[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Use British English](/wiki/Template:Use_British_English) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Italic title](/wiki/Template:Italic_title) [thumb|The American actor](/wiki/File:Edwin_Booth_Hamlet_1870.jpg) [Edwin Booth](/wiki/Edwin_Booth) as [Hamlet](/wiki/Prince_Hamlet), ca. 1870

***The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark***, often shortened to ***Hamlet*** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en)), is a [tragedy](/wiki/Shakespearean_tragedy) written by [William Shakespeare](/wiki/William_Shakespeare) at an uncertain date between 1599 and 1602. Set in the [Kingdom of Denmark](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Denmark), the play dramatises the revenge [Prince Hamlet](/wiki/Prince_Hamlet) is called to wreak upon his uncle, [Claudius](/wiki/King_Claudius), by the ghost of Hamlet's father, [King Hamlet](/wiki/King_Hamlet). Claudius had murdered his own brother and seized the throne, also marrying his deceased brother's widow. *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's longest play, and is ranked among the most powerful and influential tragedies in English literature, with a story capable of "seemingly endless retelling and adaptation by others".[[1]](#cite_note-1) The play likely was one of Shakespeare's most popular works during his lifetime,<ref name = popular/> and still ranks among his most performed, topping the performance list of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](/wiki/Royal_Shakespeare_Company) and its predecessors in Stratford-upon-Avon since 1879.[[2]](#cite_note-2) It has inspired many other writers – from [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe) and [Charles Dickens](/wiki/Charles_Dickens) to [James Joyce](/wiki/James_Joyce) and [Iris Murdoch](/wiki/Iris_Murdoch) – and has been described as "the world's most filmed story after [*Cinderella*](/wiki/Cinderella)".[[3]](#cite_note-3) The story of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was derived from the legend of [Amleth](/wiki/Hamlet_(legend)), preserved by 13th-century chronicler [Saxo Grammaticus](/wiki/Saxo_Grammaticus) in his [*Gesta Danorum*](/wiki/Gesta_Danorum), as subsequently retold by 16th-century scholar [François de Belleforest](/wiki/François_de_Belleforest). Shakespeare may also have drawn on an earlier (hypothetical) [Elizabethan](/wiki/Elizabethan_era) play known today as the [*Ur-Hamlet*](/wiki/Ur-Hamlet), though some scholars believe he himself wrote the *Ur-Hamlet*, later revising it to create the version of *Hamlet* we now have. He almost certainly wrote his version of the title role for his fellow actor, [Richard Burbage](/wiki/Richard_Burbage), the leading tragedian of Shakespeare's time.[[4]](#cite_note-4) In the 400 years since its inception, the role has been performed by numerous highly acclaimed actors in each successive century.

Three different early versions of the play are extant: the [First Quarto](/wiki/Hamlet_Q1) (Q1, 1603); the Second [Quarto](/wiki/Quarto) (Q2, 1604); and the [First Folio](/wiki/First_Folio) (F1, 1623). Each version includes lines and entire scenes missing from the others. The play's structure and depth of characterisation have inspired much critical scrutiny. One such example is the centuries-old debate about Hamlet's hesitation to kill his uncle, which some see as merely a [plot device](/wiki/Plot_device) to prolong the action, but which others argue is a dramatisation of the complex philosophical and ethical issues that surround cold-blooded murder, calculated revenge, and thwarted desire. More recently, [psychoanalytic critics](/wiki/Psychoanalytic_literary_criticism) have examined Hamlet's [unconscious desires](/wiki/Unconscious_mind), while [feminist critics](/wiki/Feminist_literary_criticism) have re-evaluated and attempted to rehabilitate the often maligned characters of [Ophelia](/wiki/Ophelia_(character)) and [Gertrude](/wiki/Gertrude_(Hamlet)).

## Contents

* 1 Characters[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]
* 2 Plot[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]
* 3 Sources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]
* 4 Date[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]
* 5 Texts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]
* 6 Analysis and criticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]
  + 6.1 Critical history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]
  + 6.2 Dramatic structure[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]
  + 6.3 Language[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]
* 7 Context and interpretation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]
  + 7.1 Religious[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]
  + 7.2 Philosophical[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]
  + 7.3 Restoration and 18th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]
  + 7.4 19th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]
  + 7.5 20th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]
  + 7.6 21st century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]
  + 7.7 Film and TV performances[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]
* 8 Stage pastiches[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]
* 9 See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]
* 10 References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]
  + 10.1 Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]
  + 10.2 Editions of ''Hamlet''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]
  + 10.3 Secondary sources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]
* 11 External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

## Characters[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* [Hamlet](/wiki/Prince_Hamlet) – Son of the late King and nephew of the present king
* [Claudius](/wiki/King_Claudius) – King of Denmark and Hamlet's uncle
* [Gertrude](/wiki/Gertrude_(Hamlet)) – Queen of Denmark and mother to Hamlet
* [Polonius](/wiki/Polonius) – Chief counsellor to the king
* [Ophelia](/wiki/Ophelia) – Daughter to Polonius
* [Horatio](/wiki/Horatio_(Hamlet)) – True friend to Hamlet
* [Laertes](/wiki/Laertes_(Hamlet)) – Son to Polonius
* Voltimand and Cornelius – Courtiers
* [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern](/wiki/Rosencrantz_and_Guildenstern) – Courtiers, friends to Hamlet
* Osric – a Courtier
* Marcellus – an Officer
* Bernardo – an Officer
* Francisco – a Soldier
* Reynaldo – Servant to Polonius
* [Ghost of Hamlet's Father](/wiki/Ghost_(Hamlet))
* [Fortinbras](/wiki/Fortinbras) – Prince of Norway
* [Gravediggers](/wiki/The_Gravediggers) – a [Sexton](/wiki/Sexton_(office))
* Player King, Player Queen, Lucianus etc. – Players
* A Priest
* A Captain in Fortinbras' army
* English Ambassadors
* Messengers, Sailors, Lords, Ladies, Guards, Danes (supporters of Laertes)

[Template:Div col end](/wiki/Template:Div_col_end)

## Plot[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:For](/wiki/Template:For)

**Act I**

The protagonist of *Hamlet* is [Prince Hamlet](/wiki/Prince_Hamlet) of Denmark, son of the recently deceased [King Hamlet](/wiki/King_Hamlet), and nephew of [King Claudius](/wiki/King_Claudius), his father's brother and successor. Claudius hastily married King Hamlet's widow, [Gertrude](/wiki/Gertrude_(Hamlet)), Hamlet's mother, and took the throne for himself. Denmark has a long-standing feud with neighboring Norway, which culminated when King Hamlet slew King Fortinbras of Norway in a battle years ago. Although Denmark defeated Norway, and the Norwegian throne fell to King Fortinbras's infirm brother, Denmark fears that an invasion led by the dead Norwegian king's son, Prince [Fortinbras](/wiki/Fortinbras), is imminent.

On a cold night on the ramparts of [Elsinore](/wiki/Kronborg_Slot), the Danish royal castle, the [sentries](/wiki/Characters_in_Hamlet#Elsinore_sentries) Bernardo and Marcellus and Hamlet's friend [Horatio](/wiki/Horatio_(Hamlet)) encounter a [ghost](/wiki/Ghost_(Hamlet)) that looks like the late King Hamlet. They vow to tell Prince Hamlet what they have witnessed.

As the Court gathers the next day, while King Claudius and Queen Gertrude discuss affairs of state with their elderly adviser [Polonius](/wiki/Polonius), Hamlet looks on glumly. After the Court exits, Hamlet despairs of his father's death and his mother's hasty remarriage. Learning of the Ghost from Horatio, Hamlet resolves to see it himself.

[thumb|Horatio, Hamlet, and the Ghost (Artist:](/wiki/Image:Henry_Fuseli_-_Hamlet_and_the_Ghost.JPG) [Henry Fuseli](/wiki/Henry_Fuseli), 1789)[[5]](#cite_note-5) As Polonius's son Laertes prepares to depart for a visit to France, Polonius gives him contradictory advice that culminates in the ironic maxim "to thine own self be true". Polonius's daughter, [Ophelia](/wiki/Ophelia_(character)), admits her interest in Hamlet, but both Polonius and Laertes warn her against seeking the prince's attention. That night on the rampart, the Ghost appears to Hamlet, telling the prince that he was murdered by Claudius and demanding that Hamlet avenge him. Hamlet agrees and the Ghost vanishes. The prince confides to Horatio and the sentries that from now on he plans to "put an antic disposition on" and forces them to swear to keep his plans for revenge secret. Privately, however, he remains uncertain of the Ghost's reliability.

**Act II**

Soon thereafter, Ophelia rushes to her father, telling him that Hamlet arrived at her door the prior night half-undressed and behaving crazily. Polonius blames love for Hamlet's madness and resolves to inform Claudius and Gertrude. As he enters to do so, the king and queen finish welcoming [Rosencrantz and Guildenstern](/wiki/Rosencrantz_and_Guildenstern), two student acquaintances of Hamlet, to Elsinore. The royal couple has requested that the students investigate the cause of Hamlet's mood and behavior. Additional news requires that Polonius wait to be heard: messengers from Norway inform Claudius that the King of Norway has rebuked Prince Fortinbras for attempting to re-fight his father's battles. The forces that Fortinbras conscripted to march against Denmark will instead be sent against Poland, though they will pass through a portion of Denmark to get there.

Polonius tells Claudius and Gertrude his theory regarding Hamlet's behavior, and speaks to Hamlet in a hall of the castle to try to uncover more information. Hamlet feigns madness but subtly insults Polonius all the while. When Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive, Hamlet greets his friends warmly, but quickly discerns that they are spies. Hamlet becomes bitter, admitting that he is upset at his situation but refusing to give the true reason why, instead commenting on "[what a piece of work](/wiki/What_a_piece_of_work_is_a_man)" humanity is. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern tell Hamlet that they have brought along a troupe of actors that they met while traveling to Elsinore. Hamlet, after welcoming the actors and dismissing his friends-turned-spies, plots to stage a play featuring a death in the style of his father's murder, thereby determining the truth of the Ghost's story, as well as Claudius's guilt or innocence, by studying Claudius's reaction.

**Act III**

Polonius forces Ophelia to return Hamlet's love letters and tokens of affection to the prince while he and Claudius watch from afar to evaluate Hamlet's reaction. Hamlet is walking alone in the hall as the King and Polonius await Ophelia's entrance, musing whether "[to be or not to be](/wiki/To_be,_or_not_to_be)". When Ophelia enters and tries to return Hamlet's things, Hamlet accuses her of immodesty and cries "get thee to a nunnery," though it is unclear whether this, too, is a show of madness or genuine distress. His reaction convinces Claudius that Hamlet is not mad for love. Shortly thereafter, the court assembles to watch the play Hamlet has commissioned. After seeing the [Player King](/wiki/Characters_in_Hamlet#the_Players) murdered by his rival pouring poison in his ear, Claudius abruptly rises and runs from the room: proof positive for Hamlet of his uncle's guilt.

[thumb|Hamlet mistakenly stabs Polonius (Artist: Coke Smyth, 19th century).](/wiki/File:Hamlet_stabs_Polonius.jpg) Gertrude summons Hamlet to her room to demand an explanation. Meanwhile, Claudius talks to himself about the impossibility of repenting, since he still has possession of his ill-gotten goods: his brother's crown and wife. He sinks to his knees. Hamlet, on his way to visit his mother, sneaks up behind him, but does not kill him, reasoning that killing Claudius while he is praying will send him straight to heaven while the Ghost is stuck in purgatory. In the queen's bedchamber, Hamlet and Gertrude fight bitterly. Polonius, spying on the conversation from behind a [tapestry](/wiki/Tapestry), makes a noise. Hamlet, believing it is Claudius, stabs wildly, killing Polonius, but pulls aside the curtain and sees his mistake. In a rage, Hamlet brutally insults his mother for her apparent ignorance of Claudius's villainy, but the Ghost enters and reprimands Hamlet for his inaction and harsh words. Unable to see or hear the Ghost herself, Gertrude takes Hamlet's conversation with it as further evidence of madness. After begging the queen to stop sleeping with Claudius, Hamlet leaves, dragging Polonius's corpse away. Hamlet jokes with Claudius about where he has hidden Polonius's body, and the king, fearing for his life, sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to accompany Hamlet to [England](/wiki/England) with a sealed letter to the English king requesting that Hamlet be executed immediately.

