicide when he says "O, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt,/Thaw, and resolve itself into dew,." As the play advances, however, Hamlet's sanity diminishes, most noticeably following the meeting with his father's ghost. Hamlet's run-in with Ophelia is one of the first indications of his madness. In Act 3, Scene 1, Hamlet lashes out against Ophelia saying "Get thee {to} a nunnery" and "If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague/for thy dowry." Hamlet's mad behavior is further displayed during his confrontation with his mother. Upon entering the room, Hamlet expresses his disgrace in Gertrude, saying "You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife,/And (would it were not so) you are my mother." Following this, Hamlet proceeds to kill Polonius who he had mistaken for the King. Because he has yet to get revenge, Hamlet's state of mind becomes even more distorted. Whether he is insane or merely carrying out his father's will is unclear. However, Hamlet's rash behavior strongly suggests that his father's death coupled with his failed revenge has driven him to insanity.