

## AP Q2 Re-Write

As the plot of Hamlet unfolds, the deteriorating mental condition of Hamlet is made more and more clear for readers. His burning desire for revenge and insanity deepens with each passing scene, accompanied by diction that portrays him as cryptic. In Act 4 Scene 3, Shakespeare utilizes imagery and tone to convey Hamlet's enigmatic malevolence and passion for revenge in a complex exchange between him and King Claudius filled with double meanings.

Firstly, the imagery revolving around "worms" and the juxtaposition of a king and beggar emphasize Hamlet's anger and malice directed at King Claudius. In his veiled attacks at Claudius, Hamlet seizes the inquiry of Polonius' whereabouts to advance the concept of "politic worms", saying that both a king and a beggar are merely "two dishes, but to one table: that's the end." This is insulting for Claudius because Hamlet is implying that a king is no more remarkable or significant than a beggar, as they all die in the end. It is an image that strips a king of his nobility and royal nature, which aligns with Hamlet's perception that Claudius should not be king given his heinous crimes. Fundamentally, it reflects Hamlet's hatred of Claudius and his desire to bring death upon him. It fits right in with the broader theme of deception that permeates this play; Claudius does not know that Hamlet is aware of the truth of his father's death and Claudius's hand in it, but the reader and audience do. As a result, Shakespeare's imagery of worms eating both kings and beggars possesses a deeper layer of meaning that highlights Hamlet's malevolence.

To make this even more apparent, Hamlet ends the analogy by saying that his little speech was "nothing but to show you how a king may go through the guts of a beggar." This image of the remains of a king being pushed through a person belonging to the lowest class of society is deeply insulting for a king and further emphasizes Hamlet's desire to see Claudius fall from glory and suffer death punishment for his actions.

In addition, the tone Shakespeare employed in this scene further reveals Hamlet's animosity and cryptic nature. The tone can be classified as provocative and filled with veiled threats; after all, Hamlet is comparing Claudius to a beggar and establishing quite unpleasant prospects of his future. Furthermore, when Claudius says "Thy loving father, Hamlet", Hamlet responds with "my mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother." Hamlet essentially corrects Claudius in saying that he is Hamlet's father, suggesting instead that Claudius is his mother due to them being married. This is significant because it draws our attention to Gertrude, who is essentially a living reminder of Claudius' crime. By stating that Claudius is actually his mother, Hamlet once again hints that he knows the truth, deepening the deception. It also reaffirms his loyalty to his mother and not Claudius, further antagonizing the latter and reiterating his anger.

In conclusion, Shakespeare's use of imagery and tone emphasizes Hamlet's growing enmity and hatred toward Claudius while highlighting his inner struggle to contain his feelings through the equivocal language whose double meaning can only be recognized by readers and not characters within the play. This mental struggle puts a massive psychological strain on Hamlet, thus nudging him ever closer to a breaking point that will undoubtedly unfold later in the play.