

Evidence that Hamlet is a "player."

1. Act I, scene 5, lines 171-172
2. 2.2 lines 6-7 ("Sith nor...it was.")
3. 2.2 lines 195-196, plus line 197's note
4. 2.2 lines 206-207 ("Though this...method in't.")
5. 2.2 lines 380-383 ("Let me...than yours.")
6. 2.2 lines 461-475
7. 2.2 lines 477-478
8. 3.2 line 1-"*Exit Players*"
9. 3.2 line 94 ("I must be idle;")
10. 3.2 line 251
11. 3.3 line 392

From the above passages, one can clearly note how Hamlet is a player inasmuch as he uses his artistic gifts (itemized in Nos. 6 and 8) to become coolly insane. On three separate occasions, Hamlet himself mentions his actions. First, he says he'll "put an antic disposition on," (Act I, scene v, lines 171-172) in order to confuse everyone, but himself and Horatio. Furthermore, Nos. 5 and 11 use Hamlet's words to show he is acting (the general discussions in these scenes are about a play Hamlet is reworking). This leads back to Nos. 6 and 8 because they are passages in which Hamlet acts, then instructs a professional player on how to act. Additionally, his deceit is unwittingly exposed by Polonius. In Act 2, scene ii, lines 207-208, Polonius says in an aside, "though [Hamlet's actions are those of a madman]...there is method in't." The

method, of course, is that it's an extravagant production put on by a player.

How does Hamlet's insane performance affect *Hamlet*? In terms of theme, Hamlet becoming a player becomes the play's central theme. Before he knew Claudius killed King Hamlet, Hamlet was an unfocused young man desperately searching for meaning in his life (he even goes so far as contemplating suicide). Furthermore, Hamlet's performance is so convincing that it sometimes leaves the impression that he isn't always acting, but rather grows crazier by the scene. The impact is that the play generates a big question: is Hamlet really a player, or is he actually going insane? Which I can confidently answer that he is in fact a player 'til the end.