**Hamlet**

**Act III, Scene 1**

*To Be or Not to Be*

1 What question does he pose himself?

2 Why?

3. Is he play-acting here? If so, why?

4. What gives his initial thoughts “the rub”?

5. Does Hamlet think to much, over-analyze? Is this his flaw?

6. Is Shakespeare using Hamlet to mount an attack on reason, thinking? What is the thrust of his critique of “thinking?”

7. Where do we find evidence of Hamlet’s philosophical turn of mind?

8. How does Shakespeare’s imagery reinforce the meaning of this speech?

9. Explicate “the oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely, the pangs of despised love, the law’s delay, the insolence of office?” (lines 70-72). What might be the source of each of these in Hamlet’s immediate experience?

10. Is Hamlet a coward? What lines suggest he is rationalizing his way out of taking action?

11. Do we see evidence in this speech of a masochistic tendency in Hamlet? If so, where?

12. Explicate the significance of his last words—“soft you now, the fair Ophelia?”

13. Why does he ask that she remember his sins in her prayers?

14. What is significant about the context (setting) in which this speech occurs?

15. How does Hamlet’s speech reinforce the “cloak and dagger” imagery of the play? How does he in this speech out-deceive the deceivers?