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BAD TASTE AND BAD *HAMLET*

> We are apt to call *barbarous* whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension, but soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us.
>
> David Hume

The centuries-old ritual is about to begin anew. In a small theater, Hamlet nears his most famous soliloquy, the immortal language of which has remained relatively stable over time, even as other elements of the play have altered. The audience shift in their seats and become still with concentration. The house lights seem to dim and the stage lights, to brighten. How will this actor's delivery measure up to that of the thousands who have preceded him in the role? What new nuances, new emphases, will he (or occasionally she, as in the case of Sarah Bernhardt's Hamlet and more recent female Hamlets) bring to the performance? In what way will this Hamlet mark the soliloquy as his own? He begins traditionally enough, but then something goes radically wrong:

> 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.
> For in that dream of death, when we awake –
> And borne before an everlasting judge –
> From whence no passanger ever returned –
> The undiscovered country, at whose sight
> The happy smile, and the accursed, damned –
> But for this, the joyful hope of this,
> Who'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world:
> Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poor,
> The widow being oppressed, the orphan wronged,
> The taste of hunger, or a tyrant's reign,
> And thousand more calamities besides,
> To grunt and sweat under this weary life,

> When that he may his full quietus make
> With a bare bodkin? Who would this endure,
> But for a hope of something after death,
> Which puzzles the brain and doth confound the sense,
> Which makes us rather bear those evils we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of?
> Aye, that!
> O this conscience makes cowards of us all.[1]

The Hamlet uttering these lines will, needless to say, forfeit his opportun to measure up to the long tradition of great Hamlets, since his lines will n be perceived as *Hamlet*. So deeply engrained in our cultural expectations the established text of "To be or not to be" that any deviation from it is lik to be greeted as parody, and the audience on this theatrical occasion is exception. Hamlet's first wrong turn of language meets with polite titte but as the mistakes multiply, the titters quickly expand into guffaws. Wh some laugh at the apparent burlesque, others sit in uneasy silence, r sure how to react. Still others quicken to intellectual alertness: this is r the usual soliloquy, but something strange and heterodox, too close to t received version to be effective parody, yet too distant to communic the same message. What is the meaning of this speech, the message of t strangely altered *Hamlet*?

The scene being described is a hypothetical reconstruction of events t have actually occurred in recent productions of the first quarto of *Ham* yet another of our "bad" quartos, but one that has aroused extraordinar strong interest during the past decade, particularly in theatrical circl My reconstruction is in one major way fallacious: during performances Q1 *Hamlet*, it would be an uneducated audience indeed that would to recognize before the moment of "To be or not to be" that they w watching a radically different *Hamlet* than the usual one – different not o in terms of its brevity, since many productions prune the play down alm to bare bones, but in terms of its choice of words and altered syntax – consistent debasement, bastardization, or (to adopt a more neutral ter simplification of the refined, poetic language of the play as we expect find it.

The textual situation of *Hamlet* is more complex than any treated so in the present study in that, since 1823, when the first of two extant cop of Q1 *Hamlet* was discovered, the play has existed for us not in two, but three early versions: the first and second quartos (1603 and 1604- respectively), and the First Folio (1623). All three texts are interrelat the folio version resembles Q1 more closely in some respects, Q2 m closely in others. Each has significant pieces of dialogue that exist in other version. As Philip Edwards has acutely noted, our sense of the d ambiguity of the play is closely connected with its lack of a clear text: "B

the prince and his play come down to us in more shapes than one. If the prince were not so mercurial the text would be more stable."[3]

Of the three early *Hamlet* texts, the second quarto has most often served as the copytext for modern editions, although G. R. Hibbard, Stanley Wells, and Gary Taylor adopt the folio for substantives in their recent Oxford editions on the grounds that the folio version represents Shakespeare's own revision of the play.[4] But in their attempts to establish a stable text for *Hamlet*, those who have constructed the major twentieth-century editions have ransacked all three early versions and related plays (the German *Der bestrafte Brudermord*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Antonio's Revenge*) for recurring configurations that would lead them to Shakespeare's intent. *Hamlet* as we usually read it is an elaborate mosaic of readings culled from early quartos, folios, and a long tradition of editorial emendation whereby the irregularities and grotesqueries of the early printed texts are smoothed over. Having made use of Q1 and other contemporary plays, however, most recent editors have gone on to suppress them as possible influences on Shakespeare, according to elaborate versions of the "Purity and Danger" ritual analyzed above in chapter 3. Indeed, in Harold Jenkins' Arden edition, the ritual is enacted twice: first to protect the editor's preferred *Hamlet* against John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*, which includes many similar incidents and which older editors had regarded as the earlier play and therefore an influence on Shakespeare, and second to protect Q2 against the marauding energies of Q1. To the extent that they adopt readings from Q1 or confirmed by Q1, editors tend to avoid mentioning that text in their notes.[5] Q1 is an embarrassment, a potential blot on the reputation of Shakespeare.

In general, the fortunes of Q1 *Hamlet* have altered along with that of the other "bad" quartos considered in previous chapters. After its discovery in the 1820s, most scholars regarded it as Shakespeare's earliest sketch for the play, albeit probably marred by corruptions. Charles Knight described it as a "vigorous sapling" that grew luxuriantly over time to become the "monarch of the forest."[6] After 1900, more and more editors regarded it as a corrupt adaptation or memorial reconstruction of the "real" *Hamlet*, even though they conceded that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* could not have been the first play of that name. For A. C. Bradley in 1904, Q1 *Hamlet* was still the "original form" of Shakespeare's play; in textual matters, as in many others, Bradley was heir and culmination of a long nineteenth-century tradition. By the time of John Dover Wilson's *What Happens in Hamlet* (1935), Q2 was the obvious choice for copytext and Q1 could be confidently dismissed even by Wilson, who had earlier posited it as Shakespeare's source play somewhat touched up by Shakespeare. For the later Wilson, Q1 was a "garbled text based upon notes got together by someone, whether actor or spectator, present at original performances of the play, as all critics are now agreed."[7] Editors after Wilson still acknowledged that there must have been

some sort of "Ur-*Hamlet*," a pre-Shakespearean play of the same na
But they posited the Ur-*Hamlet* as unrecoverable and thereby crea
an unbridgeable gulf between it and Shakespeare's version of the p
the Ur-*Hamlet* receded into a mythic past and Shakespeare's *Ha*
magically achieved the status of a charismatic original independent of
forebears.

The modernist consensus still holds firm in terms of editorial prac
in mainstream editions of *Hamlet* despite a strong movement rece
afoot in other circles to rehabilitate Q1.[8] Most recent editors continue
assert that Q1 is a memorial reconstruction – even Gary Taylor and Stan
Wells, who have done so much to rehabilitate Q *King Lear*.[9] But in th
attempts to sort out the echoes and transformations from one early prin
text to another, modern editors have been driven almost to a version
Hamlet's madness: which textual ghost speaks the truth of Shakespea
meaning? Or do all of them bear treacherous false witness to the auth
intent?

In the present chapter, I will not reenter the vast, disorienting labyri
of conflicting evidence that has had to be negotiated by every mod
editor of the play, but will confine myself for the most part to a sn
corner of it – to a reexamination of the early quarto versions of the p
the first of which is "bad" and the second of which is "good." Q1 *Ha*
is indeed "bad" *Hamlet*, and will continue to be bad so long as we ra
the early texts of the play on the basis of their adherence to cultur
predetermined standards of literary excellence. Given that "To be or
to be" in its traditional form is itself generally regarded as a touchstone
rarefied, discriminating taste – a pinnacle of literary artistry – any atten
to assert the value of an alternative version of the immortal lines is au
matically defined as evidence of a tin ear, an inability to appreciate
sublimity of Shakespeare. The matter is therefore unarguable within
established limits of the inquiry: "To be or not to be" in its traditional fo
is quintessential Shakespeare. Either you grasp its inexpressible excelle
or you don't, and if you don't, God help you. As Samuel Taylor Coleric
put the matter long since, "O heaven! words are wasted to those that f
and to those who do not feel the exquisite judgement of Shakespeare.'

But the soliloquy has served as a powerful cultural shibboleth in p
because it is uttered by an attractive, strongly-drawn, noble character w
himself posits a hierarchy of taste by which the "judicious" are sequeste
off from the "general" on the basis of their ability to see the world – a
human artifacts – with the same discriminating taste that Hamlet hims
does. We need to remind ourselves of the almost overpowering degree
which literate culture in general and professors of literature in particu
are invested in an appreciation of literary excellence as a guarantor
their membership in an intellectual elite. *Hamlet* in its high cultural fo
is "caviary to the general," and we who have the ability to savor it ea

inclusion in a select circle that Hamlet himself – and through him, Shakespeare – has defined.

As Barbara Herrnstein Smith and others have argued, literary value is contingent: the degree and kind of artistry we attribute to a given play or poem will depend not only on the particular era we inhabit, but also on our specific situation within that era – the cultural group we come from, belong to, aspire towards.[11] Indeed, as we have already noted earlier, much of the power of traditional editorial practice has derived from the editor's ability to call upon and reinforce seemingly unquestionable standards of taste shared with the more enlightened members of his or her readership. These standards, and the editions that both reflect and promulgate them, can alter markedly over time. For I. A. Richards, anyone who liked a sonnet by Ellen Wheeler Wilcox was "incapable of surviving in a complex environment and therefore biologically unfit" (cited in Smith, p. 37). Feminist scholars operating successfully in the yet more complex environment of the 1990s may question the critical assumptions behind Richards' assessment. Alexander Pope's Shakespeare would scarcely serve the present age, any more than our Shakespeare would serve his.

Moreover, the existence of shared standards of taste is much easier to document in broad matters than in instances of textual detail: literary scholars and other informed readers may agree in general about the authors to be included in an established canon, and about the basic shape of the works attributed to those authors, but when it comes to minute discriminations of language, the apparent consensus breaks down into wrangling and petty difference. *Hamlet* itself supplies an excellent case in point: for much of our century, at least before the new Oxford Shakespeares, editors were in substantial agreement about the broad shape of the play, thereby cementing an elite community with each other and with their discriminating readers. But when it comes to choosing or amending the precise wording of individual passages, the consensus falls into fragments and the text remains in flux, with no two editors precisely in accord. One famous example is the array of suggested language for the famous crux in 4.2 – Hamlet's sarcastic reference to Claudius and his creatures in terms of (variously) apes, apples, nuts and jaws, depending on the edition that we happen to consult.

The proliferation of readings here and elsewhere in *Hamlet* derives in part from each editor's need to document that she or he has perused the early materials independently of previous editors. But that need is itself driven by a strong urge to make "progress" against the insidious and intractable textual problems of the play. "Advancement in perfectness" has been one of the chief goals of *Hamlet* editors at least since that goal was articulated by Edward Capell in the late eighteenth century.[12] "To be or not to be" in its traditional form has been important for nineteenth and twentieth-century culture in part because it is, unlike much of the rest of

the play, a passage upon which (with the exception of two or three word there has long been strong unanimity. Here, at least, is immortal langua that exists precisely as Shakespeare intended it. And here, at last, Shakespeare disclosing his deepest thoughts about the human conditic The soliloquy is difficult and subject to a variety of interpretations, but t words themselves can be relied on. They are woven deeply into the fab of our culture and their static, monolithic power serves the useful functi of helping to keep the community of good taste intact and deflecti attention away from textual variations elsewhere in the play that mig destabilize the apparent consensus.

It will not be the business of this chapter to attack the hierarchy of ta by which "To be or not to be, that is the question" is defined as hig refined, and Shakespearean, and "To be or not to be, aye, there's t point," as low, vulgar, and fraudulent. The theoretical bases for such argument have been clearly set out by others already cited in my notes, a the argument itself, although easily made, will not convince anyone whc not already willing to admit the fallibility of his or her own judgme Rather, I will seek to recast the discussion about Q1 *Hamlet* entirely considering that text and its "betters" in terms of the differing expectatio created by orality and writing as competing forms of communicati within the Renaissance playhouse. Was Shakespeare's theater as literate modern editorial practice, with its insistence on the sovereign authority Shakespeare's manuscripts and acts of writing, assumes it was? How c actors in the Elizabethan and early Jacobean playhouses learn their lin How did they conceptualize the plays they worked on – as written "tex as oral discourse, or as a complicated mixture of both? And finally, h might recent studies of memory and mnemonics in early modern a earlier culture alter our received notions about the role of memory in t early modern theater?

For advocates of the theory of memorial reconstruction, memory inherently contaminated and texts generated by that means, by definiti untrustworthy. According to W. W. Greg, memorial reconstruction deno "any process of transmission which involves the memory no matter at wh stage or in what manner."[13] By such a definition, as I shall argue lat nearly all Renaissance playtexts are culpable in one degree or anoth Over and over again within Shakespeare's plays, but particularly in *Ham* bad taste is associated with an outmoded oral theatrical culture. Similar for twentieth-century adherents of the theory of memorial reconstructic "bad" Shakespeare is the product of defective memory and insufficie literacy. Modern readers and critics have, quite understandably, recapi lated Shakespeare's own apparent assumptions about the relative val of oral and literate culture: good taste is associated with writing as oppos to orality; and "good" Shakespeare, with the creation of a theater that specifically literary.

These matters are obviously highly speculative, but as we shall see, the cultural authority that defines the first quarto as "bad" *Hamlet* derives in large part from Hamlet himself, and from the new, more self-contained literary theater that he favors. When the ghost commands Hamlet to "Remember me" the prince does not trust to his memory, but writes the words down, except that he doesn't record them quite accurately: in both Q1 and Q2, the ghost thrice cries "adiew" before the command "remember." Hamlet writes down only two adieus. Modern editors follow the folio in having the ghost utter only two adieus, so that Hamlet's writing has the precision we expect of a "copy." Just as in this instance the folio version is more "literate" in its reproduction of language than either quarto version, Q2 is regularly more literary and literate than Q1 in terms of formalized criteria of difference between primarily oral and primarily literate cultures.[14] Insofar as Q2 participates more fully in our own profoundly literate assumptions about the proper shaping and complexity of art, Q2 and F (which resembles Q2 much more closely than it does Q1 in terms of language) will remain a standard against which Q1 is found wanting. But Q1 will remain like a beckoning ghost who does not write but intones, urging us to remember that the theatrical culture of the Elizabethan playhouse may have been profoundly different from the literary cultures within which *Hamlet* has been edited.

HAMLET, Q1 AND Q2

The textual mystery of *Hamlet* begins with the peculiar circumstances of its early publication. The first quarto appeared in 1603 with a title page that reads in full:

> THE / Tragicall Historie of / HAMLET / *Prince of Denmarke* / By William Shake-speare. / As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse ser- / uants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two V- / niuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where / At London printed for N.L. and Iohn Trundell. / 1603.

The printer of this edition has been identified as Valentine Simmes. As has frequently been noted, there was an irregularity in the publication, in that "A booke called the Revenge of Hamlett Prince [of] Denmarke as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes" had already been registered in 1602 to another printer, James Roberts.[15]

The plot thickens with the appearance of the second quarto in late 1604 and early 1605. Its title page reads:

> *THE* / Tragicall Historie of / HAMLET, / *Prince of Denmarke.* / By William Shakespeare. / Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much / againe as it was, according to the true and perfect / Coppie.

> / AT LONDON. / Printed by I.R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his / shoppe vnder Saint Dunstons Church in / Fleetstreet. 1604 [or 1605].