**Act IV**

Demented by grief at Polonius's death, Ophelia wanders Elsinore. Laertes arrives back from France, enraged by his father's death and his sister's madness. Claudius convinces Laertes that Hamlet is solely responsible, but a letter soon arrives indicating that Hamlet has returned to Denmark, foiling Claudius's plan. Claudius switches tactics, proposing a fencing match between Laertes and Hamlet to settle their differences. Laertes will be given a poison-tipped foil, and Claudius will offer Hamlet poisoned wine as a congratulation if that fails. Gertrude interrupts to report that Ophelia has drowned, though it is unclear whether it was suicide or an accident exacerbated by her madness.

[thumb|left|The "gravedigger scene"](/wiki/Image:Eugène_Ferdinand_Victor_Delacroix_018.jpg)[[6]](#cite_note-6) (Artist: [Eugène Delacroix](/wiki/Eugène_Delacroix), 1839) **Act V**

Horatio has received a letter from Hamlet, explaining that the prince escaped by negotiating with pirates who attempted to attack his England-bound ship, and the friends reunite offstage. Two [gravediggers](/wiki/Characters_in_Hamlet#Ophelia's_funeral) discuss Ophelia's apparent suicide while digging her grave. Hamlet arrives with Horatio and banters with one of the gravediggers, who unearths the skull of a [jester](/wiki/Jester) from Hamlet's childhood, [Yorick](/wiki/Yorick_(Hamlet)). Hamlet picks up the skull, saying "alas, poor Yorick" as he contemplates mortality. Ophelia's [funeral procession](/wiki/Funeral_procession) approaches, led by Laertes. Hamlet and Horatio initially hide, but when Hamlet realizes that Ophelia is the one being buried, he reveals himself, proclaiming his love for her. Laertes and Hamlet fight by Ophelia's graveside, but the brawl is broken up.

Back at Elsinore, Hamlet explains to Horatio that he had discovered Claudius's letter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's belongings and replaced it with a forged copy indicating that his former friends should be killed instead. A foppish courtier, [Osric](/wiki/Characters_in_Hamlet#Osric), interrupts the conversation to deliver the fencing challenge to Hamlet. Hamlet, despite Horatio's advice, accepts it. Hamlet does well at first, leading the match by two hits to none, and Gertrude raises a toast to him using the poisoned glass of wine Claudius had set aside for Hamlet. Claudius tries to stop her, but is too late: she drinks, and Laertes realizes the plot will be revealed. Laertes slashes Hamlet with his poisoned blade. In the ensuing scuffle, they switch weapons and Hamlet wounds Laertes with his own poisoned sword. Gertrude collapses and, claiming she has been poisoned, dies. In his dying moments, Laertes reconciles with Hamlet and reveals Claudius's plan. Hamlet rushes at Claudius and kills him. As the poison takes effect, Hamlet, hearing that Fortinbras is marching through the area, names the Norwegian prince as his successor. Horatio, distraught at the thought of being the last survivor, says he will commit suicide by drinking the dregs of Gertrude's poisoned wine, but Hamlet begs him to live on and tell his story. Hamlet dies, proclaiming "the rest is silence". Fortinbras, who was ostensibly marching towards Poland with his army, arrives at the palace, along with an English ambassador bringing news of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's deaths. Horatio promises to recount the full story of what happened, and Fortinbras, seeing the entire Danish royal family dead, takes the crown for himself.

## Sources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|upright|A facsimile of](/wiki/File:Saxo_original_001.jpg) [*Gesta Danorum*](/wiki/Gesta_Danorum) by [Saxo Grammaticus](/wiki/Saxo_Grammaticus), which contains the legend of Amleth

*Hamlet*-like legends are so widely found (for example in Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Byzantium, and Arabia) that the core "hero-as-fool" theme is possibly [Indo-European](/wiki/Proto-Indo-Europeans) in origin.[[7]](#cite_note-7) Several ancient written precursors to *Hamlet* can be identified. The first is the anonymous Scandinavian [*Saga of Hrolf Kraki*](/wiki/Hrólfs_saga_kraka). In this, the murdered king has two sons—[Hroar](/wiki/Hroðgar) and [Helgi](/wiki/Halga)—who spend most of the story in disguise, under false names, rather than feigning madness, in a sequence of events that differs from Shakespeare's.[[8]](#cite_note-8) The second is the Roman legend of [Brutus](/wiki/Lucius_Junius_Brutus#Biography), recorded in two separate Latin works. Its hero, Lucius ("shining, light"), changes his name and [persona](/wiki/Persona) to Brutus ("dull, stupid"), playing the role of a fool to avoid the fate of his father and brothers, and eventually slaying his family's killer, King Tarquinius. A 17th-century Nordic scholar, Torfaeus, compared the Icelandic hero Amlodi and the Spanish hero Prince Ambales (from the *Ambales Saga*) to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Similarities include the prince's feigned madness, his accidental killing of the king's counsellor in his mother's bedroom, and the eventual slaying of his uncle.[[9]](#cite_note-9) Many of the earlier legendary elements are interwoven in the 13th-century *Vita Amlethi* ("The Life of Amleth")[[10]](#cite_note-10) by [Saxo Grammaticus](/wiki/Saxo_Grammaticus), part of [*Gesta Danorum*](/wiki/Gesta_Danorum).[[11]](#cite_note-11) Written in Latin, it reflects classical Roman concepts of virtue and heroism, and was widely available in Shakespeare's day.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Significant parallels include the prince feigning madness, his mother's hasty marriage to the usurper, the prince killing a hidden spy, and the prince substituting the execution of two retainers for his own. A reasonably faithful version of Saxo's story was translated into French in 1570 by [François de Belleforest](/wiki/François_de_Belleforest), in his *Histoires tragiques*.[[13]](#cite_note-13) Belleforest embellished Saxo's text substantially, almost doubling its length, and introduced the hero's [melancholy](/wiki/Melancholia).[[14]](#cite_note-14) [thumb|upright|left|Title page of](/wiki/File:The_Spanish_Tragedy.jpg) [*The Spanish Tragedy*](/wiki/The_Spanish_Tragedy) by Thomas Kyd

According to one theory, Shakespeare's main source is an earlier play—now lost—known today as the [*Ur-Hamlet*](/wiki/Ur-Hamlet). Possibly written by [Thomas Kyd](/wiki/Thomas_Kyd) or even William Shakespeare, the *Ur-Hamlet* would have existed by 1589, and would have incorporated a ghost.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Shakespeare's company, [the Chamberlain's Men](/wiki/Lord_Chamberlain's_Men), may have purchased that play and performed a version for some time, which Shakespeare reworked.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Since no copy of the *Ur-Hamlet* has survived, however, it is impossible to compare its language and style with the known works of any of its putative authors. Consequently, there is no direct evidence that Kyd wrote it, nor any evidence that the play was not an early version of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare himself. This latter idea—placing *Hamlet* far earlier than the generally accepted date, with a much longer period of development—has attracted some support.[[17]](#cite_note-17) The upshot is that scholars cannot assert with any confidence how much material Shakespeare took from the *Ur-Hamlet* (if it even existed), how much from Belleforest or Saxo, and how much from other contemporary sources (such as Kyd's [*The Spanish Tragedy*](/wiki/The_Spanish_Tragedy)). No clear evidence exists that Shakespeare made any direct references to Saxo's version. However, elements of Belleforest's version which are not in Saxo's story do appear in Shakespeare's play. Whether Shakespeare took these from Belleforest directly or through the *Ur-Hamlet* remains unclear.[[18]](#cite_note-18) Most scholars reject the idea that *Hamlet* is in any way connected with Shakespeare's only son, [Hamnet Shakespeare](/wiki/Hamnet_Shakespeare), who died in 1596 at age eleven. Conventional wisdom holds that *Hamlet* is too obviously connected to legend, and the name Hamnet was quite popular at the time.[[19]](#cite_note-19) However, [Stephen Greenblatt](/wiki/Stephen_Greenblatt) has argued that the [coincidence](/wiki/Coincidence) of the names and Shakespeare's grief for the loss of his son may lie at the heart of the tragedy. He notes that the name of Hamnet Sadler, the Stratford neighbour after whom Hamnet was named, was often written as Hamlet Sadler and that, in the loose orthography of the time, the names were virtually interchangeable.[[20]](#cite_note-20) Sadler's first name is spelled "Hamlett" in Shakespeare's will.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Scholars have often speculated that *Hamlet*[Template:'s](/wiki/Template:') [Polonius](/wiki/Polonius) might have been inspired by [William Cecil](/wiki/William_Cecil,_1st_Baron_Burghley) (Lord Burghley)—Lord High Treasurer and chief counsellor to Queen [Elizabeth I](/wiki/Elizabeth_I_of_England). [E. K. Chambers](/wiki/E._K._Chambers) suggested Polonius's advice to Laertes may have echoed Burghley's to his son [Robert Cecil](/wiki/Robert_Cecil,_1st_Earl_of_Salisbury). [John Dover Wilson](/wiki/John_Dover_Wilson) thought it almost certain that the figure of Polonius caricatured Burghley. [A. L. Rowse](/wiki/A._L._Rowse) speculated that Polonius's tedious [verbosity](/wiki/Verbosity) might have resembled Burghley's.[[22]](#cite_note-22) Lilian Winstanley thought the name Corambis (in the First Quarto) did suggest Cecil and Burghley.[[23]](#cite_note-23) [Harold Jenkins](/wiki/Harold_Jenkins_(Shakespeare_scholar)) considers the idea that Polonius might be a caricature of Burghley is a conjecture, and may be based on the similar role they each played at court, and also on the fact that Burghley addressed his *Ten Precepts* to his son, as in the play Polonius offers “precepts” to Laertes, his son.[[24]](#cite_note-24) Jenkins suggests that any personal satire may be found in the name “Polonius”, which might point to a Polish or Polonian connection.[[25]](#cite_note-25) G. R. Hibbard hypothesised that differences in names (Corambis/Polonius:Montano/Raynoldo) between the First Quarto and other editions might reflect a desire not to offend scholars at Oxford University.[[26]](#cite_note-26)

## Date[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[right|thumb|](/wiki/File:John_Barrymore_Hamlet_1922.jpg)[John Barrymore](/wiki/John_Barrymore) as Hamlet (1922) "Any dating of *Hamlet* must be tentative", cautions the *New Cambridge* editor, Phillip Edwards.[[27]](#cite_note-27) The [earliest date estimate](/wiki/Terminus_post_quem) relies on *Hamlet*[Template:'s](/wiki/Template:') frequent allusions to Shakespeare's [*Julius Caesar*](/wiki/Julius_Caesar_(play)), itself dated to mid-1599.[[28]](#cite_note-28) The [latest date estimate](/wiki/Terminus_post_quem) is based on an entry, of 26 July 1602, in the [Register](/wiki/Stationers'_Register) of the [Stationers' Company](/wiki/Worshipful_Company_of_Stationers_and_Newspaper_Makers), indicating that *Hamlet* was "latelie Acted by the [Lo: Chamberleyne his servantes](/wiki/Lord_Chamberlain's_Men)".

