

ADVANCED ENGLISHCRITICAL STUDY OF TEXTS HAMLET: TEXT ANALYSISHAMLET

CONTEXT

Great Chain of Being

- The Great Chain of Being placed the King as the Head of state. The supremacy of kinds manifested in the divine right of kings ie. the supreme upholder of order. In effect, this functions as an inhibitive force that prevents Hamlet from committing regicide as contextual ramification was pandemonium.
- The supernatural apparition adds an eccentric element to the play for contemporary audiences, however, for Elizabethan audiences its significance is elucidated through Horatio's response "*this bodes some strange eruption to our state*". This portends the ultimate tragedy of Hamlet as a reflection of the Great Chain of Being.

Humanism

- Hamlet epitomizes the emergence of Humanistic values within Elizabethan society. This justifies the internal conflict of Hamlet between morality and familial obligations. Thus, Elizabethans favored revenge whilst humanists emphasized the necessity of thought over action.
- Accordingly, Hamlet is a humanist, Fortinbras and Claudius are usurpers and opportunists whilst Laertes is an archetypical man of action. In a sense, each of these characters foil each other's deficiencies.
- Hamlet's humanistic values are elucidated with his unwillingness to become a bystander in "*'tis unweeded garden*", rather, remaining superior to this moral deficiency. This is presented through Zeffirelli's production, constantly utilizing high angle shots of Hamlet on a platform, metaphorical representation of a '*moral high ground*'.
- Essentially, Hamlet isn't emancipated from the Elizabethan shackles of revenge, however, a new humanist promoting individualism and self determination.

Revenge

- Hamlet is an example of a Kydian tragedy as revenge is the fundamental motive, the avenger hesitates before acting, madness eventuates, subterfuge exists and the use of a 'play within a play' builds tension. Thus, it is a typical Shakespearean tragedy where the outcome outweighs the initial wrongdoing.

Patriarchal society

- Women were perceived as substandard in a patriarchal society.
- Ophelia and Gertrude suffer from Hamlet's tainted view of women due to the 'corrupted currents' of Denmark. This is articulated in the personification '*Frailty, thy name is woman*'.

CHARACTERISATION

Hamlet

- Viewing the world through a jaundiced outlook his torment stems from his father's murder, mothers *'o'er hasty marriage'* and the *'corrupted currents'* of Denmark. Thus, he is portrayed to modern audiences as a victim of a changing world. His seclusion in Denmark parallels issues that plague contemporary society with adolescents withdrawing themselves from a world which they feel lacks understanding.
- Hamlet's enigmatic behavior makes him a dramatically compelling character. His tendency to be sensitive and callous at times shows his trauma and depression in a *'distracted globe'*.
- In the *Zeffirelli production (1990)* of Hamlet, the sea of colors within the Danish court sharply contrasts Hamlet's *'inky cloak'*. Hamlet's costuming symbolizes his seclusion and anguish over his father's death contrary to the feigned mourning of the others.
- The decision to test the conscience of Claudius through the metatheatre *'play within a play'* is indicative of Hamlet's rational thinking, whilst for an Elizabethan audience he is portrayed as cowardly. This use of metatheatre provides an onstage microcosm of the conflict within Denmark
- Hamlet's flaw of *'thinking too precisely on th'event'* is seen in Act 3 Scene 3 *'And am I then revenged to take him ...when he is fit and seasoned for his passage?'*. Thus, rather than killing Claudius he further delays the act of murder - worsening the tragedy at the end. If he had swiftly avenged the death of his father the deaths of Laertes, Gertrude, Ophelia and himself may not have eventuated.
- Therefore, it is evident that Hamlet's inertia is his fatal flaw, reinforced by COLERIDGE STATING *'Hamlet is continually resolving to do, yet doing nothing to resolve...'*.
- In spite of his courage, Hamlet suffers from a failure of nerve which results in his procrastination, accentuated in famous critic GOETHE STATING *'his flaw was a failure of nerve'*.
- Ultimately, Hamlet's soliloquies arouse sympathy and provokes the questioning of today's concerns: *existentialism, nature of political power and betrayal.*

<u>QUOTE</u>	<u>TECHNIQUE</u>	<u>EFFECT</u>
<i>'distracted globe'</i>	Metaphor	Indicates Hamlet's inner and outer conflict within Denmark
<i>'A little less than kin, and less than kind'</i> <i>'I am too much I'th sun'</i>	Wit Pun	Indicates his trauma, depression and animosity towards his uncle
<i>'but no more like my father than I to Hercules..'</i>	Simile	Disownment of Claudius further indicates his trauma, depression and animosity towards his uncle.
<i>'makes each petty arture as hardy as the Nemean lions nerve...'</i>	Simile	Indicates Hamlet's audacity in response to the ghost and his original willingness to follow the ghost despite it indicating 'something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
<i>'Like John a dreams, unpregnant of my cause, and can say nothing'</i> (Act 2 Sc 2 Soliloquoy)	Simile	Hamlet reveals his inability to conjure the emotions to claim revenge through the simile in contrast to the players who are able to stimulate emotions of anger.