This time, James Roberts, to whom *Hamlet* was registered, was the print For many twentieth-century editors, the second title page has seem actively to supplant the first, so that a narration of the publication hist of the play might read rather like this: some low character, probably Jo Trundell (who was mentioned as co-publisher on the Q1 title page, a who was known for his sponsorship of base, popular printed material ballads, marvellous narratives, and the like) illegally acquired a corr copy of the play. Rather than suffer such a debased text to be promulgat under his name, Shakespeare hastened to put the "true" play in pr the very next year with the printer whom he had previously authorized publish *Hamlet*, so that Q2 would be based on the author's genuine pap and not on a pirated copy.[16]

Recent research has somewhat diminished the cloak-and-dagger dra of this narrative: Roberts regularly printed for the publisher Nicholas Li whose device appears on both title pages, and Ling made a practice acquiring texts from others in the trade. Since Roberts and Ling work together uninterruptedly both before and after the first quarto was p lished in 1603, it is likely that the two reached some understanding ab Q1 and that it was published with Roberts' consent.[17] Nevertheless, the t title pages, with their double and conflicting guarantees of authentic to performance (in the case of Q1) and to the written copy (in the case Q2), have helped to generate a strict dualism in our understanding of t two texts: Q1 was a performance text of some kind, or a debased co thereof, with all of the corruption that such a suspect origin suggests; Q on the other hand, was a literary text based on the author's own mar script "Coppie," with the promise of genuineness that such provenan implies. I am less interested in disputing this differentiation of the t quartos for descriptive purposes than in probing into the subtle moral a evidentiary valuation that causes one text to rank very high and the oth very low. Why such privilege for the literary over the theatrical?

Before delving further into the matter of provenance, however, we ne to look more closely at differences between the two quarto versions. usual with the bad quartos, the specific scapegoat function to which Q1 h been put has caused it to appear a disjointed heap of fragments rath than a respectable work of literature possessing its own claim to unity. fact, Wilson characterized it as a thing "of shreds and patches," adapti Hamlet's closet scene description of Claudius as a way of rendering it bc morally bad and uninterpretable.[18] To prefer Q1 over Q2 would be demonstrate the same base perversity of taste that has caused Gertrude prefer loathsome Claudius over fidelity to the memory of King Haml

Ironically, however, it is only in Q1 that the ragtag language is unequivocally applied to Claudius. In that version, Hamlet demands to know how his mother could "leaue him that bare a Monarkes minde, / For a king of clowts, of very shreads" (H 168 [G2]v),[19] and the ghost enters only after twelve more lines of dialogue. In both Q2 and F, however, the equivalent phrase does not occur until after the entrance of the ghost – a timing that makes Hamlet's meaning more problematic:

> *Ger.* No more.
>
> *Enter Ghost*
>
> *Ham.* A King of shreds and patches,
> Saue me and houer ore me with your wings
> You heauenly gards: what would your gracious figure?
>
> (H 170 [I3]v)

In both Q2 and F (but not in Q1) it is possible that the "King of shreds and patches" Hamlet describes is the ghost whose entrance has been recorded immediately before. In Q1 the stage directions call for the ghost to enter "*in his night gowne*" but his attire is unspecified in the alternative texts: might he be wearing a cerecloth or some other strange and irregular apparel?

Only by reference to Q1 can editors achieve certainty as to Hamlet's meaning and thereby keep intact the hierarchy of taste by which Hamlet Sr is associated with the "good" quarto and Claudius, with the "bad." Indeed, one of the defining marks of Q1 is that it is usually clearer and more straightforward than the other early texts – not only in terms of language, but also, preeminently, in terms of action. It is not a "thing of shreds and patches" if considered in its own terms, but shows the same pattern of consistent difference that we have already observed in the other "bad" quartos.

In Q1, Polonius is named Corambis, and some other names vary slightly: Ophelia is spelled Ofelia, Laertes becomes Leartes, Q2's *Gertrard* is Gertred in Q1, and *Guyldersterne* and *Rosencraus* (Q2) have the more sinister names of Gilderstone and Rossencraft. Their behavior in Q1 matches the more foreboding nomenclature. In Q2, Hamlet greets them as "good friends," refers to them later as "deare friends," and several times alludes to his love for them and theirs for him; moreover, his mother confirms that he has "much talkt" of them. In Q1, she makes no such claim and the relationship is more distant: he greets them only as "kinde Schoole-fellowes" (H 96, 98) and engages in none of the affectionate badinage with them that he does at least initially in Q2. Indeed, in Q1 their primary allegiance appears to be to Claudius – he, not Hamlet, calls them "friends" and protests his "great loue" for them (H 76). Fittingly, in Q1, unlike Q2, Horatio expresses not the slightest regret over their death: they were Claudius's creatures from the start.

Other characters' roles are also subtly but significantly altered in t first quarto so that the line between good and evil is sharper. In Claudius is a more thoroughly villainous character than he is in Q2: lacks the unctuous surface geniality he often displays in Q2, and works l in concord with the queen. In Q1, it is he, not Leartes [Laertes], w suggests the stratagem of the poisoned sword to ensure Hamlet's death Claudius is more clearly nefarious in Q1, however, Gertred is more clea innocent of at least the worst crimes of which she stands accused.[20] She a less in concord with Claudius, and swears to her son in the closet sce that she was unaware Claudius had dispatched her first husband: "But I haue a soule, I sweare by heauen, / I neuer knew of this most horr murder" (H 172 G3r). Moreover, in Q1 only, at the end of the scene s hastens to promise her help in Hamlet's revenge:

> I vow by that maiesty,
> That knowes our thoughts, and lookes into our hearts,
> I will conceale, consent, and doe my best,
> What stratagem soe're thou shalt deuise.
>
> (H 176 G3)

Later on, in a scene unique to Q1, Horatio reveals to Gertred Haml successful evasion of Claudius's plot for his execution in England and s responds by renewing her allegiance to her son, remarking of Claudi "I perceiue there's treason in his lookes / That seem'd to sugar o're villanie" and assuring Horatio that she will cover up her true feelir "soothe and please" Claudius "for a time" only to allay his suspicions, "I murderous mindes are alwayes jealous" (H 208 [H2]v).

Hamlet, too, is less unfathomable in Q1 than in Q2, but also m "healthy minded" in the conventional meaning of the phrase. Nearly of his language of sexual loathing is absent from Q1. To be sure, in soliloquy parallel to Q2's more famous "O that this too too sallied fl would melt," he exclaims in Q1, "O that this too much grieu'd and sall flesh / Would melt to nothing," and later on in the same speech he nc (as in Q2) his mother's sexual hunger for Claudius: "Why she would ha on him, as if increase / Of appetite had growne by what it looked (H 32 [B4]r). But that speech is almost the only point in the first qua version at which Hamlet seems to dwell on his mother's sexual frailty a his own "sallied flesh," and even there, the idea of his mother's gain appetite by "looking" on Claudius lacks some of the grotesqueness of Q conflation of the sexual and the alimentary: "As if increase of appetite l growne / By what it fed on" (H 32).

Similarly, in the stage direction describing the dumbshow, Q1 is em of most of the sexualization that is so prominent in Q2 and F. The Q1 st directions read:

> *Enter in a Dumbe Shew, the King and the Queene, he sits downe in an Arbor she leaues him: Then enters Lucianus with poyson in a Viall, and powres i*

in his eares, and goes away: Then the Queene commeth and findes him dead: and goes away with the other.

(H 140 F3r)

In this version from Q1, it is never stated on what terms she "*goes away with the other.*" In Q2, by contrast, her behavior with both men is explicitly sexualized by the stage directions – the queen embraces the king and he, her; he "*declines his head vpon her necke*"; finding him dead she "*makes passionate action*" and allows herself to be wooed by the poisoner: "*shee seemes harsh awhile, but in the end accepts loue*" (H 140 [H1]v). In the Q1 version of the actual play, the murder takes place in "*guyana*" rather than "*Vienna*" and the Duke's name is *Albertus* rather than *Gonzago*. But a more crucial difference is that in the Q1 "Mouse trap" the pair has been married for "Full fortie yeares" rather than thirty, as in Q2; appropriately, the husband in Q1 is more seriously burdened with age and loss of sexual potency: the "blood" that filled his "youthfull veines" now "Runnes weakely in their pipes" (H 142). In Q2 the parallel passage is, for once, less graphic than Q1: "My operant powers their functions leaue to do" (H 142).

There is a similar contrast in the two closet scenes: the Hamlet of Q2 dwells yet again on his mother's appetites: the "ranck sweat of an inseemed bed / Stewed in corruption, honying, and making loue / Ouer the nasty stie" (H 168 I3r). In Q1, his language is far less voyeuristically graphic: "Who'le chide hote blood within a Virgins heart, / When lust shall dwell within a matrons breast?" (H 168 [G2]v). For a broad stream of Freudian critics beginning with Freud himself and his disciple Ernest Jones, Hamlet is the English Oedipus – unable to kill Claudius because of his own repressed desire for his mother and covert identification with Claudius as the man who has won her away from his father.[21] That interpretation is far less available in Q1, in which most of Hamlet's "diseased" language is not present and in which most of his sexual anguish seems to relate to the breach with Ofelia rather than repressed desire for his mother. Indeed, in the speech cited above, he seems to regard "hote blood" as (relatively speaking) appropriate for a "Virgin" – perhaps for a virgin like Ofelia?

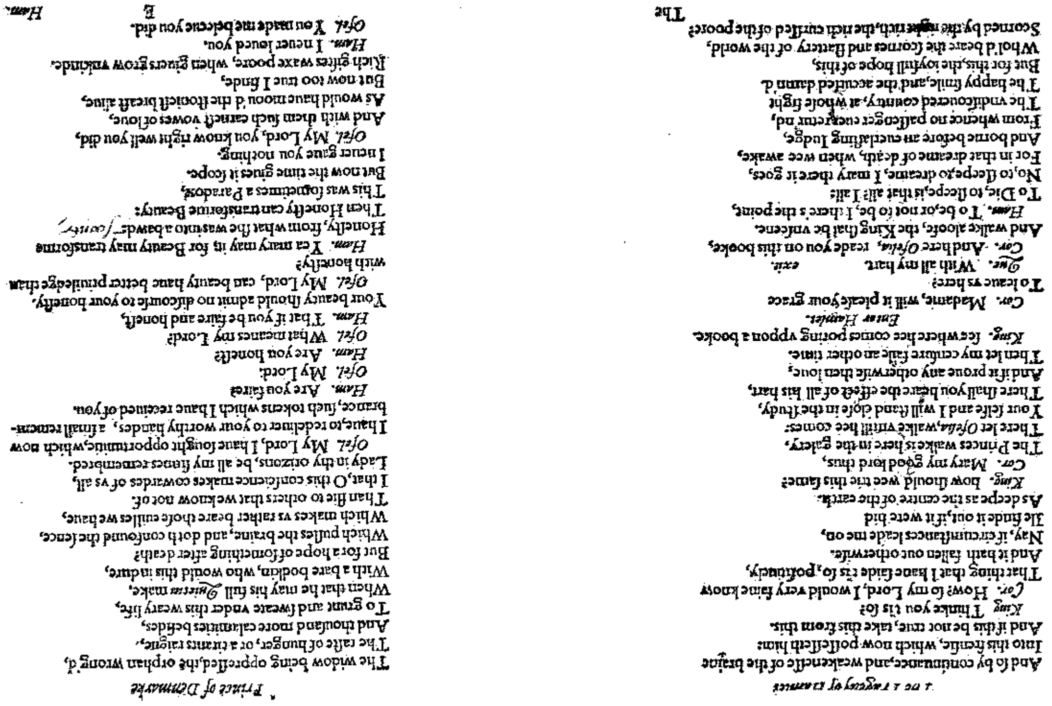
Q1 also "lacks" Hamlet's wonderfully ambiguous lines from the final soliloquy that exists only in the second quarto "... how stand I then / That haue a father kild, a mother staind, / Excytements of my reason, and my blood, / And let all sleepe" (H 190 [K3]v). A Freudian reading of the passage would take its lack of clarity over agency as an unwitting confession of Hamlet's unconscious desire to possess his mother and dispose of his father – is it he who, in the labyrinthine world of his own repressed fantasies, has killed his father and stained his mother? By failing to include most of Hamlet's incestuous preoccupation with his mother's sexuality, Q1 fails to confirm one of the master discourses of the twentieth century. Given that the Freudian reading of Hamlet's relationship to

Gertrude has been prominent in screen and stage versions of the p since Laurence Olivier's classic film version a half century ago, it is und standable that Q1 *Hamlet* has seemed during the same period to l authenticity in terms of its psychodynamics.

Q1 is also more "healthy minded" than Q2 in terms of the philosophi and religious attitudes it articulates, at least to the extent that adherer to mainstream opinion can be defined as healthier than deviance. Q1 i short, strangely powerful revenge play in which Hamlet almost entir "lacks" the crippling melancholy or weakness or depression that ma critics have found central to his character. In his conversation w Rossencraft and Gilderstone, for example, the Hamlet of Q1 is decide less melancholy than in the Q2 version of the speech, which confes a pervasive heaviness of disposition that has caused Hamlet's world to l light, color, and meaning to the point that it appears but a "pestil congregation of vapoures" (H 100). In Q1, he complains merely "No r the spangled heauens, nor earth nor sea, / No nor Man that is so gloric a creature, / Contents not me" (H 100 [E2]v).

Similarly, at the end of the encounter with Polonius/Corambis in whi Hamlet taunts him as a "Fishmonger," Q2 has Hamlet respond Polonius's announcement that he will take his leave with the arresti speech, "You cannot take from mee any thing that I will not more willin part withall: except my life, except my life, except my life" (H 94 [F1] Q1 omits the world-weary repetition and Hamlet offers only insult: "Y can take nothing from me sir, / I will more willingly part with all, / O doating foole" (H 94 [E2]v). In Q1's version of "O what a rogue and pes slaue am I," by contrast, Hamlet's opening appears to display a m vehement self-contempt than in the standard version. The first line of soliloquy in Q1 reads "Why what a dunghill idiote slaue am I?" Furth on in the same soliloquy, moreover, Hamlet refers, as in Q2, to " weakenesse and my melancholy." But in Q1 those passions have a clea "objective correlative" in that, as part of the same speech, he articula (in Q1 only) his bitterness at his loss of the throne: "His father murdr and a Crowne bereft him" (H 114–18 [E4]v–F[1]r).

