**Psychoanalytic reading of Hamlet/3.4 Notes**

**Why is H so disgusted by sex/breeding?**

Perhaps because he is innocent in some ways? Relationship with Ophelia was one of childish pleasures? – Teenage love letters - Polonius mocks these and her lack of propriety when she ‘freely’ admits him into her company.

But does sex/breeding also become symbolic/symptomatic of corruption at the heart of Denmark? – associated with overindulgence and pursuit of pleasure over morality?

e.g. H disgusted by what he sees as the decline of the Danish people – they drink too much, they switch allegiance to a new King they used to make ‘mouths’ at (e.g. insult), they marry their brother’s wife, they party at a funeral – they overindulge in sensory and physical pleasures etc. repeated image of them ‘feeding’ off the state and its power like parasites – even his own mother is guilty of this?

H on other hand, is a 30 year old student, been studying at Wittenberg (renowned for radical philosophies) – life has been away from Denmark, surrounded by intellectuals (like Horatio) who are more interested in debating metaphysical questions like ‘where do we go after we die?’ and ‘what are the ethics of revenge?’…

When he returns (and his request to go back to University is denied by Claudius) he becomes increasingly disgusted with the ‘rotten’ state of Denmark and the behaviour of its inhabitants. Often associates breeding with the spread of corruption –n when he tells Ophelia to ‘get thee to a nunnery’ and ‘there will be no more marriages’, what he’s really saying is that the only way to end the corruption in Denmark is to wipe out the family line/kingdom altogether – ‘there will be more breeders of sinners’?

Claudius is a direct contrast to Hamlet – in his soliloquy, he chooses this life (crown, queen, ambition) which demonstrates exactly why Hamlet doesn’t want any more of his like – unchristian and lacking in morality?

Would it happen that in an alternative ‘happier’ version O&H would marry, create ‘good’ children, ushering a new era for Denmark (much like the end of Harry Potter???)

Unfortunately in our version, everyone must die because the state has gone beyond retribution? –H successful in wiping out the corruption, even if he has to go down with it. The only thing left to ‘breed’ by the end of the play are the ‘worms’…

**What lies beneath his rage and anger at his mother?**

Hamlet jealous of attention of mother from Claudius – **only child syndrome** – desires power/attention after death of father. Oedipal stuff tbc…

Scene notes:

AO5: Benedict Cumberbatch – toy soldier/ children’s castle/ theatre production of children – ‘toy in blood’

‘if it be made of penetrable stuff’- connotations of sexual invasion? Violence/ desire for authority

Disgusted by sex because of conflict within – ‘enseamed’ ‘rank’

‘you cannot call it love – for at your age’ – too old for love/ sensuality and sexuality/ beauty only for the young (moment of comedy – suggests illogical behaviour). Age is linked to stage in life/ relationship with Claudius – purely protective? Claudius’ ‘damned fingers’ – a corrosive and corrupting influence (link to Ophelia ‘get thee to a nunnery’ – he wants to protect her too from what he says as a ‘rank and unweeded’ world)

**How is Gertrude presented in 3.4?**

* Use of questions – what have I done? Oblivion/lack of realisation
* Repetition – ‘nothing’ rep by G – ‘all I see…’ perhaps suggest deception/ unwillingness to see – lack of willingness/understanding ‘where is thy blush?’
* Lexical patterns – sight appearance – where on do you look/ have you eyes/ conflict between external and internal – G looking into ‘soul’/ H looking into ‘vacancy’ – G’s oblivious – cannot see reality – H forces awareness
* Personification
* Key terms linked to family position ‘oh gentle son’ ‘sweet Hamlet’ – manipulation after her threat
* Idealised terms
* Exclamations O what a rash and bloody deed – shocked at violence; suggests innocence/ unware of previous
* Contrast – differing responses
* Pronoun usage
* The word ‘custom’
* Verb choices – ‘where is thy blush’ – H asking questioning lack of innocence
* Symbolism
* Adjectives
* Metaphor