psychoanalytic approach – Hamlet can’t kill Claudius because if he did then he would have to admit his desire for his mother but can kill Claudius when Gertrude is dying

- T.S. Eliot claims Hamlet is aware of disparity between the 2 – “objective correlative” to describe the disparity – Hamlet’s disgust at his mother is excessive – play is artistic failure

- Gertrude
  - Speaks very little
  - Ghost portrays her as both guilty (virtuous Queen) and victim of Claudius’ use of witchcraft to seduce her – overall impression is of “lewdness” and “lust”
  - Player-queen says what Gertrude should have vowed – Gertrude responds with “the lady doth protest too much methinks”

- Marxist criticism
  - Bertold Brecht (1948)
    - Fortinbras – old feudal system – owe allegiance to the baron
    - Hamlet – new era of reason
    - Hamlet does not act accordingly to code of old feudal system as he kills Claudius

- Structuralism
  - Identifying underlying set of rules behind text – features that constitute revenge tragedy as a genre
  - But Hamlet’s complexity resists such simplification

- Poststructuralism
  - Concept of revenge has multiple inscriptions within play
  - Aristocratic form of self-assertion
  - Filial duty
  - Populist form of justice necessitated by corruption at top of society
  - Devolution of moral agency onto individual
  - Not one simple reading of revenge but a wide range of ideas

- New Historicist
  - English failure to quell Irish Rebellion
  - Threat of attach from Spain
  - The succession – who would rule after Elizabeth I
  - Censorship and intrigue – suspected coup by Earl of Essex
  - Lisa Jardine, Reading WS Historically – claims unlawful in Renaissance to marry one’s brother’s wife – not permitted by law – created problems of heritage
    - It deprives Hamlet of rightful succession but in play, Gertrude carries moral taint rather than stigma of unlawful marriage
    - Renaissance closet is intimate space into which wealthy could withdraw
    - Act 3 Scene 4, Hamlet invades his mother’s privacy
    - Polonius is spying
    - Ghost of old Hamlet
    - Claudius and brother made present as portraits
    - Presence of men in private space adds to Gertrude’s ‘unseemliness’