"To be or not to be" is also vastly different in the two quarto versio Whatever we may think of the nervous, staccato, almost catecheti questions and answers, interspersed with disjointed speculations, t constitute the soliloquy in its Q1 form (Figure 5.1), we will note that argument is considerably altered. To put the matter in the baldest possi terms, in Q2, Hamlet contemplates suicide, but rejects it on acco of some unknown terror in the afterlife: ills "we know not of." In Q1, contemplates suicide but rejects it on more conventional religious groun not out of dread of something after death, but "for a hope of somethi after death" – the hope of being numbered among the "happy" rather th the "accursed." In Q2, the "vndiscouer'd country" of the afterlife is tot


The Tragedy of Hamlet

And so by continuance, and weakenesse of the braine
Into this frensie, which now possesseth him:
And if this be not true, take this from this.
King Thinke you t'is so?
Cor. How? so my Lord, I would very faine know
That thing that I haue saide t'is so, positiuely,
And it hath fallen out otherwise.
Nay, if circumstances leade me on,
Ile finde it out, if it were hid
As deepe as the centre of the earth.
King. how should wee trie this same?
Cor. Mary my good lord thus,
The Princes walke is here in the galery,
There let *Ofelia*, walke vntill hee comes:
Your selfe and I will stand close in the study,
There shall you heare the effect of all his hart,
And if it proue any otherwise then loue,
Then let my censure faile an other time.
King. see where hee comes poring vppon a booke.
Enter Hamlet.
Cor. Madame, will it please your grace
To leaue vs here?
Que. With all my hart. *exit.*
Cor. And here *Ofelia*, reade you on this booke,
And walke aloofe, the King shal be vnseene.
Ham. To be, or not to be, I there's the point,
To Die, to sleepe, is that all? I all:
No, to sleepe, to dreame, I mary there it goes,
For in that dreame of death, when wee awake,
And borne before an euerlasting Iudge,
From whence no passenger euer retur'nd,
The vndiscouered country, at whose sight
The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd.
But for this, the ioyfull hope of this,
Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world,
Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poore?
The

Prince of Denmarke

The widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd,
The taste of hunger, or a tirants raigne,
And thousand more calamities besides,
To grunt and sweate vnder this weary life,
When that he may his full *Quietus* make,
With a bare bodkin, who would this indure,
But for a hope of something after death?
Which pusles the braine, and doth confound the sence,
Which makes vs rather beare those euilles we haue,
Than flie to others that we know not of.
I that, O this conscience makes cowardes of vs all,
Lady in thy orizons, be all my sinnes remembred.
Ofel. My Lord, I haue sought opportunitie, which now
I haue, to redeliuer to your worthy handes, a small remem-
brance, such tokens which I haue receiued of you.
Ham. Are you faire?
Ofel. My Lord.
Ham. Are you honest?
Ofel. What meanes my Lord?
Ham. That if you be faire and honest,
Your beauty should admit no discourse to your honesty.
Ofel. My Lord, can beauty haue better priuiledge than
with honesty?
Ham. Yea mary may it; for Beauty may transforme
Honesty, from what she was into a bawde:
Then Honesty can transforme Beauty:
This was sometimes a Paradox,
But now the time giues it scope.
I neuer gaue you nothing.
Ofel. My Lord, you know right well you did,
And with them such earnest vowes of loue,
As would haue moou'd the stoniest breast aliue,
But now too true I finde,
Rich giftes waxe poore, when giuers grow vnkinde.
Ham. I neuer loued you.
Ofel. You made me beleeue you did.
E Ham.

Figure 5.1 Q1 "To be or not to be" (1603)
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San Marino, California

mysterious and unknown, despite the earlier testimony of the gh (perhaps a sign, as W. W. Greg suggested long since, that the ghost is to be trusted?). In Q1, the afterlife bears a familiar, more comfort shape: conscience makes men cowards in the very direct sense that who takes revenge risks damnation. Conversely, however, he who does take revenge can console himself with hope for the life to come. Haml reservations about the revenge in Q1 are rationally arrived at, for all of seeming dislocation of his language. Q2 is much darker and more para ing, in that he cannot perceive any of his alternatives as clearly prefera to the others: indeed, they all seem to converge upon the same stalemat uncertainty about an afterlife that, if he adhered to standard Christ teaching, would have a much more definable shape. Q1 Haml questioning takes place against a ground of basic epistemological stabil Q2 Hamlet, at least as the play is usually interpreted, inhabits a more inf pitable, unfathomable universe – one more closely in tune with the de skepticism of twentieth-century modernism.

In Q2, similarly, Hamlet dies uttering the enigmatic line, "the res silence." It is left to Horatio to provide the hope of "flights of Angels" t may (or may not) sing the dead prince to his "rest." In Q1, it is Han himself who clothes his death in orthodoxy: his last words are "heau receiue my soule" (H 266). Yet once more, good and evil are more ea distinguished than in Q2. Despite the blood he has shed, the prince c in the hope that he has not irrevocably jeopardized his place among righteous. Much is obviously lost in the first quarto of *Hamlet* thro the absence of the moral stalemating and wide-ranging interrogation t is such an important part of most twentieth-century audiences' experie of *Hamlet* in performance and of *Hamlet* in the standard editions. Hamlet carries little of the existential angst that has endeared the pla modernists; indeed, the young prince in Q1 is scarce recognizable as "melancholy Dane." But what is lost in terms of Hamlet's relentless, ne manic probing of the dark borders of human existence is partly gai back by his increased capacity for action.

Q1 *Hamlet*, if recent testimony by actors, directors, and audiences is guide, can work wonderfully well in the theater. Its rhythms are enti different from those of Q2: what it lacks in terms of philosophic ra and refinement of language, it compensates for through an abundanc theatrical energy. Q1 is "*Hamlet* with the brakes off."[22] While Q2 freque doubles back upon itself and slows down the action with long medita speeches, Q1 *Hamlet* has no time for prolonged meditation and very li time for soliloquies. The play moves relentlessly and powerfully fi the first, horrifying encounter with the ghost to Hamlet's bloody end. differing language of "To be or not to be" correlates with larger structu in Q2 the ontological alternatives constitute a "question" with no obvi answer; in Q1, Hamlet's posing the alternatives instead constitute

"point," a step along the way to a decisive conclusion: "To be or not to be – aye there's the point!"

As has frequently been noted, Q1 "straightens out" the action of the play so that Hamlet's actions follow logically one from another.[23] The two main soliloquies in the middle of the play are reversed, as they often are in modern productions: Corambis [Polonius] reads Claudius the letter in which Hamlet professes his love to Ofelia, and they decide to eavesdrop on a conversation between the two. That plan is put immediately into effect. Hamlet enters upon the lines "To be or not to be" and then launches into the Nunnery scene with Ofelia. Shortly after, the players enter and, at Hamlet's request, offer the Priam and Hecuba speech (much curtailed); Hamlet asks them to perform the "murder of *Gonsago*" with a few added lines, they exit, he launches into the soliloquy ending "The play's the thing, / Wherein I'le catch the conscience of the King" (H 118 F[1]r) and, after a brief scene between Claudius, Gertred, Rossencraft and Gilderstone, the "play within a play" commences. Hamlet moves effectively from thought to action, his every decision ironically pushing him closer to his doom. His final major soliloquy, "How all occasions doe informe against me," is "missing" from Q1, as it is from the folio version of the play.

In Q2 and modern edited versions, by contrast, Hamlet's every action is blocked or its energies "turned awry." He draws the seemingly decisive conclusion, "the play's the thing / Wherein Ile catch the conscience of the King," early on, before the encounter with Ophelia. But then his resolve is deflected: we find him brooding on suicide in "To be, or not to be," which had appeared much earlier in Q1. Well after *The Mousetrap* was supposed to settle the matter of Claudius's guilt, in Q2 (and that version only) we find Hamlet reengaging the same knotty questions as earlier, albeit from a new perspective, in his final soliloquy, "How all occasions doe informe against me." Only in Q2 is he, at this late point in the action, continuing to castigate himself for delaying the revenge.

The switchback pattern of Q2 has its own considerable fascination – Bradley thought it a Shakespearean revision that was one of the most brilliant coups of the play in terms of revelation of character.[24] But Q2 Hamlet's self-reversals do slow the play down in the theater – a major reason why directors frequently adopt the somewhat streamlined pattern of F or even the greatly increased pace of Q1 for performance. If the two quarto versions of *Hamlet* are considered intertextually, Q2 can safely be described as slow, meditative, and introspective. Q1, rather like the *Faustus* A text, is fast, powerful, and iconoclastic and offers some of the pleasures of iconoclasm: it brutally excises "idle" verbiage and strips away impediments to action. That is not to say that Q1 is to be preferred over Q2: in the absence of the icon, the power of iconoclasm is lost. And Q2, in any case, offers at the thematic level its own pleasures for the iconoclast – its

restless philosophical searching can be seen as undercutting the relat orthodoxy of Q1.

Moreover, there is a fascinating correlation in the two quartos betwe the pacing of the action and the putative age of the prince, at least if are willing to accept the data by which Hamlet's age has traditionally be calculated. In Q1, he is a young man of about twenty: Yorick's skull has l in the ground "this dozen yeare," and Hamlet's memories of him are th of a child: "A fellow of infinite mirth, he hath caried mee twenty tir vpon his backe, here hung those lippes that I haue Kissed a hundred tir . . . " (H 234 I[1]r). In Q2, he has the same memories of Yorick, but jester's skull "hath lyen you i'th earth 23. yeeres" (H 234 [M3]v). Hamlet has to be thirty because the sexton, who has kept his trade "ir and boy thirty yeeres," began it in the year of young Hamlet's bir (Interestingly enough, Hamlet Sr's victory over Fortinbras is also m recent in Q1: it happened a mere dozen years before, not thirty, as in (which means that Hamlet is considerably younger at the time of the p than his father was at the time he conquered Fortinbras.) Q1's Hamlet l some of the breakneck impetuosity associated elsewhere in Shakespea as in the Renaissance generally, with youth: like the young lovers of *Ro and Juliet*, he hastens to meet his end. By comparison, Q2 Ham although capable of precipitate action, is more cautious and deliberati perhaps even jaded, as is appropriate for a somewhat older man. Inde in Renaissance terms, a man of thirty was on the threshold of middle a We would not wish to push the contrast too far: there are slow youths Shakespeare (like Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*) and plenty of r men a decade or so older. But in both quartos of *Hamlet*, the hero's ag curiously apt in terms of the structure and language of the play.

To what are we to attribute the profound differences between Q1 a Q2? We can easily generate narratives of origin to place in competition w the theory of memorial reconstruction and its wholesale rejection of Q1

Narrative A

In which Shakespeare, newly arrived in London, tries his inexperienced hand at a play

We know that there was a *Hamlet* play extant as early as 1589, as refer to in Nashe's preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589). Nashe describes a n and uneducated type of playwright, "shifting companions" who c scarcely claim literacy but "will affoord you whole Hamlets, I should handfuls of Tragicall speeches." As noted in the previous chapter, a *Ha* was played at Newington Butts on June 9, 1594, as part of the same run *Titus Andronicus* and some version of *The Taming of the/a Shrew*. Thon Lodge saw a *Hamlet* performed at the Theatre by the Lord Chamberlai

Men in or shortly before 1596: he refers in his *Wit's Misery and the World's Madness* to the pale "Visard of the ghost which cried so miserably at the Theatre, like an oister-wife, Hamlet, revenge."[25] All of these *Hamlet*s but the first were specifically associated with Shakespeare's company, but none was specifically attributed to Shakespeare. Indeed, *Hamlet* was not included in Francis Meres' list of Shakespeare's plays as of 1598, although we have no reason to suppose that his list was meant to be exhaustive.

Eric Sams has recently made a spirited case for Q1 *Hamlet* as the "Ur-*Hamlet*," written by Shakespeare in 1589 or earlier. Shakespeare *could* have been in London early enough for such a feat: we have no sure evidence as to the year of his arrival. As Sams suggestively notes, the specific name Hamlet derives from none of the earlier tales of Amleth, but is closely associated with Shakespeare, who remembered "Hamlett Sadler" in his will along with Heminge and Condell and named his own son Hamlet or Hamnet Shakespeare. Another Hamlett – Katherine Hamlett – drowned in the Avon near Stratford in 1579 and was, like Ophelia, the object of a "coroner's quest."[26] Sams' theory should have elements of attractiveness for Shakespeareans in that it gives over the whole field of *Hamlet* to Shakespearean authorship. There is no longer a mysterious, lost Ur-*Hamlet* to muddy the waters of Shakespeare's dramatic creativity.

On the other hand, Sams' theory puts the Bard in rather disreputable company – among the rough and ready, semi-literate dramatists ridiculed by Nashe, and (worse yet) among oyster wives. Given the persistent tradition that Shakespeare himself played the part of the ghost, we are offered the unsavory spectacle of the Bard managing his part so "miserably" that he can be likened to a fishwife bawling her wares. Most nineteenth-century editors were able to imagine Shakespeare in his early days as part of just such a rough and tumble world, but in the mainstream twentieth-century editorial tradition, he cannot be associated with the *Hamlet* of the 1590s, either as actor or author, because the play is described by contemporaries in such low and contemptuous terms. Hence the editorial energy that has gone into separating Q2 *Hamlet* altogether from the mysterious, vanished Ur-text. However, Robert Greene himself disparaged Shakespeare by name in or before 1592 as

> an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes factotum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie.[27]

Despite the best efforts of editors and others, there appears to be no way around the uncomfortable fact that Shakespeare, in the early years of his career, was considered by some as *arriviste* and even, if Greene means what he appears to mean, a plagiarist, or at least a habitual borrower of more learned people's work.

My own main difficulty with Sams' argument lies in his assertion o perfect homology between Q1 and the Ur-*Hamlet*. As editors have not there is no point in Q1 at which the ghost utters the precise wor "Hamlet, revenge." He addresses his son as "Hamlet" and cries "revenge" a few lines later, but the two words are not quite juxtaposed the phrase in question became well enough known in the theater inspire ridicule (we find it again in *Satiro-mastix* (1601) "my name's Ham reuenge: thou hast been at Paris garden hast not?"),[28] then that notori is perhaps sufficient reason for it to have been excised (if it was) from play as published in 1603. But given what we know about the instability Elizabethan playtexts in general and the marked differences amc printed *Hamlet*s in particular, is it likely that *Hamlet* would have remair the same play on stage from 1589 to 1599 or even later? Q1 may v have derived from the same "corrupt" line of descent as one or m other *Hamlet*s from the 1590s. Those involved in recent productions Q1 have sometimes noted that it seems to have the raw, inchoate ene of a work in progress.[29] But we are unlikely ever to know at what st Shakespeare entered the process. Was he the originator of *Hamle* joint originator working with other dramatists, or the reviser of an ear play of the same name, to which he was drawn, perhaps, by the m reverberations between its title and his own earlier life in Stratford?

Narrative B

In which Shakespeare becomes dissatisfied
with his first *Hamlet* and revises it
(May be used along with Narrative A, above)

Since nearly everyone prefers Q2 over Q1 in terms of polish and po refinement, it is easy to generate narratives to explain Shakespea hypothesized revision of Q1 into Q2. We have reached the late 15 possibly as late as 1603. As Shakespeare matures as an artist and company becomes increasingly prosperous, the old *Hamlet* begins to l shabby. The players call upon him to create a fuller, more polished vers in much the same way that the King's Company was later to call u Thomas Middleton to expand *A Game at Chess* from the short and infe version he initially offered them.[30] Moreover, Richard Burbage, who long played the title role with great success, is becoming too senior to happy in the part of a twenty-year-old. Then too, the temper of the nat is changing: stage melancholy is becoming increasingly fashionable the optimism of an earlier era is giving way to Jacobean gloom. Reve plays in the ranting old Senecan mode are becoming passé and the relatively upbeat *Hamlet* too closely resembles the traditional pattern. too conventional in its ideas to suit the emerging mood of the new cent

To these public, institutional considerations may be added a host of speculations about Shakespeare's private sentiments. It is 1601 and Shakespeare has fallen into a depression, possibly brought on by the double blow of his only son Hamnet's death in 1596 and his father's death in 1601, which has reawakened all the pain of the earlier loss. As James Joyce's Stephen Daedalus suggested in his *Hamlet* lecture (*Ulysses*, chap. [9]), Shakespeare maps his own experience of loss onto the play, reviving both of the departed. He is simultaneously father and son: the ghost, father of Hamlet, come back as from the grave to tell of horrors; the son, who of all of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, is the one most immersed in the theater, the one most like Shakespeare himself. He now finds his earlier *Hamlet* to be utterly inadequate to the mystery of the human condition, in which good and evil are so inextricably mixed as to be inseparable.

