



كلية: الآداب

القسم او الفرع: قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

المرحلة: الثالثة

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اسم المادة باللغة العربية: المسرحية

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Drama**

اسم المحاضرة التاسعة باللغة العربية: نوع العمل الادبي

اسم المحاضرة التاسعة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Genre**

Genre

Tragedy

Hamlet is one of the most famous tragedies ever written, and in many respects, it exhibits the features traditionally associated with the tragic genre. In addition to the play ending with the death of Hamlet and a host of others, Hamlet himself is a classic tragic protagonist. As the Prince of Denmark, Hamlet is a figure whose actions matter to an entire kingdom, which means the play's events reverberate through the entire world of the play. Like other tragic heroes, he displays many admirable traits. Hamlet may have a reputation for moping around Elsinore Castle with a melancholy disposition, but this is because he grieves his beloved father's untimely death. Despite his sadness, Hamlet is an intelligent young man of great potential, as many other characters recognize. Fortinbras says as much in the final lines of the play: "he was likely, had he been put on [the throne], / To have proved most royal" (V.ii.373–74). Finally, part of the reason Hamlet sets out down the dark path to destruction is that he succumbs to increasing isolation. His isolation amplifies his inwardness, and it also has tragic effects on others. His rejection of Ophelia, combined with his murder of her father, drives her to madness and, presumably, to suicide.

For all that it resembles a traditional tragedy, *Hamlet* also strains the usual conventions of the genre. One notable example is in the "dark path" that Hamlet embarks on that leads to catastrophe. In most tragedies it's clear that the hero is choosing to pursue something they shouldn't—in the case of a revenge tragedy, the hero succumbs to a desire for murderous vengeance. In Hamlet's case, he seems to have every reason to take vengeance, because Claudius really did murder the king and usurp his place, but Hamlet seems ambivalent about the Ghost's plea for vengeance, or slow to carry it out. He seems to want to know the truth more than anything, which doesn't seem like a tragic choice. The choice he makes that leads to many of the tragic consequences of the play—such as the death of Ophelia—is his choice to isolate himself from everyone else, behave erratically, and pretend to be mad.

Another ambiguity in *Hamlet*'s status as a tragic hero pertains to his tragic flaw. Readers often identify this as his indecisiveness, which makes sense, given that Hamlet himself repeatedly berates himself for being slow to take vengeance. Laertes and Fortinbras function as Hamlet's foils in this regard; each one acts with surefooted certainty throughout the play. Indecisiveness is a strange tragic flaw, though, because in most tragedies the flaw helps explain why the protagonist pursues the wrong things—the flaw is more typically an urge or desire rather than a passive trait. Hamlet's indecisiveness does not explain why he murders Polonius, spurns Ophelia, psychologically manipulates Gertrude, and isolates himself from his peers. In fact, his indecisiveness is the reason he tends to *avoid* taking action. Read in this way, Hamlet's indecisiveness does not mark a tragic flaw so much as an existential condition—a condition that today's audiences often identify with strongly.

Hamlet also belongs to the genre of revenge tragedy in that it features a main character seeking to avenge a wrong against himself, but Shakespeare satirizes and modifies the genre in several ways. In traditional revenge tragedies, which Shakespeare's audience would have been familiar with, the hero is an active, decisive figure who doggedly pursues a clear villain. The obstacles he faces are external, and once he sees the opportunity to take his revenge, he seizes it. Hamlet, on the other hand, struggles mostly with himself in his pursuit of Claudius. His obstacles are his own indecision and hesitation, and he lets several opportunities to seize revenge pass, such as when he sees Claudius praying and decides not to kill him. Further, Hamlet only kills Claudius once his own death is assured, so any satisfaction he gets from his nemesis's death is extremely short-lived. In these ways Shakespeare provides the traditional, bloody, action-filled revenge tragedy with a greater degree of psychological complexity and plausibility.