<p><i>'Like John a dreams, unpregnant of my cause, and can say nothing'</i> (Act 2 Sc 2 Soliloquoy)</p>	<p>Simile</p>	<p>Hamlet reveals his inability to conjure the emotions to claim revenge through the simile in contrast to the players who are able to stimulate emotions of anger.</p>
<p><i>'speech the speech...trippingly on the tongue.'</i></p>	<p>Sibilance & Alliteration</p>	<p>Indicates Hamlet's comfort and sanity when speaking to the players, juxtaposing his concise and insensitive responses to Claudius.</p>
<p><i>'the spirit that I have seen may be a devil...'</i></p>		<p>Questioning of the legitimacy of the ghost is a breach of loyalty and thus, indicates his fatal flaw is his inertia.</p> <p>This indicates the Elizabethan perspective that the ghost denotes chaos and forebodes disruption to the great chain of being. Hence, Hamlet clearly isn't suitable to</p>

Claudius

- Claudius sharply juxtaposes Hamlet's humanistic values through his unscrupulous behavior and corruptive ascension to power.
- Claudius utilizes political rhetoric when addressing the Danish court in Act 1 Scene 2.
- Claudius' manipulative nature manifests through his exploitation of; Rosencrantz & Guildenstern to spy on Hamlet, Laertes to avenge his father's death and Polonius as his spy on the affairs of Elsinore.
- Claudius functions as a foil to Hamlet in that he is a man of action. This is evident through his definitive responses ***'I have in quick determination thus set it down...'***. Consequently, he is depicted as a usurper and opportunist, whilst Hamlet is depicted as a man of intellect rather than action.

<u>QUOTE</u>	<u>TECHNIQUE</u>	<u>EFFECT</u>
<p><i>'O villain, villain, smiling damned villain...'</i></p>	<p>Repetition and irony</p>	<p>Shakespeare implements irony, with Hamlet only being able to see through Claudius' public mask evident through the repetition. This further depicts Hamlet as a man of procrastination as despite knowing the truth he still cannot act.</p> <p>Similarly, within the Zeferilli production (1990) following Claudius's opening address, the Danish court erupts in applause, thus provoking us to question modern day political leaders and their true motives.</p>
<p><i>'serpent that did sting thy fathers life'</i></p>	<p>Biblical allusion</p>	<p>His malignance is conveyed through the biblical allusion. This creates imagery of a devil in disguise, poisoning the goodness of 'Eden', thus, spreading corruption and in</p>

'serpent that did sting thy fathers life'	Biblical allusion	His malignance is conveyed through the biblical allusion. This creates imagery of a devil in disguise, poisoning the goodness of 'Eden', thus, spreading corruption and in turn infecting all of Denmark.
'My offence is rank, it smells to heaven it hath the primal eldest curse upon't, a brother's murder..' 'Oh bosom black as death!'	Hyperbole & biblical allusion	Despite his feigned public mask, Claudius berates himself through soliloquies, revealing his guilty conscience