To this hypothetical narrative may be added still others. In 1601 or thereabouts, possibly as late as 1603, Shakespeare becomes despondent over the recurrence of the plague, or over the unsettled state of the nation and the obvious decline of the reigning monarch, who was to die in 1603. And indeed, as Eric Mallin has suggested, Q2 *Hamlet*, by comparison with Q1, suffers from a pall of disease like that affecting London in 1603 and other plague years: it is sicklied over not only with the pale cast of thought, but also with physical contagion.[31] The list of plausible reasons why Shakespeare should have wanted to portray the world of *Hamlet* more darkly than before is long, intriguing, and also, alas, almost entirely speculative. But there is yet another possibility.

Narrative C

In which Shakespeare,
Having written the true and perfect Copy later published as Q2,
cuts down *Hamlet* for performance.
(Can be used as a substitute for A and B above)

According to this scenario, Q2 precedes Q1, as in the theory of memorial reconstruction, but Q1's origins are more respectable. Shakespeare brings his new play in for reading to the company; all acknowledge that he has produced a masterpiece, but suggest that the stage version needs to be much shorter, simpler, and less philosophically complex to be accessible to the usual audience. Shakespeare, possibly with the assistance of other members of the company, obligingly constructs Q1, which, as its defenders regularly note, skillfully manages to include every significant plot element of the play in its long form, but honed into an effective piece of theater in its own right.

This narrative can be modified in a number of ways. Perhaps Shakespeare and/or the company decide that the play is too long and/or

daring for a particular audience, and modify the text for a spe performance or series of performances, possibly for production on during one of the London plague times or earlier. Modern compa have performed Q1 *Hamlet* with as few as nine actors by using c doubling. For Shakespeare's company, the same number would have l possible if a man (rather than a boy) played the role of the Player Qu Although boys regularly played young women in the Elizabethan the men frequently played older women, and the Q1 player queen, ha been married a full forty years, scarcely qualifies as young.[32]

To suppose that Shakespeare did the cutting is, of course, to attri the monstrous brutalization of the major soliloquies to the Bard himse goes against the grain for us to imagine an artist deliberately lowering level of his work's refinement; indeed, most twentieth-century advocat the theory of authorial or authorized abridgement for Q1 have still fel need to posit some form of playhouse corruption to account for "To b not to be" in its Q1 form. The most noteworthy of these advocates has l Hardin Craig: although he was highly respected as a critic, his defen the "bad" quartos fell on deaf ears in the heyday of the New Bibliogr during the 1960s.[33] The sad fact is that we don't know that Shakespeare at all committed to having his dramatic art appear only in its most poli possible form (he appears to have cared considerably more about the lyric poems). The Q2 title page has seemed to most twentieth-cer readers and editors to fall clearly into the familiar Renaissance catego a published author's lament for the theft and mutilation of his wo a result of unsupervised printing. But as we have already seen in the ca John Day and *Gorboduc*, printers and publishers could make similar lam about previous and "corrupt" printings, perhaps in part to convince public that the new edition was an essential purchase even for buyers already possessed the old. Nicholas Ling, the publisher of both qu *Hamlet*s, was a canny enterpreneur, and certainly capable of such a ma ing gesture, as were Heminge and Condell later on in their preface to First Folio, which similarly dismissed earlier editions of the plays as "st and surreptitious."

Then too, we have concrete evidence that at least one other Renaiss playwright – and one who appears to have taken more care over the lication of his dramatic work than Shakespeare did – was incline lengthen, shorten, and otherwise "mutilate" his own copy. Trevor How Hill has demonstrated, to his own considerable dismay, that the auth manuscripts of Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess* show the playw altering his own play seemingly at will.[34] As I shall theorize later on, we have misconceived the way in which playwrights of the period went al the business of making plays even in cases when they worked alone ra than collaboratively – they may have conceptualized them more in te of malleable rhetorical "places" (*topoi*) than in terms of fixed langu

Given the parallel case of Middleton, it would be hazardous to rule out the possibility that Shakespeare himself created the "short" *Hamlet* out of a longer version resembling Q2, quite possibly for performance before provincial audiences who might have been put off by the intellectual adventurousness of Q2.

Indeed, in Q1 the ending of the play can be interpreted as alluding metadramatically to just such performance conditions. Rather than ordering the bodies to be placed "high on a stage," according to Horatio's petition in the Q2 version, Q1 Fortinbrass orders the captains to carry "*Hamlet* like a souldier to his graue." Horatio is the one who will occupy the scaffold:

> Content your selues, Ile shew to all, the ground,
> The first beginning of this Tragedy:
> Let there a scaffold be rearde vp in the market place,
> And let the State of the world be there:
> Where you shall heare such a sad story tolde,
> That neuer mortall man could more vnfolde.
> (H 268 [14]r)

Horatio's public, theatrical telling of the tale in the marketplace mimetically recapitulates some of the actual performance conditions of *Hamlet* on tour, so that the "sad story" he will "vnfolde" becomes the very production of *Hamlet* in which he is performing. By 1603 the staging of a play on a scaffold erected in the marketplace would have appeared, perhaps, anachronistic, since even on tour the actors usually performed indoors or in inn yards. But the ending of Q1 *Hamlet* strongly evokes the conditions of popular performance in the absence of a fixed theater.

Our evidence, yet once more, is far from conclusive as to the chronological order of the two quarto *Hamlets*: the Q1 ending that puts Horatio on a scaffold-stage can just as easily be interpreted as confirmation of Narrative A above, in which Shakespeare, in his "lost" early years in London during the 1580s, a time of flux and confusion for English dramatic companies generally, finds himself writing for a company as yet without a reliable permanent abode. And there are other possible scenarios: at least one scholar has argued that Q2 postdates both Q1 and F.[35] The mystery generated by the 1603 and 1604–05 title pages remains a mystery. Our admittedly hasty survey of possible narratives as to the origins and chronology of Q1 in relation to Q2 has left us with too many plausible answers, too little conclusive evidence.

ORALITY AND WRITING IN THE PLAYHOUSE

Actors and directors of Q1 *Hamlet* have noticed a curious quality that the play in that version does not share with its more respectable intertexts. As Peter Guinness, who performed the role of Q1 Hamlet in 1985 at the

Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond, England, expresses it, the language o that *Hamlet* was like the language overheard when one is sitting "on the top of a bus" and listening to someone else's conversation. To those involved in the conversation, it made perfect sense, but to the eavesdropper, "it's punctuated with non sequiturs, with the most curious jumps in thinking People don't always make sense of what they're saying: but nevertheless what they are saying is what they are feeling at the time." Guinness's word for Q1 *Hamlet* was "immediate." He described it as

> unrefined, it hasn't been tidied up (as perhaps the Folio has been tidied up); and for an actor, a play that falls on occasions into that rather stumbling language can provide a great challenge, and indeed a gift, because a lot of the thinking that one has to invent when one is working with a crafted script doesn't come into the play of the First Quarto: all those stumbling thoughts, those half-thoughts, those unfinished sentences, those uncompleted ideas, are actually there: it really is a *working* text.[36]

Guinness's remarks about overheard conversation apply with particular force to Q1 "To be or not to be," in which the language is far more disjointed than in the Q2 version. This time I cite the quarto version itself rather than an edited text: "For in that dreame of death, when wee awake / And borne before an euerlasting Iudge, / From whence no passanger euer retur'nd, / The vndiscouered country . . . " (H 86, 88 [D4]v). A conversation overheard? That description would appear to be grist for the mill of the advocates of memorial reconstruction. But there is, perhaps another way of conceptualizing this oddly disjunctive language.

Another Q1 Hamlet, Christopher McCullough, who appeared in a 198 production of the play by staff and students of the University College of Swansea, makes a similar comment about the Q1 version of "To be or not to be" but sees the form of the soliloquy and others in the play as "important clues to Elizabethan theater practice." For McCullough, as for Guinness, Q1 *Hamlet* was, in some insistent way, immediate. The soliloquies in performance demanded a high degree of audience contact:

> The general understanding of the Shakespearean soliloquy is a very post-Romantic notion, of something very introspective. We think of Redgrave and Gielgud and Olivier – Olivier in this film actually disembodied his soliloquies into voice-overs, and that perhaps is as far as you can go in the direction of introspection. But those lines, "To be, or not to be, I there's the point" perhaps give us a clue as to how the soliloquies were worked, how that particular convention was used in the Elizabethan theater.

McCullough found it impossible to play "I there's the point" by "turning in on myself and pretending there wasn't an audience there." Rather,

> "To be, or not to be, I there's the *point*" actually only made sense if I said it *to the audience*. In fact I was using the soliloquy as a way of putting an argument to the audience as to what was going on in the narrative; and I think in that sense the First Quarto is giving us clues about the much more open-ended nature of Elizabethan theater.

For both of these actors, there was something indefinable about Q1 that made it appear more faithful to Elizabethan theatrical practice than either of the more polished texts – something having to do with the creation of a sense of immediate community with the audience, and with the stronger rhetorical impact of the lines under those conditions. As McCullough goes on to note,

> It's interesting that all the activity that followed the Elizabethan theatrical form, the process of turning the play into a literary object, and refining the poetry, has been one of removing it from that open-ended theater practice in which it must have had dangerous potentialities – the danger implicit in the practice of genuinely putting ideas to an audience, rather than showing them a man playing with ideas.[37]

There is more at work in this set of discriminations than the traditional antagonism between academic and theatrical Shakespeareans. The difference between Q1 and Q2 or F *Hamlet* that Guinness and McCullough are struggling to articulate relates to the profoundly "oral" quality of the former text by comparison with the latter two. The disparity in language between Q1 and Q2 can be explicated in terms of the contrast between predominantly oral and predominantly literate cultures as articulated by Walter J. Ong and refined and modified by Jack Goody, Ruth Finnegan, and other recent investigators.

Amidst the flurry of interest in the orality/literacy binary among medievalists and students of modernism and postmodernism, it is odd that the binary has not attracted more attention among Shakespeareans. To be sure, the distinction between orality and writing as modes of communication has often been overworked. Recent conceptualizations of the differences have sometimes pushed the contrast to unreasonable extremes. Moreover, some recent literary scholars have used the appeal to a lost "oral culture" as a retreat from deconstruction and other distasteful recent critical "isms": under orality in medieval society, we are told, signs did not "decay into *signifiant* and *signifié*": a stable "presence" between interlocutor and listener could be assumed.[38] But even if we do not accept the postulate that oral culture had the almost mystical wholeness and integrity of communication that is sometimes claimed for it, we will discover that recent descriptions of orality crystallize some of the aesthetic issues at stake in the editorial controversy over Q1 *Hamlet* and over "bad" Shakespeare more generally.

Here I will be less interested in creating a new master narrative a the chronology of the early texts than in generating new ways of cor tualizing the traits of language that have caused the bad quartos to b generally perceived as "bad." For civilized Westerners schooled in a tradition of letters, oral literature can't be regarded as literature: it die the page – appears thin and inchoate once it is written down and sepai from the immediate milieu of its performance. Insofar as it is assoc with illiteracy or with insufficient literacy, it is doubly stigmatized society for which literacy is required for success or even compete Q1 *Hamlet* in particular and the bad quartos in general cannot cou literature because they do not come across to a reading audience as h literate.

In considering the London playhouse, we will encounter neither o nor literacy in anything like their "pure" forms. (Indeed a purely lit culture has not thus far existed.) English theatrical culture was a mili which oral and written forms jostled up against each other and comp for the allegiance of audiences, and in which literate expectations slowly winning ground away from earlier oral modes of operation. S as long ago as Chambers' monumental studies of the medieval Elizabethan stage, we have at least in theory accepted the postulate the literate, urbane late-Elizabethan theater did not spring, like Ath out of the forehead of humanist scholarship; it was grafted onto, and partly immersed in, an earlier, predominately oral and popular theat culture. What was that culture like? How do dramatic texts origin within a predominately oral setting differ from those coming out of a r familiar (to us) literate and literary environment?

According to the standard works on orality and literacy, the us language in predominately oral cultures tends to be interactional contextual: like the conversation overheard on top of the double-de bus, it demands participation in the group in order to be comprehens Even highly literate people use language differently in oral situa than they do in writing. They tend to employ less elaborate syntactic semantic structures (hence the usually disparaging expression, "He like a book"). They tend to prefer coordinate as opposed to subordi constructions, and to prefer imperatives, interrogatives, and exclama over declaratives and subjunctives. They use fewer abstract terms a narrower choice of words. Indeed, most people's speech is characte by generality and vagueness, at least by comparison with written disco In oral situations, a speaker can rely on an environment shared with h her audience to help communicate meaning. For a writer the audien less immediately present, although it may be quite vivid in his or her m The writer must therefore shape discourse with much greater precisic order to achieve the same degree of intelligibility.[39]

I recently had the experience of reading over the transcript of a m

class I had given (partly, as it happens, on the subject of Q1 *Hamlet*). Since the transcript was to be published as part of a volume on the teaching of Shakespeare, I expected to furnish my editors with an unaltered record of the model class – would it not be falsification to polish up the transcript for publication? But I quickly discovered that the transcript, albeit accurate in recording the words we used, failed to communicate much of what was going on during the session. It had to be edited – the language had to be made more precise in order to communicate to readers the same ideas that those who spoke in class had communicated. No doubt professional interviewers regularly experience the same phenomenon: even the liveliest and most successful interview needs substantial editing if it is to succeed with readers.

This difference in terms of precision of language, I would submit, is very like the difference in language between a "bad" and a "good" Shakespearean quarto, and between "bad" and "good" versions of "To be or not to be." The aesthetic preferences by which oral literature in cross-cultural context has until recently been neglected in favor of written literature are much the same as the preferences by which "good" quartos have been favored over "bad": the "bad" quarto is a record of oral performance, as nearly every one of them declares itself to be on its title page; the more polished text, with its (usually) more vivid, precise, and amplified language, its more regular meter, its greater lucidity and complexity in terms of syntax, is a version of the play more specifically geared toward readers. In a "bad" quarto, the personality of a character on stage might well be projected quite dynamically through performance, but the character may appear colorless on the page: it lacks the telling precision and "realism" for which Western literate culture has traditionally valued Shakespearean characterization particularly highly. Similarly, a "bad" quarto's defective versification leaps out at us from the printed page, but on stage during an actor's impassioned delivery of the speech, it would be "invisible" and probably unnoticed, offering a welcome jaggedness and muscularity of effect. Moreover, those critics who have faulted the versification of the "bad" quartos have usually overestimated the degree of regularity in the "good."[40]

That is not to suggest that no "good" quarto or folio version was ever performed: one great measure of Shakespeare's success as a playwright, I would argue, was that in the course of his career, he became increasingly adroit at creating performance texts that already carried the polish and precision coming to be expected of reading texts – dramatic texts that played powerfully on stage but also could be read as great poetry, though not necessarily metrically regular poetry. Curiously enough, all of the quartos most often designated as "bad" quartos – 1594 *Contention* (*Henry VI*, Part 2), 1595 *True Tragedy* (*Henry VI*, Part 3), 1597 *Romeo and Juliet*, 1600 *Henry V*, 1602 *Merry Wives*, and 1603 *Hamlet* – date from the earlier years of

Shakespeare's career. The usual explanation has been that his dram company gradually became more protective of its playbooks, more cient in fending off pirates. More recently, however, this cloak and da mode of explanation has fallen by the wayside along with the assump that playtexts were regularly pirated. If the "bad" quartos are inc earlier versions of the plays, then they may have the peculiarly oral qu recent actors have found in them because the playhouse in the 1590s still a predominately oral institution, and because Shakespeare (like o dramatists who got their start within the dramatic companies rather t in the universities) only gradually came to conceptualize his playt as potential reading texts.

