

SHAKESPEARE, THE DIVINE INCARNATE: A READING OF THE 'DISEASED ELSINORE' IN HAMLET

"Shakespeare – The Nearest Thing In Incarnation To The Eye of God" - Lawrence Olivier

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ABSTRACT

*To borrow the words of Sir Lawrence Olivier, the great Hollywood actor, who has enacted innumerable roles of Shakespearean characters, it may rightly be said that Shakespeare was akin to God. The act of creation is attributed to God, and in English plays we see hundreds of characters having been created by the sheer imaginative brilliance of William Shakespeare (1564-1616). He wrote 37 plays, which can be divided into three broad categories of Comedies, Tragedies, and Histories. In these plays, he is known to have created more than a hundred major characters and many hundreds of highly distinctive minor ones. One is struck with awe and wonder at the sheer range of the writer, whose characters develop rather than unfold through the course of the play. As Harold Bloom rightly points out in his seminal work, *Shakespeare The Invention of the Human*, "The plays remain the outward limit of human achievement: aesthetically, cognitively, in certain ways morally, even spiritually". Bloom goes on to assert that the gifted playwright has invented human beings. This thought echoes and is the central premise of the book mentioned above. It also reminds us of what Lawrence Olivier says about Shakespeare, the 'nearest thing in incarnation to the eye of God'.*

This paper attempts to establish Shakespeare as the Divine Incarnate, who despite being human has acquired a Godlike stature through the sheer force of his creativity. It would be attempted to delve deep into one of his four major tragedies, Hamlet, to establish Shakespeare's unmatched genius in delving into the psyche of the characters to reveal to us shades of the psychology of human beings, much before the knowledge of the modern day psychology was even known to mankind. At the time when Ben Jonson was still writing the comedy of humor, or Marlowe recreating the characters of Dr. Faustus and Tamburlaine, here was an 'upstart crow', not belonging to the elite group of University Wits, but one, who through his poetic genius and an unmistakable understanding of the human mind was creating characters who are still as alive and relevant to us after four hundred years of their creation.

KEYWORDS: *Divine, Invention, Psychology of the Characters, Conscious and the Subconscious*

INTRODUCTION

The Bard without boundaries, William Shakespeare (1564-1616), is perhaps the most widely produced dramatist in varied languages across cultures, thereby affirming one of the essential Aristotelian elements of 'universality' in literature. The plays, poems, and sonnets of Shakespeare, have easily lent themselves to fire the imagination of mankind through centuries. His plots have been borrowed in umpteen films; have been reworked, and grafted on to diverse cultural

backdrop by contemporary filmmakers and theatre directors not necessarily of English speaking countries.

Margorie Garber points out, “Every age creates its own Shakespeare”, and she compares him to a portrait that seems to be following us with its eyes, no matter where we move within the space of that room. The poet himself could, not have anticipated himself this ‘uncanny timeliness’. Ben Jonson had declared in the preface to the First Folio in 1623, that, “Shakespeare was not of an age, but for all time”, these words ring true, loud and clear even today, though one is tempted to add that he is also relevant and adaptable to diverse cultures and countries.

In his third lecture on the *Poet as Hero*, Thomas Carlyle compares Dante and Shakespeare to Homer. He maintains that just as we get glimpses of Greece in Homer, so shall the coming generations after thousands of years see of the European faith and practice in the works of Dante and Shakespeare. In his masterpiece, *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, he establishes:

If I say that Shakespeare is the greatest of intellects, I have said all concerning him. But there is more in Shakespeare’s intellect than we have yet seen. It is what I call an unconscious intellect; there is more virtue in it that he himself is aware of...Shakespeare’s Art is not Artifice; the noblest worth of it is not thereby plan or precontrivance. It grows up from the deeps of Nature, through this noble sincere soul, who is a voice of Nature.”(141).

