**Hamlet Worksheet**

Act 5

**Graveyard Scene:** (5.1. 0-200)

How does this scene serve to provide a little *comic relief?*

What is significant about the Clown’s question regarding the *burial site* of Ophelia?

How does their *gallows humor* reinforce the themes of the play and the movement of the plot?

How might the grave-digging clown be a mirror of Hamlet? Shakespeare dramatizes a sense of fellowship, kinship, solidarity between them. What might be the source of this?

What evidence is their of their gallows humor? (lines?)

How might the *skull* thrown up by the gravedigger’s shovel *symbolize* the action of the entire play? (ln 74)

How does Hamlet’s alluding to it as “*Cain’s jawbone*” reinforce the meaning of the play?

How does the *morbid imagery* of the “skull,” “pickaxe,” “spade,” ‘shrouding sheet,” and “pit of clay” reinforce the plot?

*How does this scene reinforce Hamlet’s existential dismay,* his sense of the absurdity of life? What feelings/ thoughts/ words does it awaken in him?

How do the remains of the lawyer and the land baron reinforce his sense of *justice?* What *morbid, but consoling wisdom* comes to him while looking at these remains?

How does Hamlet’s *fixation with the grave* reinforce the play’s plots and themes?

How is the Clown of *mirror* of Hamlet by virtue of his *wit?*

How is Shakespeare subverting the cliché that the rich are wise and the poor dumb? How might the clowns *actions and words* been seen as an *insurrection:* of what against what?

How does the clown’s actions reinforce the *central theme* of the drama that the truth “twill out?”

How might *Yorick* be seen as a *mirror* of Hamlet? How does Shakespeare underscore their kinship? What is significant about the fact that the dead jester is a mirror of the living prince?

Hamlet’s “gorge rises” at the sight. How might we “read” this symbolically?

What is significant re: Hamlet’s continuing *fixation* with the dead?

How might it contribute to his *despair?*

What scene now *reinforces his morbid fixation* with the grave?

How might we read his *leaping into Ophelia’s grave symbolically?*

How might this action *reinforce the perceptions* others have of Hamlet?

What *motivates* Hamlet to leap into Ophelia’s grave? How does this *humanize* him? What does it reveal re: his *feelings*? How does this act represent an *unmasking* of himself, put the lie to his “act.”

What do *Laertes’ actions* reveal about him?

How does this scene evidence Hamlet’s *degeneration*? How might it evidence his *redemption?*

What revealing *avowal* does he make?

How might we view the conflict between Hamlet and Laertes as a *competition?* What are they competing over?

How does this scene underscore Hamlet’s movement from the *realm of acting* to the *realm of actions?* How might it be seen as yet another attempt to psyche himself up for action, to whip his blood up for deeds? Can we read this scene as evidence his character is being seized by a spirit of action?

**Hamlet and Horatio** (5.2 lines 0-80):

Why are the *events at sea* recounted by Hamlet after the fact?

How does *Providence, Chance* intervene to avert his Fate at sea? (lines?)

How do his actions at sea reveal his cunning, his degeneration?

What lines reveal Hamlet’s feelings toward Laretes, and what does this reveal about his character?

**Hamlet and Bloodbath** (5.2. 200-225) “We defy augury . . . .”

What do these lines reveal about Hamlet, of his awakening to reality?

How does this awakening affect our understanding if his degeneration?

What explanation does Hamlet give for having “done wrong” to Laertes? Is he being honest with himself by saying it was “his madness” and not himself? Was madness his “enemy” as he contends or his “friend.” Is Hamlet’s confession as problematic at the King’s in Act III?

What does the recognition that “I have shot my arrow o’er the house and hurt my brother” reveal about him? Is this further evidence for his redemption?

What is the King’s back up plan in case the poisoned sword fails to do its work?

How does *Providence/ Chance* intervene to upset his plan? How do these chance events mirror the words of Hamlet’s of Hamlet’s “we defy augury” speech?”

What does Laertes’ final words (lns 288 and 303) reveal about him?

What does the dying Laertes ask of Hamlet? What is significant about this?

What does the dying Hamlet ask of Horatio? Why? What he is afraid of?

What is significant Hamlet prophesying Fortibras’ succession to the throne?

What is significant, ironic that the bodies are placed “high on a stage?”

What is significant that Hamlet is borne “like a soldier to the stage.”

What is significant about the final words “the soldiers shoot?”