Gertrude

- Prevailing male hegemony within Hamlet is seen through the juxtaposition of Gertrude and Ophelia. In effect, she is a passive character who is the target of Hamlet's angst, excoriating her betrayal of Hamlet.
- At the beginning of the play she is portrayed as an insincere mother through her sentiment **'all that lives must die passing through nature to eternity'**.
- Hamlet's perception of his mother has been tainted by the **'corruptive currents'** and **'foul and pestilent congregation of vapors'**. These **metaphors** emphasize the corruption which subsists in Elsinore and consequently becomes disjointed with Gertrude. The animosity towards his mother is evident in the line **'o most pernicious woman!'** which juxtaposes his earlier references to her as **'madam'**.
- The sour mother-son relationship is magnified during the closet scene (Act 3 Scene 4). Hamlet's **callous** and **concise** responses **'go, go you question with a wicked tongue'** and the **simile** **'almost as bad..as kill a king and marry his brother..'**. These responses accentuate Gertrude's actions are stained with incest and thus, Hamlet's animosity and damaged relationship.
- Throughout this scene various ambiguities arise. The first of which whether Gertrude played a part in Old Hamlet's death. This is implied through the **metaphor** **'thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul, and there I see such black and grained spots'** thus, questioning Gertrude's role in the **'unweeded garden'**. This metaphor is further extended **'do not spread the compost on weeds and make them ranker'**. These metaphors emphasize the corruption within Denmark and how the once healthy state has been contaminated by treachery.
- Secondly, whether Hamlet is truly mad is questioned. As Gertrude cannot see the ghost **'this is the very coinage of your brain..'**, the legitimacy of its apparition to Hamlet is questioned. Questions such as is he really mad? and has Hamlet's depression effected his vision of reality? are raised. Hence, due to such ambiguity Hamlet remains a universal play as it may be interpreted in many contexts.

Ophelia

- Ophelia is a victim of Hamlet's **'antic disposition'**. His tainted relationship with Gertrude contaminates his love for Ophelia and sentiment towards women. This is evident through the **personification** **'Frailty, thy name is women'** and his cynical view of women **'god hath made you one face and you make yourselves another...'** – emphasising the underlying theme of appearance versus reality.

- Her sincere and compliant responses *'I shall obey my lord'* to Laertes and Polonius indicates the patriarchal society that subsisted, from a feminist reading.
- Ophelia's madness is employed by Shakespeare to contrast Hamlet's *'antic disposition'*. As both suffer the loss of their fathers and angst plagues their life, Ophelia's true madness is conveyed through her songs and distracted responses whilst Hamlet doesn't lack awareness *'I essentially am not in madness but mad in craft'*.

Laertes

- Laertes acts a foil to Hamlet in that he is audacious in response to his father's death. Laertes juxtaposes *'tis unmanly grief'* of Hamlet through his promise to attain revenge in the **hyperbole** *'to cut his through I'th' church'*.
- In spite of this, Laertes is a noble man. Prior to killing Hamlet he experiences moral conflict, akin to Hamlet *'and yet it is almost against my conscience'*. Thus, despite him plotting the death of Hamlet with the King, his true nobility is revealed in the final scene.
- Through the dramatic juxtaposition of Laertes and Hamlet, Hamlet's fatal flaw of procrastination is magnified.

Polonius

- Polonius places his political motives over the welfare of his children. He is portrayed as a man who is highly involved in the corruptive currents of Denmark. Akin to Claudius, he utilizes espionage in order to gather information on the affairs of his children.
- Polonius' death is the beginning of the climactic point of Hamlet. His death results in the insanity of Ophelia, Laertes anger and thus the final tragedy scene.
- His employment of Reynaldo to spy on Laertes and Ophelia elucidates Polonius' nature, that is, his kids are puppets in his political mastery with their emotions ignored in the powerful world of court diplomacy.
- Despite his portrayal as a foolish old man, he is able to see through Hamlet's *'antic disposition'* stating *'Though this be madness, yet there is method in't'* thus depicting him as an intelligent and cunning.

Horatio

- Horatio is Hamlet's confidant, who enjoys absolute trust of all those in Elsinore. Even Claudius trusts Horatio to restrain Hamlet following his outburst at Ophelia's funeral.
- He also voices the prominent Elizabethan concerns of the time in regards to the great chain of being, by foreboding the corruption that will be revealed to the audience within latter scenes and the tragedy soon to occur *'this bodes some eruption to our state'*
- Additionally, he ironically foreshadows the fall of the Danish monarch and the tragedy soon to strike through his **classical allusion** *'a littler ere the mightiest Julius fell'* in Act 1 Scene 1, alluding to the calamity approaching.

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern

- Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are the false friends of Hamlet. They are exploited by Claudius in order to obtain knowledge on Hamlet. Thus, Hamlet himself excoriates them through his **metaphor** *'when he needs what you have gleaned it is but squeezing you and sponge you shall dry again'*. This indicates Claudius' ability to utilize R & G as his eyes over Elsinore, thus, simply being accessories in his pursuit of power.
- It is through R & G that Hamlet finally receives the impetus to become a man of action. This is largely evident when Hamlet discovers the letters to England *'oh from this time forth my thoughts be bloody or nothing worth'*.