Adding to the above statement, he further says:

The latest generations of men will find new meanings in Shakespeare, new elucidations of their own human being;’ new harmonies with the infinite structures of the Universe: concurrencies with the later ideas, affinities with the higher powers and the senses of man’, It is Nature’s highest reward to a true simple great soul, that he get thus to be *a part of herself*.(141-142)

In the above mentioned lecture, Carlyle refers to character delineation of Shakespeare as ‘portrait painting’, which is ‘unexampled’, his ‘ calm, creative perspicacity’, which does not merely reveal to us a face but, “its inmost heart or generic secret: it dissolves itself as in light before him, so that he discerns the perfect structure of it.”Shakespeare had “ prophetic insight”, one whom Carlyle sees as ‘universal, and perennial’ (147). Referring to the range and completeness of Shakespeare’s characters, Carlyle, suggests:

No twisted, poor convex- concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities; a perfectly level mirror; - that is to say withal if we will understand it, a man justly related to all things and men, a good man. It is truly a lordly spectacle how this great soul takes in all kinds of men and objects, a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus; sets them all forth to us in their round completeness; loving, just, the equal brother of all...Goethe alone, since the days of Shakespeare, reminds me of it. Of him too you can say that he saw the object; you may say what he himself says of Shakespeare: ‘His characters are like watches with dial plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hour like others, and the inward mechanism is

also visible'. (137)

It has often been said, that the plots of Shakespeare are archetypal, his characters borrowed, so what is it that qualifies him to be a 'man of achievement', as Keats calls him in his letter to his brothers. Germane Greer(*Shakespeare: A Very Short Introduction*)elaborates on this:

There is nothing innovative in Shakespeare's idea of history, no ideology or philosophy, which imposed, on the material that he organized. Rather he took the mass of mutually conflicting notions which he found expressed in the Bible as interpreted by his contemporaries, the homilies, the chronicles, broadsides and ballads, popular plays and traditions, and in the compendia of wisdom from all kinds of sources, and made of it something remarkably exciting and alive, repaying all kinds of analysis and suggestive of all kinds of alternatives. Keats called Shakespeare's faculty for allowing mutually conflicting notions full imaginative development 'negative capability'. (97)

In more recent times, Harold Bloom, in his seminal work, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, proclaims unambiguously that Shakespeare's plays, "remain the outward limit of human achievement: aesthetically, cognitively, in certain ways morally, even spiritually. They abide beyond the end of mind's reach, we cannot catch up to them". The central argument of the author in this work, is that Shakespeare invented the human beings, almost echoing Lawrence Olivier's statement quoted at the beginning of this section, that Shakespeare is an 'incarnation of God'. Bloom maintains that the playwright's originality was not merely in the representation of cognition, personality, and character, it was far more than that, it was "creation", the delineation of his characters like, Falstaff, Hamlet, Macbeth, Rosalind, Iago, Lear are 'extraordinary instances' of not only how meaning is generated, but also how 'new modes of consciousness' come to be created. Bloom goes on to make this singular observation that Shakespeare's characters are akin to God. That in Literature, after Jesus, Hamlet is the most cited figure in Western consciousness. He says:

The essence of Hamlet is emblematic of the greater enigma of Shakespeare himself: a vision that is everything and nothing, a person who was (according to Borges) everyone and no one, an art so infinite that it contains us, and will go on enclosing those likely to come after us.(xxi)

The characters of Shakespeare, may have been drawn from history or Holinshed's chronicles, or may be an outcome of the contemporary socio-political and cultural context, what makes them enduring and livable, despite the passage of centuries, is the sheer greatness of the playwright in not creating mere roles for an actor, but rather unraveling before the readers and the audience, the play of the consciousness in the human mind. Certain characters have now become archetypal, symbols of humanity conveying the emotion of love are Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth is the symbol of a mind wrought by the futility of ambition, while Lady Macbeth reminds one of the psyches cracking with a sense of unmitigated guilt, just as Othello has become a symbol of a jealous lover. Indeed, what the poet says in Sonnet 18, of his lover, is true of the writer himself:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this and this gives life to thee

Hamlet: A Tragedy of Mythical Dimensions

William Shakespeare's Hamlet is doubtlessly one of the most celebrated, quoted, discussed and imitated texts in the canon of Western Literature. Being one of the four great tragedies of Shakespeare, it poses certain very pertinent questions regarding human life, death, love, and one's place in the cosmos. It was first written in 1600, and later came in the Quartos of 1603, and 1604, before being compiled in the Folio edition in 1623. The titular character of the play, has come to be recognized as universally familiar theatrical icon, an intellectual rebel, a romantic at heart, a man if inaction or one given to procrastination, holding mirror up to nature, and as one who also shows the anxiety of the modern life, that questions traditional values of faith, love and trust questioning the very meaning of existence.