In 1598, [Francis Meres](/wiki/Francis_Meres) published his *Palladis Tamia*, a survey of English literature from Chaucer to its present day, within which twelve of Shakespeare's plays are named. *Hamlet* is not among them, suggesting that it had not yet been written. As *Hamlet* was very popular, Bernard Lott, the series editor of *New Swan*, believes it "unlikely that he [Meres] would have overlooked ... so significant a piece".[[29]](#cite_note-29) The phrase "little eyases"[[30]](#cite_note-30) in the [First Folio](/wiki/First_Folio) (F1) may allude to the [Children of the Chapel](/wiki/Children_of_the_Chapel), whose popularity in London forced the Globe company into provincial touring. This became known as the [War of the Theatres](/wiki/War_of_the_Theatres), and supports a 1601 dating.[[29]](#cite_note-29) [Katherine Duncan-Jones](/wiki/Katherine_Duncan-Jones) accepts a 1600–1 attribution for the date *Hamlet* was written, but notes that the [Lord Chamberlain's Men](/wiki/Lord_Chamberlain's_Men), playing *Hamlet* in the 3000-capacity [Globe](/wiki/Globe_Theatre), were unlikely to be put to any disadvantage by an audience of "barely one hundred" for the Children of the Chapel's equivalent play, [*Antonio's Revenge*](/wiki/Antonio's_Revenge); she believes that Shakespeare, confident in the superiority of his own work, was making a playful and charitable allusion to his friend [John Marston's](/wiki/John_Marston_(poet)) very similar piece.[[31]](#cite_note-31) A contemporary of Shakespeare's, [Gabriel Harvey](/wiki/Gabriel_Harvey), wrote a marginal note in his copy of the 1598 edition of [Chaucer's](/wiki/Geoffrey_Chaucer) works, which some scholars use as dating evidence. Harvey's note says that "the wiser sort" enjoy *Hamlet*, and implies that [the Earl of Essex](/wiki/Robert_Devereux,_2nd_Earl_of_Essex)—executed in February 1601 for rebellion—was still alive. Other scholars consider this inconclusive. Edwards, for example, concludes that the "sense of time is so confused in Harvey's note that it is really of little use in trying to date *Hamlet*". This is because the same note also refers to [Spenser](/wiki/Edmund_Spenser) and [Watson](/wiki/Thomas_Watson_(poet)) as if they were still alive ("our flourishing [metricians](/wiki/Meter_(poetry))"), but also mentions "[Owen's](/wiki/John_Owen_(epigrammatist)) new epigrams", published in 1607.[[32]](#cite_note-32)

## Texts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|upright|left|](/wiki/File:Hamlet.jpg)[Title page](/wiki/Title_page) of the 1605 printing (Q2) of *Hamlet*

Three early editions of the text have survived, making attempts to establish a single "authentic" text problematic.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Each is different from the others:[[34]](#cite_note-34)

* [First Quarto](/wiki/Hamlet_Q1) (**Q1**): In 1603 the booksellers [Nicholas Ling](/wiki/Nicholas_Ling) and John Trundell published, and [Valentine Simmes](/wiki/Valentine_Simmes) printed, the so-called "[bad](/wiki/Bad_quarto)" first quarto. Q1 contains just over half of the text of the later second quarto.
* Second Quarto (**Q2**): In 1604 Nicholas Ling published, and James Roberts printed, the second quarto. Some copies are dated 1605, which may indicate a second impression; consequently, Q2 is often dated "1604/5". Q2 is the longest early edition, although it omits about 77 lines found in F1[[35]](#cite_note-35) (most likely to avoid offending [James I's](/wiki/James_I_of_England) queen, [Anne of Denmark](/wiki/Anne_of_Denmark)).[[36]](#cite_note-36)\*[First Folio](/wiki/First_Folio) (**F1**): In 1623 [Edward Blount](/wiki/Edward_Blount) and [William and Isaac Jaggard](/wiki/William_Jaggard) published the First Folio, the first edition of Shakespeare's *Complete Works*.[[37]](#cite_note-37)

Other [folios and quartos](/wiki/Folios_and_Quartos_(Shakespeare)) were subsequently published—including [John Smethwick's](/wiki/John_Smethwick) Q3, Q4, and Q5 (1611–37)—but these are regarded as derivatives of the first three editions.[[37]](#cite_note-37) [thumb|The first page of the](/wiki/File:First-page-first-folio-Hamlet.jpg) [First Folio](/wiki/First_Folio) printing of *Hamlet*, 1623 Early [editors of Shakespeare's works](/wiki/Shakespeare's_editors), beginning with [Nicholas Rowe](/wiki/Nicholas_Rowe_(dramatist)) (1709) and [Lewis Theobald](/wiki/Lewis_Theobald) (1733), combined material from the two earliest sources of *Hamlet* available at the time, Q2 and F1. Each text contains material that the other lacks, with many minor differences in wording: scarcely 200 lines are identical in the two. Editors have combined them in an effort to create one "inclusive" text that reflects an imagined "ideal" of Shakespeare's original. Theobald's version became standard for a long time,[[38]](#cite_note-38) and his "full text" approach continues to influence editorial practice to the present day. Some contemporary scholarship, however, discounts this approach, instead considering "an authentic *Hamlet* an unrealisable ideal. ... there are *texts* of this play but no *text*".[[39]](#cite_note-39) The 2006 publication by Arden Shakespeare of different *Hamlet* texts in different volumes is perhaps evidence of this shifting focus and emphasis.[[40]](#cite_note-40) Other editors have continued to argue the need for well-edited editions taking material from all versions of the play. Colin Burrow has argued that "most of us should read a text that is made up by conflating all three versions...it's about as likely that Shakespeare wrote: "To be or not to be, ay, there's the point" [in Q1], as that he wrote the works of [Francis Bacon](/wiki/Francis_Bacon). I suspect most people just won't want to read a three-text play...[multi-text editions are] a version of the play that is out of touch with the needs of a wider public."[[41]](#cite_note-41) Traditionally, editors of Shakespeare's plays have divided them into five [acts](/wiki/Act_(theater)). None of the early texts of *Hamlet*, however, were arranged this way, and the play's division into acts and scenes derives from a 1676 quarto. Modern editors generally follow this traditional division, but consider it unsatisfactory; for example, after Hamlet drags Polonius's body out of Gertrude's bedchamber, there is an act-break[[42]](#cite_note-42) after which the action appears to continue uninterrupted.[[43]](#cite_note-43) [thumb|Comparison of the 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy in the first three editions of Hamlet, showing the varying quality of the text in the](/wiki/File:Bad_quarto,_good_quarto,_first_folio.png) [Bad Quarto](/wiki/Bad_Quarto), the Good Quarto and the [First Folio](/wiki/First_Folio)

The discovery in 1823 of Q1—whose existence had been quite unsuspected—caused considerable interest and excitement, raising many questions of editorial practice and interpretation. Scholars immediately identified apparent deficiencies in Q1, which was instrumental in the development of the concept of a Shakespearean "[bad quarto](/wiki/Bad_quarto)".[[44]](#cite_note-44) Yet Q1 has value: it contains stage directions (such as Ophelia entering with a lute and her hair down) that reveal actual stage practices in a way that Q2 and F1 do not; it contains an entire scene (usually labelled 4.6)[[45]](#cite_note-45) that does not appear in either Q2 or F1; and it is useful for comparison with the later editions. The major deficiency of Q1 is in the language: particularly noticeable in the opening lines of the famous "[To be, or not to be](/wiki/To_be,_or_not_to_be)" soliloquy: "To be, or not to be, aye there's the point. / To die, to sleep, is that all? Aye all: / No, to sleep, to dream, aye marry there it goes." However, the scene order is more coherent, without the problems of Q2 and F1 of Hamlet seeming to resolve something in one scene and enter the next drowning in indecision. New Cambridge editor Kathleen Irace has noted that "Q1's more linear plot design is certainly easier...to follow...but the simplicity of the Q1 plot arrangement eliminates the alternating plot elements that correspond to Hamlet's shifts in mood."[[46]](#cite_note-46) Q1 is considerably shorter than Q2 or F1 and may be a [memorial reconstruction](/wiki/Memorial_reconstruction) of the play as Shakespeare's company performed it, by an actor who played a minor role (most likely Marcellus).[[47]](#cite_note-47) Scholars disagree whether the reconstruction was pirated or authorised. It is suggested by Irace that Q1 is an abridged version intended especially for travelling productions, thus the question of length may be considered as separate from issues of poor textual quality.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Editing Q1 thus poses problems in whether or not to "correct" differences from Q2 and F. Irace, in her introduction to Q1, wrote that "I have avoided as many other alterations as possible, because the differences...are especially intriguing...I have recorded a selection of Q2/F readings in the collation." The idea that Q1 is not riddled with error but is instead eminently fit for the stage has led to at least 28 different Q1 productions since 1881.[[49]](#cite_note-49) Other productions have used the probably superior Q2 and Folio texts, but used Q1's running order, in particular moving the *to be or not to be* soliloquy earlier.[[50]](#cite_note-50) Developing this, some editors such as [Jonathan Bate](/wiki/Jonathan_Bate) have argued that Q2 may represent "a 'reading' text as opposed to a 'performance' one" of *Hamlet*, analogous to how modern films released on disc may include deleted scenes: an edition containing all of Shakespeare's material for the play for the pleasure of readers, so not representing the play as it would have been staged.[[51]](#cite_note-51)[[52]](#cite_note-52)

## Analysis and criticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

### Critical history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

From the early 17th century, the play was famous for its ghost and vivid dramatisation of [melancholy](/wiki/Melancholia) and [insanity](/wiki/Insanity), leading to a procession of mad courtiers and ladies in [Jacobean](/wiki/Jacobean_era) and [Caroline](/wiki/Caroline_era) drama.[[53]](#cite_note-53) Though it remained popular with mass audiences, late 17th-century [Restoration](/wiki/English_Restoration) critics saw *Hamlet* as primitive and disapproved of its lack of [unity](/wiki/Classical_unities) and [decorum](/wiki/Decorum).[[54]](#cite_note-54) This view changed drastically in the 18th century, when critics regarded Hamlet as a hero—a pure, brilliant young man thrust into unfortunate circumstances.[[55]](#cite_note-55) By the mid-18th century, however, the advent of [Gothic literature](/wiki/Gothic_fiction) brought [psychological](/wiki/Psychology) and [mystical](/wiki/Mysticism) readings, returning madness and the Ghost to the forefront.[[56]](#cite_note-56) Not until the late 18th century did critics and performers begin to view Hamlet as confusing and inconsistent. Before then, he was either mad, or not; either a hero, or not; with no in-betweens.[[57]](#cite_note-57) These developments represented a fundamental change in literary criticism, which came to focus more on character and less on plot.[[58]](#cite_note-58) By the 19th century, [Romantic](/wiki/Romanticism) critics valued *Hamlet* for its internal, individual conflict reflecting the strong contemporary emphasis on internal struggles and inner character in general.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Then too, critics started to focus on Hamlet's delay as a character trait, rather than a plot device.[[58]](#cite_note-58) This focus on character and internal struggle continued into the 20th century, when criticism branched in several directions, discussed in [context and interpretation](/wiki/#Context_and_interpretation) below.

### Dramatic structure[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

*Hamlet* departed from contemporary dramatic convention in several ways. For example, in Shakespeare's day, plays were usually expected to follow the advice of [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle) in his [*Poetics*](/wiki/Poetics_(Aristotle)): that a drama should focus on action, not character. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare reverses this so that it is through the [soliloquies](/wiki/Monologue), not the action, that the audience learns Hamlet's motives and thoughts. The play is full of seeming discontinuities and irregularities of action, except in the "bad" quarto. At one point, as in the Gravedigger scene,[[6]](#cite_note-6) Hamlet seems resolved to kill Claudius: in the next scene, however, when Claudius appears, he is suddenly tame. Scholars still debate whether these twists are mistakes or intentional additions to add to the play's themes of confusion and duality.[[60]](#cite_note-60) Finally, in a period when most plays ran for two hours or so, the full text of *Hamlet*—Shakespeare's longest play, with 4,042 lines, totalling 29,551 words—often takes over four hours to deliver.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Even today the play is rarely performed in its entirety, and has only once been dramatised on film completely, in [Kenneth Branagh's](/wiki/Kenneth_Branagh) 1996 version. *Hamlet* also contains a favourite Shakespearean device, a [play within the play](/wiki/Play_within_a_play), a literary device or conceit in which one story is told during the action of another story.[[62]](#cite_note-62)

### Language[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|Hamlet's statement that his dark clothes are the outer sign of his inner grief demonstrates strong rhetorical skill. (Artist:](/wiki/File:Delacroix-1834-I2-QueenConsolesHamlet.JPG) [Eugène Delacroix](/wiki/Eugène_Delacroix) 1834).