- Moreover, for the first time Hamlet mirrors an archetypal male of the time and hence is no longer a humanist in **Act 5 Scene 2**. This is articulated through his callous response to Horatio regarding their R & G death ***'they are not near my conscience..'***. This for once indicates an unscrupulous man, focused on avenging his father's death.

Ghost

- The Ghost within the play is one of the most significant elements of the plot.
- The ambiguity surrounding the ghost adds an eccentric element to the play. According to the great chain of being, it signifies ***'something is rotten in the state of Denmark'***. On the contrary, modern audience question whether it is the ***'very coinage'*** of Hamlets brain.
- This ambiguity also manifests through Hamlet, who ultimately questions the authenticity of the apparition.
- The supernatural element of the play conveys various conflicting messages to Hamlet. It raises contextual contradictions, that is, Roman principals which accentuated revenge over thought whilst humanistic values favoring divine justice over revenge.
- Additionally, the ghost orders hamlet to ***'revenge his foul and most unnatural murder...'***. However, killing the king would result in regicide and thus treason, raising moral questions.
- The apparition also raises questions regarding existentialism, through reference to purgatory ***'doomed for a certain term to walk the night...fast in fires'*** further enhancing Hamlet as a universal text with relevance to today, raising pertinent questions that are asked in society regarding mortality and life after death.
- Thus it is due to this apparition that hamlet lives in a 'distracted globe' – metaphorically and literally.

Fortinbras

- Fortinbras juxtaposes Hamlets failure to act, through his depiction as a valiant soldier. From the onset of the play his willingness to reclaim his lost land initiates the theme of revenge.
- The characterisation of Fortinbras is significant in developing Hamlet as a man of inaction. Their binary opposition is seen in **Act 4 Scene 4** whereby it is revealed that Fortinbras is determined to claim land ***'that hath in it no profit but the name...'***. Thus, the characterisation of Fortinbras depicts Hamlet as a procrastinator and the wrong man for the job.
- The fact that Fortinbras himself is seeking to claim revenge for his father, places him in the same position as Hamlet, thus, indicating how an Elizabethan male would react in contrast to the humanistic Hamlet.

THEMES

Revenge

- Hamlet is a quintessential example of a Kydian tragedy.
- Vengeance is sought by all three malcontents in the play on behalf of their fathers. From the beginning, Fortinbras functions as a dramatic juxtaposition to Hamlet. As the play develops it is also revealed to the audience that Hamlet in fact loathes the gallantry of Fortinbras ***'Exposing what is mortal and unsure...death and danger dare, even for an egg shell..How stand I then...'***.
- Drawing parallels to Fortinbras, Laertes responds to his father's death swiftly ***'only I'll be revenged most thoroughly for my father...'***. Thus, Shakespeare cunningly utilizes Fortinbras and Laertes as foils to Hamlet, expounding his inability to act and depicting him as a Renaissance man who according to **Goethe *'Hamlet's flaw is a failure of nerve'***
- Conversely, Hamlet is bestowed with the role of avenging his father's murder and reluctantly procrastinates ***'Oh vengeance! Why, what an ass am I!'***.

- Hence, Laertes and Fortinbras are driven by their clear perceptions of filial honor and duty whilst Hamlet is driven by his humanistic values and the discrepancy between what is right and wrong.

Appearance & Reality

The binary opposition of Hamlet's humanistic values and Claudius' perfidious nature, presented in Act 1 Scene 2, widens the dichotomy between appearance and reality, heightening the portrayal of Hamlet as a man of inaction. The dissemblance between 'what seems' and 'what is' is illuminated through the juxtaposition of **Claudius's eloquent opening speech** and **Hamlet's disjointed soliloquy**. Throughout the **fluent blank verse**, Claudius employs **political rhetoric** through the use of **collective pronouns** such as **'our'** and **'we'**, **metaphors** **'to be contracted in one brow of woe..'**, **dramatic irony** **'thinking by our late brother death our state to be disjoint..'** and **paradoxical statements** **'one auspicious and one dropping eye'** depicting him as a considerable and capable monarch. However, this dramatically juxtaposes Claudius's duplicitous nature which is revealed by the ghost, through the **biblical allusion** **'serpent stung me'**, serving as an innuendo that he is in fact the devil in disguise, poisoning the good of Denmark.

