



كلية : الآداب

القسم او الفرع : اللغة الانكليزية

المرحلة: الثالثة

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اسم المادة باللغة العربية : مسرح

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اسم المحاضرة الرابعة باللغة العربية: الجنون في مسرحية "هاملت"

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## ... Hamlet's Madness

In Hamlet, Shakespeare takes us to the limit of portraying human minds at work. Through the theme of madness, one can notice how much thoughts can go behind a single action. The Tragedy of Hamlet is a play essentially about making up a human mind and that's how it touches upon the idea of madness.

In the play, we have Hamlet who is either mad or pretends to be mad, there's Ophelia who truly gives in to madness, loses her mind and we have Laertes who under the duress loses his reason. When Hamlet confronts the ghost for the first time, it is Horatio who warns that it "*might deprive your sovereignty of reason And draw you into madness?*".

In Hamlet, one sees the madness for love which is one true madness. Polonius says to Ophelia, "*mad for thy love?*", "*the very ecstasy(madness) of love*" after she reveals it to him. Shakespeare shows us madness and the sources of madness too. After the ecstasy of love, it is the grief which turns him towards madness which he can't notice by himself i.e. when the gravedigger tells him that Hamlet was sent to England because he was mad, he cries out, "*how came he mad?*".

Hamlet is introduced in the play in a deep mournful state. He is devastated by the fact that his mother didn't even mourn his father's death and got seduced by Claudius, his uncle. It is Polonius who labels Hamlet as mad repeatedly. He says to Gertrude that "*your noble son is mad. Mad call I it, for, to define true madness, what is't but to be nothing else but mad?*".

He grants him mad and asks to "*find out the cause of this...defect.*" But at the same time, one also learns that Hamlet is a supremely conscious character. It is again Polonius who notices that "*though this be madness, yet there is method in't.*"

Guildenstern understands that through "*a crafty madness Hamlet keeps himself aloof.*" Throughout the play the question of madness is evoked by various characters, offering us a comprehensive view of it from a different perspective. Claudius notes Hamlet's greatness and at the same time utters that "*madness in great ones must not go unwatched.*" In the end, Hamlet's mother is also unable to understand him and cries out, "*alas, he's mad!*" So, the play meditates on the error of judging madness on the surface.

Hamlet answers on the true nature of his madness when he says that “I essentially am not in madness, but mad in craft.” It clarifies the thematic concerns on madness in the play. Madness can also be a pretention.

The forces which Hamlet was confronting were much larger and powerful than him as an individual so madness becomes his tool to navigate through all those.

Justifying it to the king, he says, “*I here proclaim was madness.*” The wrongs aren’t done by him, “*Hamlet denies it.*” “*who does it then? His madness.*” At the same time, in Ophelia one may notice the true effects of madness.

It is hard to notice whether it is caused by the murder of his father by her own lover or the loss of Hamlet’s love for her or maybe both. Her symptoms are visibly that of losing one’s mind.

She gets “*divided from herself and her fair judgement, without which we are pictures or mere beasts.*” This can be the very reason to assign some madness to Laertes under the shock of revenge. The play meditates upon the varying states of human minds and how under certain duress, they may cross into the realm of madness where reason doesn’t work.