Following this line of conjecture, the early plays that appear hi polished and "literate" to us might well have been subjected to revi after their original composition by Shakespeare or by Shakespear combination with others. Elizabethan actors had precious little time rehearsals. As Andrew Gurr has speculated, plays in their first staging have been fairly rough, becoming more polished in production if were successful enough to be retained in the repertory.[41] Q1 *Hamlet*, t would be roughed-out, theatrical *Hamlet*, before it had been refined amplified into "literature." Most of the vagueness, tangled syntax, strange immediacy for which editors have found it wanting and perforr have found it compelling can be explicated as signs of a fundame orality, as opposed to the more sophisticated and reticent "literate" ver of the play in Q2.

What evidence do we have of this hypothesized oral culture of the p house? Only bits and pieces: I cannot claim to have made a thorough st of the matter, and all of my arguments are to be regarded as hi conjectural. A useful starting point, however, might be the "illite actors." It is not only late nineteenth and twentieth-century editors have (assuming a predictable connection between level of education moral development) railed against the low and unlettered players maimed what they performed. Similar complaints were frequently m in the Elizabethan era, albeit usually by university men who were ener of the stage. At the beginning of our period, some performers (particul those unfortunates who lived out their lives as itinerants) may well h been semi-literate at best. We have already noticed the insufficie educated actor in *The Taming of a Shrew* who, to the acute discomfort of fellow, cannot get his tongue around the latinate word *comedy*, whic applied to the play they are about to present, would elevate it above status of a mere "commodity." Similarly, the base players in *Histrio-M* admit they are close to illiterate: they "can read nothing but riddle As the acting companies settled into permanent London theaters organized themselves according to the apprentice system, the pheno non of the illiterate actor would gradually have died out, since apprent

were required to be able to read and write English as a condition of employment. But the hired men brought in as need arose would not necessarily have been subject to the same restrictions. The change from an orally based to a more strongly "literate" theater may have come more gradually than we have recognized.

How would an illiterate or semi-literate actor function in a Elizabethan theatrical company? Perhaps more effectively than we think. Such actors may have possessed "oral literacy," in Rita Copeland's helpful phrase: the ability to operate within a book or manuscript-based culture without direct dependence on written texts.[43] When a new play was brought in for consideration, it was "read" to or by members of the company, but that reading was oral, as the many examples collected by G. E. Bentley suggest. That is how the new play is introduced to the company in *Histrio-Mastix*: the players sit to "heare" the play; the author reads it to them, but cannot perform without the lubrication of plentiful wine. He is so affected by the pathos of his own creation that he asks the players to read the rest themselves, whereupon they are forced to declare their inability to do so (sig. C[1]). In Henslowe's company as late as 1613, new plays were read aloud to the assembled company. Even when an author wished to acquaint Henslowe or Edward Alleyn with part of it, he did not simply loan them a copy, but called upon them to "appoint any hour to read" to them. Such collective "readings" were regularly accompanied by the consumption of wine and sometimes took place in taverns, as recorded in Henslowe's accounts for 1602. The company would decide on the basis of oral rather than written evidence whether or not a play would make successful theater. Although records from Shakespeare's company are lacking, we have no reason to suppose that the Lord Chamberlain or King's Men proceeded any differently.[44]

Moreover, in the course of their initial collective "reading," at least some of the actors may well have begun the process of memorizing the plays.[45] We know that the "plan" of the play would regularly be written out and displayed on the tiringhouse wall for the actors to consult, and that individual parts or "sides" including cues and perhaps also stage business were copied out for the actors of specific roles. Only one side is extant for the professional theater: that of Edward Alleyn for Orlando in Greene's *Orlando Furioso*. But there are other extant examples from university plays.[46] The rustic actors in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* must have been provided with something similar, since Flute speaks all of his part at once, cues and all (3.1.96). Much of the fun of the Mechanicals' struggles with their playtext derives from the fact that their grasp of elevated diction and classical civilization is unequal to the highly literate humanist mode which their playtext unwittingly burlesques. Dramatic literature of the period is full of mocking references to marginal actors who are studying their parts at the last minute or have failed to learn them at all.

But there were other ways in which inexperienced actors could lear their roles – perhaps by imitation, as "Dick" Burbage and Will Kemp trai the university men Studioso and Philomusus in the academic play, *T Return from Parnassus*, part 2 (published 1606). Burbage calls upc Studioso to act the part of Hieronimo; he is to read a role in the book the play: "obserue how I act it and then imitate mee." When Burbag recites the speech beginning "Who call *Hieronimo* from his naked bed Studioso repeats it after him. Then Kemp takes Philomusus in hand an gives him an elaborate eighteen-line speech to repeat back to him, whic Philomusus is miraculously able to do.[47] The technique in this secon instance is somewhat different for there is no book: Kemp's speech presented as impromptu. Philomusus clearly has a phenomenal memor as, presumably, did Will Kemp and the other professional actors: h repeats Kemp's elaborate compendium of fooleries after hearing it recite only once rather than through the use of playbook or sides.

After Burbage and Kemp leave, the two university scholars bemoa the baseness of their incipient career in the theater, where they must b "practis'd" to "leaden spouts, / That nought downe vent but what the do receiue" (sig. [G3]v). Theirs is the contempt of the superliterat scholar for the orally oriented and therefore "leaden" player. That is nc to suggest that university culture, with its emphasis on academic disput tion, was not also profoundly oral; only that among the educated elit literacy was essential, while it was only becoming so among the player Both the portrayal of actors in *Histrio-Mastix* and Greene's opinion Shakespeare and his fellows in *Groats-worth of witte* are startlingly similar t that of Studioso and Philomusus: Greene scorns actors as "those Puppi (I meane) that speake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in ou colours" (sig. [E3]v). Very much like more recent scholars studying ora forms from a strongly literate perspective, these university men unde estimate the degree of artistry that goes into the predominately ora medium.

Interestingly, although the roles of scholar and player are reversed i *Hamlet*, Hamlet adopts a similar pedagogical technique with *his* players. H has evidently just recited one of the speeches he wishes them to add to th "Murder of Gonsago" since he commands them in Q2, "Speake the speec I pray you as I pronoun'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue" (H 130 G3v) In Q1, his language more clearly suggests a pedagogical situation "Pronounce me this speech trippingly a the tongue as I *taught* thee" (m emphasis; H 130 F2r). In both quarto versions of the passage, the word have been written down previously, but the transmission is primarily ora as in the Burbage example from *The Return from Parnassus*.

Of course actual plays must be used with caution as evidence of play house practice, but there is no particular reason why the oral patter should be repeated in two plays that are otherwise so different unless i

conformed to at least one of the ways in which actors could learn their parts. Hamlet's own conceptualization of the performance is more aural than visual: not "We'll see a play" but "weele *heare* a play to morrowe" (my emphasis, cited from Q2 H1l4 [F4]r), and this locution is standard for the period.[48] What we appear to be observing as we survey the scanty evidence is a mixed situation in which written language supplemented oral learning to a greater or lesser degree: some actors were "harder of study" than others, some may have memorized their roles by using sides, while others learned theirs through oral repetition. For neither method was the written text as important as it is for us as readers of Shakespeare.

Advocates of the theory of memorial reconstruction have given scant credit to the mnemonic powers of an Elizabethan or early Jacobean actor: they have assumed that a player would (like modern actors) learn only his own role and have a hazy notion of what transpired while he was offstage; they have likewise assumed that the actor (like modern Shakespearean actors) would to have to have his part letter perfect in order to have memorized it adequately in terms of the standards of the company. If the London playhouse functioned as a largely oral institution, in some ways like the more recent oral institutions that have been studied firsthand by anthropologists and students of communications theory, then neither assumption is justified. Considering the number of plays a company would have in repertory at any given time, not to mention other set speeches that could be recited on command, successful Elizabethan actors had to have prodigious and highly trained memories, combined with great flexibility. Given the London deathrate and the high incidence of disease, they were well advised to "know" whole plays – not only a single part – but neither they nor Shakespeare appear to have worried about whether or not they were letter perfect. Nor, according to recent research based on extant playbooks of the early seventeenth century, were the actors as reliant on prompters as most editors have assumed. The so-called prompter – more properly termed bookkeeper – in the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean playhouse was probably less a prompter in the more recent sense of the term than a "production coordinator" concerned far less with the minutiae of language than with the orchestration of large props and special effects (a bed on-stage, thunder offstage, a sennet) required at specific points in the action.[49]

As students of the orality/literacy interface have frequently noted, the possession of a written record makes exact repetition of a given document practical and convenient, whereas within oral culture it is more difficult, albeit not impossible or necessarily unknown. Medieval literate culture had recognized two forms of memory: *memoria ad res* and *memoria ad verba*, with a memory for the gist of a speech or written passage frequently valued more highly than word-for-word memory since an ability to paraphrase more clearly demonstrated that the material had been internalized.[50] Our own preference is, of course, for the opposite, at least in the transmission

of literary materials and in the performance of a classic like Shakespear we have tended to assume that Hamlet speaks for Shakespeare himse when he calls upon the clowns to speak no more than is set down for the lest they neglect "some necessary question of the play." But Hamlet h all the prejudices of the university man; Shakespeare, by contrast, w an actor. Elizabethan and early Jacobean acting was probably closer modern film acting than to modern Shakespearean stage acting in i tolerance for occasional improvisation, which they termed "extempo shifts" and "fribbling."[51]

That improvisation, insofar as it was assimilated into the fabric of th play, could easily have been recorded as "Shakespeare" in succeedin versions of a given playtext. One likely example is Hamlet's nervo doubling of words and phrases in F as opposed to Q2 *Hamlet* (for exampl Q2 "Fie on't, ah fie" in the first soliloquy versus F "Fie on't? Oh fie, fie or, in the "Fishmonger" speech to Polonius, Q2 "Excellent well" versus "Excellent, excellent well").[52] Many modern critics regard this stylisti quirk as quintessentially Shakespearean, but it is probably at least part Burbage – based on the oral "authority" of the playhouse rather than th written authority of the author's text. The consistent patterns of variatio among early printed texts of plays discussed thus far in the present stud could have originated through purposeful ensemble work accomplishe by the acting company collectively rather than through a single writer' labored reshaping of a manuscript. The highly communal, highly ora environment of the Elizabethan playhouse did not make for clear-cu differentiation between author and performer.

In Hamlet's highly literate and authoritarian view, of course, t compromise the integrity of the playtext as "set down" would be "villainous – acceptable, perhaps, to the more free-form, improvisatory oral style of th Kemps and Tarltons, but insufficiently precise and controlled for th higher form of theater he advocates. And indeed, after Q1 *Hamlet* there ar no new Shakespearean bad quartos in most people's definition of the term although some that were already extant continued to be reprinted.[53] W need to think of Prince Hamlet, and of his play, particularly in its mor canonical second quarto and folio forms, as helping to generate a mor literate theatrical taste rather than merely reflecting an alteration i audience expectations. At least in theory, Hamlet advocates a drama tha is more textually precise, more reticent and less open-ended than the older more highly "oral" theater had been – a drama that gains its power from th unfolding of its own design and "necessary questions" rather than from its quicksilver ability to transform itself in response to the reactions of a specific audience.

As Leeds Barroll has argued (see n. 31), during plaguetimes when the theatres were closed, Shakespeare was inactive in the writing of plays: he apparently needed, or at least desired, the functioning community of the

playhouse to stimulate his creativity as a playwright. He may even have composed orally. In their preface to readers of the First Folio, Heminge and Condell describe the writer thus:

> Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarse receiued from him a blot in his papers.
>
> (F *A*3r)

What he thought he *uttered*: did he speak the speeches aloud to himself or to others as he wrote them down? Most of the non-verbal uses of the verb *utter* recorded by the *OED* relate to the sphere of commerce – merchants "utter" commodities by putting goods forth upon the market, putting currency into circulation, and the like. It is possible, of course, that Heminge and Condell had just such a usage in mind. To think of the theater as a market was an early modern commonplace: at an earlier point in the preface, they had themselves urged potential readers, like peddlars hawking their wares, to buy, buy the book. Or the compilers of the *OED* may simply have missed this specific usage.[54] They regularly ignore prefatory material from the First Folio as less authoritative than the plays themselves in documenting vocabulary for the period. But it is just possible that Heminge and Condell were recording a writing practice that was still strongly immersed in the orality of the playhouse. If a speech was sounding vividly in the playwright's mind as he set it down, he might well have "uttered" it before or during the writing of it, as Shakespeare's fellows suggest he did. In his preface to *The Malcontent*, John Marston seems to record a similar process in his own writing of plays: "'tis my custome to speake as I think, and write as I speake."[55]

As we have already noted in the case of Thomas Middleton, at least some playwrights of the period could work alterations upon their own compositions with slapdash efficiency and ease. Rather than working laboriously from written copy, I would suggest, in copying out *A Game at Chess* Middleton may have been writing from memory: trained in the ways of the theater, he kept his texts carefully fixed in his mind, *ad res* but not necessarily *ad verba*. An author writing from memory might well create the small, "indifferent" variations between one textual version and another that have so bedevilled editors.[56] He or the company, working from memory, might also reconstruct a play with ease to meet new pressures in terms of audience or occasion. Schooled in the rhetorical *topoi* as both a scheme for memory and a device for insuring amplitude of discourse, Middleton may well have composed the play afresh each time he penned it out. Actors who supplied written copies to oblige friends or patrons may also have written from memory.[57] The grammar schools regularly taught rudimentary memory systems whereby the rhetorical "places" were to be

imagined as actual *loci* vividly fixed in the mind and used associatively for organizing and retrieving large amounts of material.[58] Might Shakespeare, too, have written from memory? Might he have been, as Middleton appears to have been, a memorial constructor?

In medieval culture, it had been relatively common to envision writing as the copying of preexisting mental images. As we noted much earlier, Dante conceptualized his writing of the *Vita nuova* as a copying out of words written in the "book of my memory." Mary Carruthers has called attention to the parallel functions of our conceptions of spontaneous genius and the medieval construction of memory: she gives a vivid picture of Saint Thomas Aquinas "writing" his works by dictating them in seemingly perfected form to several scribes writing simultaneously. "Nor did he seem to be searching for things as yet unknown to him; he seemed simply to let his memory pour out its treasures." Queen Elizabeth I apparently had the same skill. Sir John Harington's papers include evidence that she could write one letter herself while simultaneously dictating a second and listening to and commenting on the reading of a "tale."[59] She accomplished this feat, we can speculate, by possessing a highly trained memory: having composed the substance of the letters in her mind, she was able, as the memory manuals claim one should, to associate each necessary idea with a specific mental "place" and thus move forward with the epistles nearly simultaneously by moving from one place to the next.

