

EXPOS 20: WHY SHAKESPEARE?

SESSION 4: EVIDENCE, ANALYSIS, ARGUMENT

Reading for Today:

- *The Harvard Guide to Using Sources: [Avoiding Plagiarism](#)* [Links to an external site.](#) (including subsections)
- *[Aphorisms on Literary Studies](#)* [Links to an external site.](#)
- *[Links to an external site.](#)* *[Aphorisms on Drama](#)* [Links to an external site.](#) *[Links to an external site.](#)*

Writing Due:

- *[Response Paper 1.1: Questions and Problems](#)*

In-Class Discussions:

- *From Question to Text:* Work backwards from your analytical questions to identify a possible text for your essay.
- *Text Statements:* Practice writing a sentence that identifies your text (i.e., the thing being interpreted).
- *From Text to Argument:* With reference to Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" speech, model an academic argument.
- *Interpretation:* Discuss what interpretation is and what we do when we interpret things.
- *Lightning Theater:* Do a quick performance of a scene to start a conversation about what drama is.
- *Writing About Drama:* Discuss some key aspects of drama to consider when writing about it.
- *English Drama up to Shakespeare:* Using timelines and conceptual maps, discuss the English mystery plays, the University Wits, and the development of public theatres in the Elizabethan age.
- *Interpretation:* Discuss what interpretation is, i.e. the search for meaning and the search for significance.
- *Evidence, Analysis, Argument:* In preparation for our next response papers, discuss some ways to organize information using timelines and charts and some ways to analyze information using conceptual maps.

Aphorisms (introduced in class, to be completed after class):

- *[Aphorisms on Texts](#)* [Links to an external site.](#)
- *[Aphorisms on Interpretation](#)* [Links to an external site.](#)
- *[Aphorisms on Evidence](#)* [Links to an external site.](#)
- *[Aphorisms on Explication](#)* [Links to an external site.](#)
- *[Aphorisms on Analysis](#)* [Links to an external site.](#)
- *[Aphorisms on Arguments](#)* [Links to an external site.](#)

Assignment:

- *[Response Paper 1.2: Evidence and Analysis:](#)* Create an explication, a timeline, a conceptual map, and then a 300-word "argument statement" that responds to the question or problem you've selected to write about for your first essay.



“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”

FROM QUESTION TO TEXT



“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: FROM QUESTION TO TEXT

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

[*Ham.*] I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!

[*Ham.*] The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns.



“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: SHAKESPEARE AGAINST PHILOSOPHY



William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

Ham. Ha, ha! Are you honest? (3.1.103)

Ham. Where's your father? (3.1.130)

“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: FROM QUESTION TO TEXT

Response Paper 1.1: Questions and Problems

In his famous “To be, or not to be” speech, Prince Hamlet cowers at the finality of death, of the afterlife, of “the undiscover’d country, from whose bourn / No traveller returns” (3.1.79-80). This line is acutely problematic because Hamlet has recently seen his Father’s ghost return from the grave. Shortly after Hamlet’s famous speech, he turns to his lover Ophelia, who has been standing off to the side, and asks, “Are you honest?” (3.1.103), and then moments later, “Where’s your father?” (3.1.130). In this scene, Ophelia is indeed acting as her father’s agent: Polonius has sent her to see if Hamlet is really mad. As Hamlet’s questions to Ophelia indicate, he knows that she is working for Polonius and that he is being watched. “Are you honest?” No. “Where’s your father?” *Behind the curtain*. But when does Hamlet know that he is being watched? In most productions, Hamlet hears Claudius and Polonius shuffle or sneeze behind the curtain while he is speaking with Ophelia, then becomes suspicious, and then starts feigning anger and madness. Shakespeare’s text does not require this reading, though, which it certainly could have done with a clear stage direction. It is at least possible that Hamlet has known all along. It is possible that Shakespeare intended for Hamlet to deliver his “To be or not to be” speech knowing that he was being watched, making it, yes, a *speech* and not a *soliloquy*, for Hamlet is not alone on stage when he delivers these lines: he has Ophelia to his left, who must be wondering what on earth Hamlet is talking about, and Claudius and Polonius to his right, who are spying on him. If so, then “To be, or not to be” may not be the quintessential question of human being, may not be the profound philosophical statement it has been taken to be by centuries of readers and critics. It could be, instead, what someone says when he wants others think he is crazy. But why would Shakespeare choose philosophy as the language Hamlet uses to feign madness? Why would Shakespeare satirize Hamlet’s philosophy and philosophy as such? And why have so many readers taken the “To be, or not to be” speech as serious philosophy rather than satirical drama?

Text Statement

This essay considers the status of philosophy in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, especially in the famous “To be, or not to be” speech, by attending to the tension between philosophy and drama.



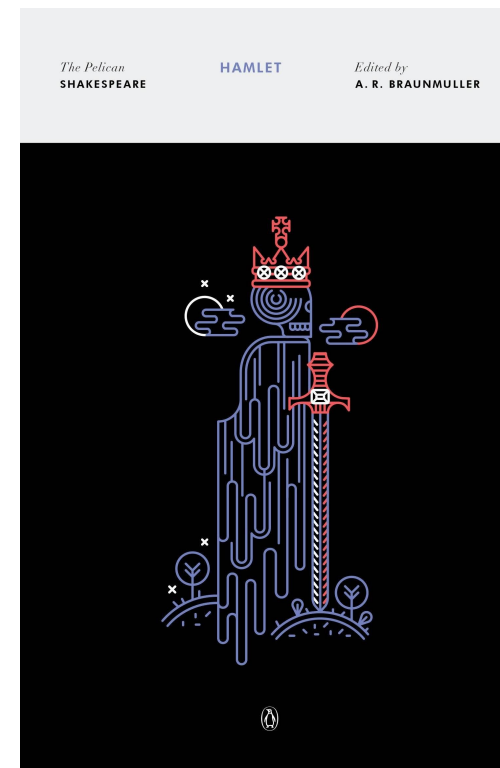
TEXT STATEMENTS



TEXT STATEMENTS

Text:

- (1) Something made by humans.
- (2) The thing being interpreted.



TEXT STATEMENTS

The Material: the document(s), events(s), idea(s), phenomenon under consideration.