Shakespearean experts have attributed the origin of Hamlet to Thomas Kyd's Ur-Hamlet, performed in London in 1590. It is patterned after the model of the Senecan Tragedy, also used by Kyd in The Spanish Tragedy. This genre of revenge tragedy was much popular on the Elizabethan stage, with elements of the vengeful ghost, the protagonist's revenge on the murderer and his accompanying emotional turbulence. But, even before Kyd, we first hear about Hamlet's story in the *Historia Danica* written by Saxo Grammaticus, a Danish historian, and also in Saxo's *Historia*, we get to know of Amlethus, a legendary hero from the tenth century. Franco de Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques* in 1576, which was translated in 1608 as *The Historie of Hamblet* by Thomas Pavier in 1608. Elizabethan audience, then was familiar with the Hamlet story, but Shakespeare mastery lies in turning the basic plot into superlative theatre, not only by applying the conventions of Elizabethan drama but by showing the character development of a complete tragic hero in timeless poetic language.

Hamlet's pre-eminence as a literary figure is indeed mythical he is Shakespeare's greatest character who displays a vast comprehensiveness of consciousness and keenness of intellect. Bloom points out:

It is a peculiarity of Shakespearean triumphalism that the most original literary work in Western Literature, perhaps in the world's literature, has now become so familiar that we seem to have read it before, even when we encounter it for the first time... Consciousness is his salient characteristic, he is the most knowing and aware figure ever conceived. We have the impression that nothing is lost upon this fictive personage. Hamlet is a Henry James who is also a swordsman, a philosopher in line to become a king, a prophet of a sensibility, still out ahead of us in an era to come. (404)

Bloom goes to the extent of calling Hamlet the "alpha and the omega" of Shakespearean plays, though he composed sixteen more plays after Hamlet. He maintains that one can find all of Shakespeare in this one play: history, comedy, satire, tragedy, and romance, going to the extent of calling it "poem unlimited", and Hamlet a "transcendental hero", who defies all barriers of time, space and age. The crisis of Hamlet, his paralyzed emotional state, involves a rare internalization of the self, which finds expression in seven soliloquies spoken by the character in the play. Regarding his timelessness, Bloom further notes:

There will always be as many Hamlets as there are actors, directors, playgoers, readers, critics. Hazlitt uttered a more than Romantic truth in his: "It is we who are Hamlet" Clearly Hamlet has usurped the Western literary consciousness, as its self aware threshold, gateways no longer crossable by us into transcendental beyond. Yet most of

us are not imaginative speculators and creators, even if we share in an essentially literary culture...What seems most universal about Hamlet is the quality and graciousness of his mourning. This initially centers upon the dead father and the fallen – away mother, but by Act V the center of grief is everywhere, and the circumference nowhere or infinite. (413).Hamlet, as a character, bewilders us because he is so endlessly suggestive. Are there any limits to him? His *inwardness* is his most radical originality, the ever-growing inner self, the dream of infinite consciousness, has never been more fully portrayed. (416)

It is for the above reasons that the Hamlet continues to be the most daunting characters ever to be portrayed, and the play the most famously problematic ever written. Critics have tried to delve into the character of Hamlet, while A.C Bradley feels that the key to Hamlet's disconcerted self is the sudden marriage of his mother with Claudius, and his father's ghost demanding him to seek revenge, but Freudian critics, Ernest Jones being the most renowned amongst those have looked for Oedipus Complex as an explanation for his disposition. In contrast to these is T. S Eliot's famous dismissal of the play as an 'artistic failure', its inaction and the melancholy of the prince as having no "objective correlative". There, of course, is no formula, which could explain the 'emotion' that Hamlet undergoes. It is beyond all of this, it transcends any preconceived logical cold reasoning, but rather continues to be the tragedy of a man, who finds his world shattered, his love lost, his father dead, and is at odds with himself. His trust has been breached more than once, by Claudius, Gertrude, and by Ophelia, whom he loves and whom he finds to be a decoy of her father Polonius. He is not a rash man, who would, like Lear take an immediate impulsive decision, he seeks to avenge his father's death, but only after he is assured that he has not been deceived by the dead spirits. He is a god fearing man, who believes in the notions of heaven and hell, he refuses to kill Claudius as he finds him in prayers, because he wants his soul to languish in hell for his misdeed, and not go to heaven as he sat at his prayers. Once he has got the evidence of the guilt of Claudius, in the play within the play, it is then only a matter of most opportune moment that he would use to take revenge on his father's death. The melancholy and the dejection he feels, the uncertainty and futility he expresses about his life has very modern strains. It is the subject of much of modern literature in the Twentieth Century. Hamlet says, "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it were now, 'is not to come; if it is not to come, it will be now..."There are a variety of themes that one can find in the play. Speaking of these Cedric Watts says:

