

**Worksheet 4 – The Book, the Flower and the Sword**

**Review**

**Answer these questions about the previous video lecture to check how much you remember.**

1. What was Machievelli's most famous work often referred to regarding ambition and duplicity?
  - a) The King
  - b) The Prince
  - c) The Bishop
  - d) The Leader
  
2. What year was the Spanish Armada?
  - a) 1590
  - b) 1600
  - c) 1588
  - d) 1584
  
3. Machievelli's book written in 1503 but published in 1531 after his death was still banned widely in the 1590s when Shakespeare was writing Hamlet. What idea caused it to be so widely condemned?
  - a) That a beggar and a King were the same
  - b) That life was not worth living
  - c) That there was no such thing as an afterlife and the only life that existed, was this one.
  - d) That a public figure could adopt a public persona for political purposes.

**Recall**

**Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.**

4. What does the flower represent in Renaissance iconography??
  - a) Love
  - b) Fate
  - c) Words
  - d) Death
  
5. What number does John McRae suggest that Shakespeare uses to take the audience through the Renaissance Iconography used?
  - a) 7
  - b) 3
  - c) 5
  - d) 12
  
6. What does Fortinbras' name literally mean?
  - a) Strong will
  - b) Ferocious fighter
  - c) Strong arm
  - d) Noble warrior

### Analysis :

Let's look again at the examples that Professor John McRae uses to illustrate the three elements that create the perfect monarch that he feels Hamlet becomes.

Book = Head: Intellect; knowledge;

Flower = Heart: Love; passion; emotions

Sword = Hand: physical strength; ability to fight

Book: Act 2 scene 2 L189-190 Hamlet has adopted an 'antic disposition' and is confronted by Polonius.

Polonius: What do you read, my lord?

Hamlet: Words, words, words.

Flower: Act 3 scene 1 L89-91 Hamlet is confronted by Ophelia who has been told to return his gifts of love and poems so that her father and the King can watch their interaction.

Ophelia: Good my lord,

How does your honour for this many a day?

Hamlet: I humbly thank you, well, well, well.

Sword: Act 5 scene 2 L261 – 267 Hamlet and Laertes fight an honourable duel to settle their grievances over Polonius and Ophelia's deaths. Claudius and Laertes have set up the foils and poisoned Laertes foil so that Hamlet will die if wounded. Claudius has also poisoned the wine.

Hamlet: Judgement?

Osric: A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laertes: Well, again.

King: Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine:

Here's to thy health. Give him the cup.

Hamlet: I'll play this bout first. Set it by awhile.

Come, another hit! What say you?

Laertes: I do confess't.

- 1 Re-read the rest of these scenes or part of scenes and see what comes beforehand and what afterwards. It is always crucial to be able to place important details into their context within the wider play.**
- 2 Remembering the Kingly qualities that we looked at last time from Macbeth (Act 4 scene 3). What evidence do you see of Hamlet's possession of these qualities?**

### MALCOLM

But I have none: the king-becoming graces,

As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,

Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,

Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,

I have no relish of them, but abound

In the division of each several crime,

Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should

Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,

Uproar the universal peace, confound  
All unity on earth.

- 3 Thinking about the rest of the play in general, what evidence can you find for Hamlet as a :**  
**Scholar.**  
**Lover.**  
**Fighter.**

*Extension: Consider different productions that you may have seen and think about these three aspects of Hamlet's character. What evidence have directors given us?*

*E.g. Kenneth Branagh's version shows intimate sexual scenes between Hamlet and Ophelia which establishes Hamlet as a lover and therefore changes how we feel about this changing relationship. Other productions do not focus on this and leave their relationship as more friendly. The 2021 Greg Hersov production at the Old Vic showed a much more loving relationship between Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Again, how might this affect how we feel about Hamlet and his ability or suitability to be the perfect King?*

## Evaluation

7. At 2.40 – 2.50 Professor John McRae shows us a picture and talks about the crucial importance of Hamlet's status as a student at Wittenberg University.

In 1502 Elector Frederick founded the University which attracted some important thinkers. Most famously that of Martin Luther who started in 1508 as a Professor of Theology. On 31 October 1517, Luther is said to have nailed his 95 theses against the selling of indulgences at the door of the All Saints', the Castle Church. These indulgences could be bought specifically to reduce the length of time that a loved one would have to serve in purgatory before facing the final judgement of God. This event was revolutionary and is seen as marking the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Find out more about these 95 theses and see how they challenged the very basis of the Catholic Church at the time.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninety-five\\_Theses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninety-five_Theses)

[https://www.history.com/topics/reformation/martin-luther-and-the-95-theses#section\\_4](https://www.history.com/topics/reformation/martin-luther-and-the-95-theses#section_4)

Consider how the presence of the Ghost who comes with tales of Purgatory, adheres to the Catholic Doctrinal teachings.

Note down these two conflicting and challenging attitudes to faith and write a paragraph that explores your ideas as to how the importance of Wittenberg University as the scholarly institution that Hamlet attends (and wants to return to) affects your ideas of Hamlet as a character and how this links with the balanced and complete image that Prof McRae paints of the character of Hamlet.

*Extension: Professor McRae discusses the iconography that is often seen in Renaissance paintings particularly in Northern Europe.*

*Do some further research into some of these types of Art and see if you can identify examples of Books; Flowers; and Swords. He shows us a very famous example in Raphael's The Dream of Scipio but have a look at some of the following examples and then find your own. Are you developing your own interpretation of the wider world of the Renaissance that permeates throughout this play?*





## Glossary

**Duplicity** - deceitfulness in speech or conduct, as by speaking or acting in two different ways to different people concerning the same matter; double-dealing.

**Iconography** - the use of images and symbols to represent ideas.

**Scholar** - a person who studies a subject in great detail, especially at a university:

**Theology** - the study of religion and religious belief

**Theses** – plural of Thesis:

a long piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one that is done for a higher college or university degree:

**Indulgences** - In the teaching of the Catholic Church, an indulgence (Latin: indulgentia, from indulgeo, 'permit') is "a way to reduce the amount of punishment one has to undergo for sins"

**Reformation** - a major movement within Western Christianity in 16th-century Europe that posed a religious and political challenge to the Catholic Church and in particular to papal authority, arising from what were perceived to be errors, abuses, and discrepancies by the Catholic Church.

**Protestant** - a member of the parts of the Christian Church that separated from the Roman Catholic Church during the 16th century.

**Doctrinal** – Relates to Doctrine

a belief or set of beliefs, especially political or religious ones, that are taught and accepted by a particular group.