

Hamlet

Year of Origin	1600 -1601 (3 rd)
Source	Saxo Grammaticus - <i>Historia Danica</i> (early 12th cent.) Belfortius's <i>Histoires Tragiques</i> (Paris, 1562) Thomas Kil's <i>Spanish Tragedy</i> (1588)
Genre	Tragedy
Setting	Denmark



Themes and Comments

- Being an intellectual, Hamlet cannot act;
 - Hamlet is not Brutus, who looked for and welcomed suicide as an escape;
 - H. moves from the negativity and suicidal temptation of the soliloquy to the determination to accept the role of avenger and to pay for the evil he will cause with his life. That's why, apart from any possible interpretation, H. belongs to the specific convention of the **REVENGE TRAGEDY**:
 - 1) The hero finds himself in a situation he hasn't created and which imposes action upon him;
 - 2) it was the playwright's task to create variations on this basic theme, but he shouldn't move too far from the established convention which stated that the revenger should take an opportunity unconsciously offered by the villain (Claudius plots to have H. killed by Laertes) so that the revenge becomes an act of justice.
- FORTINBRAS succeeds H. on the throne because he has all the qualities required of a king: courage, determination, a practical mind and the total absence from philosophical doubts that delayed H.'s action. He will restore order in the kingdom (whether a positive or negative one we don't know). S. seems to think order as an essential condition for the life of a nation.

- The soliloquy
- The Great TRAGEDIES

- Revenge Tragedy vs Renaissance influence
- Character Study
 - Idealist Intellectual
 - Revenge Hero
 - Fool (when he pretends to be mad)
 - Renaissance Man
 - Moral doubts
 - Uncertainties
 - Existential Hero
 - Spiritual ennui



•Renaissance influence

- The study of the concept of Harmony disrupted by murder
- The role of the Prince
- The importance of Court, Love, Death, Religion



• Duality:
A symbolic fight between good and evil which dominates the plot

We've read:
Act III- Scene 1 (To Be or not to Be)
Act III- Scene 4 (Look here, upon this picture)

<u>Ghost King</u>	vs	<u>King Claudius</u>
>Light		>Dark
>Good		>Evil
>Spiritual		>Terrestrial
>godly		>bestial
Unreality		Reality