These feats of memory are strikingly like Heminge and Condell's description of Shakespeare in the act of composition, except that Shakespeare does his own transcription and is described as writing out of nature rather than (in medieval fashion) out of a physical book:

> Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarse receiued from him a blot in his papers.
>
> (F *A*3r)

John Fletcher, who succeeded Shakespeare as in-house playwright for the King's Men, is said (in the Beaumont and Fletcher folio) to have had the same talent for mental composition. If Shakespeare wrote from memory, setting down vivid images and basic arguments as they already existed in the storehouse of his mind, but free, in accordance with the practice of *memoria ad res* and standard grammar-school rhetorical training, to augment, diminish, embellish, and alter them at will, then the restless expansion, contraction, and transmutation of playtexts that has seemed until recently to be a monstrous deformation of Shakespearean authorship might instead be of its essence. Harold Love's suggested term for the phenomenon is "serial composition," which, in the playhouse, might involve continuous memorial construction and reconstruction on the part

of both Shakespeare and other members of the company, and might involve the extensive use of oral sources that modern editors have discounted. It is not, perhaps, mere happenstance that Ben Jonson, in a discussion of Shakespeare's fluency, compared him to the classical orator Haterius.[60] To reconceptualize Shakespearean authorship thus is to lose the hard distinction between text and orality on which the time-honored disparagement of "memorial reconstruction" is based. Perhaps, as Frances Yates long ago suggested, the physical features of the Globe Theatre itself were used by the actors as *loci* for memorization, just as, in the far more elaborated and philosophically charged memory systems of Renaissance neo-Platonists, human memory was imagined as a theater.[61]

THE SKULL AND THE SCRIVENER

When the ghost asks Hamlet to "remember," the prince responds in extreme fashion by vowing to do violence to his own internalized system of mnemonic "places." In both quarto texts, he, like Dante in the *Vita nuova*, imagines memory as a book or "table" in which he has copied out his reading and experience. All of this he will obliterate:

> Yea, from the table of my memory
> Ile wipe away all triuiall fond records,
> All sawes of bookes, all formes, all pressures past
> That youth and obseruation coppied there,
> And thy commandement all alone shall liue,
> Within the booke and volume of my braine
> Vnmixt with baser matter . . .
> (cited from Q2; H 60, 62, [D3]v)

Having razed his internal *loci*, he is forced to turn to writing for the preservation of important material: "My tables, meet it is I set it downe." In Q1, however, he imagines the memory of his father not in terms of a written "commandement" in a "booke and volume," but in terms of a mental image – perhaps an image of King Hamlet seated on the throne? "And thy *remembrance*, all alone shall *sit*" (my emphasis, H 62 [C4]v). Is Hamlet's violent eradication of all other mnemonically systematized wisdom commendable under the circumstances, or horrifyingly rash? In Q1, the havoc seems to be minimal because the prince does not subsequently lose his capacity for efficacious action, but in Q2, arguably, Hamlet's ability to function effectively in the world is effaced along with the "copied" wisdom and experience that defined his memory and selfhood.

D. F. McKenzie has noted significant ways in which late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century culture displays unease over the loss of immediate contact created by the replacement of oral situations with printed books. In medieval manuscripts, the image of the author or patron is sometimes

positioned at the beginning of a textblock in a way that suggests that th ensuing words on the page are to be imagined as his utterance – the wel known portrait of Chaucer at the beginning of the Tale of Melibee in th Ellesmere manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* is an example.[62] But with th multiplication of near-identical copies, the replication of oral settin became more difficult to communicate to readers. In their introductior to collections of printed sermon literature, late sixteenth and seventeentl century preachers frequently felt compelled to assure their invisible readin public that despite the lessened immediacy of the medium of communic tion, their readers should still imagine them as physically present – just as they stood in the pulpit before their congregation and interacted with ther directly. In printed quarto playbooks, the common title-page assurance th the printed text within represents the play just as it had been performe served a similar function, bringing the milieu of the playhouse and wh John Marston called its "*soule of lively action*" to vivid life for reader Similarly, Robert Armin offered an introductory apology for the fact th his printed version of *The History of the two Maids of More-clacke* (1609) coul offer only "dumb show" instead of his own presence to "put life into th picture," that is, the full-length picture of Armin adorning the title page c the printed volume (Figure 5.2).[63] In such a formulation, printed tex are dead bodies that have to be reanimated. The frontispiece or title pag portraits so common in late sixteenth and seventeenth-century books, man of which show the author gesturing toward the book itself as a continuatio of his identity, serve in part, as Armin states directly, to reassure readers c an actual physical presence behind the printed page. Even the Shakespear First Folio observes this convention through its arrestingly large title-pag engraving of the author.[64]

By contrast, in our own culture, the picture of the author tends t appear, if at all, on the back jacket of the book: apparently, we do nc need or even want to think of our contact with the book in terms of or communication with the author, although some of us do give the pictur a surreptitious glance before beginning to read. The presentation of th author in third-world printed books is more analogous to the lat Elizabethan and early Jacobean pattern, perhaps because in cultures fc which stories or poems are still thought of as primarily oral forms, th same need for the author's picture has existed more recently. In a 195 Oriya-language edition of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land and Other Poen* printed by arrangement with Faber & Faber in India, for example, unlik Western editions of the poem, the author's picture is curiously placed o the upper left corner of the page facing the author's preface, so that Elio who looks across toward the preface with his lips slightly open as thoug pronouncing the words, can be imagined – exactly as he might have bee in a late medieval manuscript – as uttering the words of the preface eve as the reader reads them.[65]

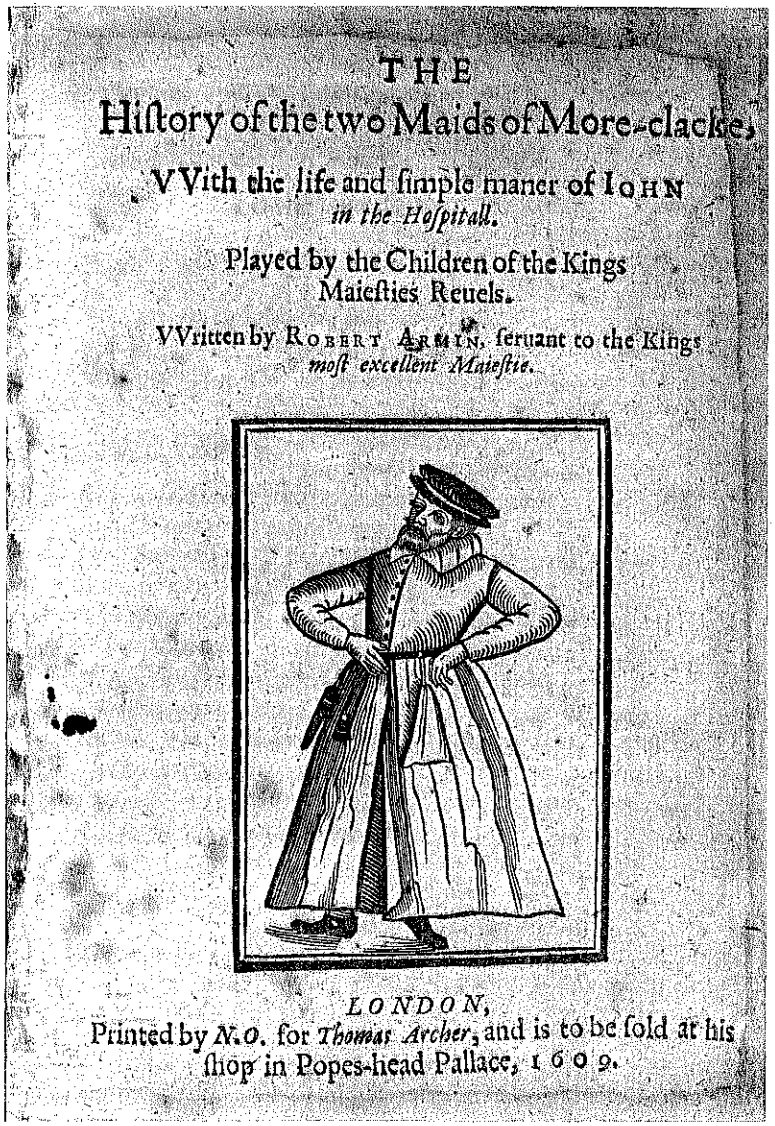
THE
Hiſtory of the two Maids of More-clacke,
VVith the life and ſimple maner of IOHN
in the Hoſpitall.
Played by the Children of the Kings
Maieſties Reuels.
VVritten by ROBERT ARMIN, ſeruant to the Kings
moſt excellent Maieſtie.
LONDON,
Printed by *N.O.* for *Thomas Archer*, and is to be ſold at his
ſhop in Popes-head Pallace, 1609.

Figure 5.2 Title page of Robert Armin's *History of the two Maids of More-clacke* (1609) Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

Despite Hamlet's strong preference for the "literate" over the "or Shakespeare's prince appears caught in precisely the same dilemma of emerging literate culture, for whom books were replacing many instan of oral community without necessarily affording the same assurance human contact and the same visual cues to interpretation. His persona offers almost a textbook case in the transformations wrought, according Ong and Goody, by the assimilation of literacy: an increased tende to work through abstraction, interiority, and solitary thought as opposec communal interaction.[66] The soliloquies in Q1 are brief and demand to addressed directly to the audience; the soliloquies in Q2 are more reac interpretable as Hamlet's long and elaborate musings to himself. And y in the prince's own perception, the more highly literate forms are someh empty, inert – lacking the "*soule of lively action.*"

Students of orality have suggested that the difference between auth and performer tends to be less clearly drawn in oral cultures than in hig literate ones, if only because in oral cultures one does not encoun an author's work without the simultaneous presence of a perform In *Hamlet*, the distance has become problematic and requires consta negotiation. On the one hand, in calling for an end to improvisation at t expense of preexisting dramatic design, Hamlet seeks to effect a cl separation between composition and performance. On the other hand, own behavior as author-performer suggests strong ambivalence about t separation he seeks to legislate. If he calls for a high standard of exactitu in terms of the performance's fidelity to the playtext, he also shows distir signs of nostalgia for an older, improvisatory oral culture. During t performance of *The Mousetrap*, he proves incapable of retaining in practi the separation between author and player he earlier advocated in theo he repeatedly interrupts the performance, as though insisting on bei numbered among the actors. And afterward, he takes the fool's part performing an impromptu jig, pronouncing himself a "paiocke" – "patched or motley fool" in one recent gloss of the term – and playfu asserting his right to a "share" in the dramatic company.[67] Has he earn his percentage as author, player, or both?

Later on, in his conversation with the gravediggers, he encounters th ghost of a vanished orality in the form of Yorick's skull. The mouth the court fool that once vented forth endless quips and sallies is nc empty, a monstrous grimacing void. On the one hand, Hamlet complai to Horatio about the Clowns' impertinent, carnivalesque disregard f properly respectful language toward their betters: "the age is growne picked, that the toe of the pesant coms so neere the heele of the Courti he galls his kybe" (cited from Q2, H 232). On the other hand, in contei plating the gaping, empty jaws of the jester, Hamlet seems to regret th passing of Yorick's saucy improvised wit: "where be your gibes now? yo gamboles, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set th

table on a roare?" (H 234, 236). Indeed, in some of his own impromptu sallies earlier, the prince had gone a fair way toward replacing the departed jester. The historical Will Kemp actually performed at Elsinore sometime around 1586 or 1587; by 1599 he had left Shakespeare's company, and was probably dead of plague by 1603, by which time the company appears to have outgrown his improvisatory style.[68] The theater as Hamlet prefers to conceptualize it is regularized, but also somehow impoverished, by the imposition of literate standards of fidelity to the written text and the silencing of its orally based Kemps and Yoricks. In Hamlet's mental world, as for his father's physical body poisoned through the ear, oral/aural modes have atrophied, become tainted with corruption and decay.

With these extended speculations about orality – the play as it existed outside the printed text – we may appear to have strayed far afield from our declared interest in the materiality of the printed playbooks. Indeed, by conceptualizing a playwright like Shakespeare as working primarily from memory rather than from written notes or records, we may appear to have gone a fair way toward conceding Bowers' and Tanselle's point that the literary work needs to be located, finally, in the mind and intent of the author. But the material playtexts, if examined in their order of publication rather than in some hypothesized order of composition, reveal precisely the development from an oral to a more "literate" aesthetic that we have postulated for the Shakespearean theater in general. Despite its supposed theatrical origins, F is a more "literary" text than Q2 in terms of grammar and usage: it regularizes language, smooths out colloquialisms, and creates verb–subject agreement. As John Dover Wilson noted in 1918, punctuation in the first quarto tends to record theatrical emphasis, while by the folio it has become more syntactical. Parentheses are a particularly interesting case: in the first and second quartos, they often register an actor's special emphasis in the delivery of a line as in Q1's "(My tables) meet it is I set it downe," while in the folio, as for us, they are used for parenthetical matters.[69] In the titles and headings of early published versions from Q1 through F, *Hamlet* gradually migrates from the lower status of "Tragicall Historie" to the higher one of "Tragedie."[70] Even though the folio version of *Hamlet* is thought by many editors to be closer than Q2 to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as performed on the early Jacobean stage, F is also more "literate" than Q2 in terms of its treatment of written texts that arise within the play, just as Q2 is more "literate" than Q1. By looking at the three versions in order of publication, we can document an increased "literate" interest in fidelity toward an original, an increased concern for the aesthetic value of the written text being documented.

As noted earlier, only the Hamlet of F writes down the Ghost's message with the same number of adieus that the Ghost pronounces. But it is the handling of materials of written origin that surface within the play – like Hamlet's letter to Horatio detailing his escape from the pirates – that

differs most markedly in the three versions. In Q1, Horatio tells Gertrude that he has "euen now" received a letter from Hamlet, but rather than read it aloud to her, Horatio delivers the gist of it orally (*memoria ad res*):

> . . . he writes how he escap't the danger,
> And subtle treason that the king had plotted,
> Being crossed by the contention of the windes,
> He found the Packet sent to the king of *England*,
> Wherein he saw himselfe betray'd to death,
> As at his next conuersion with your grace,
> He will relate the circumstance at full.
>
> (H 208 [H2]v)

In Q2, by contrast, Gertradt is not present. The letter is delivered to Horatio onstage and he reads it aloud privately to himself: the situation has become more recognizably "literate" according to the standard criteria. As we might expect, this version is considerably more detailed and concrete in its narration of the events that resulted in Hamlet's escape since it is presented as a word-for-word rendering of the text:

> *Hor. Horatio,* when thou shalt haue ouer-lookt this, giue these fellowes some meanes to the King, they haue Letters for him: Ere wee were two daies old at Sea, a Pyrat of very warlike appointment gaue vs chase, finding our selues too slow of saile, wee put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boorded them, on the instant they got cleere of our shyp, so I alone became theyr prisoner, they haue dealt with me like thieues of mercie, but they knew what they did, I am to doe a turne for them, let the King haue the Letters I haue sent, and repayre thou to me with as much speede as thou wouldest flie death, I haue wordes to speake in thine eare will make thee dumbe, yet are they much too light for the bord of the matter, these good fellowes will bring thee where I am, *Rosencraus* and *Guyldensterne* hold theyr course for *England*, of them I haue much to tell thee, farewell.
>
> *So that thou knowest thine Hamlet.*
>
> (H 210 [L2]v–L3r)

The Q2 version of Horatio's reading, in its series of run-on sentences separated only by commas, has very much the quality of a quick, hurried perusal, although the loose punctuation can easily be imagined as reflecting the precipitate conditions under which the letter was penned.

By the time of the First Folio, in marked contrast, the communication has been made more accessible for readers – divided into proper sentences and clearly separated from its oral context by the use of italics. Indeed, it is printed on the page in a way that precisely resembles the format of an actual royal letter or warrant, complete with initial large capital (Figure 5.3). But who is reading the letter in its folio form? The last indication of

I do not know from what part of the world
I ſhould be greeted, if not from Lord *Hamlet*.

Enter Saylor.

Say. God bleſſe you Sir.

Hor. Let him bleſſe thee too.

Say. Hee ſhall Sir, and't pleaſe him. There's a Letter for you Sir: It comes from th'Ambaſſadours that was bound for England, if your name be *Horatio*, as I am let to know it is.

Reads the Letter.

