

## THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET: A SYSTEM OF GENRES

**Adir de Oliveira Fonseca Júnior<sup>1</sup>**

Universidade Federal de São Paulo

**Abstract:** Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is often considered to be a “complex” or “deep” tragedy. The arguments used to sustain this opinion usually emphasize the psychological dispositions of Prince Hamlet, or tend to mention the supposed philosophical tone of the play. This paper aims, as far as possible, to demystify this conjecture, attempting to elucidate at least some of the conventions and *topoi* manipulated by Shakespeare in the composition of *Hamlet*. For this purpose, we will focus our attention on historical and generic issues, observing the precepts which used to regulate the tradition prior to Romanticism.

**Key-words:** *Hamlet*; William Shakespeare; genres; tradition.

**Resumo:** A tragédia *Hamlet*, de Shakespeare, é comumente considerada uma obra “complexa” ou “profunda”. Os argumentos utilizados a fim de sustentar essa opinião geralmente realçam as disposições psicológicas do Príncipe Hamlet, ou tendem a mencionar o suposto tom filosófico da peça. Este artigo pretende, tanto quanto for possível, desmistificar essa conjectura, procurando elucidar ao menos algumas das convenções e dos *topoi* manipulados por Shakespeare na composição de *Hamlet*. Para tanto, focaremos nossa atenção em questões históricas e genéricas, observando os preceitos que regulavam a tradição anterior ao Romantismo.

**Palavras-chave:** *Hamlet*; William Shakespeare; gêneros; tradição.

---

1. English major (7th semester) at the Federal University of São Paulo. E-mail: adirofjunior@hotmail.com. Fapesp scientific initiation grant (process n. 2010/10196-1). This paper was developed in the course Literatura em Língua Inglesa I, taught by Prof. Lavinia Silveiras, during the first semester of 2011. I thank Prof. Silveiras for her readings, suggestions and comments on the text, and I also thank Prof. Bianca Fanelli Morganti, adviser of my scientific initiation study.

## Introduction

*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is notably one of the most discussed plays written by William Shakespeare, being commented by several critics, under various perspectives, since it was published in 1603.<sup>2</sup> As Eliot (1932, p. 124) once said, Hamlet “is the ‘Mona Lisa’ of literature”. This assertion is valid if we consider the many different historical interpretations which have guided literary critics upon each reading of *Hamlet*, as well as the diverse analyses produced by various art historians of that intriguing painting by da Vinci.

If during the 17th century, at the time of its publication, *The tragedy of Hamlet* was mostly analyzed through the lens of rhetoric and generic issues, since the end of the 18th century, on the other hand, Goethe, for example, focused his attention on the main character, considering the psychological dispositions of Hamlet.

In this paper, though, we do not reject the value of the latter point of view, which was pertinent in its own historical discourse, we will center our attention on generic issues concerning Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, trying to elucidate some of the *topoi* involved in the composition of this tragedy and how the system of genres plays a crucial function in its unity and final form.

## Aspects of the tragedy

There is no reason to question the generic classification of *Hamlet*; after all, its historical status is already confirmed by the naming of the play – *The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Even so, for a better understanding

---

2. The first edition of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is dated at 1603, and refers to an *in-quarto* version of the play (Q 1). There are also other versions, though: a second *in-quarto* (Q 2), published in 1604, and a third *in-folio* edition, (F 1), published in 1623. Besides, there are two other intermediate *in-quartos* (the Q 3, of 1611, and the Q 4, *s.d.*), but they are not considered as literary relevant by several critics, which can be questioned. (Cf. Ramos, 1955:17-18)

of what kind of elements were involved in a tragic composition, and also what precepts and procedures of the tragic genre were available for an Elizabethan playwright, we should take into account Aristotle's *Poetics*. In effect, the Aristotelian principles had exerted great authority on the rhetorical and poetic treatises which used to regulate the artistic production up to the last decades of the 18th century, prior to the Romantic period.

