**English 431: Shakespeare How to create a body paragraph that includes quotes and analysis**

Thesis: Shakespeare’s Hamlet uses ear imagery as a way of re-orienting Hamlet. Since he cannot trust his eyes, he uses sound cues to understand the people around him and his own feelings. But in Hamlet, the hero is increasingly deafened with louder and louder noises, making it impossible for to remember and feel his grief.

Division 1 Topic Sentence: As early as 1.2, Claudius’s excessive talking is contrasted with Hamlet’s taciturnity. Shakespeare makes this contrast to suggest that Claudius is not only insensitive to Hamlet’s grief, but he and his fellow aristocrats are constantly interrupting Hamlet’s inner emotional battles until Hamlet is overcome with distraction.

Example Quote:

 The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,

Keeps wassail, and the swagg’ring up-spring reels,

And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down

The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out

The triumph of his pledge. (1.4.9-13)

Pick out examples of the thing you want to analyze: In this passage, Hamlet describes his uncle partying all night. The passage is filled with onomatopoetic language such as “swagger,” “reel,” “and “bray,” which suggest he is both drunk and loud. It also has loud “voiced” percussive sounds such as k’s, b’s, d’s, g’s, t’s, and p’s: “drains his draughts of Rhenish down,” “kettle drum and trumpet,” “bray,” “triumph,” etc. Even the diphthongs are loud: “takes his rouse,” “Rhenish down,” and “bray out” sound like trumpets.

Connect the analysis to your larger discussion. This passage continued in Q2 for 20 more lines, using phrase like “swinish phrase” and “dram of evil “ to suggest that Claudius’s revelry makes the whole country look bad. But in Folio, the passage is cut down so that the focus is on Claudius’s uncouth clamor and its immediate effect on Hamlet. Hamlet has come home to grieve, but his meditations are constantly interrupted by grotesque loud displays from the people in power.

Example Quote:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep--

No more; and by a sleep to say we end

The heartache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to--'tis a consummation

Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep.

To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub. . . (3.1.59-67)

Pick out examples of the thing you want to analyze: Hamlet’s use of parenthetical or interrupted statements and questions suggest that he is having increasing trouble concentrating. As he tries to answer his own rhetorical question—[is it] “nobler in the mind to suffer…or…by opposing, end [a sea of troubles]”?—he keeps dwelling on the blessings of “to die, to sleep”; “to die, to sleep. /To sleep, perchance to dream” (3.1.66-67). Similarly, in 2.2, he interrupts his long litany of questions about his cowardice (“Am I coward? Who calls me villain”) with insults about his “remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain”; and interrupts that catalog of adjectives with self-flagellating insults (“What an ass am I”). Hamlet cannot finish a thought because the noisiness of the lay keeps him from putting “wild and whirling” thoughts to rest.

Connect the analysis to your larger discussion: Hamlet is one of the only plays where a character speaks to his brain. At the end of 2.2, he finishes his catalog of insults by telling is brain to go a different way: “About, my brain.” In 5.2 he says his brains act without him like actors without a prologue: “Ere I could make a prologue to my brains, / They had begun the play” (5.2.31-2) in which they killed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet’s distraction is caused by an increasingly loud play filled with percussive noise and loud people.

Notes about quoting and analyzing:

* Don’t pad your paper with long quotes. If you use quotes longer than three lines, indent them 10 spaces on the left.
* If your quotes are shorter than three lines, use / marks to show line breaks for verse, but not for prose.
* Don’t restate or summarize the quotes. Select the pieces of the quote that represent imagery and rhetoric and discuss those.
* Do not summarize the plot.
* Connect your analysis to your thesis.

Other notes:

* Use our textbook. Online editions are not as accurate and are not edited using the same standards.