HOratio, *When thou ſhalt haue ouerlook'd this, giue theſe Fellowes ſome meanes to the King: They haue Letters for him. Ere we were two dayes old at Sea, a Pyrate of very Warlicke appointment gaue vs Chace. Finding our ſelues too ſlow of Saile, we put on a compelled Valour. In the Grapple, I boorded them: On the inſtant they got cleare of our Shippe, ſo I alone became their Priſoner. They haue dealt with mee, like Theeues of Mercy, but they knew what they did. I am to doe a good turne for them. Let the King haue the Letters I haue ſent, and repaire thou to me with as much haſt as thou wouldeſt flye death. I haue words to ſpeake in your eare, will make thee dumbe, yet are they much too light for the bore of the Matter. Theſe good Fellowes will bring thee where I am.* Roſincrance *and* Guildenſterne, *hold their courſe for England. Of them I haue much to tell thee, Farewell.*

He that thou knoweſt thine,
Hamlet.

Come, I will giue you way for theſe your Letters,
And do't the ſpeedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. *Exit.*

Enter King and Laertes.

King. Now muſt your conſcience my acquittance ſeal,
And you muſt put me in your heart for Friend,
Sith you haue heard, and with a knowing eare,
That he which hath your Noble Father ſlaine,
Purſued my life.

Laer. It well appeares. But tell me,
Why you proceeded not againſt theſe feates,
So crimefull, and ſo Capitall in Nature,
As by your Safety, Wiſedome, all things elſe,
I that we are made of ſtuffe, ſo flat
That we can let our Beard be ſho
And thinke it paſtime. You ſhor
I lou'd your Father, and we loue
And that I hope will teach you to

Enter a Meſſen

How now? What Newes?

Meſ. Letters my Lord from
Maieſty: this to the Queene.

King. From *Hamlet*? Who br

Meſ. Saylors my Lord they
They were giuen me by *Claudio*,

King. Laertes you ſhall heare
Leaue vs. *Ex*

High and Mighty, you ſhall kn
Kingdome. To morrow ſhall I begg
Eyes. When I ſhall (firſt asking yo
count th'Occaſions of my ſodaine, and

What ſhould this meane? Are all
Or Is it ſome abuſe? Or no ſuch th

Laer. Know you the hand?

Kin. 'Tis *Hamlets* Character
ſcript here he ſayes alone: Can y

Laer. I'm loſt in it my Lord; b
It warmes the very ſickneſſe in m
That I ſhall liue and tell him to hi
Thus diddeſt thou.

Kin. If it be ſo *Laertes*, as how
How otherwiſe will you be rul'd

Laer. If ſo you'l not o'rerule
Kin. To thine owne peace: if
As checking at his Voyage, and t
No more to vndertake it; I will w
To an exployt now ripe in my De
Vnder the which he ſhall not cho
And for his death no winde of bla
But euen his Mother ſhall vncharg
And call it accident: Some two
Here was a Gentleman of *Norma*
I'ue ſeene my ſelfe, and ſeru'd aga
And they ran well on Horſeback

Figure 5.3 Folio version of Hamlet's letter (1623)
Reproduced by permission of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin

a speaker was *Say*, for the sailor who delivered it. The letter is presumably being read by Horatio since he addresses the sailor at the end of his reading without any textual indication of a change in speaker. The necessary prefix *Hor.* is omitted after the stage direction "*Reads the Letter*" – possibly by mistake in the printinghouse. But if so, it is a highly interesting mistake, for its effect is to make the folio reader rather than Horatio the actual reader of the letter: the communication has moved from an imagined dramatic setting to the printed page, where we, as readers, are invited into the drama to read over the shoulder of Horatio. As we move from Q1 to Q2 to F, the presentation of Hamlet's letter becomes increasingly "literate" as opposed to oral, increasingly private and oriented toward visual rather than aural reception. Later on, in Q2 and F but not in Q1, Hamlet presents himself as a master of the technology of writing, though he shows the contempt of his class for the scrivener's menial craft. He reports to Horatio how he managed to produce a credible forgery of Claudius's commission for his execution, having failed in his attempt to forget how to write "faire" in a good court hand (H 244, 245).

There is a similar progression in the handling of Hamlet's letter to Ophelia/Ofelia, except that in this instance the major issue is Hamlet's increased interest in aesthetic critique as we move from one version to the next. In Q1, Corambis produces the letter and, commanded by the king, reads it to those assembled:

> Doubt that in earth is fire,
> Doubt that the starres doe moue,
> Doubt trueth to be a liar,
> But doe not doubt I loue.
> To the beautifull *Ofelia*:
> Thine euer the most vnhappy Prince *Hamlet*
> (H 82, 84 [D4]r)

It is credible that the Hamlet of Q1, with his habitual neglect for felicity of expression, might have composed such a poem, but by Q2, in which the prince's normal mode of speech is more erudite and polished, the crudeness of his verse has to be accounted for. In Q2, both Hamlet and Polonius/Corambus have turned literary critic. Polonius reads, "*To the Celestiall and my soules Idoll, the most beautified* Ophelia," and continues, "*that's an ill phrase, a vile phrase, beautified is a vile phrase, but you shall heare: thus in her excellent white bosome, these &c.*." He is presumably reading and commenting on the salutation, but the typography does not make clear whose language is whose. Then, after a question from the queen, he proceeds to the body of the letter:

> *Doubt thou the starres are fire,* *Letter.*
> *Doubt that the Sunne doth moue,*

Doubt truth to be a lyer,
But neuer doubt I loue.
O deere *Ophelia*, I am ill at these numbers, I haue not art to recken my grones, but that I loue thee best, ô most best belieue it, adew. Thine euermore most deere Lady, whilst this machine is to him. *Hamlet.*

(H 82, 84 [E4]r)

The poem in this version is arguably more ambiguous than in Q1 since its question whether "the Sunne doth moue" was, at the turn of the seventeenth century, a nicer problem than whether "the starres do moue," as in Q1. But the most important point about the poem is that in Q2 Hamlet feels obliged to apologize for it: it is beneath his habitual artistry, a sign of the degree to which his "grones" of passion have interfered with his more customary verbal sophistication.

The F version is similar to Q2. There too, Hamlet is in the business of setting up aesthetic hierarchies, but there, as in the case of the later missive to Horatio, the text of the letter is set on the printed page with the reader in mind and correctly demarcated off from Polonius's interjected comments through the use of italics (H 83–85). Q2 and F are more aesthetically sophisticated than Q1 in that the poem is not merely communication, but has become an instance of the deformity of communication on the part of a suffering lover. Indeed, the second quarto and folio texts have a much broader stylistic register than does Q1, in which, to the dismay of its critics, the style is too uniformly low to register social distinctions among speakers. As Alfred Hart complained of the "bad" quartos more generally in *Stolne and Surreptitious Copies*, "King, queen, cardinal, duchess, peer, soldier, lover, courtier, artisan, peasant, servant, and child all speak alike."[71]

Who is responsible for these interesting differences among the three early *Hamlets* in terms of the presentation of written materials? Shakespeare? the players? some other early reviser? the printers or publishers? However we attempt to account for the gradually increasing "literacy" with which the three *Hamlet*s handle written matter within the play, we need to recognize a correlation between this pattern and another noticed in earlier chapters by which, as we move from "bad" quartos to better folios, the plays are subtly gentrified, particularly in their depiction of the milieu of dramatic activity. F *Merry Wives* offers characters of slightly higher social standing and culminates in a masque evoking the courtly milieu of Windsor Castle and the garter chapel; F *Taming of the Shrew* presents the play's actors as genteel allies of the lord instead of semi-literate louts on the level of Christopher Sly, and ends with Sly and his frame having vanished altogether. Similarly in *Hamlet*, if we consider the three versions of the play in terms of their portrayal of theatrical culture, we will find a pattern of

gradual elevation of the actors, a gradual separation of them and Hamlet from "low" elements of theatrical life. The exclusionary rituals by which Robert Greene and other learned poets of the 1590s had sought to distance themselves from "illiterate" players like Shakespeare are appropriated by Shakespeare himself.

In all three versions of the play, the Prince of Denmark is on terms of intimacy with a troupe referred to as the "Tragedians of the City." We will note the classical epithet – they are not players but "Tragedians" – strong propaganda, that, for the elevation of the actor's profession! But the content of Hamlet's advice differs significantly from one version to the next. In all three texts he condemns strutting and stage bellowing that tears a "Passion to tatters, to verie ragges, to split the eares of the Groundlings: who (for the most part) are capeable of nothing, but inexplicable dumbe shewes, & noise," (cited from F; H 131 TLN 1857–60), but the rest of the speech differs widely between Q1 and Q2/F. In Q1 he condemns the clowns for speaking more than is set down for them, as he does in Q2 and F, but then continues in lines unique to the first quarto to describe another fault committed by stage fools:

> And then you haue some agen, that keepes one sute
> Of ieasts, as a man is knowne by one sute of
> Apparrell, and Gentlemen quotes his ieasts downe
> In their tables, before they come to the play, as thus:
> Cannot you stay till I eate my porrige? and, you owe me
> A quarters wages : and, my coate wants a cullison:
> And, your beere is sowre : and, blabbering with his lips,
> And thus keeping in his cinkapase of ieasts,
> When, God knows, the warme Clowne cannot make a iest
> Vnlesse by chance, as the blinde man catcheth a hare:
>
> (H 132, 134 F2)

In this version (which is prose written as blank verse, as commonly in Shakespearean quartos), Hamlet lingers over the poorly endowed clown's repeated stock lines and gags – no doubt entirely unscripted – that draw a laugh whatever the theatrical occasion because they have been anticipated by the audience. Gentlemen actually write the stuff down! – perhaps the first time the words have seen paper. Part of the joke is that literate gentlemen are willing to treat an uncouth, orally based theater with such respect. Such gags did indeed circulate in manuscript: two resembling the "ieasts" to which Hamlet refers were eventually published in *Tarlton's jests. Drawne into these three parts* (1613). The quip about sour beer was probably based on a jest in which Tarlton played drunkard before the queen, and the line about the coat wanting a cullison appears in a jest the same clown played on a red-faced gentleman in an alehouse to make the company merry.[72] Successful delivery of Hamlet's speech in Q1 would require the prince to

mimic the improvisatory, "oral" theater he despises and perhaps stimulate an audience response quite similar to that clowns like Tarlton had aimed for. The speech is an interesting and highly concrete glimpse of actor–audience relations in the late Elizabethan popular theater, in which there is a strong element of direct, spontaneous interaction between the stage and assembled auditors and a high degree of interpenetration between onstage action and the clown's exploits offstage. But this speech is absent in the second quarto version of the play, which offers instead a sophisticated rationale for playing that does not exist in Q1.

In Q2 and F, Hamlet prefaces his critique of the bellowing actors and clowns who speak more than is set down for them by offering his famous advice about suiting the action to the word, the word to the action, about not overstepping the modesty of nature, and holding the mirror up to nature.

> to shew vertue her feature; scorne her own Image, and the very age and body of the time his forme and pressure: Now, this ouer-done, or come tardie off, though it makes the vnskilfull laugh, cannot but make the iudicious greeue, the censure of which one, must in your allowance ore-weigh a whole Theater of others.
>
> (cited from Q2; H 132 [G4]r)

We will note that in this version, Hamlet has divided the audience between the "low" and the judicious – one of the latter is to be preferred over a whole house of the former. Whatever Hamlet may mean by the "forme and pressure" of the "age and body of the time," the play as he envisions it has assumed a greater distance from its audience: it does not so much interact with its spectators as require sufficient distance for interpretation – a sophisticated "reading" of the "age and body" it mirrors. The first quarto's vignette immersing us (and the Prince of Denmark himself) in the slapstick ethos of the popular stage is absent here, as the elevated talk about holding the mirror up to nature is absent from Q1. The image Hamlet projects of the theatre is noticeably more refined in the "good" than in the "bad" quarto. And he has more strongly disavowed that segment of the audience incapable of the "virtue" and judgment that the theater can teach.

The folio version of Hamlet's speeches is close to the second quarto version, except for a highly interesting addition. The three texts differ markedly in their account of the reasons why the "Tragedians of the City" have been compelled to go on tour. In the first quarto, before the players arrive, Hamlet asks Gilderstone, "How comes it that they trauell? Do they grow restie?" The word *restie* could be either *restive* in the now obsolete sense of "inactive" or *rusty*, meaning out of practice, but in either case implies a diminution of previous powers. Gilderstone advises Hamlet that their reputation holds, but the "principall publike audience that / Came

to them, are turned to priuate playes, / And to the humour of children" (H 102 E3r). In the second quarto, Hamlet's question is similar, but shows the players more respect: "Doe they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the Citty; are they so followed." Rosencraus answers simply, "No indeede are they not" (H 102 [F2]v). There is no mention of a possible falling off in artistry, or of the children's companies who have demeaningly eclipsed the adult players.

The folio version (the one to which we are accustomed in standard texts of the play) is greatly expanded, and forges, through its topical specificity, an explicit linkage between Shakespeare's company performing the play of *Hamlet* and the players of Elsinore. We get much more information about the children's companies, as well as much fuller analysis of the basis for their appeal. Hamlet's queries combine the Q1 and Q2 versions, but the rest of the conversation is unique to this version:

> *Ham.* Doe they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the City? Are they so follow'd?
> *Rosin.* No indeed, they are not.
> *Ham.* How comes it? doe they grow rusty?
> *Rosin.* Nay, their indeauour keepes in the wonted pace; But there is Sir an ayrie of Children, little Yases, that crye out on the top of question; and are most tyrannically clap't for't: these are now the fashion, and so be-ratled the common Stages (so they call them) that many wearing Rapiers, are affraide of Goose-quils, and dare scarse come thither.

To which, Hamlet:

> What are they Children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the Quality no longer then they can sing? Will they not say afterwards if they should grow themselues to common Players (as it is like most if their meanes are not better) their Writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their owne Succession.
>
> (H 103 TLN 1381–98)

In this version, there is an overlay of anxiety about status in the portrayal of the misfortunes suffered by the "common Stages" and their players. Given that the plague closed London theaters for extended periods in 1603 and subsequent years, requiring the King's Men at times to resume their role of itinerants, the company's continuance as "Tragedians of the City" was indeed a matter for anxiety, quite apart from the inroads made by the boy companies. Prince Hamlet is incredulous that the children have achieved the degree of prominence they have, and becomes indirectly a spokesman for the adult companies. His speeches – particularly when this segment of the action is combined with his analysis of the purpose of playing later on – subtly define the so-called "common" players away from the

status of menials or children and confer upon them the much higher function of moral teachers who mirror humanity to itself in all of its vices and virtues.

As has frequently been suggested, a similar speech about the "little Yases" may at one point have existed in Q2 as well, and been dropped as the rivalry between companies subsided or for some other reason. But if we take the three texts in order of publication in the material form in which we have them, each version of Hamlet's encounter with the players elevates the status of the theater as an institution by a notch or two, and also elevates the actual company performing the play. Hamlet's comments about the players move them increasingly further from a "low" popular, orally based image of the theater, and toward a more refined, cultivated, and literate vision of it. By the time of the First Folio, the Shakespearean theater presents itself as proudly authorial and claims a capacity for artistic unity and self-containment. As Shakespeare's plays assumed the status of literature and became increasingly distanced for readers from the institution that had given them their "soule of lively action," the name and image of Shakespeare himself became increasingly important as a guarantor of a continuing human presence behind the printed page. *Pace* Foucault, the concept of authorship may have developed at least in part as an antidote to the increased distance created by literacy between the originator of a work of art and its consumers.