First of all, Aristotle (II, 16) points to a difference between comedy and tragedy – the two dramatic genres – according to their particular objects of imitation: while comedy aims at representing men in their worse aspects, tragedy aims at representing men as better than in actual life. Then, in part VI, the author gives a more precise definition of tragedy, considering not only the types of characters involved, but also the style and the emotions which the poet should achieve:

Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. (Arist., *Poet.*, VI, 27. Translated by S. H. Butcher)

Likewise, Aristotle makes it clear that a tragedy is not concerned primarily with the imitation of men, but of their *actions* instead. Thus, the function of the characters in the play is, above all, the accomplishment of actions and the consequences of these upon human behavior, rather than a direct representation of the characters' *psyché*. Hence, we might say that what is really relevant for a tragic plot is not *why*, but *how* the character deals with the reverses of fortune – yet, these two motivations are intrinsically connected.

From these observations taken from Aristotle's *Poetics*, we can see why *Hamlet* has been considered a tragedy, and what type of poetic

elements Shakespeare had to gather in order to establish a tragic unity: the elevated characters from the high court of Denmark; the grandiloquent speeches; and, finally, the nature of the actions described, through which the author made it possible to inspire pity and fear in the characters and, consequently, in the audience.

Nevertheless, if *Hamlet*, on the one hand, is normatively a tragedy, which encompasses in its plot the main poetic conventions proper to the tragic genre, on the other hand, it is also likely that Shakespeare borrowed features from other genres, combining different components in order to produce significant effects in the text, both in style and in matter.

### ***Hamlet*: an unlimited poem?**

According to Harold Bloom's appraisal (2004), *The tragedy of Hamlet* is, of all Shakespeare's poems, the "most unlimited" one.<sup>3</sup> By saying "unlimited", it seems that Bloom assigns a universal aura, a high level of complexity to the play. Adopting a Romantic point of view<sup>4</sup>, Bloom brings up issues such as the "ambivalent consciousness" of Prince Hamlet<sup>5</sup>, his deep motivations, and even the very intentions of Shakespeare himself. Therefore, Bloom's literary criticism on *Hamlet* basically suggests that

---

3. "De todos os poemas, [*Hamlet*] é o mais ilimitado"; "Shakespeare, deparando-se com o gênero do poema ilimitado, encerra-o de tal modo que sempre precisássemos ouvir mais." (Bloom, 2004:17;137. Translated by José Roberto O'Shea)

4. "Bloom sees poetic influence as a psychological dialectic between the poet's anguish at being imprisoned within a conditioning system belonging to others and the poet's need for creative correction and renewal. (...) Bloom, eminent scholar of Romanticism that he is, in the end promotes the Romantic aesthetic to an absolute. 'Poetry expresses a poet's melancholy at not being first' might summarize his view. Mystical influences suggesting strange magical astrological forces also figure in this psychoanalytic tendency." (Conte, 1986. pp.26-27. Translated by Charles Segal)

5. "A questão central, então, será: de que maneira Hamlet se tornou uma consciência dotada de ambivalência tão extraordinária?" (Bloom, 2004, p.22)

what makes this work so *complex* and *secular* is the enigmatic figure of the main character, whose emotions and thoughts cannot be easily explainable.

Curiously, Eliot (1932, p.126) presents us a contrary position, and instead of lauding this supposed density of the play, he criticizes the lack of consistency of *Hamlet*, due to the inexpressibility of the character's emotion, for which Shakespeare could not find an "objective correlative" in art.<sup>6</sup>

Putting aside considerations of this nature, we shall observe, from a brief investigation, the confluence of other genres in *Hamlet*, attempting to examine if it might be actually considered a "complex" piece – in the sense that it involves, as we have already remarked, material taken from other types of literary practices in addition to the classic precepts which governed the composition of a tragedy.

### Understanding the system of genres

Before the production of the Romantic discourse, the value of the poets was judged not according to their supposed originality, as conceived in modern times, but rather in the relation of their poetic work to the authorized models already consolidated in the tradition<sup>7</sup>. According to Eliot (1932, p.4), tradition in art is never inherited in a passive way; on the contrary, it is something obtained by great labor. It involves an acute sense of history, an awareness of the simultaneous existence of the past and the present, and consequently of the co-existence of all the literary productions. "The 'timeless present' which is an essential characteristic of literature means that the literature of the past can always be active in that

---

6. "We should have to understand things which Shakespeare did not understand himself". (Eliot 1932, p.126)

7. The etymology of the word *tradition* refers to the Latin verb *trado* (to hand down, to bring over; thus, to transmit, deliver something), assigning its active meaning and temporality. (Cf. Lewis & Short 1879)

of the present. So Homer in Virgil, Virgil in Dante, Plutarch and Seneca in Shakespeare, Shakespeare in Goethe [...]” (Curtius 1990, p.15).

