THE MONOLOGUE from ACT III SCENE 1

A room in the castle

**Structural analysis** of Hamlet's monologue

To tell the truth it is the most famous soliloquy, which start with the well-known line: ‘’ To be,or not to be, that is the question’’.

The structure of the monologue has been organised posing a question and two possible answers. From the very first line punctuation plays an important role : the question is posed by a perception verb : TO BE. The playwright uses the infinite to make this question a universal one. The two choices are: to live or to die so the problem is life that is the central of investigation.

The structure of the soliloquy can be divided into 3 parts that are the main critical themes and questions. Here are three of the most important ones:

1. Doubt and uncertainty (1-10)
2. Life and death (10-20)
3. Madness (20-30)

In lines 1-10 Hamlet uses a lot of infinitive forms which give his speech a reflective mood. In lines 1-5 he draws upon some images which are pictures of disease and corruption. In lines 8-9 Hamlet views death I as something to be welcomed because of its freeing power and considers it in a medieval perspective. In lines 15-19, Hamlet lists the injustices and miseries inflicted on humanity, that is the passing of the time, political oppression, social discrimination, unreturned love, the delays of justice, insolence, and ingratitude. In line 24 we can find a metaphor which stands for the after death or the “ *undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns”*. At the end of his soliloquy Hamlet deprecates his lack of action and his cowardice.