

Contrast and comparison of two of hamlet's soliloquies essay



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Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' presents us with many apparent elements that are expressed through various mediums. One of the most effective mediums is the use of soliloquies. This journal entry will breakdown the first and last soliloquies delivered by Hamlet and denote their meanings whilst contrasting and comparing them. In regards to the soliloquies it is evident that they are both significant to the play and progress of the characters.

It is evident that these two soliloquies add importance to the progression of the play as they deliver differing situations in the play. Shakespeare uses each soliloquy as a philosophical analysis that introduces upcoming themes and happenings. They allow foreshadowing to take place in order for the audience to understand the crucial events that will ultimately follow. For example in the first soliloquy, Hamlet establishes strong thoughts about death, both of his father and suicide. It is also later revealed that Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, has married his mother.

Through this soliloquy, Shakespeare incorporates immense depth to the character of Hamlet as well as the other main characters. It enables the audience to understand Hamlet's stance and further insight into his thought patterns in regards to death, suicide and duty to God and family. "Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd his cannon 'gainst self-slaughter". In contrast to this, the fourth act and Hamlet's last soliloquy it is evident that the audience is aware of Hamlet's true motivations which thus result in the final events of the play.

The last soliloquy has been preceded by the unveiling of Claudius' plan to kill Hamlet in England and is used by Shakespeare to portray how Hamlet has

changed thus his reasoning has formed a new rational Hamlet. "Thaw and resolve itself into a dew! Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd" This part of the first soliloquy is compared to "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will," and it is evident that there was abandonment of God/Heaven/Hell and a now a realization that they do exist with God having a master plan that we all subconsciously abide by.

One of the major changes in Hamlet's character (which is suggested by the language used in the first and final soliloquies by Hamlet) is the ostensible spirituality of the character. In contrast to Hamlet's final soliloquy, Hamlet's first implies an impactful spiritual/religious assurance. As seen in the third line, Hamlet concedes that there is an "everlasting", whose laws condemn suicide as a sin.

"Or that the everlasting had not fix'd he's canon 'gainst self-slaughter. In addition this soliloquy has many mythological references, for example the comparison between his father and the sun God Hyperion. Not only do these references efficiently add insight for the audience and understanding of the text but also helps illustrate the character of Hamlet as a glorification of his circumstances thus highlighting his reverence of the divine. However, the words of Hamlet's last soliloquy are not used for glorification or depreciation of anybody in regards to divine references.

As a result, no ideals are established and the foul and gross physicality of nature is dominant. Hamlet calls humans "beast" characterized by the "bestial oblivion" whilst making several other references to less attractive elements of life such as "egg-shell", "gross as earth", "stain'd", "blood"

and “grave”. Although these elements are stated in this soliloquy there is an absence of acknowledgment of the celestial.

There fails to be any mythological references made and even when God is stated the reference is lacking in number and importance. Hamlet does refer to God once “he that made us”, but again the importance is lessened due to the lack of capital in “h”. Shakespeare fails to give away any definite indication of Hamlet’s beliefs; there is a distinct reduction of Hamlet’s use and dependence on the spiritual and celestial. In addition the contrast of mythological, celestial references and imagery used by Shakespeare is distinct in each soliloquy.

In regards to the first soliloquy Shakespeare creates sordid and foul tones using disease imagery and metaphors to establish the reasons for Hamlet’s melancholia and creates bitterness towards Claudius and Gertrude. Hamlet’s opening lines of this soliloquy incorporates plethora of metaphors in regards to “flesh”. These metaphors immediately start up the chain of disease imagery that is maintained throughout the rest of the play.

Even though the imagery used by Shakespeare in the final soliloquy is constant with the Hamlet’s disgust of the physical, its focus is more on the association of man and beast. This soliloquy is far less descriptive and far more focused on prefacing action than the first. In contrast to the increase of the intellectual, Hamlet makes the first derogatory comment towards the intellect and language: “of thinking too precisely on the event” and “my thoughts be bloody”. This overall reduction in outrage and passion indicates the change of Hamlet’s character throughout the rest of the play.

Overall it is evident that throughout the play the character of Hamlet progresses into a rational thinker whose action takes place in order to serve both internal desires and that of society. It is evident through his soliloquies that Hamlet is able to express his feelings as a rational individual rather than a hasty person, rushing into action without thought. As the character of Hamlet progresses the audience is able to see a more positive outcome for Hamlet, with the expectations of vengeance being served and every character falling to their own demise.