Moreover, it is worth remembering that before Romanticism the core of the poetic composition was based substantially on the principle of *imitatio*, which refers to the act of imitating a representative model associated with a certain genre. However, this should not be seen as a mere copy, but rather as a mimetic process of combining, digesting, recycling old forms in order to produce something new and meaningful from a known and effective formula. By doing so, a poet was inserting himself or herself in a specific generic tradition, and possibly he or she assumed that the readers or the audience would recognize this affiliation, in such a way that a judgment, based on comparison, could be made. Along with the procedure of *imitatio*, there were the analogue notions of *aemulatio* and *contaminatio*: the former refers to the act of imitating and, at the same time, rivaling with a great author, trying to surpass his or her wit and art, while the latter refers to the fusion of two or more models in a harmonic unit. In the end, all these concepts are intrinsically connected to the idea of tradition and to the system of genres.

Shakespeare wrote between the 16th and 17th centuries, and thence the notions of imitation and tradition are notably latent in his works. Shakespeare’s art dialogues with all the great authors of ancient Greco-Roman and medieval periods and, since “*no poet, no artist of any art, has his meaning alone*” (Eliot 1932, p.4), his wit is due in large part to these other authors with whom he had contact. Plutarch, Plautus, Ovid, Seneca: these are some of the probable Latin authors read (and imitated) by Shakespeare.<sup>8</sup> Even *Hamlet*’s plot was not an “innovative creation” of

---

8. “Provável, por exemplo, é que [Shakespeare] tenha lido Plauto, no original; e o uso que faz de Ovídio (no original, ou na tradução de Arthur Golding, 1565-1567), ou de Plutarco (na tradução de North, 1579) e outros autores revelam que ‘se leu relativamente poucos livros, mostrou um poder, verdadeiramente assombroso, de absorver e usar tudo o que lia’. (...) De autores gregos – diz Boas – Shakespeare

Shakespeare, but it takes us back to preceding traditions that circulated much before Shakespeare's time. What is interesting to observe, though, is not the so-called originality of the story, but preferably how Shakespeare presents it and by which means he does so.

As already mentioned above, *Hamlet* is conventionally a tragedy, since Shakespeare makes use of typical tragic elements consolidated in the poetic tradition. Yet, it is possible to find *topoi* taken from other literary codes in the structure of the play. According to Pécora (2001, p.12), there is a basic historical tendency of the most different genres to develop "mixed" forms with relative dynamics in different periods of time. *Hamlet* as well is not a "pure tragedy"; on the contrary, it is a multifaceted construct, which embraces *topoi* supposedly alien to the tragic genre; and it is further a historical artifact with its specificities and circumscribed concerns. In the following paragraphs, we will be examining some examples of these common places found along the Shakespearean piece.

One interesting thing to be observed is the presence of comic elements in the play, once comedy is at first considered to be the opposite of tragedy – as we can see in Aristotle's definitions of both of these dramatic genres. Polonius, for example, is painted by Shakespeare as a characteristic comic *senex* from Roman comedy: the very fact that he is a father, his pompous and artificial speeches<sup>9</sup>, his pedantry and energetic defense of

---

provavelmente não conheceu nada; mas não se deve desprezar a continuidade latino-medieval de expressões e figuras gregas e latinas que passaram a *topoi*, lugares-comuns, e de que há reflexos em Shakespeare." (Ramos 1955:23-24)

9. POLONIUS: "This business is well ended./My liege, and madam, to expostulate/What majesty should be, what duty is,/Why day is day, night night, and time is time,/Were nothing but to waste night, day and time./Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,/And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,/I will be brief: your noble son is mad:/Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,/What is't but to be nothing else but mad?/But let that go.

QUEEN GERTRUDE: More matter, with less art.

