



Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres (Oxford Shakespeare Topics)

By Lawrence Danson

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The history of genres, or kinds, of drama is one of contradictory traditions and complex cultural assumptions. The divisions established by the original edition of Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies (the First Folio, 1623) give shape to whole curricula; but, as Lawrence Danson reminds us in this lively book, there is nothing inevitable, and much unsatisfying, about that tripartite scheme. Yet students of Shakespeare cannot avoid thinking about questions of genre; often they are the unspoken reason why classrooms full of smart people fail to agree on basic interpretive issues. Danson's guide to the kinds of Shakespearean drama provides an accessible account of genre-theory in Shakespeare's day, an overview of the genres on the Elizabethan stage, and a provocative look at the full range of Shakespeare's comedies, histories, and tragedies.

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Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres (Oxford Shakespeare Topics) By Lawrence Danson Bibliography

- Rank: #2562659 in Books
- Published on: 2000-03-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.20" h x .50" w x 7.80" l, .47 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 168 pages



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Editorial Review

Review

"Witty and accessible in style, broad in range but with no sacrifice of depth, equally attuned to the theatrical practice and the literary theory of Shakespeare's time, apt in its modern comparisons...; in every respect...it can be warmly recommended to both playgoers and students at every level.... Danson has produced the best book on the subject of Shakespeare and dramatic genre since Madeleine Doran's *Endeavors of Art*, a dazzling study published in 1954. Perhaps we are witnessing the beginning of a long overdue return to formal and aesthetic concerns in Shakespearean criticism."--Jonathan Bate, *Times Literary Supplement*

"Presents an interesting, useful, and often entertaining, survey of the ways in which thinking about genres has dominated the interpretation of the plays... easily accessible to the layman."--*Virginia Quarterly Review*

About the Author

Lawrence Danson is Professor of English at Princeton University and the author of *Max Beerbohm and the Act of Writing* and *Wilde's Intentions*.

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