

The Fishmonger Scene

S- Hamlet's book (reference line 193-208) is symbolic of Hamlet's mind and feelings. Hamlet tells Polonius that he is reading "Words, words, words" (line 192). This would be congruent with the confusion the reader can assume fills Hamlet's mind.

I- "Sun breed maggots in a dead dog" (Line 181) brings to mind a rotting dog carcass with maggots breeding on it. It is disturbing, uses shock factor.
"Eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum" (Line 202). This is very descriptive. Also sounding gross.

F- Word choice: "Fishmonger" (Line 174). Hamlet is referencing Polonius' trickery and stupidity and is insulting him by comparing to someone of a low rank. Polonius misses the insult attributing the comment to madness.
"God kissing carrion" (Line 182) is an *allusion* to mythology.

T- Theme: Hamlet is mad.
Hamlet's madness is intentional.

Tone: Sarcastic. Hostile.

Squid

1. Have you a daughter?
2. This is interesting because Hamlet has known Polonius for several years and definitely knows that Ophelia is his daughter. He could be saying this to add to his desired impression of madness. It also may show the bitterness Hamlet has towards Polonius for telling Ophelia to refrain from accepting Hamlet's love.
3. This is one of the first examples of Hamlet's "madness" that minor characters have been referencing throughout the play. The reader is taken aback by Hamlet's sudden absurdity.

How will this scene help you....

Thesis 1: Hamlet's absurd discourse and rapid change of thought (as seen especially in line 181), are clues to his possible genuine madness. This is the first scene (aside from ghost interactions) that the reader experiences Hamlet's "madness."

Thesis 7: Hamlet's behavior towards Polonius is exaggerated and unfair. Polonius is, in theory, attempting to help Hamlet and discover the cause of his supposed madness. If this were the case, Hamlet's attitude and attack on Polonius could be described as hypocritical and uncompassionate.