Compared with language in a modern newspaper, magazine or popular novel, Shakespeare's language can strike contemporary readers as complex, elaborate and at times difficult to understand. Remarkably, it still works well enough in the theatre: audiences at the reconstruction of 'Shakespeare's Globe' in London, many of whom have never been to the theatre before, let alone to a play by Shakespeare, seem to have little difficulty grasping the play's action.[[63]](#cite_note-63) Much of *Hamlet****s language is courtly: elaborate, witty discourse, as recommended by*** [***Baldassare Castiglione's***](/wiki/Baldassare_Castiglione) ***1528 etiquette guide, The Courtier. This work specifically advises royal retainers to amuse their masters with inventive language. Osric and Polonius, especially, seem to respect this injunction. Claudius's speech is rich with rhetorical figures—as is Hamlet's and, at times, Ophelia's—while the language of Horatio, the guards, and the gravediggers is simpler. Claudius's high status is reinforced by using the*** [***royal first person plural***](/wiki/Majestic_plural) ***("we" or "us"), and*** [***anaphora***](/wiki/Anaphora_(rhetoric)) ***mixed with*** [***metaphor***](/wiki/Metaphor) ***to resonate with Greek political speeches.***[***[64]***](#cite_note-64) Hamlet is the most skilled of all at rhetoric. He uses highly developed metaphors, [stichomythia](/wiki/Stichomythia), and in nine memorable words deploys both [anaphora](/wiki/Anaphora_(rhetoric)) and [asyndeton](/wiki/Asyndeton): "to die: to sleep— / To sleep, perchance to dream".[[65]](#cite_note-65) In contrast, when occasion demands, he is precise and straightforward, as when he explains his inward emotion to his mother: "But I have that within which passes show, / These but the trappings and the suits of woe".[[66]](#cite_note-66) At times, he relies heavily on [puns](/wiki/Pun) to express his true thoughts while simultaneously concealing them.[[67]](#cite_note-67) His "nunnery" remarks[[68]](#cite_note-68) to Ophelia are an example of a cruel [double meaning](/wiki/Double_entendre) as *nunnery* was [Elizabethan](/wiki/Elizabethan_era) slang for *brothel*.<ref name=Nunnery>This is widely interpreted as having a double meaning, since 'nunnery' was slang for a brothel. Pauline Kiernan, *Filthy Shakespeare*, Quercus, 2006, p. 34. This interpretation has been challenged by Jenkins (1982, 493–495; also H. D. F. Kitto) on the grounds of insufficient and inconclusive evidence of a precedent for this meaning; Jenkins states that the literal meaning is better suited to the dramatic context.</ref>[[69]](#cite_note-69) His very first words in the play are a pun; when Claudius addresses him as "my cousin Hamlet, and my son", Hamlet says as an aside: "A little more than kin, and less than kind."[[70]](#cite_note-70) An [aside](/wiki/Aside) is a dramatic device in which a character speaks to the audience. By convention the audience realises that the character's speech is unheard by the other characters on stage. It may be addressed to the audience expressly (in character or out) or represent an unspoken thought.

An unusual rhetorical device, [hendiadys](/wiki/Hendiadys), appears in several places in the play. Examples are found in Ophelia's speech at the end of the nunnery scene: "Th**expectancy and rose *of the fair state"; "And I, of ladies most* deject and wretched*".***[***[71]***](#cite_note-71) ***Many scholars have found it odd that Shakespeare would, seemingly arbitrarily, use this rhetorical form throughout the play. One explanation may be that* Hamlet *was written later in Shakespeare's life, when he was adept at matching rhetorical devices to characters and the plot. Linguist George T. Wright suggests that hendiadys had been used deliberately to heighten the play's sense of duality and dislocation.***[***[72]***](#cite_note-72) ***Pauline Kiernan argues that Shakespeare changed English drama forever in* Hamlet *because he "showed how a character's language can often be saying several things at once, and contradictory meanings at that, to reflect fragmented thoughts and disturbed feelings". She gives the example of Hamlet's advice to Ophelia, "get thee to a nunnery", which is simultaneously a reference to a place of chastity and a slang term for a brothel, reflecting Hamlet's confused feelings about female sexuality.***[***[73]***](#cite_note-73)

## Context and interpretation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

### Religious[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:John_Everett_Millais_-_Ophelia_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)[*Ophelia*](/wiki/Ophelia_(painting)) depicts Lady Ophelia's mysterious death by drowning. In the play, the gravediggers discuss whether Ophelia's death was a suicide and whether or not she merits a Christian burial. (Artist: [John Everett Millais](/wiki/John_Everett_Millais) 1852).

Written at a time of religious upheaval, and in the wake of the [English Reformation](/wiki/English_Reformation), the play is alternately [Catholic](/wiki/Catholicism) (or piously medieval) and [Protestant](/wiki/Protestantism) (or consciously modern). The Ghost describes himself as being in [purgatory](/wiki/Purgatory), and as dying without [last rites](/wiki/Last_rites). This and Ophelia's burial ceremony, which is characteristically Catholic, make up most of the play's Catholic connections. Some scholars have observed that [revenge tragedies](/wiki/Revenge_play) come from traditionally Catholic countries, such as Spain and Italy; and they present a contradiction, since according to Catholic doctrine the strongest duty is to God and family. Hamlet's conundrum, then, is whether to avenge his father and kill Claudius, or to leave the vengeance to God, as his religion requires.[[74]](#cite_note-74) Much of the play's Protestantism derives from its location in Denmark—both then and now a predominantly Protestant country, though it is unclear whether the fictional Denmark of the play is intended to mirror this fact. The play does mention [Wittenberg](/wiki/Wittenberg), where Hamlet, Horatio, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern attend university, and where [Martin Luther](/wiki/Martin_Luther) first proposed his [95 theses](/wiki/The_Ninety-Five_Theses) in 1517, effectively ushering in the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation).[[75]](#cite_note-75) In Shakespeare's day Denmark, like the majority of Scandinavia, was Lutheran.[[76]](#cite_note-76)

### Philosophical[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|upright|Philosophical ideas in *Hamlet* are similar to those of the French writer](/wiki/File:Michel-eyquem-de-montaigne_1.jpg) [Michel de Montaigne](/wiki/Michel_de_Montaigne), a contemporary of Shakespeare's. (Artist: [Thomas de Leu](/wiki/Thomas_de_Leu), fl. 1560–1612).

Hamlet is often perceived as a philosophical character, expounding ideas that are now described as [relativist](/wiki/Relativism), [existentialist](/wiki/Existentialism), and [sceptical](/wiki/Scepticism). For example, he expresses a subjectivistic idea when he says to Rosencrantz: "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so".[[77]](#cite_note-77) The idea that nothing is real except in the mind of the individual finds its roots in the Greek [Sophists](/wiki/Sophism), who argued that since nothing can be perceived except through the senses—and since all individuals sense, and therefore perceive things differently—there is no absolute truth, but rather only relative truth.[[78]](#cite_note-78) The clearest alleged instance of existentialism is in the "[to be, or not to be](/wiki/To_be,_or_not_to_be)"[[79]](#cite_note-79) speech, where Hamlet is thought by some to use "being" to allude to life and action, and "not being" to death and inaction.

*Hamlet* reflects the contemporary [scepticism](/wiki/Philosophical_scepticism) promoted by the French [Renaissance humanist](/wiki/Renaissance_humanism) [Michel de Montaigne](/wiki/Michel_de_Montaigne).<ref name= m49>MacCary (1998, 49).</ref> Prior to Montaigne's time, humanists such as [Pico della Mirandola](/wiki/Pico_della_Mirandola) had argued that man was God's greatest creation, made in God's image and able to choose his own nature, but this view was subsequently challenged in Montaigne's [*Essais*](/wiki/Essays_(Montaigne)) of 1580. Hamlet's "[What a piece of work is a man](/wiki/What_a_piece_of_work_is_a_man)" could supposedly echo many of Montaigne's ideas, and many scholars have disagreed on whether Shakespeare drew directly from Montaigne or whether both men were simply reacting similarly to the spirit of the times.[[80]](#cite_note-80) Nevertheless, if the sentence is analysed in the textual context[[81]](#cite_note-81) it is easy to understand how Hamlet was being sarcastic: "Man delights not me", he concludes. Amaral[[82]](#cite_note-82) Shakespeare provides no clear indication of when his play is set; however, as Elizabethan actors performed at the [Globe](/wiki/Globe_Theatre) in contemporary dress on minimal sets, this would not have affected the staging.[[114]](#cite_note-114) Firm evidence for specific early performances of the play is scant. What is known is that the crew of the ship [*Red Dragon*](/wiki/Red_Dragon_(1595)), anchored off [Sierra Leone](/wiki/Sierra_Leone), performed *Hamlet* in September 1607;[[115]](#cite_note-115) that the play toured in Germany within five years of Shakespeare's death;[[116]](#cite_note-116) and that it was performed before [James I](/wiki/James_I_of_England) in 1619 and [Charles I](/wiki/Charles_I_of_England) in 1637.[[117]](#cite_note-117) Oxford editor George Hibbard argues that, since the contemporary literature contains many allusions and references to *Hamlet* (only [Falstaff](/wiki/Falstaff) is mentioned more, from Shakespeare), the play was surely performed with a frequency that the historical record misses.[[118]](#cite_note-118) All theatres were closed down by the [Puritan](/wiki/Puritan) government during the [Interregnum](/wiki/English_Interregnum).[[119]](#cite_note-119) Even during this time, however, playlets known as [*drolls*](/wiki/Droll) were often performed illegally, including one called *The Grave-Makers* based on Act 5, Scene 1 of *Hamlet*.[[120]](#cite_note-120)

### Restoration and 18th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[thumb|Title page and frontispiece for *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: A Tragedy. As it is now acted at the Theatres-Royal in Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden. London, 1776*](/wiki/File:Hamlet,_Drury_Lane_Edition.jpg) The play was revived early in the [Restoration](/wiki/English_Restoration). When the existing stock of pre-[civil war](/wiki/English_Civil_War) plays was divided between the two newly created [patent theatre companies](/wiki/Patent_theatre), *Hamlet* was the only Shakespearean favourite that [Sir William Davenant's](/wiki/William_Davenant) [Duke's Company](/wiki/Duke's_Company) secured.[[121]](#cite_note-121) It became the first of Shakespeare's plays to be presented with movable [flats](/wiki/Flats_(theatre)) painted with generic scenery behind the [proscenium arch](/wiki/Proscenium) of [Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre](/wiki/Lincoln's_Inn_Fields).[[122]](#cite_note-122) This new stage convention highlighted the frequency with which Shakespeare shifts dramatic location, encouraging the recurrent criticisms of his violation of the [neoclassical](/wiki/Neoclassicism) principle of maintaining a [unity of place](/wiki/Classical_unities).[[123]](#cite_note-123) Davenant cast [Thomas Betterton](/wiki/Thomas_Betterton) in the eponymous role, and he continued to play the Dane until he was 74.[[124]](#cite_note-124) [David Garrick](/wiki/David_Garrick) at [Drury Lane](/wiki/Theatre_Royal,_Drury_Lane) produced a version that adapted Shakespeare heavily; he declared: "I had sworn I would not leave the stage till I had rescued that noble play from all the rubbish of the fifth act. I have brought it forth without the grave-digger's trick, Osrick, & the fencing match".[[125]](#cite_note-125) The first actor known to have played Hamlet in North America is Lewis Hallam. Jr., in the [American Company's](/wiki/American_Company) production in Philadelphia in 1759.[[126]](#cite_note-126) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Garrick_as_Hamlet.jpg)[David Garrick's](/wiki/David_Garrick) iconic hand gesture expresses Hamlet's shock at the first sight of the Ghost. (Artist: unknown).

[John Philip Kemble](/wiki/John_Philip_Kemble) made his Drury Lane debut as Hamlet in 1783.[[127]](#cite_note-127) His performance was said to be 20 minutes longer than anyone else's, and his lengthy pauses provoked the suggestion that "music should be played between the words".[[128]](#cite_note-128) [Sarah Siddons](/wiki/Sarah_Siddons) was the first actress known to play Hamlet; many women have since played him as a [breeches role](/wiki/Breeches_role), to great acclaim.[[129]](#cite_note-129) In 1748, [Alexander Sumarokov](/wiki/Alexander_Sumarokov) wrote a Russian adaptation that focused on Prince Hamlet as the embodiment of an opposition to Claudius's tyranny—a treatment that would recur in Eastern European versions into the 20th century.[[130]](#cite_note-130) In the years following America's independence, [Thomas Apthorpe Cooper](/wiki/Thomas_Apthorpe_Cooper), the young nation's leading tragedian, performed *Hamlet* among other plays at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, and at the [Park Theatre](/wiki/Park_Theatre_(Manhattan)) in New York. Although chided for "acknowledging acquaintances in the audience" and "inadequate memorisation of his lines", he became a national celebrity.[[131]](#cite_note-131)

### 19th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[A poster, ca. 1884, for an American production of *Hamlet* (starring Thomas W. Keene), showing several of the key scenes|thumb|upright](/wiki/File:Thos._W._Keene_in_Hamlet.png)

