
Hamlet

Act 3 lines 92-190

Summary (Ethan)

- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern tell the King that they have not found out why Hamlet has been acting strange
- Polonius and Claudius continue their plan to eavesdrop on Hamlet and Ophelia's conversation
 - “ Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,/ We will bestow ourselves. Read on this/ book” (3.1.42-44)
 - Bestow : They are going to hide so that they can eavesdrop on Ophelia and Hamlet
 - They give her a book of prayers for the reason why she is alone

Summary

- Ophelia tries to return the gifts that Hamlet gave her earlier
 - “ My lord, I have remembrances of yours,/ That I have longed long to re-deliver” (3.1.94-95)
- Hamlet then starts to be rude towards Ophelia
 - “ Ha, ha! Are you good?” (3.1.104)
 - Hamlet is like in a way are you kidding me
 - “Are you fair?” (3.1.106)
 - Fair: Beautiful
 - In this case Hamlet is throwing a shot at her beauty both inside and out. Yes, she appears to be beautiful but he questions whether or not this beauty is a trick or an authentic representation of her as a whole person (moral, loyal, etc). He shows his uncertainty about her as he lashes out at her.

Summary

- Ophelia is disappointed in what Hamlet has become
 - “ O heavenly powers, restore him!” (3.1.42)
 - Make him normal again
 - “ To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!” (3.1.163)
 - She is miserable to see what Hamlet has become
- The King wants to send him to England
 - “Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England” (3.1.171)
 - Sending Hamlet away to England
- Polonius still thinks Hamlet’s weird behaviour is because of love but the king is suspicious and afraid that there could be more to Hamlet’s madness. Notice that at the start of the play, the king and Gertrude ask Hamlet to stay, but now the king is quick to want him gone.

Characterization (Bryan)

- Throughout the play, Hamlet had an effect on Ophelia. At the start of the play, Ophelia and Hamlet are in love with each other.
- Continuing on, we can see this love deteriorating.
 - When Hamlet says: *“You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.”* (3.1.117-119),
 - Hamlet did love Ophelia as we see in the letter that Polonius read earlier. We also see in his rage toward Ophelia that there is love because otherwise he would simply be dismissive. Then why is he saying she shouldn't have believed him? Look to other things he said for insight/understanding into this. He is contemplating the state of man being untrustworthy by nature and so he tells Ophelia that she should not have believed him because man is not capable of true honest love. This gives insight into Hamlet's other motivator for his “madness”.

Characterization - Cont'd

- As a result, this leaves Ophelia feeling neglected and played, for spending so much of her time with him.
 - This is seen when Ophelia says, *“And I, of ladies most deject and wretched, That sucked the honey of his music vows, ’ ’(3.1.157-158).*
- This highlights how Ophelia believes what Hamlet says and thinks he truly means that he never loved her and that she has been used rather than loved.
- This is problematic for a woman in Elizabethan England because if they were lovers then her virtue is ruined and she may have trouble finding a future husband if Hamlet is not going to marry her (New Historicism connection).
- Hamlet is so caught up in his planned madness to trap the king OR his true melancholy over the state of Denmark and his role in fixing it that he ignores the impact he has on Ophelia.

Characterization - Cont'd

- To add on, Hamlet's view of Humans changes immensely. Hamlet is the heir to throne, a prince. He's supposed to be a charming, role model that everyone can look up to. However, Hamlet doesn't play that role because of what he really thinks of humans.
 - This is seen when Hamlet says “*What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all. Believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.*” (3.1.127-130).
- It seems that he thinks humans only bring bad to the world which causes him to be less fond of them.
 - This brings up the question, is Hamlet playing the part and acting mad, or has he actually become overwhelmed by melancholy?

Characterization - Cont'd

- Lastly, Hamlet thinks badly about himself.
 - While talking to Ophelia he says, “ *I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in.*” (3.1.124-127)
- Ever since he started acting mad, everyone’s brought it up but no one stopped to ask what’s actually wrong with him. Now that he’s being all sorts of things revolving around him being mad, maybe this is having a toll on his mental health, causing him to think of himself this way.
- Also the words he says helps the reader understand the pressures on Hamlet - this could provide insight into his “madness” - that he is being pressured to be proud, revengeful, and ambitious, but he can’t bring himself to act on these emotions that he is meant to feel.

Style (Alexander Gruescu)

“And with them words of so sweet breath composed/As made the things more rich: their perfume lost” (3.1.99-100).

- Metaphor: comparison using like or as.
- Ophelia compares Hamlet’s words to being sweet, but then losing value like perfume.
- **This comparison references the uncertainty that Hamlet is presenting.** When provided with later context of Hamlet saying he never gave letters to her, it portrays Hamlet as a much different person than Ophelia believed him to be.

“I did love you once ... I/loved you not” (3.1.115-119).

