

Hamlet



Consolidating our understanding of Acts 1, 2, and 3.

Learning Goal

I will learn how to consolidate my understanding of the text to create a working thesis and plan of development.

STEP ONE: BRAINSTORM TO CREATE A THESIS:

- 1. Choose one of the following guiding questions to explore.**
- 2. Find all of the evidence that is on topic to the chosen guiding question.**

- Is this play exploring the impact of “illness identity”? When one is identified as being melancholic, for example, does this become a self fulfilling prophecy?
- Is this play exploring the uncertainty of mankind and the resulting mental illness that results when man can't come to terms with that uncertainty?
- Is this play exploring the pressures that filial piety put on an individual OR the pressures that society places on individuals? What happens when the dutiful child identity or collective identity trumps individual identity?

I'LL MODEL HOW THIS IS DONE...

Watch me

...

I'm choosing:

Is this play exploring the impact of “illness identity”?
When one is identified as being melancholic, for example, does this become a self fulfilling prophecy?

NEXT, I GO TO THE NOTES I'VE TAKEN IN CLASS
AND PICK ONES ON TOPIC TO THIS QUESTION...

Sample Brainstorm: Act 1 Observations

- **Actions**: Claudius takes the throne though Hamlet is the “most immediate to [the] throne”(1.2.109), and Fortinbras attacks thinking the kingdom weak when Hamlet’s father dies (as though Hamlet is not ready to rule) (1.2.16-25). This reveals that **others doubt him and/or he doubts himself**.
- **Effects**: Claudius and Gertrude chastise Hamlet for having “unmanly grief”(1.2.94). **They doubt his strength of character to rule**.
- **Effects**: Hamlet is wearing dark clothes and looks sad: “Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off...do not for ever with thy veiled lids/Seek for thy noble father in the dust”(1.2.68-71)
- **EFFECTS**: mother is sympathetic regarding the death of Hamlet’s father (his loss) - reveals that Hamlet could be overly emotional by nature (2.2.53-57)
- **Effects**: Laertes and Polonius warn Ophelia that Hamlet is likely using her (1.3) infers that **they think he is immature and not capable of mature love**.
- **Effects + Speech**: “He waxes desperate with imagination” (1.4.87). Horatio fears Hamlet is irrational after seeing his father’s ghost revealing **he assumes Hamlet does not have the strength of character to deal with this apparition**.

Consolidation:

Cause: The people whom Hamlet loves (his support group of friends, family, and future wife) doubt his ability to regulate his emotions effectively (his love for Ophelia, his grief over his father, the challenges faced when ruling a kingdom).

THESIS VERSION OF THIS:

Cause: When a person's support group doubt his/her strength of character in dealing with mature emotions...

Sample Brainstorm Acts 2 & 3:

- **Actions**: procrastinating - he doubts himself
- **Thoughts/Speech**: Hamlet reveals that he is pressured by this self doubt: questions his motives and ability to follow through with his duty to avenge his father “am I a coward” (2.2.567-68). He sees himself in the way others saw him earlier in the text (weak and “unmanly”) and this results in melancholy.
- **Juxtaposition of Hamlet vs Fortinbras**: Hamlet calls himself pigeon livered (2.2) and his procrastination evident in the last scene shows that he lacks a strong sense of self. He is not able to make the tough decisions that Fortinbras easily makes. Again, he sees himself in the way others saw him (too weak to rule) and this results in melancholy.
- **Speech**: “You should not have believed me...(3.1.117-119 + 127-130) This shows his self doubt. The doubt that Laertes and Polonius had has become a self fulfilling prophecy and this manifests itself in “madness” or symptoms of depressive melancholy (seen through effects, actions, speech, looks).

Consolidation:

This must be added to the working thesis: Hamlet starts to see himself in the ways that others see him (self fulfilling prophecy) and this results in symptoms of depressive melancholy.

THESIS VERSION OF THIS:

Cause: When a person's support group doubts his/her strength of character in dealing with mature emotions, this becomes a self fulfilling prophecy

Effect: the person doubts his own identity and this leads to depressive melancholy.