We then may see that the play is coordinated by many interwoven themes. These themes include : actors, acting and action; action versus reflection; mousetraps of various kinds ; attitudes to death; 'appetite' as simultaneously ambition, lust and intemperance; conflict between the older and the younger generations ; women as victims of male violence; melancholia and madness; and man as both Hyperion and satyr, both paragon of animals and quintessence of dust. Again and again, the play looks over the edge of life into death, and it offers contrasting vistas of the region...Thus by repeatedly questioning the obvious and subverting the conventional, Shakespeare has converted the material of a mere revenge drama into a tragedy. He has provided the ethical complexity which, for modern audiences and critics, is one of the defining characteristics of the tradition of tragedy. (20)

It is for the reasons cited above that one finds a definite resonant cultural echo, which is not limited to the Western regions of the world alone. Hamlet is a tragedy of a genius caught in the toils of circumstance that he is not able to fling himself free of. The full horror of his situation is unfolded to us gradually, until he is completely overwhelmed under its yoke. Regarding its relevance and appeal to the modern audience and readers, John Dover Wilson opines:

Hamlet is Shakespeare's most realistic, most modern, tragedy; the play of all others in which we seem to come closest to the spirit and life of his time, and he closest to the spirit and time of ours"(52)

The opening scene itself sets into motion the quest that is to unfold gradually. While the first line of the play is, "Who's there?", the twenty-first line reveals to us that there is a spirit, "this thing" which has appeared again, and at the end of line thirty nine, the stage direction announces, "Enter the GHOST in armor", which goes away in silence, despite the command of Horatio, "Stay, speak, speak: I charge thee speak!". But, it does not escape any one's notice that it is "like the king", "majestic", "and invincible". At dawn it disappears, only to return in scene four, for an exchange with Hamlet, the prince. In the meantime Claudius and Gertrude make their appearance in the royal court after their marriage, while the 'memory of the dead king was still green, Claudius observes that "Clouds still hang" on the prince. Though the prince is yet not aware of the appearance of his father's ghost, he is out of sorts, unsettled by the hasty marriage of his mother with his uncle, and the grief of his dead father, he pointedly observes that, he is "too much in the sun", that he has that within him "which passeth show" and not merely his "inky cloak" which outwardly shows him in sorrow. Being told later that his father's spirit was seen in armor, Hamlet is assured that there is some foul play and he is determined to unravel it:

My father's spirit in arms? All is not well;
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come.
Till then, sit still my soul; foul deeds will rise'
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. (I.2.253-256)

Shakespeare has spelt out in the first line of the play itself, that the nature of the play is that of enquiry, "Who's there?", and by the end of scene two, the foregrounding for the rest of the play has been done, that of the death of the king, the marriage of the queen with his brother, the unsettled state of being of Prince Hamlet, and the ghost's eagerness to reveal something through his recurrent visits. We become aware of the fact that the state of Denmark is "out of joint", as Hamlet says:

O, that too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into adew,
Or that the everlasting has not fixed
His cannon 'gainst self slaughter. O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of the world!
Let me not think on't: frailty thy name is woman-

A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body,
Like Niobe all tears, why she, even she –
O God a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourned longer
She married, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! (I.2.131-156)