From around 1810 to 1840, the best-known Shakespearean performances in the United States were tours by leading London actors—including [George Frederick Cooke](/wiki/George_Frederick_Cooke), [Junius Brutus Booth](/wiki/Junius_Brutus_Booth), [Edmund Kean](/wiki/Edmund_Kean), [William Charles Macready](/wiki/William_Charles_Macready), and [Charles Kemble](/wiki/Charles_Kemble). Of these, Booth remained to make his career in the States, fathering the nation's most notorious actor, [John Wilkes Booth](/wiki/John_Wilkes_Booth) (who later assassinated [Abraham Lincoln](/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln)), and its most famous Hamlet, [Edwin Booth](/wiki/Edwin_Booth).[[132]](#cite_note-132) Edwin Booth's *Hamlet* was described as "like the dark, mad, dreamy, mysterious hero of a poem ... [acted] in an ideal manner, as far removed as possible from the plane of actual life".[[133]](#cite_note-133) Booth played Hamlet for 100 nights in the 1864/5 season at [The Winter Garden Theatre](/wiki/The_Winter_Garden_Theatre_(1850)), inaugurating the era of long-run Shakespeare in America.[[134]](#cite_note-134) In the United Kingdom, the actor-managers of the [Victorian era](/wiki/Victorian_era) (including Kean, [Samuel Phelps](/wiki/Samuel_Phelps), Macready, and [Henry Irving](/wiki/Henry_Irving)) staged Shakespeare in a grand manner, with elaborate scenery and costumes.[[135]](#cite_note-135) The tendency of actor-managers to emphasise the importance of their own central character did not always meet with the critics' approval. [George Bernard Shaw's](/wiki/George_Bernard_Shaw) praise for [Johnston Forbes-Robertson's](/wiki/Johnston_Forbes-Robertson) performance contains a sideswipe at Irving: "The story of the play was perfectly intelligible, and quite took the attention of the audience off the principal actor at moments. What is the [Lyceum](/wiki/Lyceum_Theatre,_London) coming to?"[[136]](#cite_note-136) In London, Edmund Kean was the first Hamlet to abandon the regal finery usually associated with the role in favour of a plain costume, and he is said to have surprised his audience by playing Hamlet as serious and introspective.[[137]](#cite_note-137) In stark contrast to earlier opulence, [William Poel's](/wiki/William_Poel) 1881 production of the Q1 text was an early attempt at reconstructing the Elizabethan theatre's austerity; his only backdrop was a set of red curtains.[[138]](#cite_note-138) [Sarah Bernhardt](/wiki/Sarah_Bernhardt) played the prince in her popular 1899 London production. In contrast to the "effeminate" view of the central character that usually accompanied a female casting, she described her character as "manly and resolute, but nonetheless thoughtful ... [he] thinks before he acts, a trait indicative of great strength and great spiritual power".[[139]](#cite_note-139) In France, Charles Kemble initiated an enthusiasm for Shakespeare; and leading members of the Romantic movement such as [Victor Hugo](/wiki/Victor_Hugo) and [Alexandre Dumas](/wiki/Alexandre_Dumas,_père) saw his 1827 Paris performance of *Hamlet*, particularly admiring the madness of [Harriet Smithson's](/wiki/Harriet_Smithson) Ophelia.[[140]](#cite_note-140) In Germany, *Hamlet* had become so assimilated by the mid-19th century that [Ferdinand Freiligrath](/wiki/Ferdinand_Freiligrath) declared that "Germany is Hamlet".[[141]](#cite_note-141) From the 1850s, the [Parsi theatre](/wiki/Parsi_theatre) tradition in India transformed *Hamlet* into folk performances, with dozens of songs added.[[142]](#cite_note-142)

### 20th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[thumb|In 1908,](/wiki/File:Craig's_design_(1908)_for_Hamlet_1-2_at_Moscow_Art_Theatre.jpg) [Edward Gordon Craig](/wiki/Edward_Gordon_Craig) designed the [MAT production of *Hamlet*](/wiki/Moscow_Art_Theatre_production_of_Hamlet) (1911–12). The isolated figure of Hamlet reclines in the dark foreground, while behind a [gauze](/wiki/Scrim_(material)) the rest of the court are absorbed in a bright, unified golden pyramid emanating from Claudius. Craig's famous screens are flat against the back in this scene.

Apart from some western troupes' 19th-century visits, the first professional performance of Hamlet in Japan was [Otojirō Kawakami's](/wiki/Otojirō_Kawakami) 1903 [*Shimpa*](/wiki/Shimpa) ("new school theatre") adaptation.[[143]](#cite_note-143) [Shoyo Tsubouchi](/wiki/Tsubouchi_Shoyo) translated *Hamlet* and produced a performance in 1911 that blended *Shingeki* ("new drama") and [*Kabuki*](/wiki/Kabuki) styles.[[143]](#cite_note-143) This hybrid-genre reached its peak in [Tsuneari Fukuda's](/wiki/Tsuneari_Fukuda) 1955 *Hamlet*.[[143]](#cite_note-143) In 1998, [Yukio Ninagawa](/wiki/Yukio_Ninagawa) produced an acclaimed version of *Hamlet* in the style of [Nō](/wiki/Noh) theatre, which he took to London.[[144]](#cite_note-144) [Constantin Stanislavski](/wiki/Constantin_Stanislavski) and [Edward Gordon Craig](/wiki/Edward_Gordon_Craig)—two of the 20th century's most influential [theatre practitioners](/wiki/Theatre_practitioner)—collaborated on the [Moscow Art Theatre's](/wiki/Moscow_Art_Theatre) seminal [production of 1911–12](/wiki/Moscow_Art_Theatre_production_of_Hamlet).[[145]](#cite_note-145) While Craig favoured stylised abstraction, Stanislavski, armed with his ['system,'](/wiki/Stanislavski's_'system') explored psychological motivation.[[146]](#cite_note-146) Craig conceived of the play as a [symbolist](/wiki/Symbolism_(arts)) [monodrama](/wiki/Monodrama), offering a dream-like vision as seen through Hamlet's eyes alone.[[147]](#cite_note-147) This was most evident in the staging of the first court scene.[[148]](#cite_note-148) The most famous aspect of the production is Craig's use of large, abstract screens that altered the size and shape of the acting area for each scene, representing the character's state of mind spatially or visualising a [dramaturgical](/wiki/Dramaturgy) progression.[[149]](#cite_note-149) The production attracted enthusiastic and unprecedented world-wide attention for the theatre and placed it "on the cultural map for Western Europe".[[150]](#cite_note-150) *Hamlet* is often played with contemporary political overtones. [Leopold Jessner's](/wiki/Leopold_Jessner) 1926 production at the Berlin Staatstheater portrayed Claudius's court as a parody of the corrupt and fawning court of [Kaiser Wilhelm](/wiki/William_II,_German_Emperor).[[151]](#cite_note-151) In [Poland](/wiki/Poland), the number of productions of *Hamlet* has tended to increase at times of political unrest, since its political themes (suspected crimes, coups, surveillance) can be used to comment on a contemporary situation.[[152]](#cite_note-152) Similarly, [Czech](/wiki/Czech_Republic) directors have used the play at times of occupation: a 1941 [Vinohrady Theatre](/wiki/Vinohrady) production "emphasised, with due caution, the helpless situation of an intellectual attempting to endure in a ruthless environment".[[153]](#cite_note-153) In China, performances of Hamlet often have political significance: Gu Wuwei's 1916 *The Usurper of State Power*, an amalgam of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, was an attack on [Yuan Shikai's](/wiki/Yuan_Shikai) attempt to overthrow the republic.[[154]](#cite_note-154) In 1942, [Jiao Juyin](/wiki/Jiao_Juyin) directed the play in a [Confucian](/wiki/Confucianism) temple in [Sichuan Province](/wiki/Sichuan), to which the government had retreated from the advancing Japanese.[[154]](#cite_note-154) In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the [protests](/wiki/Tiananmen_Square_protests_of_1989) at [Tiananmen Square](/wiki/Tiananmen_Square), Lin Zhaohua staged a 1990 *Hamlet* in which the prince was an ordinary individual tortured by a loss of meaning. In this production, the actors playing Hamlet, Claudius and Polonius exchanged roles at crucial moments in the performance, including the moment of Claudius's death, at which point the actor mainly associated with Hamlet fell to the ground.[[154]](#cite_note-154) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Mignon_Nevada_Ophelia2.jpg)[Mignon Nevada](/wiki/Mignon_Nevada) as Ophelia, 1910

Notable stagings in London and New York include Barrymore's 1925 production at the [Haymarket](/wiki/Haymarket_Theatre); it influenced subsequent performances by [John Gielgud](/wiki/John_Gielgud) and [Laurence Olivier](/wiki/Laurence_Olivier).[[155]](#cite_note-155) Gielgud played the central role many times: his 1936 New York production ran for 132 performances, leading to the accolade that he was "the finest interpreter of the role since Barrymore".[[156]](#cite_note-156) Although "posterity has treated [Maurice Evans](/wiki/Maurice_Evans_(actor)) less kindly", throughout the 1930s and 1940s he was regarded by many as the leading interpreter of Shakespeare in the United States and in the 1938/9 season he presented Broadway's first uncut *Hamlet*, running four and a half hours.[[157]](#cite_note-157) Evans later performed a highly truncated version of the play that he played for South Pacific war zones during World War II which made the prince a more decisive character. The staging, known as the "G.I. Hamlet," was produced on Broadway for 131 performances in 1945/46.[[158]](#cite_note-158) Olivier's 1937 performance at The Old Vic was popular with audiences but not with critics, with [James Agate](/wiki/James_Agate) writing in a famous review in [*The Sunday Times*](/wiki/The_Sunday_Times)*,* "Mr. Olivier does not speak poetry badly. He does not speak it at all.".[[159]](#cite_note-159) In 1937 [Tyrone Guthrie](/wiki/Tyrone_Guthrie) directed the play at Elsinore, Denmark with Laurence Olivier as Hamlet and Vivien Leigh as Ophelia.

In 1963, Olivier directed [Peter O'Toole](/wiki/Peter_O'Toole) as Hamlet in the inaugural performance of the newly formed [National Theatre](/wiki/Royal_National_Theatre); critics found resonance between O'Toole's Hamlet and [John Osborne's](/wiki/John_Osborne) hero, Jimmy Porter, from [*Look Back in Anger*](/wiki/Look_Back_in_Anger).[[160]](#cite_note-160) [Richard Burton](/wiki/Richard_Burton) received his third Tony Award nomination when he played his second Hamlet, his first under John Gielgud's direction, in 1964 in a production that holds the record for the longest run of the play in Broadway history (137 performances). The performance was set on a bare stage, conceived to appear like a dress rehearsal, with Burton in a black v-neck sweater, and Gielgud himself tape-recorded the voice for the Ghost (which appeared as a looming shadow). It was immortalised both on record and on a film that played in US theatres for a week in 1964 as well as being the subject of books written by cast members William Redfield and Richard L. Sterne. Other New York portrayals of *Hamlet* of note include that of [Ralph Fiennes's](/wiki/Ralph_Fiennes) in 1995 (for which he won the [Tony Award](/wiki/Tony_Award) for Best Actor) – which ran, from first preview to closing night, a total of one hundred performances. About the Fiennes *Hamlet* Vincent Canby wrote in *The New York Times* that it was "...not one for literary sleuths and Shakespeare scholars. It respects the play, but it doesn't provide any new material for arcane debates on what it all means. Instead it's an intelligent, beautifully read ..."[[161]](#cite_note-161) [Stacy Keach](/wiki/Stacy_Keach) played the role with an all-star cast at [Joseph Papp's](/wiki/Joseph_Papp) [Delacorte Theatre](/wiki/Delacorte_Theatre) in the early 70s, with [Colleen Dewhurst's](/wiki/Colleen_Dewhurst) Gertrude, [James Earl Jones's](/wiki/James_Earl_Jones) King, [Barnard Hughes's](/wiki/Barnard_Hughes) Polonius, [Sam Waterston's](/wiki/Sam_Waterston) Laertes and [Raúl Juliá's](/wiki/Raúl_Juliá) Osric. [Sam Waterston](/wiki/Sam_Waterston) later played the role himself at the [Delacorte](/wiki/Delacorte_Theater) for the [New York Shakespeare Festival](/wiki/New_York_Shakespeare_Festival), and the show transferred to the [Vivian Beaumont Theatre](/wiki/Vivian_Beaumont_Theatre) in 1975 (Stephen Lang played Bernardo and other roles). [Stephen Lang's](/wiki/Stephen_Lang_(actor)) *Hamlet* for the [Roundabout Theatre Company](/wiki/Roundabout_Theatre_Company) in 1992 received mixed reviews[[162]](#cite_note-162)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)[[163]](#cite_note-163) and ran for sixty-one performances. [David Warner](/wiki/David_Warner_(actor)) played the role with the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 1965. [William Hurt](/wiki/William_Hurt) (at Circle Rep Off-Broadway, memorably performing "To Be Or Not to Be" while lying on the floor), [Jon Voight](/wiki/Jon_Voight) at Rutgers, and [Christopher Walken](/wiki/Christopher_Walken) (fiercely) at Stratford CT have all played the role, as has [Diane Venora](/wiki/Diane_Venora) at the Public Theatre. [Off Broadway](/wiki/Off_Broadway), the [Riverside Shakespeare Company](/wiki/Riverside_Shakespeare_Company) mounted an uncut [first folio](/wiki/First_folio) *Hamlet* in 1978 at [Columbia University](/wiki/Columbia_University), with a playing time of under three hours.[[164]](#cite_note-164) In fact, *Hamlet* is the most produced Shakespeare play in New York theatre history, with sixty-four recorded productions on Broadway, and an untold number [Off Broadway](/wiki/Off_Broadway).[[165]](#cite_note-165) [Ian Charleson](/wiki/Ian_Charleson) performed Hamlet from 9 October to 13 November 1989, in [Richard Eyre's](/wiki/Richard_Eyre) production at the [Olivier Theatre](/wiki/Royal_National_Theatre), replacing [Daniel Day-Lewis](/wiki/Daniel_Day-Lewis), who had abandoned the production. Seriously ill from AIDS at the time, Charleson died eight weeks after his last performance. Fellow actor and friend, [Sir Ian McKellen](/wiki/Ian_McKellen), said that Charleson played Hamlet so well it was as if he had rehearsed the role all his life; McKellen called it "the perfect Hamlet".[[166]](#cite_note-166)[[167]](#cite_note-167) The performance garnered other major accolades as well, some critics echoing McKellen in calling it the definitive Hamlet performance.[[168]](#cite_note-168)