- Paradox: A self-contradictory statement that has an element of truth to it.
- Hamlet contradicts himself about him simultaneously once loving Ophelia, and him never loving her at all. Regardless, he no longer loves her.
- **This contradiction shows the uncertainty of Hamlet’s character,** as Ophelia does not know what Hamlet once thought and now thinks of her.

“be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow” (3.1.136).

- **Simile:** comparison using like or as.
- Hamlet tells Ophelia to be pure, comparing her to the cleanliness of snow and ice.
- This comparison connects to Ophelia’s identity as a woman (feminist), which especially holds true when taking into context what Laertes and Polonius believes her to be.

Style (Alexander Gruescu)

“I have heard of your paintings too, well enough./God hath given you one face,and you make/yourselves another; you jig, you amble, you lisp” (3.1.143-145).

- Metaphor: comparison without using like or as.
- Anaphora: repetition of a word or phrase in succession.
- Hamlet compares Ophelia’s makeup to that of a painting. Additionally, Hamlet scolds her by successively repeating the term “you”, and then an accusation.
- This comparison and anaphora show that again **Ophelia’s identity is connected to her femininity**. Hamlet scrutinizes her behaviour in spite of this.

“The courtier’s, the soldier’s, scholar’s, eye, tongue, sword” (3.1.153).

- Metonymy: substitution of a name or an attribute in place for a thing meant.
- Ophelia talks about how Hamlet no longer has the attributes he once had, comparing them to the skills that soldiers, scholars, and courtiers possess.
- This comparison shows that the mental state of Hamlet raises uncertainty in Ophelia just as much as it does in Claudius and Polonius. Additionally, Ophelia **connects Hamlet’s identity to that of a stable heir, a stability that Hamlet has appeared to have lost.**

“That suck’d the honey of his music vows,/Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,/Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh” (3.1.158-60).

- Metaphor: comparison without using like or as.
- Idiom: comparison using like or as.
- Ophelia compares Hamlet’s words to once being sweet, but now sounding harsh like bells out of tune.
- This comparison shows the uncertainty of who exactly Hamlet is. Ophelia does not recognise the Hamlet she just spoke to, as it is so out of character to the gentle and kind prince that she was in love with.

Style (Alexander Gruescu)

“O’er which is melancholy sits on brood,/And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose/Will be some danger” (3.1.167-169).

- Metaphor: comparison without using like or as.
- Foreshadow
- Claudius compares Hamlet’s ever decreasing mental state to that of a egg hatching and growing into something greater.
- This comparison shows that Hamlet’s identity, at least according to Claudius, is defined by his state of melancholy (new historicism). As Hamlet grows more and more unstable, it is uncertain where his true mind lays.

Connection (James)

Psychoanalytical

- “For the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness... I did love you once” (3.1.111-115)
 - Relates to Freud's idea of the Id, the Ego and the Superego
 - Hamlet seems to be facing a conflict between his Ego and his Id, while his Ego knows or is unsure whether Ophelia is a faithful and good person, his Id can't help making the connection between her, his mother's actions as a result he is not thinking rationally - he is simply reacting emotionally whenever he sees her.
- “You should not have believed me” (3.1.116)
 - Demonstrates Hamlet's cognitive dissonance (contradictory thought) and insecurity
 - This statement is contradictory and shows that Hamlet thinks he is untrustable, yet Hamlet still continues to act on his thoughts and impulses, these two ideas clash and further push how he seems more unstable

Connection

New Historicism

- “Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest... We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery” (3.1.121-130)
 - In the time of Shakespeare’s writing, nunneries had a double meaning as a convent but also as slang for brothels. Brothels are places that house people of lust where prostitutes work. On the other side, nunneries are stern advocates for chastity among women and are considered holy.
 - In telling Ophelia that she should go to either a brothel OR a nunnery indicates that he thinks of her as full of lust or maybe that she has committed sinful acts for which she should be punished by being sent to a nunnery OR that she belongs in a brothel, implying that she is a prostitute (misogynistic). He also says that she should not breed sinners. This implies that Hamlet wants her to go to a nunnery to “save her” so she can avoid participating in the world which he now feels is full of sin. Ophelia, however, would hear this as a confirmation that their love was tainted and now her honour is tainted. This would be devastating for a woman in Elizabethan England. The fact that Hamlet is oblivious to this shows his selfishness and lack of rational thought in this “plan” of his or in his melancholy.

Connection

Feminism

- For wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them... You jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance (3.1.139-147)
 - Hamlet demonstrates his misogynistic viewpoint on the roles of women in society, he generalizes, including the entirety of femdom in his notion of women as extremely lustful and temptation of sins, he implies that women defy God and are ignorant creatures, and tells Ophelia to go to a brothel or a whorehouse, objectifying and dismissing any actual humanity that Ophelia has
 - Hamlet is projecting all of his frustrations about his mother's lack of loyalty onto Ophelia - does this give insight into the motivator for his melancholy.