The Conceptual: the aspect of those materials that you're addressing.

This essay explores the gender politics symbolized in Peggy's haircut in the episode "The Jet Set" from season two of *Mad Men*.

This essay addresses the social and psychological causes and effects of the "ex-con" stigma in the hiring process in the southern United States.

This essay considers the healthcare plans of the 2020 Democratic Party presidential candidates, especially their financial sustainability.



“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: SHAKESPEARE AGAINST PHILOSOPHY

FROM TEXT TO ARGUMENT



“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: SHAKESPEARE AGAINST PHILOSOPHY

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come;
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on.

“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: SHAKESPEARE AGAINST PHILOSOPHY

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors,--he comes before me.

“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: SHAKESPEARE AGAINST PHILOSOPHY

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

[Ham] What make you at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Ros. [Aside to GUILDENSTERN] What say you?

Ham. [Aside] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.--If you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: SHAKESPEARE AGAINST PHILOSOPHY

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

“TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”: SHAKESPEARE AGAINST PHILOSOPHY

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

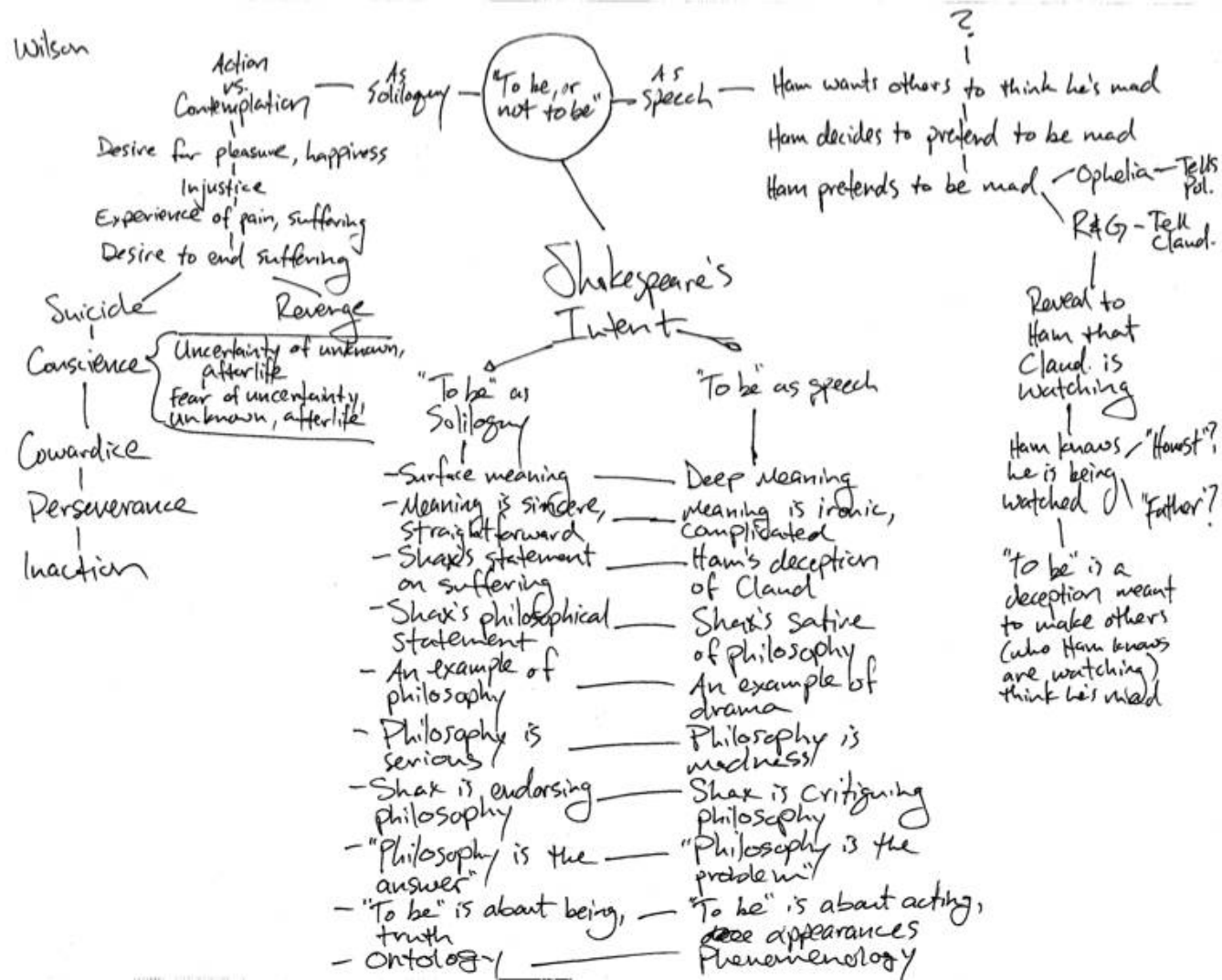
Pol. I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.

Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS

Enter HAMLET

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the question...

"TO BE, OR NOT TO BE": SHAKESPEARE AGAINST PHILOSOPHY





LIGHTNING THEATER





WRITING ABOUT DRAMA



WRITING ABOUT DRAMA: SOME TERMS

Some Features of Drama

- Genre
- Soliloquies
- Asides
- Dialogue
- Prologues and Epilogues
- Plaudites
- Plays within Plays
- Act / Scene Divisions
- Verse / Prose

Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama

- Plot
- Character
- Speech
- Thought
- Spectacle
- Music

WRITING ABOUT DRAMA: ARISTOTELIAN TRAGEDY

1. serious in tone;
2. serious in purpose;
3. represented in dramatic form;
4. written in elevated language;
5. telling one and only one story (not several woven together) with a beginning, middle, and end;
6. about royals and nobles;
7. making it socially significant;
8. usually involving a reversal of fortune from a good situation to a bad;
9. usually ending in some major catastrophe;
10. arousing pity (feeling sorry for the undeserved suffering of another) and fear (being afraid such misfortune could befall oneself) in the audience;
11. effectively purging pity and fear from the emotional lexicon of the audience;
12. yet remaining morally satisfying;
13. because it represents, not a good person meeting good fortune (which is morally satisfying but isn't pitiable because it doesn't pain us to see good deeds rewarded), nor a totally wicked person meeting misfortune (which is morally satisfying but isn't pitiable because the bad deserve misfortune), nor a totally virtuous person meeting misfortune (which is pitiable but not morally satisfying because the good don't deserve misfortune), but a good person who makes some slight mistake which brings everything crashing down (which is pitiable because the good receives misfortune but is also morally satisfying because the misfortune results from a mistake that was indeed made);
14. in which the protagonist at some point recognizes the mistake made.