On the contrary, Hamlet's **callous** and **oblique** response **'seems madam? nay it is, I know not seems'** is an insinuation that his grieving and despair lacks superficiality, converse to the feign mourning of Gertrude **'a beast that wants discourse of reason would have mourned longer!'** As seen in the Zeffirelli production of Hamlet, the sea of colours within the Danish court sharply contrasts Hamlet's 'inky cloak' indicating his seclusion and inner conflict. Thus, Hamlet's **soliloquy** in Act 1 Scene 2 **fragmented by broken lines, rhetorical questions, exclamations, interjection** through the **repetition** of **'O'** and **caesura** **'She married.'** expounds his desolation and juxtaposes Claudius's rehearsed speech. Ultimately, the falsity of appearances is foregrounded through the characterisation of Claudius, Hamlet and Gertrude, magnifying his procrastinatio

- The **simile** **'a little month or ere those shoes were old...like Niobe'** encapsulates Hamlet's feelings of despair and torment that a short time after his father's death, the feigned public mourning of all around him has been exposed, whilst he still lingers in the past.
- The use of **classical allusions** **'hyperions curls, the front of Jove himself'** emphasizes the disparity between Old Hamlet and Claudius, that is, whilst Claudius appears regal he is no comparison to Old Hamlet's nobility.
- Additionally, Polonius stating **'with devotion's visage and pious action, we do sugar o'er the devil himself'** provokes questioning of the appearance and reality on various levels. Not only does this provoke the audience to question Claudius' actions, it is also increases the significance of the text in today's society – with issues such as child abuse within religious groups, Polonius' words are largely applicable.

Existentialism

- Prominent questions in today's society regarding mortality are reflected throughout Hamlet.
- Throughout the **'to be or not to be...'** soliloquy in Act 3 Scene 1 Hamlet explores the issue of mortality and the reasons for living. It is revealed to the audience that concerns surrounding existentialism torment Hamlet's inner thoughts **'to die, to sleep - to sleep, perchance to dream..'** With this juxtaposition, Hamlet belittles the meaning of death – provoking the audience to question what life truly means, thus, presenting Hamlet as a universal text.
- Throughout Hamlet readers are reminded of the ever present shadow of mortality. Shakespeare poses questions regarding religious institutions and the issue of suicide. Through the **metaphor** **'O that this too solid flesh would melt...everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst self slaughter...'** questions the religious stance on such issues which are prominent today such as teenage suicide.

- Additionally, the graveyard scene (**Act 5 Scene 1**) provokes the questioning life's struggles. Hamlet's obsession with the ironies of life are accentuated through the **symbolism** of Yorrick's skull, prompting Hamlet to fall into a sorrowful reverie. This is evident in the **classical allusion** '*Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay, might stop a hole to keep the wind away..*', provoking readers to question what one takes with them once they die which is a prominent concern today.
- The use of **anadiplosis** in Act 5 Scene 1 '*Alexander returneth to dust, dust is earth, earth we make loam...*' heighten the tension between freedom and the limiting nature of death.

Loyalty

- Disloyalty subsists within Elsinore on numerous levels: Hamlet perceives all women as treacherous as a result of his tainted relationship with Gertrude, Claudius' sinister motives are only revealed to Hamlet and Ophelia is warned by Laertes and Polonius of Hamlet's affections '*not permanent, sweet, not lasting..*'.
- Additionally, loyalty to oneself is accentuated through Polonius's words of wisdom '*this above all, to thine own self be true*'. Other aspects of loyalty such as filial loyalty and faithfulness to the state of Denmark are persistent concerns that are explored.
- Hamlet also suffers from uncertainty of the ghosts nature, indicating his lack of loyalty towards his father and his filial duty to avenge his death '*the spirit that I have seen may be a devil...*'.
- Honesty is another predominant theme throughout the text, seen through the anger, depression and trauma '*to be honest as this world goes is to be one man picked out of ten thousand..*'. This elucidates Hamlet's cynicism of his counterparts within Elsinore. Additionally, the substandard view of women within the context in which Hamlet was written is further enhanced through the underlying notion of dishonesty '*god hath given you one face and you make yourselves another...*'

Destiny

- Essentially, Shakespeare accentuates that one may not escape their true fate. Despite Hamlet's consistent procrastination, he suffers the full ramifications of attempting to postpone the attainment of vengeance. The underlying theme of destiny is evident in the **rhyming couplet** '*O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right..*'.
- Ultimately, Hamlet is unable to escape his role of avenger, finally attaining vengeance in the final scene. In spite of this, the audience is provoked to question whether tragedy eventuated due to Hamlet's inertia.