But, he resolves to hold his tongue, while his heart breaks. This holding of his grief in his heart will continue even after he has been given the task by the ghost of his dead father too, “revenge his foul and most unnatural murder”, that he had been poisoned by his own brother, who also, “won to his shameful lust the will of my most seeming – virtuous queen”. It was, “O horrible! O horrible, Most horrible!”, but the ghost gives a specific task to the prince, to “revenge his foul and most unnatural murder”, but to leave his mother to “heaven/ and to those thorns that in her bosom lodge/ To prick and sting her”. The remainder of the play is dedicated to the task assigned to the prince by his dead father's ghost. John Dover Wilson, in his critical study, **What Happens in Hamlet** says:

Shakespeare asks every spectator, every reader, to sympathize with his hero, to feel with him, to place himself in his shoes, to understand his situation, and to attempt, in imagination, a solution. That is in part the meaning of tragic drama.(44)

He further adds:

To all the other burdens that the fate has piled upon the hero a last and crowning one was added, the burden of doubt. At the end of first act Hamlet, together with Shakespeare's audience, is left in uncertainty about the ‘honesty’ of the ghost....So great is Hamlet's moral stature, so tough is his nerve, that the back does not break. But he is crippled, and the arm which should perform the Ghost's command is paralyzed. Thus he continues to support the burden, but is unable to discharge it. That, in a sentence, is “the tragical history of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.”(49-50)

A. D. Nuttall dismisses Coleridge's critique of Hamlet as a man paralyzed by the excess of thought, and so does John Dover Wilson. Nuttall goes on to rather extol the character of Hamlet, saying:

Hamlet is Shakespeare's prime example of a thinker, and thought is making Hamlet ill. It is a mistake to suppose that Hamlet's problem is a weakness of will. If a will is involved with wishing, then we must grant that Hamlet's will to do that must be done is huge. His malady is the disjunction of the will.(202)

Nuttall further adds that Hamlet's reflexive consciousness deters from taking an action in haste, not that he is incapable of action as suggested by Coleridge, Goethe, Eliot and Empson. He rejects Empson's claim that Hamlet is designed as an “insoluble conundrum”, on the grounds that the play has multilayered meanings and possible

interpretations, one can find in it an existentialist Hamlet, a Freudian Hamlet, and most importantly a deeply religious Hamlet, who is a Christian, and his religion forbids revenge, though he has been commanded to do so by the ghost of his father. He rightly says, "This gives us the ethical conflict on which the tragedy thrives"(202)

Hamlet is able to uncover the mystery and is assured of his father's murder in the play within the play, *The Death of Gonzalo*. Once confirmed, he would now look for a suitable opportunity to take revenge, but to guard his safety he has adopted an antic disposition, feigned madness, which gives him the freedom, like that of a Shakespearean clown to say truthful things and to make pointed observations, which he is incapable of doing in his sane self, thereby offering him a safety valve to release his pent-up thoughts. As Bradley puts it, the assumption of insanity "gives some utterance to the load that pressed on his heart and brain". He is emotionally unstable, and he needs time for consideration. John Dover Wilson says:

The tragic burden has done its work, and he is conscious that he no longer retains perfect control over himself. What more natural than that he should conceal his nervous breakdown behind a mask which would enable him to let himself go when the fit is upon him?(92)

His mainstay in all this had been his love for Ophelia. She is introduced as a pure, innocent, dutiful daughter and a sister, who had been receiving 'tenders of Hamlet's affection' to her. She confesses to her father Polonius:

My Lord, he hath importuned me with love
In honorable fashion
And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.(I.3.110-114)

She is instructed both by Laertes and Polonius to be wary, and not "to slander any moment leisure" with Hamlet. She is told to be a "baby", and "obey". There is no interaction between Hamlet and Ophelia with one another till Act III Scene I. Polonius finds Hamlet's disposition odd, and tries to justify it to Claudius and Gertrude that it is for the love of his daughter that he is gloomy. It suits both the King and the queen to believe so, but Ophelia on the direction of her father had been keeping away from the prince. She reports to the father that Hamlet had come to her, "with a look so piteous in purport/As if he had loosed out of hell/To speak of horrors ", he came to her took her by the wrist, held her hard, looked at her as if he had to draw her sketch, and goes on to say:

Long stayed he so,
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being.(II.1.88-93)