WRITING ABOUT DRAMA: REVENGE TRAGEDY

1. *Crime*: Usually violent—murder or rape.
2. *Injustice*: God and state fail to punish the criminal.
3. *Vigilantism*: An individual assumes responsibility for the administration of justice.
4. *Guilt*: The vigilante seeks to do the thing he or she is punishing someone else for doing.
5. *Things Fester*: Ambivalence, delay, investigation, introspection, plotting, scheming, angst, madness—the plot expands.
6. *The Return of Justice*: Always at a public event.
7. *Catastrophe*: Because guilt is widespread, many people die.
8. *The Downfall of Dynasties*: The society as a whole is guilty, so it must perish. A new leader often comes to power, offering hope for a return to social order.



ENGLISH DRAMA UP TO SHAKESPEARE



ENGLISH MYSTERY PLAYS

- 11-12th c. Church services take brief interludes for representations of Easter and Christmas.
- 12th c. England's "twelfth-century renaissance"; for the first time, drama is removed from the liturgical service, played outside the church, and written in the vernacular; though it still mostly treats religious matters, the number of Biblical stories chosen to be represented increases greatly.
- 1210 Pope Innocent III forbids clergy to act outside the church; trade guilds assume responsibility for public drama.
- 1378 Trade guilds performing plays on pageant wagons during the Feast of Corpus Christi are first recorded in York.
- 1380-1414 An anonymous Wycliffite writes *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*, a polemic against representations of God and Christian Truth in the Corpus Christi cycles.
- 1517 The Protestant Reformation begins when Luther posts his 95 Theses in Saxony.
- 1545-63 The Council of Trent bans religious plays in an attempt to reign in the extra-Biblical material that the Protestants frequently lampooned.
- 1568 The mystery plays are banned in England.



THE UNIVERSITY WITS

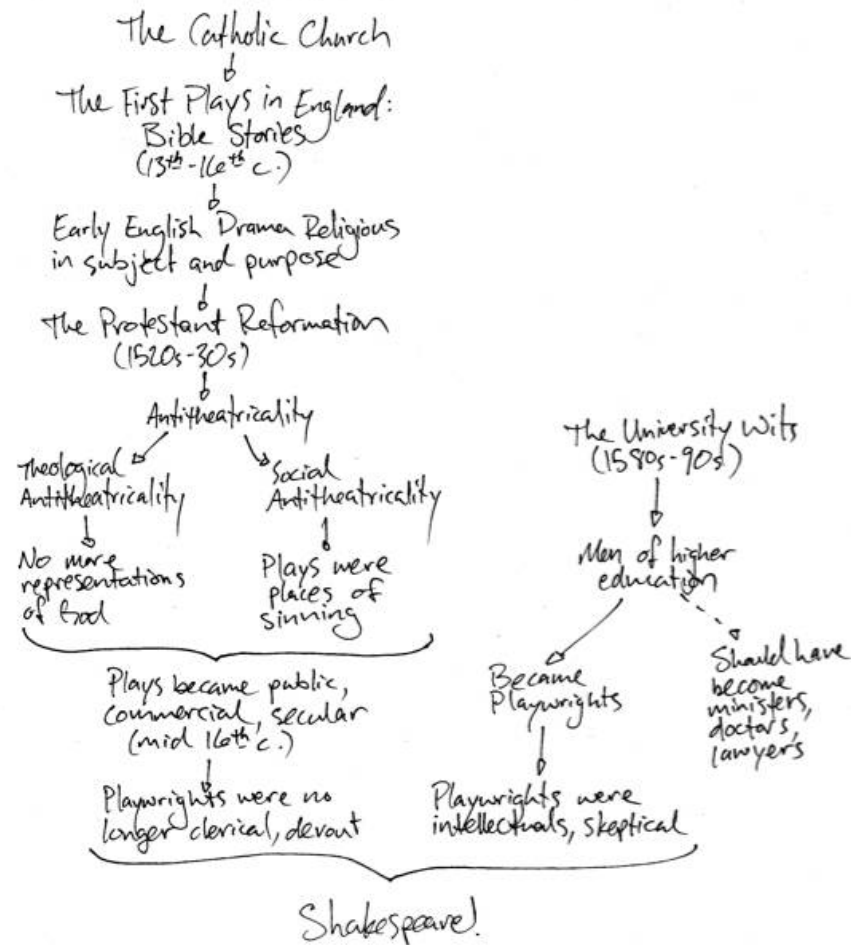
- 1573 John Lyly receives his BA from Magdalen College, Oxford. His MA follows in 1575.
- 1577 George Peele takes his BA at Christ Church, Oxford. His MA follows in 1579
- 1577 Thomas Lodge takes his BA at Trinity College, Oxford. His MA follows in 1581
- 1578 Robert Greene takes his BA at St. John's, Cambridge. His MA at MA at Claire Hall follows in 1583.
- 1584 Marlowe takes his BA degree from Corpus Christi, Cambridge.
- 1586 Thomas Nashe takes his BA from St. John's Cambridge. He continues toward an MA for a short while, though he never obtains one.

Robert Greene, *Greenes, Groats-Worth of Witte* (1592):

There is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and beeing an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey.

ENGLISH DRAMA UP TO SHAKESPEARE

Early English Drama





INTERPRETATION



INTERPRETATION

What is interpretation?

Interpretation: The search for meaning and significance.

- *Meaning*: An account of what an author wanted to communicate.
 - What was the author trying to accomplish?
- *Significance*: An explanation of how and why something came into existence, or of its importance.
 - What does the text point to?
 - Why does the text matter?