LORD POLONIUS: Madam, I swear I use no art at all./That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;/And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;/But farewell it, for I will use no art./Mad let us grant him, then: and now remains/That we find out the cause of this effect,/Or rather say, the cause of this defect,/For this effect defective comes by cause:/Thus it

the *mos maiorum*<sup>10</sup>, to mention some of his traits, represent Polonius as a foolish old man – Hamlet calls him “*tedious old fool*” (act II, scene II). “Polonius always attempts to appear learned and witty, yet his pride in his own skill, cunning, and wisdom makes him appear all the more ridiculous” (Draudt 2002, p.73). In addition, the Q 2 version of *Hamlet* brings at the opening of act II, scene I, the indication “*Enter old Polonius*”: another hint that Shakespeare could be alluding the classic figure of the *senex*.

In scene II of act III, before the exhibition of the dramatic performance in front of the court – used by Prince Hamlet as a trap to confirm if his uncle Claudius was indubitably the murderer of his father –, Hamlet addresses the first actor of the theater company and gives him some acting advice.<sup>11</sup> As we can see, this type of speech does not refer to what is considered to be an essential part of a tragedy; rather, it seems to be a digression incorporated by Shakespeare in his play, serving as an advice and admonishment towards the actors’ *actio*. At last, it is possible to assert that this speech maintains a strong bond with the oratory genre: in the same way that Hamlet aims to instruct the actor with imperatives, the rhetorical treatises intended to instruct the orators on how to behave before an audience.<sup>12</sup>

---

*remains, and the remainder thus. Perpend. (...)*” – (*Hamlet*, Act II, scene II)

10. POLONIUS: “*And in part him; but' you may say 'not well:/ But, if't be I mean, he's very wild;/ Addicted so and so:/ and there put on him/ What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank/ As may dishonour him; take heed of that;/ But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips/ As are companions noted and most known/ To youth and liberty.*” (Act II, scene I).

11. HAMLET: “*Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to/you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it,/ as many of your players do, I had as lief the/ town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air/ too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently;/ for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say,/ the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget/ a temperance that may give it smoothness. (...)/ Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion/ be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the/ word to the action; with this special o'erstep not/ the modesty of nature (...)*”. (Act III, scene II)

12. “Movimento do corpo é o controle dos gestos e do semblante que torna mais provável o que pronunciamos. Convém que haja *pudor* e *acrimônia* no semblante; nos gestos, nem encanto, nem fealdade devem chamar atenção, *para que não pareçamos histriões ou operários*. Também o método de mover o corpo



Another feature broadly observed in the course of *Hamlet* is the allusion to many known *topoi* collected from philosophic material. Indeed, this fact might be one of the reasons why *Hamlet* is considered, in modern times, to be such a “reflexive” or even “philosophical” tragedy. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize here that before the Romantics the concept of literature was very different from the modern one, and it used to refer to the whole literary production system and its corresponding knowledge. Thence, in that specific historical period, literature was not only related to fiction, but it included in its scope a large range of parallel subjects concerning the literary discourse in general: poetry, philosophy, ethics, rhetoric, politics, etc. The classification of *Hamlet* as “a philosophical tragedy”, thus, is impregnated by a Romantic point of view. Nonetheless, by saying that Shakespeare developed philosophical issues in his tragedy, we are suggesting that some of the *topoi* observed in his piece might be regarded as material proper to that type of discourse, though not exclusive to it.

Inasmuch as Shakespeare’s production is often acknowledged to share some features with Seneca’s, it is likely that the reader may establish associations between part of his works and the Stoic doctrine defended by the Roman author.<sup>13</sup> *The tragedy of Hamlet* is one of these works. In the “Mouse-trap” scene, for instance, we find an expressive speech of Hamlet to Horatio which alludes to some of the topics propagated by the Stoics: the Fortune’s strikes upon men, the slavery of passions, the value of friendship.<sup>14</sup>

---

deve acomodar-se àquelas partes em que se distribui a voz.” (*Rhet. ad Her.*: III, 26. Translated into Portuguese by Ana Paula Celestino Faria and Adriana Seabra. Emphasis added.)