She is used as a decoy by her father, which Hamlet becomes aware of. Ophelia is divided in her love for Hamlet and her duty for her father. Her character is as tragic as of Hamlet, maybe more, because her end in madness is unwarranted, she seems to be a “fly” to “wanton Gods”, who gets killed as if for their “sport”. She dies misunderstood, unheard, in deep sorrow for the death of her father, and the loss of her love. She becomes a victim of Hamlet’s loss of faith in women, because his trust had been broken in a woman, her mother, where it should have been most strong. His suspicion is further strengthened, when Ophelia, in her dutifulness to her father returns his letters and gifts to him,” repel his letters, and denied/ His access” to her. She allows her conversation to be heard by her father, the king and the queen. Polonius suspects that Hamlet’s madness is caused by Ophelia’s rejection of his love, but also believes that there is a “method” in it. We see the lovers together for the very first time in Act III Scene I, the famous nunnery scene. Regarding Hamlet’s harshness, towards Ophelia. J. Dover Wilson notes:

The attitude of Hamlet towards Ophelia is without doubt the greatest of all the puzzles in the play, greater even than that of the delay itself ...it is clear in the tirades of the nunnery scene he is thinking almost as much of his mother as of Ophelia...Hamlet treats Ophelia like a prostitute.(101-103)

Ophelia’s only offence is that, like he was following the command of his father’s ghost, she too was obeying the instructions of her father who was alive, and who was close to Claudius.(In the play it is only Hamlet, Horatio who seem to have found the hasty marriage of Gertrude with Claudius objectionable.) Polonius decides to prove the love sick prince’s affection for Ophelia, who returns his letters and gifts to him. Already, Hamlet believed, “Frailty thy name is a woman”, which he felt both the women in his life Gertrude as well as Ophelia. Polonius is a pedantic protective father, an obsequious subordinate, and a garrulous courtier, who is killed by Hamlet, while he was eavesdropping in Gertrude’s chamber, his conversation with his mother. We feel no pity for him, except when Ophelia mourns for him in her madness. However in the nunnery scene, Hamlet is aware of the eavesdropping King and Polonius, and merely uses Ophelia to speak his mind to the silently hidden listeners. Claudius realizes that, “Madness in great ones must not unwatched go”, and decides to send him to England:

Love? His affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little
Was not like madness...
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England(III.1.162-169)

Hamlet is able to convince himself of Claudius’s guilt in the play within the play, thereafter, the play has a few successive dramatic moments following one after the other, the killing of Polonius, the interaction of the mother and the son, where he forbids her from going to bed with Claudius, the plan of the king to do away with Hamlet with the help of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, the madness of Ophelia, her death, the grave diggers scene – where Hamlet announces, “I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers/ Could not with all their quantity of love/ Make up my sum”, the final bout between Laertes and Hamlet in which the queen drinks from the poisoned cup meant for Hamlet, and the injuring of both Hamlet and Laertes with rapiers poisoned by Claudius, and the eventual killing of Claudius the, “ incestuous, murderous,

damned Dane”, and Hamlet’s own death with instructions to Horatio to report his death and the right cause for which he fought, and to tell his story. Horatio bids him adieu:

Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.(V.2.352-353)

CONCLUSION

“Elsinore’s Disease is Anywhere’s, Any Time’s”

Shakespeare’s Hamlet, is evidently a tragedy, which is packed with action, the brooding titular protagonist does not procrastinate, he rather works, as it were, with a strategy, is subsumed in self –doubt. He is in a conflict about the purpose of life, or the ease of death, an intellectual whose consciousness is the governing principle of the play. The rotten state of Denmark is merely a microcosm of the general tragic condition of life. Bloom rightfully sums it up as the tragedy of a personality, which he calls, “canonical sublime”, he further adds, “Elsinore’s disease is anywhere’s, any times.” Indeed the enigma of Hamlet holds across centuries and geographical spaces, it transcends all barriers of time and space and continues to tease the minds of the readers and challenges the stage performers as the ultimate challenge, to be able to rise to the imaginative genius of the playwright. Hamlet indeed has acquired a mythical stature and is unmistakably recognized as one of the most masterful creations of Shakespeare, which explores the multilayered consciousness of its characters and offers keen insight into the workings of the human mind.

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