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ENGL 305

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March 26, 2017

## Psychoanalysis Outline

### I. Introduction

A. Status Quo: It is established that Hamlet loves Ophelia before his father died.

After the death, he treats her horribly. Obviously something in these events affects his treatment of her.

B. New Perspective: Hamlet does not consciously give a reason to us, so we must analyze his subconscious through the means of psychoanalysis. Freud. It's not Hamlet's father's death that warrants this change in reaction, but his mother's remarriage.

C. Problem of Ignoring that Perspective:

D. Claim/Committed Perspective on the Problem:

### II. Paragraph on Freud/Melancholia and Narcissism

A. Introduce key terminology that I need to reference

B. Quick few sentences on Hamlet's other melancholia symptoms. (paraphrase and give line numbers) (mourning longer, self-deprecation, one more??)

### III. Hamlet loved Ophelia before his Father's death

A. Polonius quoting a previous love letter

- IV. Hamlet is very upset by his mother's remarriage, so much so that it is the topic of his first soliloquy. He really rails against her
  - A. Ex. from process assignment.
- V. After Hamlet Sr.'s death, he treated Ophelia very differently
  - A. Ex. quote used in process assignment
- VI. However, his treatment towards Ophelia is emulating the same things he hates about his mother's actions
  - A. ex?
- VII. His reactions to Ophelia are thus a reflection of his hurt ego. He had a narcissistic attachment with her. He identified himself with Gertrude, so when she acted in a way that disappointed him, his ego mirrored it.
  - A. Ex further when Ophelia dies, and his reaction is to prove that he loved her for himself, but not for her.
- VIII. Conclusion

Go through the body paragraphs chronologically

## Free Writes

### Process Assignment:

In his essay, *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud differentiates normal mourning from the pathological melancholia. While mourning and melancholia both stem from the loss of a loved one or idea, melancholia is specifically characterized by the loss of a narcissistic object-cathexis, which negatively affects the ego of the melancholic individual and makes the loss internally about them. In other words, the loved one that the self-oriented individual formed an attachment to was chosen because the individual saw his or herself in the person, and they felt a desire to make that person a part of them, absorb them. When that loved one is then lost, the individual then loses themselves as well, resulting in a habit of self-degrading behavior stemming from the slighted ego.

Hamlet's mistreatment of Ophelia becomes clear when it is viewed as a result of the breaking of a narcissistic bond between Hamlet and Gertrude, due to his mother's quick remarriage. Hamlet is deeply disturbed by his mother's marriage to Claudius so soon after his father's death. His first monologue focuses on denouncing her goodness on the basis of inconstancy:

Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him

As if increase of appetite had grown

By what it fed on, and yet, within a month —

Let me not think on't! Frailty, thy name is woman! —

...married with my uncle. (1.2.143-6, 151)

Hamlet laments that Gertrude loved his father so much that "she would hang on him," her affections only growing stronger with time, but this love seemed to vanish "within a month" as she easily married Hamlet's uncle. This quick recovery leaves Hamlet questioning the sincerity of Gertrude's love for his father, and he specifically curses her for her "frailty," her lack of resolve and loyalty to one she was sworn to love.

However, Hamlet later demonstrates this same frailty in his affections towards Ophelia, making his protests towards his mother seem more personal in nature, the disgust which he shows for Gertrude being really a disgust for himself. Hamlet's appraisal of Gertrude's actions towards his father's memory mirror the words he speaks to Ophelia:

I did love you once...

You should not have believ'd me, for virtue cannot so

[inoculate] our old stock but we shall relish of it. I lov'd

you not. (3.1.114, 116-8)

Hamlet seems to emulate his idea of Gertrude's inconstancy as he speaks to Ophelia both "I did love you once" and "I lov'd you not." Before Gertrude's remarriage, Hamlet only ever proclaimed his love for Ophelia, writing love letters to her urging her to doubt the universe before she doubts his love for her (2.2.116-9). It is only after Gertrude marries Claudius that Hamlet acts malevolently towards Ophelia, suggesting that his view of himself and his role in romantic relationships is intimately and narcissistically tied to his mother's. Hamlet's actions towards Ophelia only make sense when read as the result of a slight to Hamlet's ego. Hamlet's object-cathexis of Gertrude was tied to her loyalty to her loved ones, a trait that Hamlet saw in himself. Hamlet did not lose Gertrude to death, but he lost the image of her as a loving and loyal wife and thus he lost his ability to be loyal in love.