Corruption

- Elsinore is a world of political intrigue, préceded through the **metaphors** '*corrupted currents*', contaminated by '*foul and pestilent congregation of vapours*'. Through Claudius's '*incestuous*' ascension to power, the predominant issue of corruption within Denmark is initiated.
- Claudius's murder of his brother initiates the corruption within Denmark, that would soon encase the whole state. Shakespeare's use of **biblical allusions** '*serpent stung me*' serves as an innuendo that Claudius himself is a duplicitous devil in disguise, who poisoned the good of Denmark and spread his mischief across the land.
- Hamlet, depicted as the humanistic male, is isolated from the **metaphorical** '*unweeded garden...things rank and gross in nature..*' by his ideals of justice and morality. Zeferelli's production of Hamlet, persistently places Hamlet at the top of Elsinore or on higher platforms, placing him on a moral high ground looking down on an infected state.
- The theme of corruption also extends further than Gertrude. An extension of the garden motif exists in the **metaphor** '*do not spread compost on the weeds to make them ranker.*' Additionally,

metaphors such as *‘Denmark is a prison’* indicate the oppression experienced in a society tainted by villainy and duplicity.

- The underlying notion of corruption is seen through the symbolism behind the death of Old Hamlet *‘in the porches of my ears did pour the leperous distilment..’*. This death, serves as innuendo that Claudius is poisoning the ‘ears’ of everyone in Denmark through his disingenuous political rhetoric.

ASH TEKINAY STATES ‘IT IS HAMLET’S DISGUST WITH THE CORRUPT LIFE THAT RENDERS HIM THE DESIRE TO FIND OUT THE UNDERLYING REALITY BEHIND APPEARANCES.’

SPECIFIC ACTS AND SCENES

Act 1 Scene 5

THROUGHOUT ACT 1 SCENE 5, THE CONFLICTING MESSAGES OF THE GHOST ARE CONSTANTLY PRESENTED TO THE AUDIENCE. THIS REFLECTS THE CONTEXTUAL CONFLICT, BETWEEN THE AGE OF REASON, WITH THE EMERGENCE OF HUMANISM, AND THE ELIZABETHAN ERA.

- Elizabethan belief in the ‘Great Chain of Being’, placing the King at the pinnacle of the social hierarchy and labeling supernatural apparitions as a ‘disruption to our state’, is presented in the appearance of ‘old hamlet’.
- Unlike Fortinbras, whose filial duty to avenge his father’s death by reclaiming *‘land that hath in it no profit but the name’* Hamlet procrastinates due to the conflicting messages conveyed by the ghost.
- The Ghost describes murder as *‘foul, strange and unnatural’* whilst asking Hamlet to *‘Revenge his most foul and unnatural murder’*. Ultimately, killing the king would result in regicide and thus treason, raising moral questions.
- Additionally, the use of the **antithetical simile** *‘with wings as swift as meditation or the thought of love may sweep to my revenge...’* frames Hamlet as unfit for the role of revenge as the lyrical words ‘meditation or thoughts of love’ are out of tune with the sentiments the situation demands. Consequently, it is evident that Hamlet himself is the wrong man for the job with GOETHE STATING ‘HIS FLAW IS A FAILURE OF NERVE’.
- DURING A PERIOD OF GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGING ECONOMIES IT SHOWS THE SHIFTING NATURE OF THE WORLD AND THE UNCERTAINTIES THAT PLAGUE OUR LIFE.
- This apparition ultimately disjoins his relationship with his mother, evident through his castigation of her *‘O most pernicious woman!’* dramatically juxtaposes his references to *‘madam’* in **Act 1 Scene 2**.

SOLILOQUIES

ACT 1 SCENE 2 ‘O THAT THIS TOO SOLID...’

- This soliloquy accentuates Hamlet’s contempt at his mother’s **‘o’er hasty remarriage’** and the animosity towards his uncle. With a despondent tone, his inner feelings are revealed to the audience. This lays the foundation for prominent concerns which are explored throughout the remainder of the play, that is, existentialism, disloyalty and incest.

Technique	Effect
Metaphor: ‘too solid flesh would melt, thaw and resolve... everlasting had not fixed his canon’	Hamlet is questioning the essence of religion, which forbids the act of suicide. This metaphor indicates Hamlet’s trauma at the corruption exists around him and accordingly, his suicidal wishes.
Repetition: ‘O God’	Conveys the agony and melancholy within Hamlet.