INTERPRETATION

Work

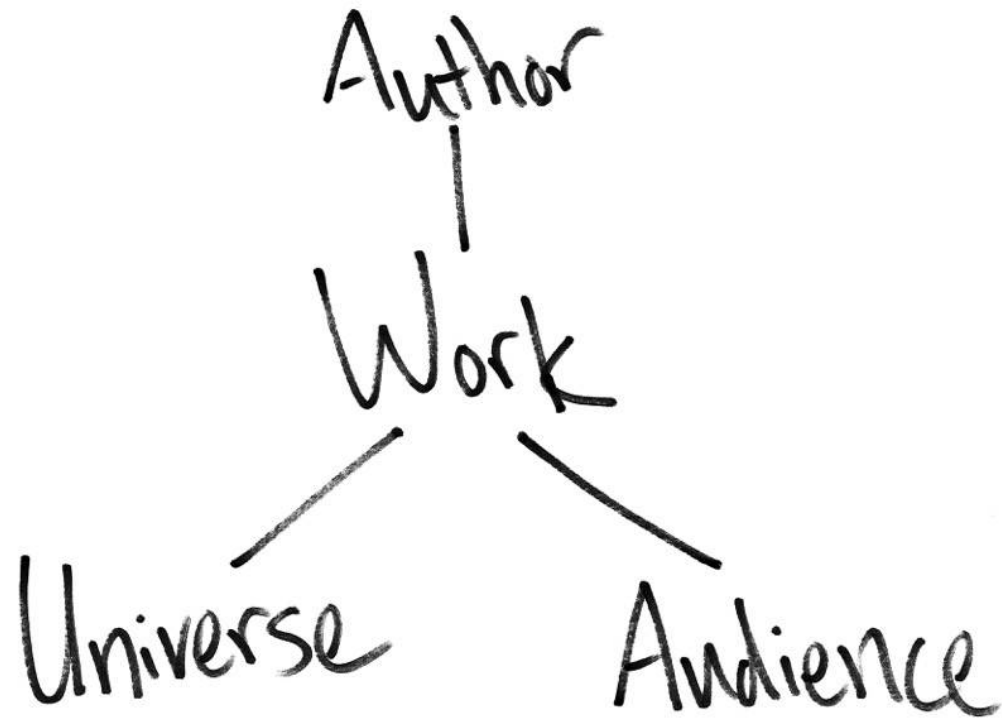
INTERPRETATION

Author
|
Work

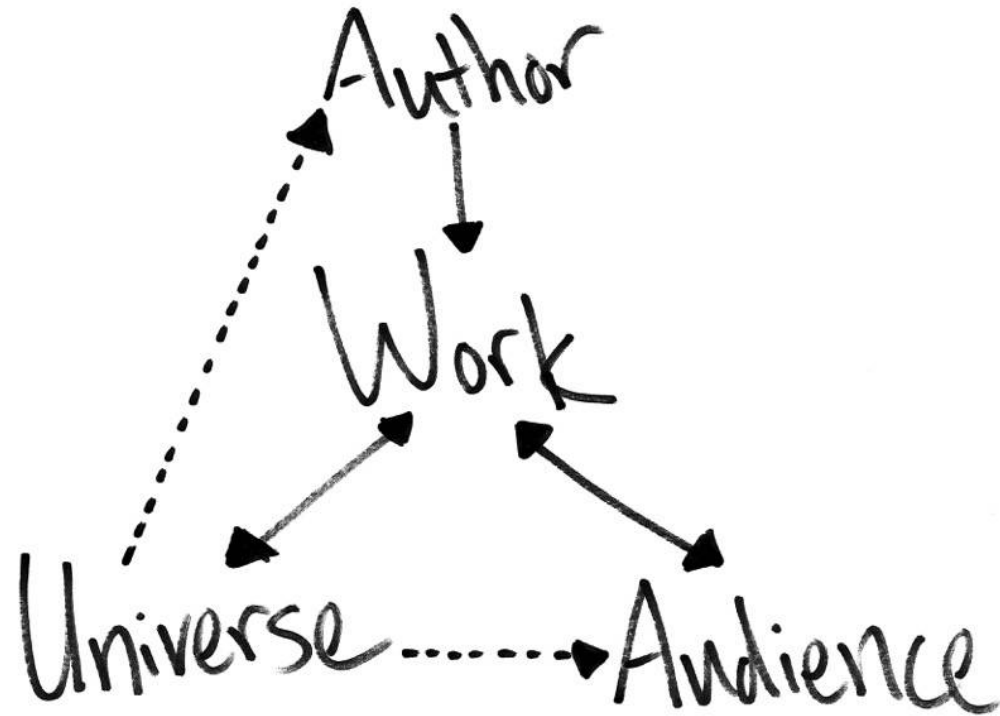
INTERPRETATION



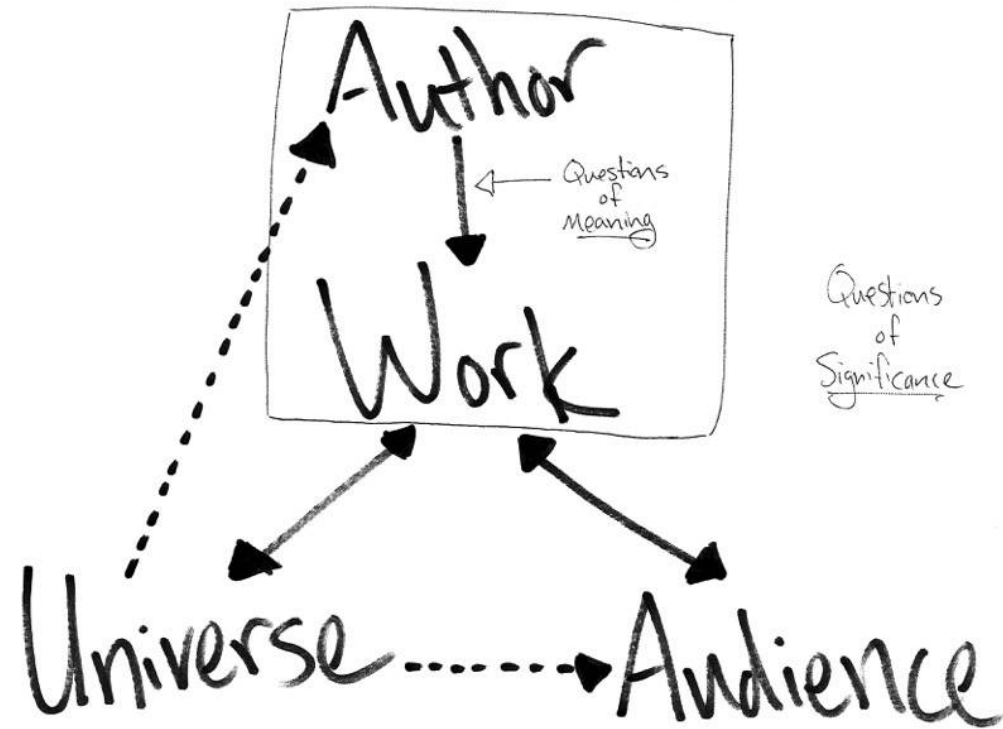
INTERPRETATION



INTERPRETATION

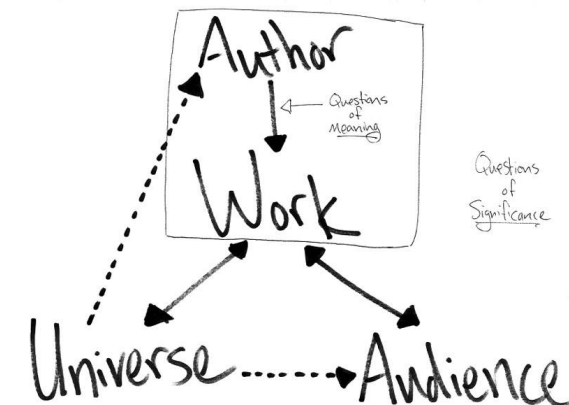


INTERPRETATION



INTERPRETATION: “I’M GOING TO START TAKING ROLE”

“If we have any more problems with tardiness, I’m going to start taking role at the beginning of class.”

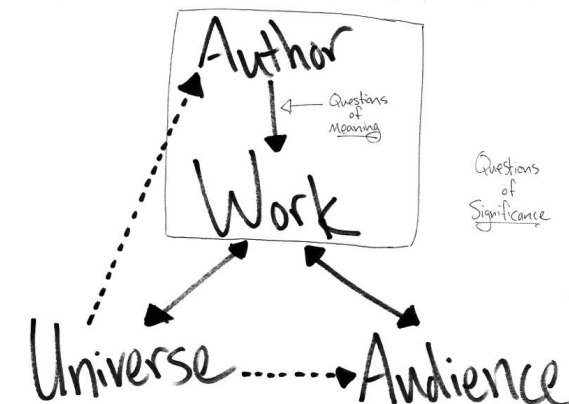


INTERPRETATION: “IT’S MY FAULT”

Wife: I thought I told you to transfer \$4,000 over to the checking account to pay the carpenter.

Husband: I know. The day got away from me, and I didn’t get to it. Sorry.

Wife: No, it’s my fault. I should have just done it myself. I should’ve known better than to expect you to do it.



