

Student Essay on "to Be or Not to Be..." Soliloquy Breakdown.

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Essay

In the famous first line of Hamlet's infamous soliloquy, he debates with himself. He wonders if he should keep the pain inside of him trapped and thus "Suffer the slings and arrows of outrages fortune", or he can oppose these feelings, the "Sea of troubles" and end his problems. The second sentence tells us how he plans to end his problems, with suicide. He says, "And by a sleep to say we end the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to." He wants to end all the pain and grief that his father's death brought upon him. How serious is he about suicide though? He might just be saying what he says because he knows that Polonius and Claudius are listening in. In the third sentence, Hamlet tells us that "Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished", telling Polonius and Claudius that he wants his suicidal thoughts fulfilled. In the fourth sentence he says "To die, to sleep - To sleep - perchance to dream." He wonders what dreams might come to him in his sleep, but that's the "rub", the problem. In the sleep Hamlet wishes to take, dreams are non-existent. Dreams will take a long break from visiting Hamlet when he leaves the mortal realm. In the next sentence, Hamlet says, "There is the respect that makes calamity of so long life." I took this as meaning that people strive to live because they want to dream. They want to make dreams that come to them in their sleep and dreams that they have in life a reality. In the next sentence, Hamlet goes on to exemplify some hardships and accomplishments of life. He mentions the pains of love, insolence of office, or politics as a whole, and oppression. He goes on to say that he will relieve himself from all these debts with a mere dagger. In the next sentence he asks who would bear the burdens to live a weary life and to continue a dreary life after death. In the same sentence he continues to say that the country he was born in is not the same as he once knew it. In the seventh sentence, he claims that one's conscience makes a coward; he was probably referring to King Claudius. He ends by telling the now visible Ophelia that his love is in his prayers and to remember his sins.