

Paula vasconcellos

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Paula Vasconcellos Plot of Hamlet To kill a king, to avenge a murder, to save a nation, a task put into one man's hands. Hamlet is a man with "too much reason" and not enough action. Sick with love and disgusted by the lust which slowly engulfs his kingdom. He is surrounded by greed and death within a threatened Denmark. In Shakespeare's Hamlet, plot is constructed through various internal conflicts and a tense mood formed by the use of historical setting, psychological characterization, and ominous foreshadowing. The battle between King Fortinbras and King Hamlet is an example presented in the play of historical setting, for it illustrates a past happening which is important for the fundamental understanding of the play. It describes the battle between the two kings for some land, an occurrence in the past which is important to what is happening in the present.

Shakespeare uses historical settings to develop conflict in the plot of the play. After the murder of the King Hamlet by Claudius, his brother, the reader is led to believe that young Fortinbras will now fight back for the land his father once lost, "Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras, holding a weak supposal of our worth, or thinking by our late dear brother's death our state to be disjoint and out of frame, colleague'd with this dream of his advantage, he hath not failed to pester us with message importing the surrender of those lands lost by his father, with all bands of law, to our most valiant brother." (Act I sc. 2 lines 17-25) This leads to an atmosphere of suspense and fear of an unknown future. The appearance of the ghost of the late King Hamlet is another example of historical reference for it is used to start building up to an oncoming "conflictuous" development of the plot. Psychological characterization in the play focuses mainly on Hamlet.

Shakespeare demonstrates Hamlet's weakness by showing how he can never make decisions and by contrasting him with young Fortinbras. Hamlet is portrayed as someone weak and unstable while Fortinbras, is a strong-willed character, ready to gather his troops and recover his country's pride by getting back the land his father once lost. . In Shakespeare's Hamlet, ominous foreshadowing plays an extremely important role. The play opens at a sentry post before the castle of Elsinore, Denmark, during legendary times. It is midnight and Francisco, a sentry, is at his post awaiting his relief. We are already led to wonder what he is frightened of, but we are soon told, " Horatio says ' tis but our fantasy, and well not let belief take hold of him thouching this draded sight, twice seen of us." (Act I , sc. I, lines 30-33) We are informed that for the past couple of nights two guards have repeatedly seen what is thought to be an apparition of the late King Hamlet of Denmark. Already a sense of mystery permeates the beginning of the plot with the mysterious appearance of the ghost, but as quickly as the ghost comes, it goes. We are left only with one question in our minds, why has the ghost returned from the dead? This question leads us to foreshadow that the ghost has returned to correct a wrong or if it be an evil ghost to cause chaos in Denmark. Another example that might lead us to conclude that something is not right in the state of Denmark is the line said by Marcellus(one of the guards who has seen the ghost), " Something is rotten in the state of Denmark". This line alone leaves the reader with an uncomfortable feeling, wondering what could be wrong and if it is somehow connected to the ghost's return. Another important example of foreshadowing if found in Act I sc. III , when Polonius prohibits his daughter Ophelia to speak to prince

Hamlet, " I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth have you so slander any moment leisure as to give words or to talk with the Lord Hamlet." (lines 139-141) Polonius is committing the ultimate mistake found in all the great tragedies, he is prohibiting two lovers to see or speak to one another. If there is any true love between Hamlet and Ophelia the reader can conclude that they will probably try to see one another against Polonius' will. This creates a tense mood to the reader, foreshadowing of an ominous and threatening, future occurrence in the plot. Shakespeare uses diverse literary devices to attain conflict leading to a rather intricate plot. He does not commence the play by feeding us with background knowledge, but by employing immediate action. Through historical data the reader is enlightened with the elements that influenced the outcome of the present conflict leaving us with a mood of uncertainty of the future. Finally, through a psychological analysis of some of the characters, particularly Hamlet, we acquire a broader understanding of the conflictous plot of the play.