INTERPRETATION: "IF YOU'VE GOT A BUSINESS, YOU DIDN'T BUILD THAT"



Obama: If You've Got A Business, You Didn't Build That

749,629 views • Jul 16, 2012

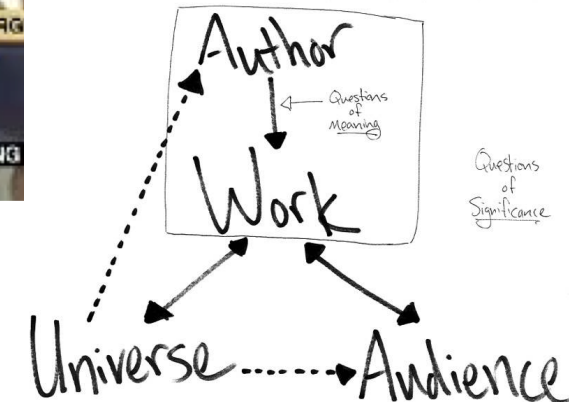
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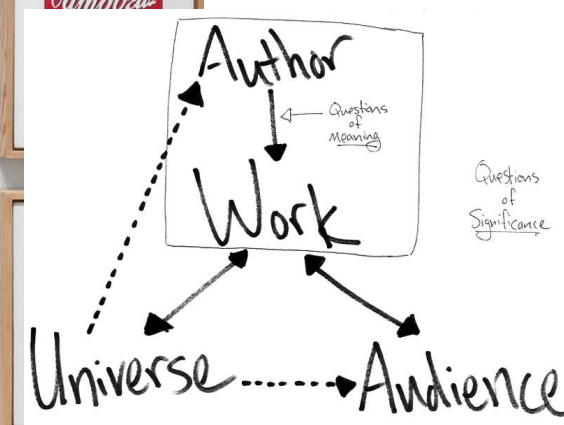
goprapidresponse
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Obama says success is not a result of someone working hard or being smart and that if you started your own business, you didn't build it yourself. (July 13, 2012).

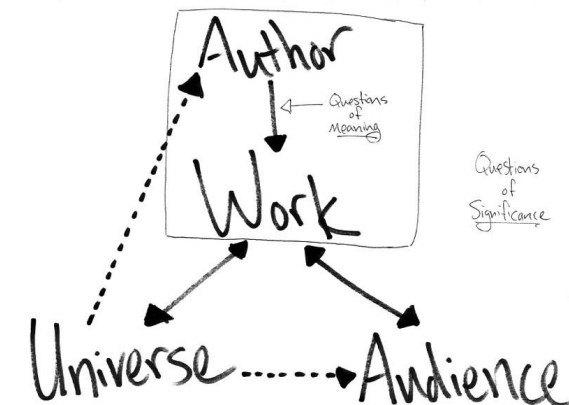


INTERPRETATION: ANDY WARHOL, CAMPBELL'S SOUP CANS (1962)



INTERPRETATION: THE SECOND AMENDMENT

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”



