

Act 2 scene 2- exchange between H and Polonius

Polonius doesn't deal with H very well. It's funny because H is being so rude. P is just a victim when subjected to H.

'Yet there is method in't' - if it was complete madness, there would be no method in it, perhaps Polonius is suspicious?

Hamlet is talking in prose instead of verse. A lower ranking character talks in prose as they don't have the ability to sculpt/craft language.

Hamlet is running rings round Polonius.

'Fishmonger' - disrespect, degrading. Fishing for information.

'For if the sunbred maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion- have you a daughter?' - if the sun kisses Ophelia, she may breed.

Polonius hasn't got the dexterity to fight back. He is taking H too seriously.

Why does H confide in P about his suicidal thoughts? 'Except my life'

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Fortune represented by a woman - laddish banter - jokes about her sexualising women.

Hamlet is very cynical - 'Denmark's a prison'

Lack of structure in his speech, so he's putting on madness (or is just mad)

Is H rejecting the artifice of blank verse and using prose to make a statement of putting on a show to fulfil your 'status'? He's showing that this is futile.

In line 283/284, there is a reference to a stage which reminds us that H is a play about acting/about plays.

The troop of actors are struggling to keep going because of political power? Theatre companies aren't doing so well any more.

People are thick. In line 335 - people change from wanting quality acting to seeing kids do magic tricks. They can't be trustworthy support for the acting business.

Hamlet's soliloquy

'Rogue and peasant slave' - strayed from his responsibility as someone high up. He may see himself as lower down in the ranking because he has to act - actors are of a 'peasant status' so he is likening himself to them.

'Force his soul to his own conceit' - unwillingly force his own feelings away. Hamlet is in awe of this ability as he can't hide his feelings.

He might see himself as a martyr because he has had to force his own soul to hide.

He's having to serve the spirit of his father ('peasant'). He's not noble because he hasn't yet done the deed so he's a bit weak.

He feels trapped. He feels self disgust.

Hecuba - a queen who married the king of Troy. But what is the actor to Hecuba? Or Hecuba to him? Nothing at all. He has no real connection - it's all put on.

He's aware of his own incapacity to act but there is irony because he's an actor in real life. He's an actor acting lamenting the fact that he can't act.

Group 4-

H's soliloquy at the end of scene 4.

Hamlet describes how he feels useless/inadequate.

He is frustrated that he didn't kill C when he had the chance.

He criticises himself drastically, calling himself a 'beast'.

Is H's problem that he overthinks everything?

He has a real moral issue with Fortinbras- fighting for land and potentially killing 2000 men.

'When honour's at the stake'- it's about honour- honour more important than the lives of 2000 men.

He has conflict within himself- what he is feeling and what he should be feeling.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Excellent good friends or Adders fang'd?

Good- Their friendship is suggested as being real up to a point with H- they partake in banter, but it's superficial. H calls them 'good lads' they call him 'my most dear lord'. But when compared to H's depth, they don't come close.

Loyalty- 'My lord, we were sent for'- why would they tell him if not loyal?

'Fortune's cap'- referencing fortune as a woman- sexualising her.

Act 3 sc 1- trying to moderate H's madness? 'Crafty madness' 'more like a gentleman' 'with much forcing of their disposition'.

'My lord, you once did love me'- line 305 act 3 sc 1. Suggests that the problem is H, not them.

Adders- 'Your visitations shall receive such thanks as fits a king's remembrance'- financial gain for them to betray their friend.

'To lay our service freely at your feet to be commanded'- they're letting Claudius use them to get at H.

Maybe the only reason they told H they were spying on him is because he got it out of them.

Gertrude

She has some skill in dealing with people. A good woman who does things that have unforeseen negative consequences? 'As kill a king?'- no idea of C's guilt.

'I pray thee stay' 'Let not thy mother lose her prayers'

Negative-

In Hamlet's eyes yes. Public persona- passive and submissive.

It stabilizes the monarchy that there is a marriage- good intentions for the state?

'O'er hasty marriage'- Gertrude recognises that her marriage has an impact.

She's not powerful as a woman.

Insignificant-

Passive, selfish.

She has comparatively few lines to male characters.

She tells Claudius of Polonius' death, doesn't put hamlet first. Easily persuaded by C.

She is a good queen which may mean that her personal life is a failure, but shows that women can be good leaders.