

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 inscription 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 attack 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’