

An analysis of repeated allusions in shakespeare's hamlet

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“ The serpent that did sting thy father’s life Now wears his crown. (I, V, 39-40) This is the Ghost of the late King Hamlet telling his son how his brother (Claudius) murdered him. He compares the serpent (from Adam and Eve) to his brother. This gives a whole new view of Claudius and what type of person he really is. This develops the theme everything is not as it seems. Claudius seems like he wants to help and get closer to Hamlet but in reality, is just trying to keep him from finding out that he killed Hamlet’s father.

“ My father’s brother, but no more like my father Than I to Hercules.” (I, ii, 152) This was after Hamlet finds out about the marriage of his mother and his uncle. Hamlet clearly does not trust Claudius and noticeably does not view him as a father figure. This allusion was used here because it is foreshadowing that there is something that Shakespeare wanted the readers to know. He wanted them to infer that Claudius isn’t as great as he seems.

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favor, “ Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood, A violent in the youth of primary nature, Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting, The perfume and suppliance of a minute. No more.” (I, iii, 5-10) This allusion is about Ophelia’s brother is telling her to not get to attach to Hamlet because he doesn’t truly care for her. He doesn’t want his sister to get hurt. This develops the theme of not letting others take advantage of you. Ophelia is blind to see that Hamlet doesn’t really love her. This is foreshadowing because in Act II Hamlet starts to detach himself from Ophelia.

“ And never did the Cyclops’ hammer fall on Mars’s armor, forged for proof eterne, With less remorse than Pyrrhus’ bleeding sword now falls on Priam” (II, ii, 452-455)

Hamlet uses this allusion to highlight that he is going to attack Claudius for revenge. This motivates him to stick to his plan of getting revenge for his father.

This is another scene to build up to the climax. This allows the reader to see how much Hamlet cares for his father and will do anything to prove justice for him.

“ With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus Old grandsire Priam seeks” (II, ii, 432) Hamlet compares himself to Pyrrhus (son of Achilles who was killed during the Trojan war) because he is determined for revenge. This shows a side an emotional side of Hamlet. This allusion makes Hamlet feel like a hero on a mission for revenge. This once again shows how much Hamlet loves his father.

“ O heart, lose not thy nature, let not ever the soul of Nero enter this firm bosom. Let me be cruel, not unnatural.” (III, ii, 356-357) Hamlet is reminding himself of Nero (a Roman emperor who murdered his mother) to keep himself in line. Although he is very angry with his mother, he doesn’t want to cause her any harm because he still cares about her. This adds to the theme because Hamlet uses this allusion to remind himself of his actual objective, which is to let his mother realize her mistakes instead of actually provoking her into realizing what she has done.

“ And my imaginations are as foul as Vulcan’s stithy” (III, ii, 77) Vulcan is the Roman god of fire. Hamlet is indicating his aggressive and “ fiery” state of mind. This is another example of foreshadowing the horrible events in the play; like Polonius’ murder and Laertes’ murder.

“ To be, or not to be? That is the question” (III, I, 58) Hamlet is debating on where he should commit suicide or not. He is in deep pain and doesn’t know what to do. This shows the theme that everything is not as it seems.

Someone as rich and powerful as Hamlet is so depressed that he is willing to take his own life. He may seem strong and happy on the outside but deep down he’s so depressed.

“ You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.” (III, I, 121) After being approached by Ophelia who is trying to return tokens of love from Hamlet, he furiously denies giving her anything. He tells her that he never loved her. Once again Ophelia was blind to see that Hamlet didn’t really love her. He broke Ophelia’s heart and she is very devastated by the way that he spoke to her. Hamlet degraded her; Ophelia mentions how kind and strong he used to be towards her, clearly he does not care for her anymore.

“ Oh, my offence is rank. It smells to heaven. It hath the primal eldest curse upon’t, a brother’s murder. Pray can I not.” (III, iii, 37-39) When Claudius is alone in the room he vents his guilt over the sin that he committed, killing his brother. He wants to ask for forgiveness but he does not want to give up what he gained from this sin (the crown). This shows a side of Claudius that

makes the reader feel somewhat bad for him. He doesn't know if God can forgive him for this horrifying sin. It also shows how selfish Claudius is, he doesn't want to give up his crown and the queen even though he had to murder his brother for it in the first place.