INTERPRETATION



ON THE SHOW FOOD SHOP HEALTH & WELLNESS PARENTS HOME



POP CULTURE

Dumbledore's outing gives text new meaning

Oct. 21, 2007, 4:53 PM EDT / Source: The Associated Press

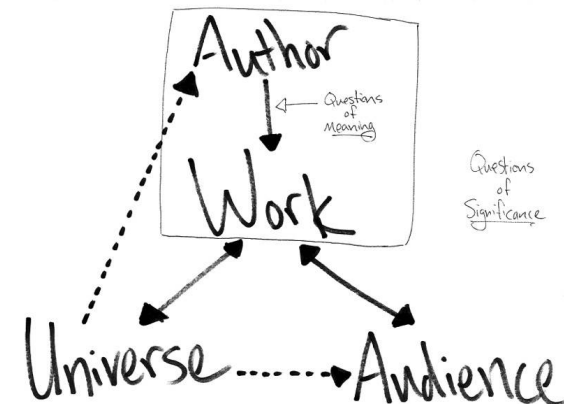
With author J.K. Rowling's revelation that master wizard Albus Dumbledore is gay, some passages about the Hogwarts headmaster and rival wizard Gellert Grindelwald have taken on a new and clearer meaning.

The British author stunned her fans at Carnegie Hall on Friday night when she answered one young reader's question about Dumbledore by saying that he was gay and had been in love with Grindelwald, whom he had defeated years ago in a bitter fight.

Sign up for our newsletter

SUBSCRIBE

“I always thought of Dumbledore as gay... Yeah, that's how I always saw Dumbledore.” – J.K. Rowling



INTERPRETATION



Donald J. Trump 
@realDonaldTrump 

Meryl Streep, one of the most over-rated actresses in Hollywood, doesn't know me but attacked last night at the Golden Globes. She is a.....

6:27 AM - Jan 9, 2017

 68,873  36,825  120,564 

Donald J. Trump 
@realDonaldTrump 

Hillary flunky who lost big. For the 100th time, I never "mocked" a disabled reporter (would never do that) but simply showed him.....

6:36 AM - Jan 9, 2017

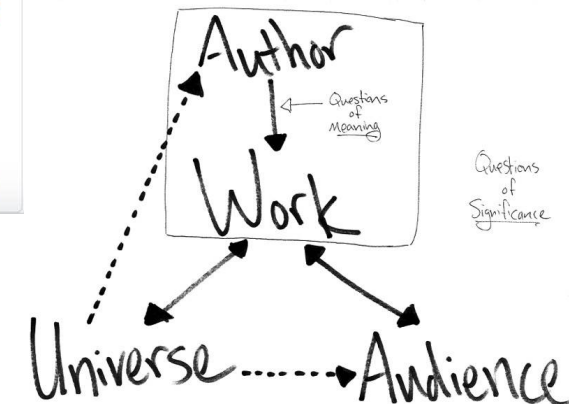
 35,567  20,987  82,251 

Donald J. Trump 
@realDonaldTrump 

"groveling" when he totally changed a 16 year old story that he had written in order to make me look bad. Just more very dishonest media!

6:43 AM - Jan 9, 2017

 23,447  15,753  67,488 



INTERPRETATION

- Where do questions of intent come up in your daily life?
- Where do questions of intent come up in your other classes?
- What do you care about when you study literature—the work, the author, the universe, or the audience?
- Can you give an example where understanding someone's intent was easy vs. not easy?



RESPONSE PAPER 1.2: EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS



RESPONSE PAPER 1.2: EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

Part A: Timeline

- Big-picture evidence: an overview of the events related to your topic/question.
- Just the facts, ma'am.

Part B: Explication

- Small-scale evidence: identify the most important passage (probably more than 10 but less than 40 lines) for your topic/question.
- Small-scale Analysis:
 - 10 observations
 - Use the formal terms of literary studies, as appropriate.
 - These don't all need to be earth-shattering points.
 - Revisit the strategies used to unpack "To be, or not to be" in your *Not Using Sources* assignment.
 - Work through the more-obvious comments you can make to the less-obvious.

