

Is Hamlet really mad or does he put on an “antic disposition” during the play?
How does Shakespeare explore this using language?

In the story of Hamlet, Shakespeare incorporates many different analytical techniques to deepen our understanding and the plot of hamlet. Hamlet through the course of the play so far has seemed very moody and very misanthropic, he didn't have this aspect of him portrayed at the start, when he seemed normal. Hamlets rage and anguish has been progressing and growing throughout the pay, but also he has become depressed. We can identify Hamlets emotions in many different ways, but the real question is whether he is mad or not,

In the play so far Hamlet has had two soliloquies and from these two we can see the progression of Hamlet's depression. From the first soliloquy we can see that Hamlet is contemplating suicide and wondering why it has come to be one of his only options, where as in the second soliloquy we can see that Hamlet is Asking questions about suicide and he is sort of accepting it and trying to say that perhaps it isn't the end, but he doesn't say it as though he has accepted it, but more that he is considering it still and waiting for a reason to not commit suicide.

In the play we can deduce that there are some acts from Hamlet that lead you to believe that he is madness and has no rational thinking, but you can also say that there are points in the story that tell the reader that he isn't mad and that perhaps he has a grand scheme, for example when he is in the confession booth considering killing Claudius, but instead he decides not to because Claudius just repented so he won't go to hell, most people wouldn't have thought about this, but Hamlet does, meaning that there is a side to Hamlet which is very knowledgeable and perhaps his knowledge is what is holding him back? Is that the only thing that is holding back Hamlet? Because in two occasions now Hamlet has been held back from sinning because of his religion, the first time in his first soliloquy when he says, “O that this too too solid flesh would melt, thaw and resolve itself into a dew” this is where Hamlet is wishing that he would die, but not by his own hands because he didn't want to go to hell. The second time in the confession booth as previously stated.

The question of whether Hamlet is mad or not is a question that has boggled scholars for years, and thats because lots of them would only look at it from one perspective. If you look at it from Hamlets perspective then you can tell that he is obviously in distress and turmoil for the loss of his father and the soon marriage of his mother and uncle. Hamlet finds out that his uncle is the one who killed his father, from a poltergeist of his father who only he can see. When the poltergeist confronts Hamlet when he is telling his mother that Claudius killed Hamlet Sr. Only Hamlet sees him, and his mother doesn't. This is one of the two confrontations of Hamlet's ghost and the first one is not talked about for the rest of the story. The second confrontation is straight after the play which Hamlet has put on to shame and frame Claudius for his murder and also to shame Hamlet's mother for marrying so soon. One thing that Hamlet told the actors to put into the play as that when King Hamlet was on his deathbed and talking to Gertrude he was saying to her and she in return that she would never move on and that he will live on with her

forever. So this means that Gertrude is in a fragile state after being insulted, but also in a state of realisation. This is the perfect time to strike for Hamlet and he does. He confronts his mother and when the ghost appears he falls to his knees and asks his mother why she can't see him. There are three explanations to Hamlet seeing his father, on the one side Hamlet could actually be seeing a ghost and could actually be mad, that is an understandable synthesis from what we have already seen of Hamlet. The other possible idea is that Hamlet's acting and he is trying to persuade his mother that he is mad as some big scheme of things. The third idea is that Hamlet's mind is playing tricks on him, the mind generally likes to fill in spots that aren't full, so when Hamlet is running around the Castle he would be seeing all these pictures and portraits of Claudius which have replaced the portraits of Hamlet Sr. This would also be expected because Claudius wouldn't want to walk around the castle and see the face of the man who he killed inconspicuously. From the adrenaline rush that Hamlet is in at the moment after just thinking that he upstaged and solved the case to prove that Claudius committed the murder, and he just killed Polonius so he would be in a high state of mind meaning that his mind could be playing tricks on him and that could result in him seeing his father as a ghost. That would also explain why Gertrude didn't see the ghost. Now to whether I think that he is mad or not, from all of my evidence I would have to say that he is not mad and that this is all tricks of the mind, and that he has got a plan to deal with the king in all due time.

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