### 21st century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[thumb|upright|Benedict Cumberbatch began playing Hamlet at the](/wiki/File:Benedict_Cumberbatch_2011_(jpg).jpg) [Barbican Theatre](/wiki/Barbican_Centre) starting in August 2015. *Hamlet* continues to be staged regularly, with actors such as [Simon Russell Beale](/wiki/Simon_Russell_Beale), [Ben Whishaw](/wiki/Ben_Whishaw), [David Tennant](/wiki/David_Tennant), [Angela Winkler](/wiki/Angela_Winkler), [Samuel West](/wiki/Samuel_West), [Christopher Eccleston](/wiki/Christopher_Eccleston), [Maxine Peake](/wiki/Maxine_Peake), [Rory Kinnear](/wiki/Rory_Kinnear), [Christian Camargo](/wiki/Christian_Camargo) and [Andrew Scott](/wiki/Andrew_Scott_(actor)), performing the lead role.[[169]](#cite_note-169)[[170]](#cite_note-170)[[171]](#cite_note-171)[[172]](#cite_note-172)[[173]](#cite_note-173) In May 2009, *Hamlet* opened with [Jude Law](/wiki/Jude_Law) in the title role at the [Donmar Warehouse](/wiki/Donmar_Warehouse) West End season at [Wyndham's Theatre](/wiki/Wyndham's_Theatre). The production officially opened on 3 June and ran through 22 August 2009.<ref name=ShentonStage>Mark Shenton, ["Jude Law to Star in Donmar's Hamlet."](http://www.thestage.co.uk/news/newsstory.php/18174/jude-law-to-star-in-donmars-hamlet) *The Stage*. 10 September 2007. Retrieved 19 November 2007.</ref>[[174]](#cite_note-174) A further production of the play ran at [Elsinore Castle](/wiki/Elsinore_Castle) in Denmark from 25–30 August 2009.[[175]](#cite_note-175) The Jude Law *Hamlet* then moved to Broadway, and ran for 12 weeks at the [Broadhurst Theatre](/wiki/Broadhurst_Theatre) in New York.[[176]](#cite_note-176)[[177]](#cite_note-177) In 2013, American actor [Paul Giamatti](/wiki/Paul_Giamatti) won critical acclaim for his performance on stage in the title role of *Hamlet*, performed in [modern dress](/wiki/Modern_dress), at the [Yale Repertory Theater](/wiki/Yale_Repertory_Theater), at [Yale University](/wiki/Yale_University) in [New Haven, Connecticut](/wiki/New_Haven,_Connecticut).[[178]](#cite_note-178) The [Globe Theatre](/wiki/Shakespeare's_Globe) of London initiated a project in 2014 to perform *Hamlet* in every country in the world in the space of two years. Titled *Globe to Globe Hamlet*, it began its tour on 23 April 2014, the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. As of 23 February 2016, the project had performed in 170 different countries.[[179]](#cite_note-179) [Benedict Cumberbatch](/wiki/Benedict_Cumberbatch) played the role for a 12-week run in a production at the [Barbican Theatre](/wiki/Barbican_Centre), opening on 25 August 2015. The play was produced by [Sonia Friedman](/wiki/Sonia_Friedman), and directed by [Lyndsey Turner](/wiki/Lyndsey_Turner), with set design by [Es Devlin](/wiki/Es_Devlin). It was called the "most in-demand theatre production of all time". The entire run sold out in seven hours after tickets went on sale 11 August 2014, more than a year before the play opened.[[180]](#cite_note-180)[[181]](#cite_note-181)[[182]](#cite_note-182)

### Film and TV performances[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

The earliest screen success for *Hamlet* was [Sarah Bernhardt's](/wiki/Sarah_Bernhardt) five-minute film of the fencing scene,[[183]](#cite_note-183) which was produced in 1900. The film was an early attempt at combining [sound and film](/wiki/Sound_film), music and words were recorded on phonograph records, to be played along with the film.[[184]](#cite_note-184) Silent versions were released in 1907, 1908, 1910, 1913, 1917, and 1920.[[184]](#cite_note-184) In the 1920 version, [Asta Nielsen](/wiki/Asta_Nielsen) played the role of Hamlet as a woman who spends her life disguised as a man.[[184]](#cite_note-184) [Laurence Olivier's](/wiki/Laurence_Olivier) 1948 moody black-and-white [*Hamlet*](/wiki/Hamlet_(1948_film)) won [best picture](/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Picture) and [best actor](/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Actor) [Oscars](/wiki/Academy_Award), and is still, [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the only Shakespeare film to have done so. His interpretation stressed the Oedipal overtones of the play, and cast 28-year-old [Eileen Herlie](/wiki/Eileen_Herlie) as Hamlet's mother, opposite himself, at 41, as Hamlet.[[185]](#cite_note-185) In 1953, actor [Jack Manning](/wiki/Jack_Manning_(actor)) performed the play in 15-minute segments over two weeks in the short-lived late night [DuMont](/wiki/DuMont_Television_Network) series [*Monodrama Theater*](/wiki/Monodrama_Theater). *New York Times* TV critic Jack Gould praised Manning's performance as Hamlet.[[186]](#cite_note-186) Shakespeare experts Sir [John Gielgud](/wiki/John_Gielgud) and [Kenneth Branagh](/wiki/Kenneth_Branagh) consider the definitive rendition of the Bard's tragic tale[[187]](#cite_note-187) to be the 1964 Russian film [*Gamlet*](/wiki/Hamlet_(1964_film)) ([Template:Lang-rus](/wiki/Template:Lang-rus)) based on a translation by [Boris Pasternak](/wiki/Boris_Pasternak) and directed by [Grigori Kozintsev](/wiki/Grigori_Kozintsev), with a score by [Dmitri Shostakovich](/wiki/Dmitri_Shostakovich).[[188]](#cite_note-188) [Innokenty Smoktunovsky](/wiki/Innokenty_Smoktunovsky) was cast in the role of Hamlet; he was particularly praised by Sir [Laurence Olivier](/wiki/Laurence_Olivier).

John Gielgud directed [Richard Burton](/wiki/Richard_Burton) in a [Broadway production](/wiki/Richard_Burton's_Hamlet) at the [Lunt-Fontanne Theatre](/wiki/Lunt-Fontanne_Theatre) in 1964–5, the longest-running *Hamlet* in the U.S. to date. A live film of the production was produced using "Electronovision", a method of recording a live performance with multiple video cameras and converting the image to film.[[189]](#cite_note-189) Eileen Herlie repeated her role from Olivier's film version as the Queen, and the voice of Gielgud was heard as the Ghost. The Gielgud/Burton production was also recorded complete and released on LP by [Columbia Masterworks](/wiki/Columbia_Masterworks). [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Bernhardt_Hamlet2.jpg)[Sarah Bernhardt](/wiki/Sarah_Bernhardt) as Hamlet, with [Yorick's](/wiki/Yorick) skull (Photographer: [James Lafayette](/wiki/James_Lafayette), c. 1885–1900) The first *Hamlet* in color was a [1969 film](/wiki/Hamlet_(1969_film)) directed by [Tony Richardson](/wiki/Tony_Richardson) with [Nicol Williamson](/wiki/Nicol_Williamson) as Hamlet and [Marianne Faithfull](/wiki/Marianne_Faithfull) as Ophelia.

In 1990 [Franco Zeffirelli](/wiki/Franco_Zeffirelli), whose Shakespeare films have been described as "sensual rather than cerebral",[[190]](#cite_note-190) cast [Mel Gibson](/wiki/Mel_Gibson)—then famous for the [*Mad Max*](/wiki/Mad_Max) and [*Lethal Weapon*](/wiki/Lethal_Weapon) movies—in the title role of his [1990 version](/wiki/Hamlet_(1990_film)); [Glenn Close](/wiki/Glenn_Close)—then famous as the psychotic "other woman" in [*Fatal Attraction*](/wiki/Fatal_Attraction)—played Gertrude,[[191]](#cite_note-191) and [Paul Scofield](/wiki/Paul_Scofield) played Hamlet's father.[[192]](#cite_note-192) In contrast to Zeffirelli, whose *Hamlet* was heavily cut, [Kenneth Branagh](/wiki/Kenneth_Branagh) adapted, directed, and starred in a 1996 version containing every word of Shakespeare's play, combining the material from the F1 and Q2 texts. Branagh's [*Hamlet*](/wiki/Hamlet_(1996_film)) runs for around four hours.[[193]](#cite_note-193) Branagh set the film with late 19th-century costuming and furnishings;[[194]](#cite_note-194) and [Blenheim Palace](/wiki/Blenheim_Palace), built in the early 18th century, became Elsinore Castle in the external scenes. The film is structured as an [epic](/wiki/Epic_film) and makes frequent use of [flashbacks](/wiki/Flashback_(narrative)) to highlight elements not made explicit in the play: Hamlet's sexual relationship with [Kate Winslet's](/wiki/Kate_Winslet) Ophelia, for example, or his childhood affection for Yorick (played by [Ken Dodd](/wiki/Ken_Dodd)).[[195]](#cite_note-195) In 2000, [Michael Almereyda's](/wiki/Michael_Almereyda) [*Hamlet*](/wiki/Hamlet_(2000_film)) set the story in contemporary [Manhattan](/wiki/Manhattan), with [Ethan Hawke](/wiki/Ethan_Hawke) playing Hamlet as a film student. Claudius (played by [Kyle MacLachlan](/wiki/Kyle_MacLachlan)) became the CEO of "Denmark Corporation", having taken over the company by killing his brother.[[196]](#cite_note-196) Notable made-for-television productions of *Hamlet* include those starring [Christopher Plummer](/wiki/Christopher_Plummer) (1964), [Richard Chamberlain](/wiki/Richard_Chamberlain) (1970; [Hallmark Hall of Fame](/wiki/Hallmark_Hall_of_Fame)), [Derek Jacobi](/wiki/Derek_Jacobi) (1980; [Royal Shakespeare Company](/wiki/Royal_Shakespeare_Company), BBC), [Kevin Kline](/wiki/Kevin_Kline) (1990), [Campbell Scott](/wiki/Campbell_Scott) (2000) and [David Tennant](/wiki/David_Tennant) (2009; [Royal Shakespeare Company](/wiki/Royal_Shakespeare_Company), BBC).[[197]](#cite_note-197) There have also been several films that transposed the general storyline of *Hamlet* or elements thereof to other settings. There have also been many films which included performances of scenes from *Hamlet* as a play-within-a-film. See [Hamlet on screen](/wiki/Hamlet_on_screen#Adaptations) for further details.

## Stage pastiches[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

There have been various "derivative works" of *Hamlet* which recast the story from the point of view of other characters, or transpose the story into a new setting or act as sequels or prequels to *Hamlet*. This section is limited to those written for the stage.