STEP TWO:

- 1. Turn the brainstorming into a working thesis.**
- 2. Edit it using the 4S rule.**

WORKING THESIS:

When a person's support group doubts his/her strength of character in dealing with mature emotions, this becomes a self fulfilling prophecy and the person doubts his own identity and this leads to depressive melancholy.

- SUPPORTABLE?**
- SPECIFIC?**
- SIGNIFICANT?**
- SINGULAR?**

Edited Thesis + How my essay might play out:

LEAD: Define “illness identity”

LINK: Connect to Elizabethan fascination with melancholy and Shakespeare’s exploration of how illness identity impacts the main character in Hamlet.

THESIS: Shakespeare uses characterization to explore how external labelling leads to a self fulfilling prophecy because self doubt results in depressive melancholy.

POD options at this point:

- Claudius and Gertrude doubt his ability to rule - he doubts himself - he falls into a depression over his inability to live up to the expectations of an heir.
- Polonius doubts his ability to love - he doubts himself - he falls into a depression which pushes Ophelia away
- Horatio doubts his ability to effectively grieve his father’s death - he doubts himself - his depression results in him making irrational decisions when trying to deal with the ghost’s call to action and his inability to act results in a deeper depression.

Something To Consider



My thesis explores *Hamlet* through a psychological lens (psychoanalytic criticism)

- Inspired by research on the psychological theory regarding “illness identity”
- Inspired by understanding of the Elizabethan fascination with melancholy and
- Inspired by Shakespeare’s exploration of how illness identity impacts the main character in Hamlet.
- Inspired by research on the symptoms associated with depressive melancholy (see the connections after Kenneth’s slides) + my slideshow introducing the lit.circle performances.

***WHILE YOU ARE BRAINSTORMING,
CONSIDER YOUR LENS...***

Psychoanalytic: How are Hamlet's Id, Ego, and Superego determining his actions/decisions. How does his character development indicate what is happening with him psychologically and why is this happening? Does the ghost represent Hamlet's Id? Why is Hamlet the only one to hear the ghost?

Hamlet's character development indicates he is depressed. See chart above for quotes. Is he going through the grief process? Is he showing signs of depression, melancholy, etc?

Feminist: How do the struggles regarding gender equality or gender identity contribute to the development of the theme? This can be linked to gender specific expectations on Hamlet, Gertrude and Ophelia. How do these expectations associated with gender identity impact the characters?

Marxist: what quotes indicate that economic/social power struggles contribute to the development of Hamlet's sense of self (identity)? Ex: Laertes warns Ophelia of Hamlet's inability to marry her because she is not royalty and can not provide power to his family. (1.3.20-21)

Your turn



1. Choose a guiding question to explore OR create your own.
2. Read through our Hamlet files and your text to record examples that are on topic to the guiding question.
3. Review the examples recorded and look for patterns or answers to the question.
4. Create a working thesis and then edit it.
5. Think ahead: how might this thesis play out? You may not have three subtopics yet, but you can make predictions or have fewer than three.

Time To



COLLABORATE



1. Go to your Hamlet Literature Circle.
2. Form a proofreading circle to share your brainstorming and thesis.
3. As a group, choose one thesis, one subtopic, and quotes to prove it.



Review & Write

1. Review the literary paragraph handout together as a class.
2. Work with your literature circle to write a literary paragraph using the chosen thesis, subtopics, and quotes. Write the good copy on a Google Doc AND on chart paper.
3. Be ready to have your paragraph marked by the class.

NEXT STEP



I know this...So Now..

I know this...SO NOW ...

Final consolidation

Write your version of the I Know This... So now...

- ❑ *I know* my thesis and working plan of development **SO NOW** as we read Acts 3-5, I want to sticky note any quotes that further support my thesis.
- ❑ *I know* that I am using Psychoanalytic with a focus on “illness identity” and melancholy **SO NOW** I want to research the definitions of “illness identity” and the symptoms of melancholy so that I can sticky note any quotes that show evidence/symptoms of these psychological theories .
- ❑ *I know* I have to include elements of New Literary Criticism (where I analyze how elements of fiction and style are manipulated to communicate my thesis) **SO NOW** I want to track how the author is using characterization or stylistic devices in the quotes I choose