	The repetition of 'O' is an interjection which indicates his conflict with Christian beliefs.
Negative connotation: 'weary, stale, flat and unprofitable...'	This creates negative bias indicating Hamlet's weariness through the listless tempo of the words which mirror the treachery that exists.
Metaphor: 'tis an unweeded garden..things rank and gross in nature'	The use of the garden motif creates imagery of all things being repulsive. The 'unweeded garden' refers to the corruption that has now poisoned the once healthy and good state of Elsinore. This represents Denmark through Hamlet's jaundiced outlook.
Personification: 'Frailty, thy name is woman'	Hamlet's view of women has been tainted by the ' <i>foul and pestilent congregation of vapors</i> '. Due to his mother's remarriage his view of all women has been contaminated believing that both his mother and Ophelia are responsible for the corruption in Denmark.
Simile: 'she followed my poor fathers body like Niobe'	Indicates Hamlets bewilderment and disgust at his mother's remarriage. The simile juxtaposes Gertrude's betrayal to the devotion of a traditional life, enhancing the depiction of Gertrude as an unfaithful women.
Caesura: 'she married'	Accentuates that his mothers remarriage engages his strongest feelings. His obsession with this marriage results in his inner conflict.
Sibilance: 'post with such dexterity to incestuous sheets'	This metaphor utilises sibilance which conveys Hamlet's nausea whilst being interested in his mothers sexual relations. This is explained as the Oedipal conflict, and through the Freudian interpretation is his fatal flaw.

ACT 2 SCENE 2 'O WHAT A ROGUE'

- This soliloquy involves Hamlet berating himself over his procrastination and failure to conjure the emotions to avenge his father's death and attain vengeance as he is meant to. Throughout this soliloquy Hamlet's Humanistic values are illuminated.

Technique	Effect
Rhetorical Questions: ' <i>Had he the motive and cue for passion that I have?</i> ' <i>Am I a coward?</i> '	Dramatic juxtaposition between Hamlet's procrastination and inability to attain vengeance, to the player who was able to conjure the emotions which he should possess. This indicates frustration as this is an issue that haunts Hamlet and self reflection.
Negative connotation: ' <i>dull and muddy-mettled rascal</i> ' ' <i>remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!</i> '	Creates negative bias which accentuates Hamlet's self disgust at his procrastination and what Claudius label 'tis unmanly grief'. Hence, Hamlet himself concedes he is the unsuited for the role of avenger. The accumulation through the commas, creates a vehement tone where Hamlet reveals his inner thoughts of Claudius. This complements the imagery of Claudius as a 'serpent', depicting him as a duplicitous and malignant man.
Metaphor: ' <i>I am pigeon livered and lack gall</i> '	Hamlet excoriates himself and berates his lack of audacity. This sharply juxtaposes his initial response to the ghost in the simile ' <i>makes each petty arture as hardy as the nemean lions nerve</i> '. Evidently, he is a man of PROCRASTINATION.

<i>'the spirit I have seen may be a devil'</i>	Seeds of doubt are sowed in his mind, in order to further procrastinate. This represents the Elizabethan view that ghosts disrupted the chain of being and could assume another form.
<i>'the plays he thing wherein ill catch the conscience of the king'</i>	This illuminates Hamlet's Humanistic values through the notion of intellect over action. Whilst in the eyes of the Elizabethan audience, he is a coward.

ACT 3 SCENE 1 'TO BE OR NOT TO BE...'

- This soliloquy questions the nature of existentialism, which is an underlying theme throughout the play. Hamlet explores the notion of suicide and accordingly, the uncertainty which follows death. It is accentuated that the 'dread of something after death' forces us to endure the 'calamity' of a 'long life'.