The best-known is Tom Stoppard's 1966 play [*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*](/wiki/Rosencrantz_and_Guildenstern_Are_Dead), which retells many of the events of the story from the point of view of the characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and gives them a backstory of their own. Several times since 1995, the [American Shakespeare Center](/wiki/American_Shakespeare_Center) has mounted repertories that included both *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, with the same actors performing the same roles in each; in their 2001 and 2009 seasons the two plays were "directed, designed, and rehearsed together to make the most out of the shared scenes and situations".[[198]](#cite_note-198) [W.S. Gilbert](/wiki/W.S._Gilbert) wrote a short comic play titled [*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*](/wiki/Rosencrantz_and_Guildenstern_(play)), in Hamlet's play is presented as a tragedy written by Claudius in his youth of which he is greatly embarrassed. Through the chaos triggered by Hamlet's staging of it, Guildenstern helps Rosencrantz vie with Hamlet to make Ophelia his bride.[[199]](#cite_note-199) [Lee Blessing's](/wiki/Lee_Blessing) [*Fortinbras*](/wiki/Fortinbras_(play)) is a comical sequel to *Hamlet* in which all the deceased characters come back as ghosts. The *New York Times* reviewed the play, saying it is "scarcely more than an extended comedy sketch, lacking the portent and linguistic complexity of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.* *Fortinbras* operates on a far less ambitious plane, but it is a ripping yarn and offers Keith Reddin a role in which he can commit comic mayhem."[[200]](#cite_note-200) [Heiner Müller's](/wiki/Heiner_Müller) postmodern drama *The Hamletmachine* was first produced in Paris by director Jean Jourdheuil in 1979. This play in turn inspired [Giannina Braschi's](/wiki/Giannina_Braschi) dramatic novel *United States of Banana*, which takes place at the Statue of Liberty in post-9/11 New York City. In it, Hamlet, [Zarathustra](/wiki/Zarathustra), and Giannina are on a quest to free the Puerto Rican prisoner [Segismundo](/wiki/Segismundo) from the dungeon of Liberty, where Segismundo's father, Basilio, the King of the United States of Banana, imprisoned him for the crime of having been born. The work intertwines the plots and characters of [Pedro Calderón de la Barca's](/wiki/Pedro_Calderón_de_la_Barca) [*Life Is a Dream*](/wiki/Life_Is_a_Dream) with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

[Caridad Svich's](/wiki/Caridad_Svich) *12 Ophelias (a play with broken songs)* includes elements of the story of *Hamlet* but focuses on Ophelia. In Svich's play, Ophelia is resurrected and rises from a pool of water, after her death in *Hamlet*. The play is a series of scenes and songs, and was first staged at public swimming pool in Brooklyn.[[201]](#cite_note-201) Heidi Weiss of the *Chicago Sun-Times* said of the play, "Far more surreal and twisted than Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead,* *12 Ophelias* is a reminder of just how morphable and mysterious Shakespeare's original remains."[[202]](#cite_note-202) Other characters are renamed: Hamlet is Rude Boy, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are androgynous helpers known simply as R and G, Gertrude is the madam of a brothel, Horatio becomes H and continues to be Hamlet's best friend/confidante, and a chorus of Ophelias serves as guide. A new character, Mina, is introduced, and she is a whore in Gertrude's brothel.

[David Davalos'](/wiki/David_Davalos) *Wittenberg* is a "tragical-comical-historical" prequel to *Hamlet* that depicts the Danish prince as a student at Wittenberg University (now known as the [University of Halle-Wittenberg](/wiki/University_of_Halle-Wittenberg)), where he is torn between the conflicting teachings of his mentors [John Faustus](/wiki/Faust) and [Martin Luther](/wiki/Martin_Luther). The *New York Times* reviewed the play, saying, "Mr. Davalos has molded a daft campus comedy out of this unlikely convergence,"[[203]](#cite_note-203) and *nytheatre****s review said the playwright "has imagined a fascinating alternate reality, and quite possibly, given the fictional Hamlet a back story that will inform the role for the future."***[***[204]***](#cite_note-204)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

* [Critical approaches to *Hamlet*](/wiki/Critical_approaches_to_Hamlet)
* [Ghost stories](/wiki/Ghost_story)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

### Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Refbegin](/wiki/Template:Refbegin) All references to *Hamlet*, unless otherwise specified, are taken from the Arden Shakespeare Q2 (Thompson and Taylor, 2006a). Under their referencing system, 3.1.55 means act 3, scene 1, line 55. References to the First Quarto and First Folio are marked *Hamlet Q1* and *Hamlet F1*, respectively, and are taken from the Arden Shakespeare "Hamlet: the texts of 1603 and 1623" (Thompson and Taylor, 2006b). Their referencing system for Q1 has no act breaks, so 7.115 means scene 7, line 115. [Template:Refend](/wiki/Template:Refend)

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

### Editions of ''Hamlet''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Refbegin](/wiki/Template:Refbegin)

Bate, Jonathan, and Eric Rasmussen, eds. 2007. *Complete Works*. By William Shakespeare. The RSC Shakespeare. New York: Modern Library. ISBN 0-679-64295-1.

Edwards, Phillip, ed. 1985. *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. New Cambridge Shakespeare ser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-29366-9.

Hibbard, G. R., ed. 1987. *Hamlet*. Oxford World's Classics ser. Oxford. ISBN 0-19-283416-9.

Hoy, Cyrus, ed. 1992. *Hamlet*. Norton Critical Edition ser. 2nd ed. New York: Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-95663-4.

Irace, Kathleen O. 1998. *The First Quarto of Hamlet*. New Cambridge Shakespeare ser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-65390-8.

Jenkins, Harold, ed. 1982. *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare, second ser. London: Methuen. ISBN 1-903436-67-2.

Lott, Bernard, ed. 1970. *Hamlet*. New Swan Shakespeare Advanced ser. New ed. London: Longman. ISBN 0-582-52742-2.

Spencer, T. J. B., ed. 1980 *Hamlet*. New Penguin Shakespeare ser. London: Penguin. ISBN 0-14-070734-4.

Thompson, Ann and Neil Taylor, eds. 2006a. *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare, third ser. Volume one. London: Arden. ISBN 1-904271-33-2.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 2006b. *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*. The Arden Shakespeare, third ser. Volume two. London: Arden. ISBN 1-904271-80-4.

Wells, Stanley, and Gary Taylor, eds. 1988. *The Complete Works*. By William Shakespeare. The Oxford Shakespeare. Compact ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-871190-5.

[Template:Refend](/wiki/Template:Refend)

### Secondary sources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Refbegin](/wiki/Template:Refbegin)

Alexander, Peter. 1964. *Alexander's Introductions to Shakespeare*. London: Collins.

Banham, Martin, ed. 1998. *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-43437-8.

Baskerville, Charles Read. ed. 1934. *Elizabethan and Stuart Plays*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Benedetti, Jean. 1999. *Stanislavski: His Life and Art*. Revised edition. Original edition published in 1988. London: Methuen. ISBN 0-413-52520-1.

Blits, Jan H. 2001. Introduction. In *Deadly Thought: "Hamlet" and the Human Soul*: 3–22. Langham, MD: Lexington Books. ISBN 0-7391-0214-1.

[Bloom, Harold](/wiki/Harold_Bloom). 2001. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. Open Market ed. Harlow, Essex: Longman. ISBN 1-57322-751-X.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 2003. *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited*. Edinburgh: Canongate. ISBN 1-84195-461-6.

Braun, Edward. 1982. *The Director and the Stage: From Naturalism to Grotowski*. London: Methuen. ISBN 978-0-413-46300-5.

Britton, Celia. 1995. "Structuralist and poststructuralist psychoanalytic and Marxist theories" in *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: From Formalism to Poststructuralism (Vol 8)*. Ed. Raman Seldon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995. ISBN 978-0-521-30013-1.

Brode, Douglas. 2001. *Shakespeare in the Movies: From the Silent Era to Today*. New York: Berkley Boulevard Books. ISBN 0-425-18176-6.

Brown, John Russell. 2006. *Hamlet: A Guide to the Text and its Theatrical Life*. Shakespeare Handbooks ser. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 1-4039-2092-3.

Buchanan, Judith. 2005. *Shakespeare on Film*. Harlow: Pearson. ISBN 0-582-43716-4.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 2009. *Shakespeare on Silent Film: An Excellent Dumb Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-87199-9.

Burian, Jarka. 1993. "Hamlet in Postwar Czech Theatre". In *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*. Ed. Dennis Kennedy. New edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-521-61708-1.

Burnett, Mark Thornton. 2000. " 'To Hear and See the Matter': Communicating Technology in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000)". *Cinema Journal* 42.3: 48–69.

Carincross, Andrew S. 1936. *The Problem of Hamlet: A Solution*. Reprint ed. Norwood, PA.: Norwood Editions, 1975. ISBN 0-88305-130-3.

Cartmell, Deborah. 2000. "Franco Zeffirelli and Shakespeare". In Jackson (2000, 212–221).

Chambers, Edmund Kerchever. 1923. *The Elizabethan Stage*. 4 volumes. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-811511-3.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 1930. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. ISBN 0-19-811774-4.

[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)

Crowl, Samuel. 2000. "Flamboyant Realist: Kenneth Branagh". In Jackson (2000, 222–240).

Crystal, David, and Ben Crystal. 2005. *The Shakespeare Miscellany*. New York: Penguin. ISBN 0-14-051555-0.

Davies, Anthony. 2000. "The Shakespeare films of Laurence Olivier". In Jackson (2000, 163–182).

Dawson, Anthony B. 1995. *Hamlet*. Shakespeare in Performance ser. New ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7190-4625-4.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 2002. "International Shakespeare". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 174–193).

[Eliot, T. S.](/wiki/T._S._Eliot) 1920. ["Hamlet and his Problems"](http://www.bartleby.com/200/sw9.html). In *The Sacred Wood: Essays in Poetry and Criticism*. London: Faber & Gwyer. ISBN 0-416-37410-7.

[Foakes, R. A.](/wiki/Reginald_A._Foakes) 1993. *Hamlet versus Lear: Cultural Politics and Shakespeare's Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-60705-1.

French, George Russell. 1869. *Shakspeareana Geologica*. London: Macmillan. Reprinted New York: AMS, 1975. ISBN 0-404-02575-7.

[Freud, Sigmund](/wiki/Sigmund_Freud). 1900. [*The Interpretation of Dreams*](/wiki/The_Interpretation_of_Dreams). Trans. James Strachey. Ed. Angela Richards. The Penguin Freud Library, vol. 4. London: Penguin, 1991. ISBN 0-14-013794-7.

Gay, Penny. 2002. "Women and Shakespearean Performance". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 155–173).

Gillies, John, Ryuta Minami, Ruru Li, and Poonam Trivedi. 2002. "Shakespeare on the Stages of Asia". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 259–283).

Greenblatt, Stephen. 2004a. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. ISBN 0-393-05057-2.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 2004b. ["The Death of Hamnet and the Making of Hamlet"](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/17483). *N.Y. Review of Books* 51.16 (21 Oct. 2004).

Greg, Walter Wilson. 1955. *The Shakespeare First Folio, its Bibliographical and Textual History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. ASIN B0000CHBCM.

Guntner, J. Lawrence. 2000. "*Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* on film". In Jackson (2000, 117–134).

Halliday, F. E. 1964. *A Shakespeare Companion 1564–1964*. Shakespeare Library ser. Baltimore, Penguin, 1969. ISBN 0-14-053011-8.

Hattaway, Michael. 1982. *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance*. Theatre Production ser. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul. ISBN 0-7100-9052-8.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 1987. *Hamlet*. The Critics Debate ser. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan. ISBN 0-333-38524-1.

[Heilbrun, Carolyn](/wiki/Carolyn_Heilbrun). 1957. "The Character of Hamlet's Mother". [*Shakespeare Quarterly*](/wiki/Shakespeare_Quarterly) 8.2: 201–206.

Holland, Peter. 2002. "Touring Shakespeare". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 194–211).

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 2007. "Shakespeare Abbreviated". In Shaughnessy (2007, 26–45).

Hortmann, Wilhelm. 2002. "Shakespeare on the Political Stage in the Twentieth Century". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 212–229).

Howard, Jean E. 2003. "Feminist Criticism". In *Shakespeare: An Oxford Guide*: 411–423. Ed. Stanley Wells and Lena Orlin. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-924522-3.