13. Stoicism is essentially a moral doctrine, according to its main precepts and tendencies. It is assumed that its founder was Zeno of Citium (IV-III b.C.), and between his followers we may include Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. (Cf. Bergson 2005, pp.134-135)

14. HAMLET: (...) “*Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice/And could of men distinguish, her election/Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been/As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing, A man that fortune's buffets and rewards/ Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those/W'bose blood and judgment*

In effect, according to the Stoics, there is a tension between Fortune and virtue, once the constancy of the soul – indispensable condition to achieve a virtuous and tranquil life based on reason – is frequently threatened by the unstable circumstances given by Fortune. A man is only wise and fully happy when he becomes indifferent to the accidents, but also indifferent to the passions, for the agitations moved by the *pathos* affect the stability of the soul as well. This presumption is not only valid in relation to self judgment, but it also should be a parameter for the election of our companions, in order to avoid our corruption through our friends' vices.<sup>15</sup> All these Stoic elements are condensed in Hamlet's speech, in which the Prince portrays his friend Horatio as a wise man.

Likewise, Hamlet's plan behind the "mousetrap" was to judge if the words of his father's ghost were true, so he could be sufficiently convinced that Claudius actually murdered King Hamlet. This also suggests a Stoic moral position, since the Stoics believed, as we can see from Epictetus, that our soul should move towards the truths, rejecting the false ideas and suspending the judgment upon obscure matters (Chauí 2010, p.304). More widely, such an assumption was the basic premise exposed in the manuals of conduct, such as Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1528).

---

*are so well commingled;/ That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger;/ To sound what stop she please. Give me that man/  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him/ In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,/ As I do thee.--Something too  
much of this./ There is a play to-night before the king;/ One scene of it comes near the circumstance/ Which I have told thee  
of my father's death:/ I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,/ Even with the very comment of thy soul/ Observe mine uncle:  
if his occulted guilt/ Do not itself unkennel in one speech,/ It is a damned ghost that we have seen,/ And my imaginations  
are as foul/ As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;/ For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,/ And after we will both our  
judgments join/ In censure of his seeming." (Act III, scene II)*

15. "(...) é preciso saber escolher os amigos, já que 'nada agrada tanto ao ânimo como uma amizade fiel e doce', corações em que se pode confiar sem temor, companheiros cuja palavra nos acalma e cujo conselho nos guia, cuja alegria dissipa nossa tristeza – em suma, a *humanitas*. Isso significa escolhê-los isentos de paixão, pois esta é um vício contagioso." (Chauí 2010, p.304)

It is even possible to affirm that the composition of the character of Hamlet resembles a Stoic and melancholic temperament, being constructed with elements taken from the Stoic morality and in consonance with the ideas that were circulating in Shakespeare's historical period.<sup>16</sup> In fact, in the course of the play, Hamlet seems to be always in struggle: a struggle between, on the one hand, reason and constancy of soul and, on the other hand, the passionate desire of carrying out his revenge. This tension, as already remarked above, is the Stoic paradox taken in its extreme, and points to the *dysthimia* inherent to the *persona* of Hamlet, which he has to endure throughout the whole tragedy.<sup>17</sup>

### Concluding remarks

*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, albeit its tragic status, encompasses *topoi* from other literary genres, such as comedy, oratory and philosophy. However, this does not mean that Shakespeare was corrupting the established tradition, by neglecting the tragic principles, or that he was

---

16. "(...) that old aphorism of Aristotle may be verified, *Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae*, no excellent wit without a mixture of madness. Fracastorius shall decide the controversy, "phlegmatic are dull: sanguine lively; pleasant, acceptable, and merry, but not witty; choleric are too swift in motion, and furious, impatient of contemplation, deceitful wits: *melancholy men have the most excellent wits, but not all; this humour may be hot or cold, thick, or thin; if too hot, they are furious and mad; if too cold, dull, stupid, timorous, and sad; if temperate, excellent, rather inclining to that extreme of heat, than cold.*" (Burton 1850, p.255)