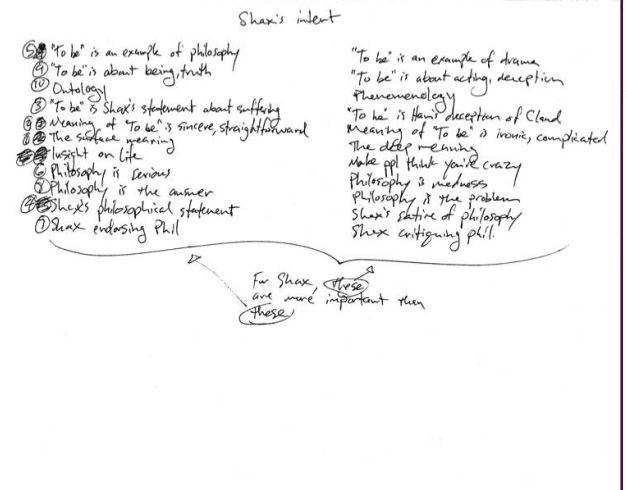
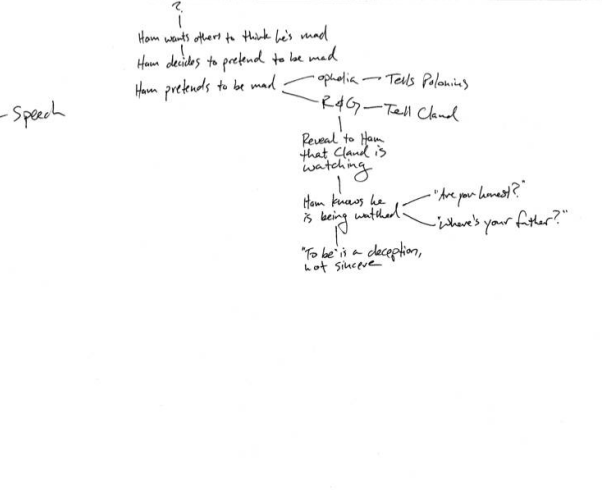
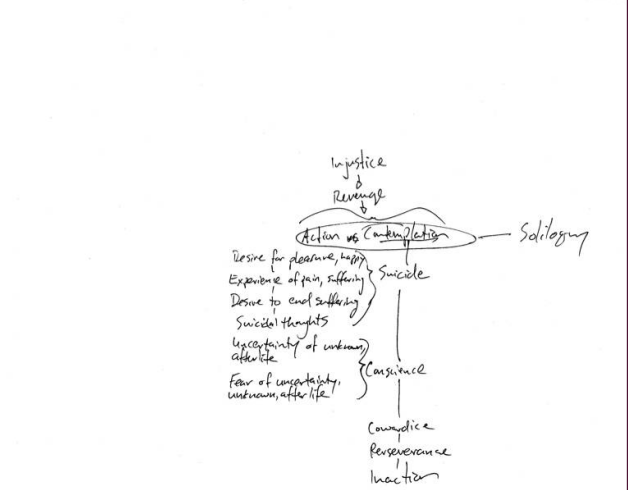
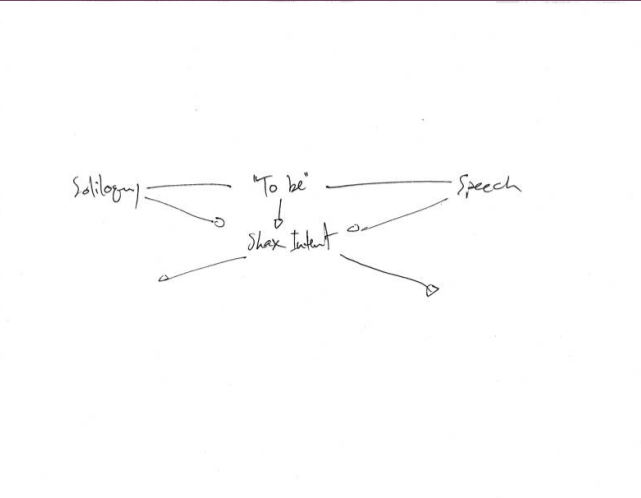
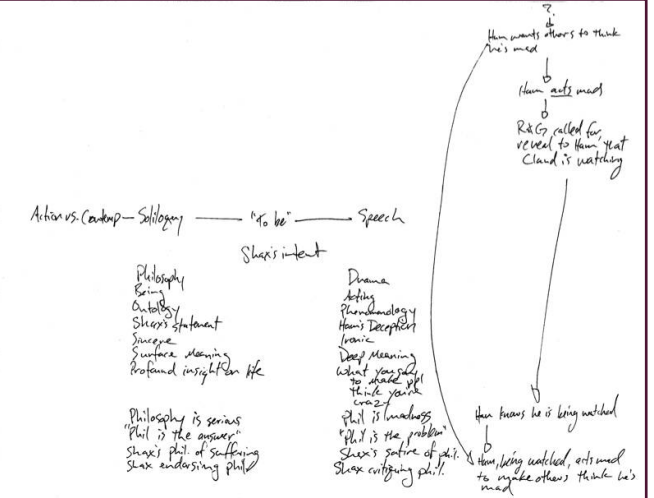
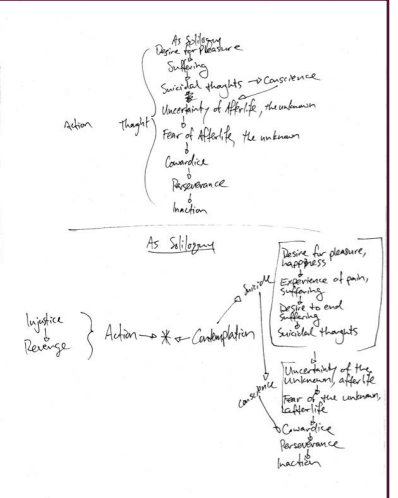
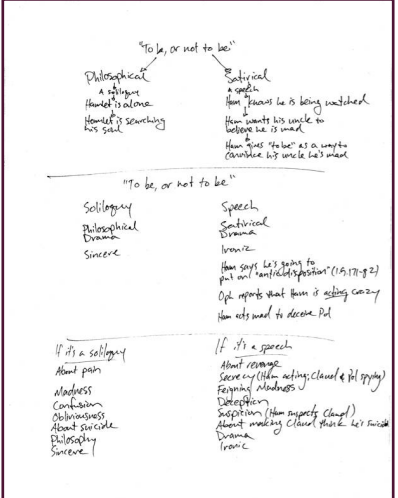
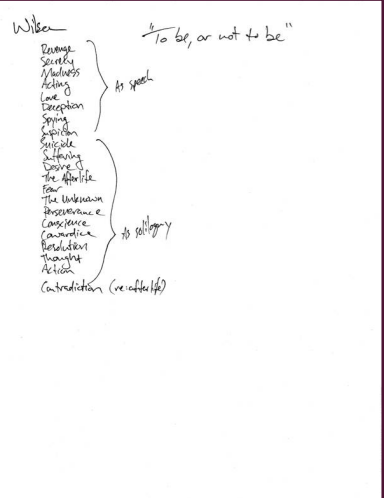
Part C: Conceptual Map

- Big-picture Analysis:
 - Weaving together facts and concepts.
 - Meant to help you figure out the "story" of your idea: what comes first, what causes what else to happen

