



## The glass of fashion

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

**Ophelia:**

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,  
Th' expectation and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
Th' observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!

*[Hamlet, Act 3, scene 1, 150–154](#)*

After Hamlet repeatedly advises her to "get thee to a nunn'ry" [*see* p. 46], Ophelia bewails the noble prince's apparent madness and mourns Denmark's loss of so exemplary a gentleman. Like the society of Shakespeare's England, the society of Hamlet's Denmark seems to operate on a principle of emulation: all noblemen are expected to remark and imitate the manners of the prince. Hamlet's eye (perception), tongue (discourse), and sword (prowess) set standards for courtiers, soldiers, and scholars, if not in that order. Till he went bonkers, he was the chiefest bloom of the realm, the princely paragon observed by all observers. Hamlet was the "glass of fashion": that is, the mirror of comportment. "Glass" commonly meant "mirror" in Shakespeare's day; "fashion" was more ambiguous, meaning fashion as we know it, but more commonly what Ophelia also calls "form": "manner," "demeanor," or "self-disposition."

### Copyright Notice

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:  
<http://www.enotes.com/shakespeare-quotes>