Technique	Effect
<i>'to be or not to be..'</i>	The underlying theme of the play, that is the nature of existentialism, is referred to within the opening lines. Hamlet questions whether it is easier to end his life and avoid the vices of corruption in the 'foul and pestilent congregation of vapours' or cleanse 'tis unweeded garden' himself.
Metaphor: <i>'whether 'tis nobler in mind to suffer...or take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them'</i>	This metaphor encapsulates Hamlet's inner conflict throughout the whole text. The metaphor questions whether it is easier to end life's trouble through suicide or practice Christian teachings and <i>'suffer the slings and arrows'</i> . Thus, revealing Hamlet's reasons for his melancholy and despair. Hamlet's association of fortune with 'slings and arrows' indicates his view that fortune is brutal and unjust.
Juxtaposition, repetition and asynedton: <i>'to die, to sleep – to sleep, perchance to dream'</i>	Hamlet trivialises the notion of death, which haunts many people in modern society, by juxtaposing it 'to sleep'. Hamlet's repetition of 'to die, to sleep' accentuates the moral dilemma he faces. This further portrays hamlet as unsuitable for the role of avenger, reinforced through Goethe stating 'his flaw is a failure of nerve' Also reflects the incoherence and disorder of the protagonists through, underscoring Hamlet's existentialist fears.
Hyperbole: <i>'the heartache and the thousand natural shocks'</i>	Hamlet accentuates the pain of life and how nothing good comes out of it. His exaggeration of 'thousand natural shocks' indicates his inner feelings of betrayal and how the corruption and treachery has developed him into a cynic.
Accumulation: <i>'who would bear the whips and scorns of time, th' oppressor wrong....'</i>	The repetitive use of commas in this line accumulates the ideas of Hamlet. This creates a dispirited tone, as if everything in the world was corrupt and 'rank and gross in nature'. Thus, through this accumulation, Hamlet further expresses the truth within Denmark that 'Denmark is a prison..'
Rhetorical Question: <i>'fly to others that we know not of?'</i>	The philosophical nature of Hamlet is revealed once again. Hamlet begins to question the uncertainties

	after death, which is an enduring issue that affects contemporary society and thus, makes Hamlet a universal play. This reveals to the audience, why Hamlet continually threatens to commit suicide however, constantly suffers the failure of nerve.
Alliteration: <i>'conscience does make cowards of us all'</i> <i>'bare bodkin'</i>	Hamlet reinforces the notion that his Humanist values have resulted in his 'failure of nerve' that is, his inability to act. This reinforces the notion that Hamlet's inertia is his fatal flaw.
Caesura: <i>'and lose the name of action'</i>	Accent is placed on the notion of procrastination and being unable to act. Hence, through this emphasis, Hamlet's fatal flaw is once again emphasised through his soliloquy. Evidently, Hamlet

ACT 5 SCENE 2

- The final scene of the play presents the recurring theme and notion that an individual may not escape fate and ultimately shape their future. This serves as an implicit judgment towards the audiences procrastination, as Hamlet states *"there's a divinity that shapes our ends"*. Thus, the audience is provoked to question whether he had *"swiftly"* sought revenge, whether the final tragedy would have occurred.
- Hamlet elucidates his the internal conflict from which he suffered due to the incongruence of his filial duties with his humanistic moral obligations as *"in my heart there was some kind of fighting"*.
- The predominant theme of corruption that is present from the onset of the play is heightened as Claudius' order so *"my head should be struck off"* is revealed.
- Humanistic Hamlet deviates from his procrastination which hinders his ability to seek revenge as he states *"They did make love to this employment. They are not near my conscience"* – this juxtaposes the earlier need to ensure Claudius was guilty of *"royal knavery!"* through the 'play within a play'.
- The qualities of Hamlet and Laertes are illuminated as a dramatic juxtaposition to the villainy of the rest of the Court as elucidated through the **simile** *"Your skill shall, like a star i'th' darkest night, stick fiery off indeed"*.
- Further illustrating the corruption, **asyndeton** *"thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane"* creates an overwhelming sense of accumulation regarding Claudius' sinister nature.
- The poignant death of Hamlet, heightened through his words *"Thou livest; report me and my cause aright"* evokes sympathy within the audience as he is framed as the 'Prince of Denmark' who on no grounds deserves to die but rather, is an innocent victim of the duplicity that subsists.
- Contextually, the vengeful deaths in Act 5 Scene 2, specifically that of Claudius, signifies the reassertion of the Great Chain of Being, ironically signified by Horatio *"Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest"*. This accentuates Hamlet's essential goodness and the restoration of order within Denmark; further heightened through the entry of Fortibras and his claiming of Denmark.
- Within the *1948 Olivier production* of Hamlet, his death followed by the medium shot of the *"sweet prince"* on the throne of the Denmark emphasizes this notion of the Great Chain of Being, being restored and the return to normalcy.
- The stoic death of Hamlet, appealing to the audiences compassion, is enhanced through the fitting tribute by Fortinbras in the **simile** *"Let four captains bear Hamlet like a soldier..."*. Thus the elevation of Hamlet at the conclusion of the text above a corruptive state; similar to his standing on a higher platform within the *Zefereilli production*, portrays the dominance of veracity over vengeance.
- Fortinbras' claiming of Denmark serves as an implicit judgment on Hamlet's procrastination as his adherence to his filial duty of revenge for his father has ultimately resulted in his claiming of land, contrary to Hamlet's death.