Howard, Tony. 2000. "Shakespeare's Cinematic Offshoots". In Jackson (2000, 303–323).

Hurstfield, Joel, and James Sutherland. 1964. *Shakespeare's World*. New York: St. Martin's Press.:\*Innes, Christopher. 1983. *Edward Gordon Craig*. Directors in Perspective ser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-27383-8.

Jackson, MacDonald P. 1986. "The Transmission of Shakespeare's Text". In *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies* Ed. Stanley Wells. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-31841-6. 163–185.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 1991. "Editions and Textual Studies Reviewed". In *Shakespeare Survey 43, The Tempest and After*: 255–270. Ed. Stanley Wells. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-39529-1.

Jackson, Russell, ed. 2000. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*. Cambridge Companions to Literature ser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-63975-1.

Jenkins, Harold. 1955. "The Relation Between the Second Quarto and the Folio Text of *Hamlet*". *Studies in Bibliography* 7: 69–83.

Jones, Gwilym. 2007. [*Thomas Middleton at the Globe*](http://www.globelink.org/research/thomasmiddleton/). London: Globe Theatre education resource centre. Retrieved: 30 December 2007.

Kermode, Frank. 2000. *Shakespeare's Language*. London: Penguin. ISBN 0-14-028592-X.

Keyishian, Harry. 2000. "Shakespeare and Movie Genre: The Case of *Hamlet*". In Jackson (2000, 72–84).

Kirsch, A. C. 1968. "A Caroline Commentary on the Drama". *Modern Philology* 66: 256–261.

Knowles, Ronald. 1999. "Hamlet and Counter-Humanism" *Renaissance Quarterly* 52.4: 1046–1069.

[Lacan, Jacques](/wiki/Jacques_Lacan). 1959. "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*". In *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading Otherwise*. Ed. Shoshana Felman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982. Originally appeared as a double issue of *Yale French Studies*, nos. 55/56 (1977). ISBN 0-8018-2754-X.

[Lennard, John](/wiki/John_Lennard). 2007. *William Shakespeare: Hamlet*. Literature Insights ser. Humanities-Ebooks, 2007. ISBN 1-84760-028-X.

MacCary, W. Thomas. 1998. *"Hamlet": A Guide to the Play*. Greenwood Guides to Shakespeare ser. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. ISBN 0-313-30082-8.

Marsden, Jean I. 2002. "Improving Shakespeare: from the Restoration to Garrick". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 21–36).

Matheson, Mark. 1995. "Hamlet and 'A Matter Tender and Dangerous' ". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46.4: 383–397.

Moody, Jane. 2002. "Romantic Shakespeare". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 37–57).

Morrison, Michael A. 2002. "Shakespeare in North America". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 230–258).

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 1997. *John Barrymore, Shakespearean Actor*. Cambridge University Press, ISBN 0-521-62028-7.

Novy, Marianne. 1994. *Engaging with Shakespeare: Responses of George Eliot and Other Women Novelists*. (Athens, Georgia) in Thompson and Taylor (2006a, 127).

O'Connor, Marion. 2002. "Reconstructive Shakespeare: Reproducing Elizabethan and Jacobean Stages". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 76–97).

Osborne, Laurie. 2007. "Narration and Staging in *Hamlet* and its afternovels" in Shaughnessy (2007, 114–133).

Oxford English Dictionary (Second Edition) on CD-ROM version 3.1. 2004. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-861016-8.

Pennington, Michael. 1996. *"Hamlet": A User's Guide*. London: Nick Hern. ISBN 1-85459-284-X.

Pitcher, John, and Woudhuysen, Henry. 1969. *Shakespeare Companion, 1564–1964*. London: Penguin. ISBN 0-14-053011-8.

[Quillian, William H.](/wiki/William_H._Quillian) [*Hamlet and the New Poetic: James Joyce and T. S. Eliot*](/wiki/Hamlet_and_the_New_Poetic:_James_Joyce_and_T._S._Eliot)*.* Ann Arbor, MI:UMI Research Press, 1983.

Rosenberg, Marvin. 1992. *The Masks of Hamlet*. London: Associated University Presses. ISBN 0-87413-480-3.

Rowse, Alfred Leslie. 1963. *William Shakespeare: A Biography*. New York: Harper & Row. Reprinted New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1995. ISBN 1-56619-804-6.

[Saxo](/wiki/Saxo_Grammaticus), and Hansen, William. 1983. *Saxo Grammaticus & the Life of Hamlet*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. ISBN 0-8032-2318-8.

Schoch, Richard W. 2002. "Pictorial Shakespeare". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 58–75).

Shapiro, James. 2005. *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*. London: Faber, 2006. ISBN 0-571-21481-9.

Shaughnessy, Robert. 2007. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*. Cambridge Companions to Literature ser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-60580-9.

[Shaw, George Bernard](/wiki/George_Bernard_Shaw). 1961. *Shaw on Shakespeare*. Ed. Edwin Wilson. New York: Applause. ISBN 1-55783-561-6.

[Showalter, Elaine](/wiki/Elaine_Showalter). 1985. "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism" In *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*: 77–94. Ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman. New York and London: Methuen. ISBN 0-416-36930-8.

Smallwood, Robert. 2002. "Twentieth-century Performance: The Stratford and London Companies". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 98–117).

Starks, Lisa S. 1999. "The Displaced Body of Desire: Sexuality in Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*". In *Shakespeare and Appropriation*: 160–178. Ed. Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer. Accents on Shakespeare ser. London: Routledge. ISBN 0-415-20725-8.

Taxidou, Olga. 1998. *The Mask: A Periodical Performance by Edward Gordon Craig*. Contemporary Theatre Studies ser. volume 30. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers. ISBN 90-5755-046-6.

[Taylor, Gary](/wiki/Gary_Taylor_(English_literature_scholar)). 1989. *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present*. London: Hogarth Press. ISBN 0-7012-0888-0.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 2002. "Shakespeare Plays on Renaissance Stages". In Wells and Stanton (2002, 1–20).

Teraoka, Arlene Akiko. 1985. *The Silence of Entropy or Universal Discourse : the Postmodernist Poetics of Heiner Müller*. New York: Peter Lang. ISBN 0-8204-0190-0.

Thompson, Ann. 2001. "Shakespeare and sexuality" in Catherine M S Alexander and Stanley Wells *Shakespeare and Sexuality*: 1–13. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-80475-2.

Thompson, Ann and Taylor, Neil. 1996. *William Shakespeare, "Hamlet"*. Plymouth, UK: Northcote House. ISBN 0-7463-0765-9.

Thomson, Peter. 1983. *Shakespeare's Theatre*. Theatre Production ser. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul. ISBN 0-7100-9480-9.

Uglow, Jenny. 1977. *Hogarth: A Life and a World*. New ed. London: Faber and Faber, 2002. ISBN 0-571-19376-5.

Vickers, Brian, ed. 1974a. *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage*. Volume one (1623–1692). New ed. London: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 0-415-13404-8.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 1974b. *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage*. Volume four (1753–1765). New ed. London: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 0-415-13407-2.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 1974c. *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage*. Volume five (1765–1774). New ed. London: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 0-415-13408-0.

Vogler, Christopher. 1992. *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters*. Second revised ed. London: Pan Books, 1999. ISBN 0-330-37591-1.

Ward, David. 1992. "The King and 'Hamlet' ". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43.3: 280–302.

Weimann, Robert. 1985. "Mimesis in *Hamlet*". In *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*: 275–291. Ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman. New York and London: Methuen. ISBN 0-416-36930-8.

[Wells, Stanley](/wiki/Stanley_Wells), and Stanton, Sarah, eds. 2002. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*. Cambridge Companions to Literature ser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-79711-X.

[Wilson, John Dover](/wiki/J._Dover_Wilson). 1932. *The Essential Shakespeare: A Biographical Adventure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 1934. *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and the Problems of its Transmission: An Essay in Critical Bibliography*. 2 volumes. Cambridge: The University Press.

[Template:Long dash](/wiki/Template:Long_dash). 1935. *What Happens in Hamlet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959. ISBN 0-521-06835-5.

Welsh, Alexander. 2001. *Hamlet in his Modern Guises* (New Jersey: Princeton) in Thompson and Taylor (2006a, 125).

Winstanley, Lilian. 1921. *Hamlet and the Scottish succession, Being an Examination of the Relations of the Play of* Hamlet *to the Scottish Succession and the Essex Conspiracy*. London: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted Philadelphia: R. West, 1977. ISBN 0-8492-2912-X.

Wofford, Susanne L. 1994. "A Critical History of Hamlet". In *Hamlet: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives*: 181–207. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martins Press. ISBN 0-312-08986-4.

[Template:Refend](/wiki/Template:Refend)

[Template:Library resources box](/wiki/Template:Library_resources_box)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Spoken Wikipedia](/wiki/Template:Spoken_Wikipedia)

* [*Hamlet*](http://www.bl.uk/works/hamlet) at the British Library
* [Template:Ibdb show](/wiki/Template:Ibdb_show)
* [Template:Iobdb show](/wiki/Template:Iobdb_show)
* [Template:Librivox book](/wiki/Template:Librivox_book)

Texts

* [The Annotated Hamlet](http://www.shakespearestudyguide.com) Complete Text of Hamlet With Explanations of Difficult Words and Passages. No ads or images.
* ["HyperHamlet"](http://www.hyperhamlet.unibas.ch) — The Q2 text, with copious hyper-linked references and notes. Run by the University of Basel.
* [ISE](http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/plays/Ham.html) — Internet Shakespeare Editions: transcripts and facsimiles of Q1, Q2 and F1.
* [Shakespeare Quartos Archive](http://www.quartos.org) — Transcriptions and facsimiles of thirty-two copies of the five pre-1642 quarto editions.
* [Open Source Shakespeare—*Hamlet*](http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/playmenu.php?WorkID=hamlet) A complete text of *Hamlet* based on Q2.
  + [View all of Hamlet's lines](http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/characters/charlines.php?CharID=hamlet&WorkID=hamlet) in Open Source Shakespeare.
* [Project Gutenberg full text](http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/1524)

Analysis

* [Hamlet on the Ramparts](http://shea.mit.edu/ramparts) — The [MIT's](/wiki/Massachusetts_Institute_of_Technology) Shakespeare Electronic Archive.
* [Hamletworks.org](http://www.hamletworks.org) – scholarly resource with multiple versions of *Hamlet*, commentaries, concordances, and more.
* [Depictions and commentary of Hamlet paintings](http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/HamletPaintings.html)
* [Clear Shakespeare *Hamlet*](http://clearshakespeare.com/category/hamlet/) — A word-by-word audio guide through the play.

[Template:Shakespeare](/wiki/Template:Shakespeare) [Template:Hamlet](/wiki/Template:Hamlet) [Template:Featured article](/wiki/Template:Featured_article) [Template:OlivierAward PlayRevival 2001–2025](/wiki/Template:OlivierAward_PlayRevival_2001–2025) [Template:Subject bar](/wiki/Template:Subject_bar) [Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

[\*](/wiki/Category:Hamlet) [Category:1600s plays](/wiki/Category:1600s_plays) [Category:English Renaissance plays](/wiki/Category:English_Renaissance_plays) [Category:Fratricide in fiction](/wiki/Category:Fratricide_in_fiction) [Category:Ghosts in popular culture](/wiki/Category:Ghosts_in_popular_culture) [Category:Metafictional plays](/wiki/Category:Metafictional_plays) [Category:Plays about death](/wiki/Category:Plays_about_death) [Category:Plays adapted into films](/wiki/Category:Plays_adapted_into_films) [Category:Plays adapted into operas](/wiki/Category:Plays_adapted_into_operas) [Category:Plays adapted into radio programs](/wiki/Category:Plays_adapted_into_radio_programs) [Category:Plays adapted into television programs](/wiki/Category:Plays_adapted_into_television_programs) [Category:Plays adapted into video games](/wiki/Category:Plays_adapted_into_video_games) [Category:Plays set in Denmark](/wiki/Category:Plays_set_in_Denmark) [Category:Regicide in fiction](/wiki/Category:Regicide_in_fiction) [Category:Revenge plays](/wiki/Category:Revenge_plays) [Category:Shakespearean tragedies](/wiki/Category:Shakespearean_tragedies) [Category:Suicide in fiction](/wiki/Category:Suicide_in_fiction) [Category:Works based on Gesta Danorum](/wiki/Category:Works_based_on_Gesta_Danorum) [Category:Works set in castles and fortresses](/wiki/Category:Works_set_in_castles_and_fortresses)