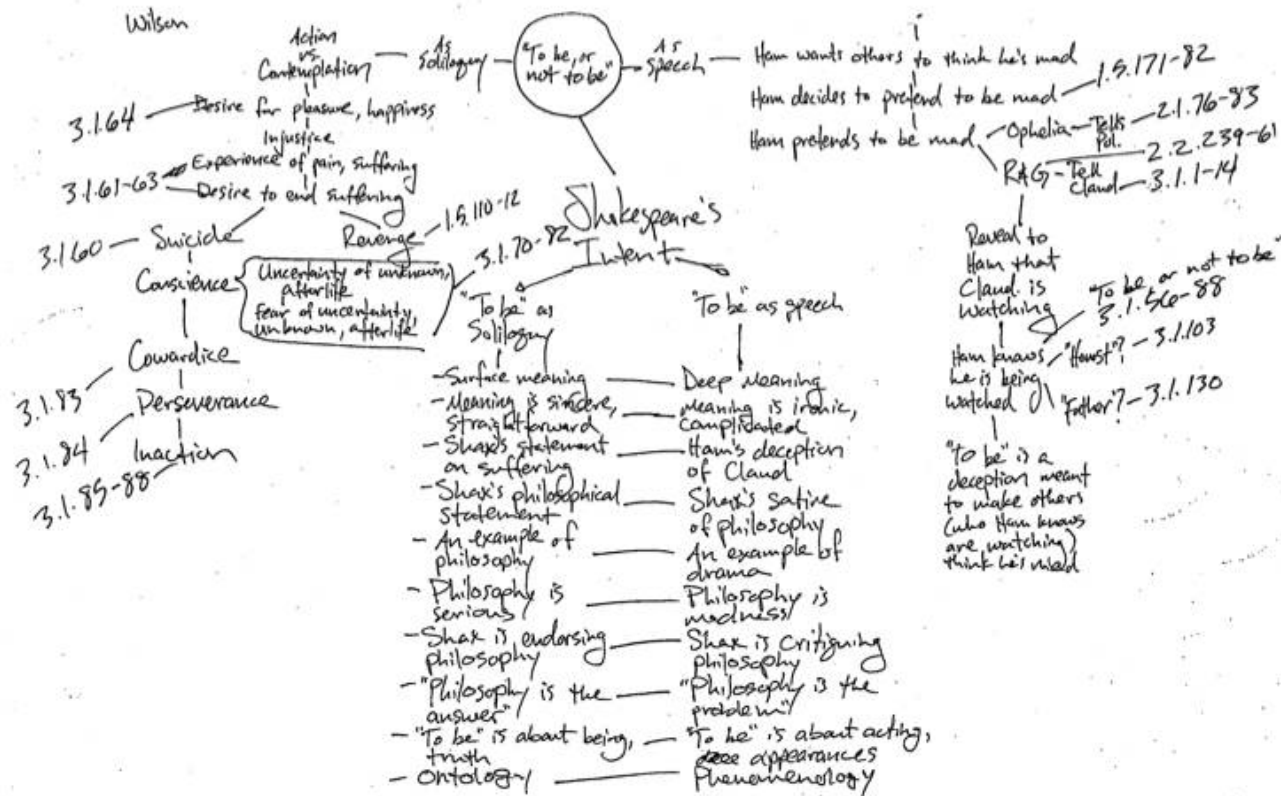
Part D: Argument Statement

- Turn your conceptual map into a written statement summarizing the analysis of your text/question/evidence you've arrived at.

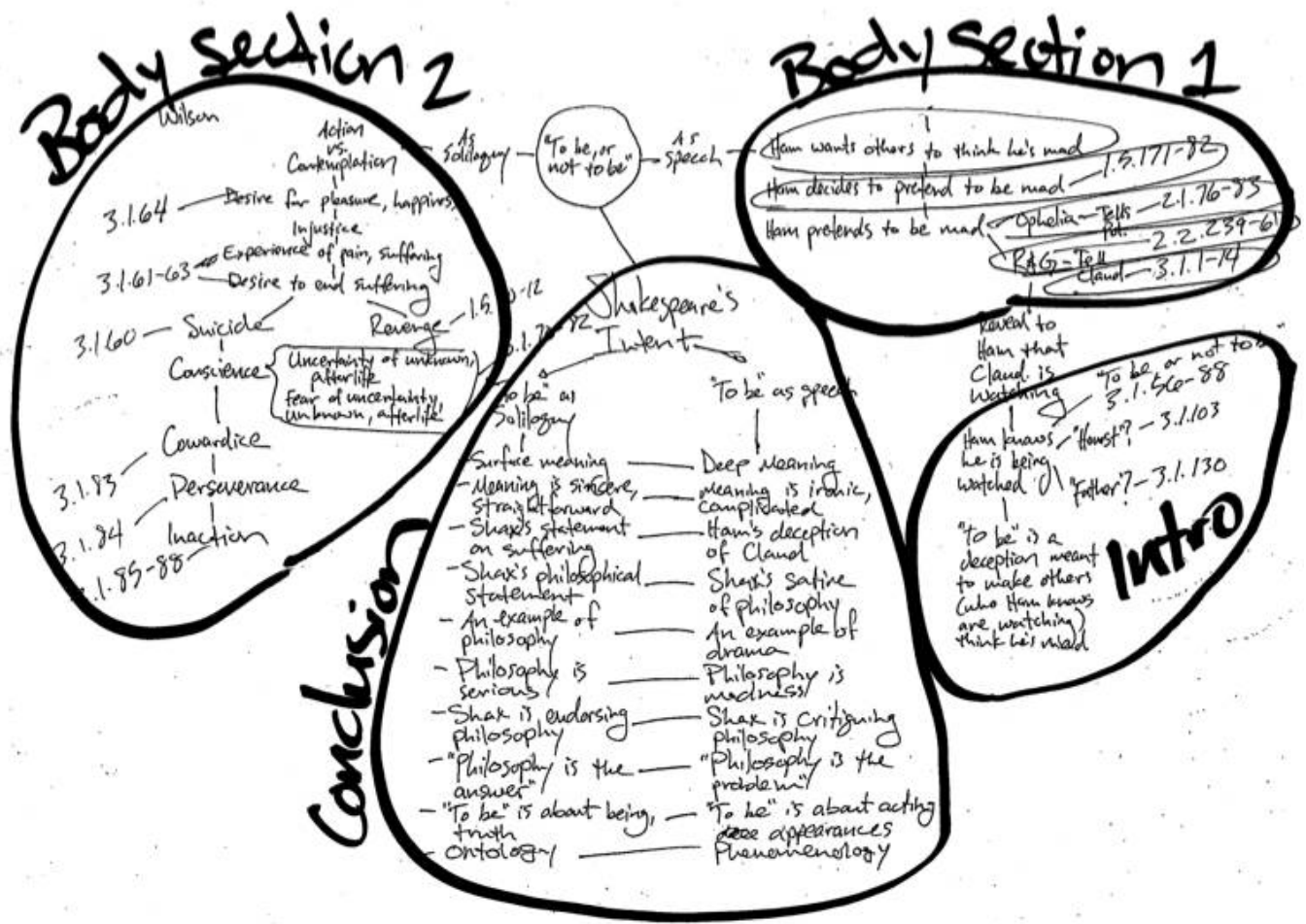
RESPONSE PAPER 1.2: EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS



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Writing Due:

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