HAMLET How all occasions do inform against me

And spur my dull revenge! What is man

If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed?—a beast, no more.

Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,

Looking before and after, gave us not

That capability and god-like reason

To fust in us unused. Now whether it be

Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple

Of thinking too precisely on th’event—

A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom

And ever three parts coward—I do not know

Why yet I live to say ‘Tis thing’s to do’,

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means

To do’t. Examples gross as earth exhort me,

Witness this army of such mass and charge,

Led by a delicate and tender prince,

Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed

Makes mouths at the invisible event,

Exposing what is mortal and unsure

To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,

Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great

Is not to stir without great argument,

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw

When honour’s at the stake. How stand I, then,

That have a father killed, a mother stained,

Excitements of my reason and my blood,

And let all sleep while, to my shame, I see

The imminent death of twenty thousand men

That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,

Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot

Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,

Which is not tomb enough and continent

To hide the slain. O, from this time forth

My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth! (4.4.22-56)

Examine Hamlet’s diction in his description of Fortinbras, and discuss why he is an appropriate foil for Hamlet. Explain Hamlet’s two theories about why he has not yettaken his revenge on Claudius. Remember that he spared Claudius only because he thought the king was praying, and that he has killed the spy in his mother’s bedroom whom he took to be Claudius. What is your own theory about his delay?