17. "(...) É uma inconstância, uma agitação perpétua, inevitável, que nasce dos temperamentos irresolutos (...). O ânimo não é capaz de mandar nem de obedecer às suas paixões: entrega-se à aflição de uma vida que não se expande, e à indiferença de um ânimo paralisado no meio da ruína de seus desejos' (Sêneca, *Da tranquilidade da alma*, II, 7-8) (...) "Se a *euthymia* é o contentamento consigo mesmo, a *dysthimia* é o desgosto de si mesmo. Alma triste e impaciente, aflita e abatida, ansiosa e inerte (...). Os doentes melancólicos são como os sarnentos, que desejam que raspem sua pele: neles, as paixões brotam como úlceras malignas e consideram prazeroso atormentar-se e sofrer. Saem a correr o mundo, como se mudando de lugar pudessem repousar, sem perceber, escreve Sêneca, a verdade do que disse Lucrécio: 'Assim cada um foge de si mesmo'. O mal de que sofrem não vem dos lugares, mas de si mesmos, que não conseguem suportar." (Chauí 2010, p.302)

inventing something new and original, as one could argue. As we mentioned before, the historical tendency is that the most varied genres develop mixed forms, contaminating each other in a fluid process. In the case of *Hamlet*, and of the poetic production of the classical tradition in general – from the Greeks and Romans to the Romantics –, the genre of composition is not stagnant; on the contrary, it admits *topoi* and modes of expression which, *a priori*, do not concern the original frame.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the very presence of other genres in *Hamlet* makes this Shakespearean work be considered so “complex” in modern times. The way Shakespeare manipulates the system of genres and plays with its rules results, indeed, in a multifaceted tragedy, that might be actually considered “unlimited”, but only in its persuasive effects and not in its proper means. After all, it was only through the complex maneuver of preexisting conventions and materials that Shakespeare could finally achieve this impression of density and infinitude.

### Bibliographical references

ARISTOTLE. *Poetics* (s/d). Translated by S. H. Butcher. Available at: <<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.mb.txt>>. Accessed 27 June 2011.

BERGSON, Henri (2005). *Cursos sobre a Filosofia Grega*. Trad. Bento Prado Neto. São Paulo, Martins Fontes, pp. 134-135.

BLOOM, Harold (2004). *Hamlet: Poema ilimitado*. Trad. José Roberto O'Shea. Rio de Janeiro, Objetiva.

BURTON, Robert (1850. 1st published in 1621). *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Philadelphia, J.W. Moore; New York, J. Wiley. Available at: <<http://archive.org/details/anatomymelancho25burtgoog>> Accessed 22 October 2012.

---

18. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, e.g., we already find confluences from other genres besides epic: the pathetic episode of Dido is a typical tragic scene (cf. *Aen.*, IV).

CHAUÍ, Marilena (2010). *Introdução à História da Filosofia: as Escolas Helenísticas*, vol. II. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, pp. 292-310.

[CÍCERO] (2005). *Retórica a Herênio*. Trad. Ana Paula Celestino Faria; Adriana Seabra. São Paulo, Hedra.

CONTE, Gian Biagio (1986). *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*. Translated from the Italian and edited by Charles Segal. Cornell University Press, pp. 26-27.

CURTIUS, Ernst Robert (1990). *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Translated from German by Willard R. Trask. Princeton University Press.

DRAUDT, Manfred (2002). The Comedy of Hamlet. In: *Atlantis Journal*, 24(1): 71-83. Available at: <[http://www.atlantisjournal.org/Papers/24\\_1/draudt.pdf](http://www.atlantisjournal.org/Papers/24_1/draudt.pdf)> Accessed 27 June 2011.

ELIOT, T. S. (1932) Hamlet. In: *Selected Essays*. New York, Harcourt, pp. 121-126. \_\_\_\_\_. Tradition and the individual talent. In: \_\_\_\_\_, pp. 3-11.

LEWIS, Charlton. T. & SHORT, Charles. *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879. Available at: <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>> Accessed 28 June 2011.

PÉCORA, Alcir (2001). À Guisa de Manifesto. In: *Máquina de Gêneros*. São Paulo, Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, pp. 11-16.

SHAKESPEARE, William (1955). *A tragédia de Hamlet, Príncipe da Dinamarca*. Trad. Péricles Eugênio da Silva Ramos. Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio Editora.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Available at: <<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/full.html>> Accessed 27 June 2011.