Given the profoundly different aesthetic assumptions encoded in the three texts, it is small wonder that our standard editions, despite their general preference for Q2 as copytext, adopt the folio version of Hamlet's pronouncements about theater. That version is the one that brings us closest to Shakespeare as we have traditionally liked to imagine him, and to a Shakespearean theater elegant and sophisticated enough to accord with our image of the author. Similarly, in other cases we have discussed in which the folio offers the most "literate" version of a given passage, most editors have followed the folio. We don't have one single *Hamlet*, we have the pleasure of three interrelated *Hamlets*, each occupying a different position on the register between orality and literacy. To observe how poorly the rough, highly interactive *Hamlet* of Q1 has fared in editorial and critical discussion by comparison with its betters is to recognize the extent to which our received image of "gentle Shakespeare" has been constructed along the lines of Hamlet's own taste. When it comes to aesthetic judgment, the elite is unquestionably to be preferred over the popular, and the highly literate over the low and suspiciously oral. But there is a lingering aura of the seemingly effaced. Alas, poor Yorick!

6

JOHN MILTON'S VOICE

Charles Lamb has left an amusing reaction to his discovery that John Milton had, like most other authors in our twentieth-century understanding of the term, revised his work in the process of composition:

> There is something to me repugnant, at any time, in written hand. The text never seems determinate. Print settles it. I had thought of the 'Lycidas' as of a full-grown beauty – as springing up with all its parts absolute – till, in an evil hour, I was shown the original written copy of it, together with the other minor poems of its author, in the Library of Trinity, kept like some treasure to be proud of. I wish they had thrown them in the Cam, or sent them, after the latter cantos of Spenser, into the Irish Channel. How it staggered me to see the fine things in their ore! interlined, corrected! as if their words were mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure! as if they might have been otherwise, and just as good! as if inspirations were made up of parts, and those fluctuating, successive, indifferent! I will never go into the workshop of any great artist again, nor desire a sight of his picture, till it is fairly off the easel; no, not if Raphael were to be alive again, and painting another Galatea.[1]

The very textual instability that has fascinated scholars of our own era and impelled us back into archival research was, for Lamb in Trinity College Library, "repugnant," even menacing. It is not that he failed to recognize the alteration and displacement of words as a usual element of the creative process, but that, at least on that occasion, he wished to be shielded from it. Great art had to be *as if* born full-blown and perfect in order to be itself, retain its aura of invulnerable unity and strength.

For Lamb at Trinity, "Print settles it" – fixes the art as though in amber so that it can be admired through many ages. But he could preserve his illusion of the immortality of poetic language only insofar as he confined his reading of *Lycidas* to the 1645 and 1673 printed versions of the poem, which are indeed remarkably similar, although by no means identical. If instead he had consulted *Lycidas* as it was first published in the 1638

33 Johnson, ed. (n. 10), 3: 99. For discussion of eighteenth-century adaptations, see Haring-Smith (n. 7), pp. 9–22; and Oliver, ed. (n. 6), pp. 65–69.
34 See, for an example of women's response, Marianne Novy's Introduction to *Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare*, ed. Novy (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), p. 7.
35 See Irene G. Dash's discussion of Garrick and nineteenth-century productions, *Wooing, Wedding, and Power: Women in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 41–64.
36 For all of these and other examples, see Haring-Smith (n. 7), pp. 43–64. See also Susan J. Wolfson, "Explaining to Her Sisters: Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespear*," in Novy, ed. (n. 34), pp. 16–40, especially pp. 23–27.
37 D. C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York and London: Garland, 1992), pp. 323–25.
38 See, for example, the postcards reproduced in Elspeth King, *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women: The Thenew Factor* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1993), p. 29. I am indebted to the kindness of Lynda Boose for this reference.
39 Thompson, ed. (n. 6), p. 21.
40 See Alexander, "The Taming of a Shrew" (n. 12), p. 614. See also the more recent sources cited in n. 12 above.
41 Quiller-Couch and Wilson, eds (n. 9), p. xxvi. For another similar view, see A. L. Rowse, ed., *The Annotated Shakespeare, Vol. I: The Comedies* (New York: C. N. Potter, 1978), pp. 119–21.
42 See, for example, Shirley Garner, "*The Taming of the Shrew*: Inside or Outside of the Joke?" in "*Bad*" *Shakespeare* (n. 22), pp. 105–19.
43 See, for example, Valerie Wayne, ed., *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), particularly Catherine Belsey's "Afterword: A Future for Materialist Feminist Criticism?" pp. 257–70.
44 Oliver, ed. (n. 6), p. 64.
45 See the new Oxford Shakespeare and, for yet a more flexible array of texts, Michael Warren, ed., *The Complete King Lear: 1608–1623* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1989).

5 BAD TASTE AND BAD *HAMLET*

1 For the purpose of this anecdote, I offer my own edited version of the first quarto of *Hamlet*, with modernized spelling and punctuation; see also Albert B. Weiner, ed., *Hamlet: The First Quarto 1603* (Great Neck, New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1962), pp. 104–05.
2 The most electrifying recent production has been Sam Walter's 1985 Q1 *Hamlet* for the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, which several reviewers considered the theatrical highpoint of the year in the London area. For descriptions of that and other recent productions, see the accounts in Thomas Clayton, ed., *The* Hamlet *First Published (Q1, 1603): Origins, Form, Intertextualities* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), pp. 59–60 and 123–36; and Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, eds, *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*, Shakespearean Originals: First Editions (Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp. 13–29. Q1 has also aroused interest on the Polish stage: see Clayton's introduction, p. 18 and n. 2. See also Marvin Rosenberg's "The First Modern English Staging of *Hamlet* Q1," in Clayton, ed., pp. 241–48, for William Poel's less successful effort in 1881.

3 New Cambridge *Hamlet*, ed. Philip Edwards (Cambridge and New Y Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 8. See also two important recent arti Paul Werstine, "The Textual Mystery of *Hamlet*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (19 1–26; and Barbara Mowat, "The Form of *Hamlet*'s Fortunes," *Renaissance Dr* n.s. 19 (1988): 97–126.
4 See Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Compa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 402; and G. R. Hibbard's single-vol *Hamlet* for the Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). As u for all my disagreements with them, my own thinking is strongly indebte recent editions of the play, in particular Wells and Taylor's Oxford Shakesp (*Textual Companion*); Edwards' New Cambridge *Hamlet* (n. 3); G. R. Hibba *Hamlet*; and Harold Jenkins' Arden edition, *Hamlet* (London and New Y Routledge, 1982; reprinted 1987 and 1989). For readers interested in worl with the second quarto and the first folio versions concurrently in a conven pocket edition, the New Folger Library *Hamlet*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Werstine (New York and London: Washington Square Press, 1992), wl conflates the two texts but marks all passages unique to Q2 and all pass unique to F1, is particularly valuable. There is also a useful discussion of variants in Grace Ioppolo, *Revising Shakespeare* (Cambridge and Lonc Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 134–46, which vacillates between mem reconstruction and authorial revision as explanations for the origins of Q1.
5 See in particular, Jenkins, ed. (n. 4); and Marga Munkelt's analysis of edit practice, "Traditions of Emendation in *Hamlet*: The Handling of the Quarto," in Clayton, ed. (n. 2), pp. 211–40.
6 See Charles Knight, *William Shakspere: A Biography*, 3rd edition (Lonc Routledge & Sons, 1867), p. 361. The theory of Q1 as an inept reconstruc of some sort was articulated during the nineteenth century, most notabl John Payne Collier, but was not dominant then. See the surveys of opinio Hibbard, ed. (n. 4), pp. 75–76; and in George Ian Duthie, *The "Bad" Quar* Hamlet: *A Critical Study*, Shakespeare Problems VI (Cambridge: Cambri University Press, 1941), pp. 90–91.
7 See A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904; reprinted New York: Merid 1955), p. 111, n. 2; and John Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* (1 reprinted Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. For Wilson's earlier views of Q1, see his "The Copy for 'Hamlet,' 1603," *Lib* 3rd series 9 (1918): 153–85; and "The 'Hamlet' Transcript, 1593" in the s volume, pp. 217–47. See also the discussion of his theories in Duthie (n. 6

In 1919 T. S. Eliot notoriously agreed with the "disintegrator" J. M. Robert that *Hamlet* was a palimpsest and an artistic failure – a philosophical trag uneasily grafted upon a much simpler and cruder revenge play closely res bling Q1. But in the case of *Hamlet*, yet once more, E. K. Chambers and the disintegrationists won the day during the 1920s; thereafter, the image of the H "as a patcher of other men's plays" became intolerable for the twentieth-cen critical mainstream. See J. M. Robertson, *The Problem of "Hamlet"* (Lonc George Allen & Unwin, 1919); T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* (1920; reprir London: Methuen, 1972), pp. 95–103; his *Selected Essays, 1917–1932* (New Y Harcourt, Brace, 1932), pp. 121–26; and the contextualization of Eliot's opir in William H. Quillian, *Hamlet and the New Poetic: James Joyce and T. S. Eliot*, Stu in Modern Literature, no. 13 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1 1975), pp. 49–77; Terence Hawkes, *Meaning by Shakespeare* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 93–96; and his *That Shakespeherian Rag: Essays Critical Process* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), pp. 92–119.

8 One recent exception is Holderness and Loughrey's edition (n. 2), an early copy of which was kindly supplied by Bryan Loughrey. For other recent work "rehabilitating" Q1 *Hamlet*, see especially Steven Urkowitz, "'Well-sayd olde Mole': Burying Three *Hamlets* in Modern Editions," in Georgianna Ziegler, ed., *Shakespeare Study Today* (New York: AMS Press, 1986), pp. 37–70; his "Good News about 'Bad' Quartos," in Maurice Charney, ed., *"Bad" Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon* (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988), pp. 189–206; and "Back to Basics: Thinking about the *Hamlet* First Quarto," in Clayton, ed. (n. 2), pp. 257–91. See also Philip C. McGuire's essay in the same volume, "Which Fortinbras, Which *Hamlet*?" pp. 151–78, which the author kindly sent me in manuscript; and Kathleen O. Irace's discussion in *Reforming the "Bad" Quartos: Performance and Provenance of Six Shakespearean First Editions* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1994), which argues for Q1 as memorially reconstructed but still worthy of perusal.

9 See in particular their *Textual Companion* (n. 4), pp. 23–31 and 398. The Norton Shakespeare currently in preparation will, in using the Oxford text, presumably keep its hypothesis of memorial reconstruction for Q1; similarly, Kathleen Irace's forthcoming Cambridge edition of Q1 will posit it as memorially reconstructed. But the critical landscape is gradually changing. See, in addition to Holderness and Loughrey's edition of Q1 (n. 2), two recent editions that leave open the matter of Q1's origins: the Folger edition, ed. Mowat and Werstine (n. 4), and the new *Three-Text Hamlet*, ed. Paul Bertram and Bernice W. Kliman (New York: AMS Press, 1991), cited in the present study as H. The *New Variorum Hamlet*, ed. Bernice Kliman and William Hutchings, with anticipated completion in 2001, will appear in both computerized hypertext and in print format, and will enormously facilitate textual work on the play.

10 Cited from T. M. Raysor, ed., *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism* (London: Constable, 1930), 1: 21.

11 See Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1984); and Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

12 Cited from Boswell's *Malone's Shakespeare* 1: 134–35, in J. D. Wilson, *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's* Hamlet, *and the Problems of Its Transmission: An Essay in Critical Bibliography*, 2 vols (New York: Macmillan; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 1: 2.

13 W. W. Greg, *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: The Battle of Alcazar & Orlando Furioso*, Malone Society Extra Volume, 1922 (Oxford: Frederick Hall, 1923), p. 256.

14 Although I am skeptical about the technological determinism of some of the arguments in the first two authors in the following list, my speculations in this chapter are strongly indebted to: Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982); Jack Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*, Studies in Literacy, Family, Culture and the State (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); his earlier book in the same series, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Ruth Finnegan's extension and critique in *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

15 Cited from Jenkins, ed. (n. 4), p. 13.

16 For recent editorial discussion and attenuation of this hypothetical scena see Jenkins, ed. (n. 4), pp. 13–18; Hibbard, ed. (n. 4), pp. 67–71; and Edwa ed. (n. 3), pp. 9–10.

17 See Gerald D. Johnson, "Nicholas Ling, Publisher 1580–1607," *Studie Bibliography* 38 (1985): 203–14, and his "John Trundle and the Book-Tr 1603–1626," *Studies in Bibliography* 39 (1986): 177–99. Despite Trundle's p reputation among modern editors, some of his publications were hig interesting. He was, for example, the publisher of *Hic Mulier* and *Haec-Vir*.

18 Wilson (n. 12), 1: 20; other scholars (also with Claudius in mind?) refe the play as a patchwork: see in particular Duthie's definitive dismissal of (n. 6).

19 Here and throughout, the *Hamlet* texts are cited from *The Three-Text Ha* I have also checked all Q1 citations either against the Huntington Lib copy of Q1 or against Q, and have checked Q2 citations against Q. For the c venience of readers not in possession of the parallel-text edition, my citati include signature numbers for substantive quotations in addition to the p numbers from H.

20 For recent readings of Q1 Gertred, see, for example, Steven Urkowitz, "I Women Eleven Ways: Changing Images of Shakespearean Characters in Earliest Texts," in *Images of Shakespeare*, Proceedings of the Third Congress the International Shakespeare Association, 1986, ed. Werner Habicht, D Palmer, and Roger Pringle (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London a Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), pp. 292–304; Kathleen Ira "Adapting *Hamlet* Q1 to Zeffirelli," paper presented at the Shakespe Association of America seminar on text, 1992; and Dorothea Kehler, "The F Quarto of *Hamlet*: Reforming the Lusty Widow," paper presented at the S seminar on text, 1994.

21 Ernest Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949; reprinted New York: Norton, 197 written, according to Jones, "as an exposition of a footnote in Freu 'Traumdeutung' (1900), p. 9."

22 Quoted from Peter Guinness in Brian Loughrey, "Q1 in Recent Performan An Interview," in Clayton, ed. (n. 2), p. 128.

23 See Loughrey (n. 22) and the current of minority opinion represented Frank G. Hubbard, ed., *The First Quarto Edition of Shakespeare's Hamlet*, Univers of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature no. 8 (Madison: [Univers of Wisconsin], 1920), pp. 32–35; Weiner, ed. (n. 1); Maxwell E. Foster, *The F behind the Play*: Hamlet *and Quarto One*, ed. Anne Shiras (Pittsburgh: Privat published by the Foster Executors, 1991); Hardin Craig, *A New Look Shakespeare's Quartos* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), pp. 78–8 Urkowitz (n. 20); and Holderness and Loughrey, eds (n. 2), pp. 13–29.

24 Bradley (n. 7), pp. 112–13, nn.

25 Nashe and Lodge are cited from Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Drame Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 7 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; New Yo Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 15, 24.

26 Eric Sams, "Taboo or Not Taboo? The Text, Dating and Authorship of *Ham* 1589–1623," *Hamlet Studies* 10 (1988): 12–46.

27 Robert Greene, *Groats-worth of Wit* . . . (London: for Richard Oliue, 159([E3]v–[E4]r.

28 *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, 4 vols, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridg Cambridge University Press, 1953), 1: 351.

29 See in particular Peter Guinness's comments on Q1 in Loughrey (n. 2 p. 124.

30 See Trevor Howard-Hill's speculation in "The Author as Scribe or Reviser? Middleton's Intentions in *A Game at Chess*," *TEXT* 3 (1987): 305–18.

31 Eric S. Mallin, *Inscribing the Time: Shakespeare and the End of Elizabethan England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1995). The hypothesis that Shakespeare wrote Q2 while the theaters were closed during plaguetime conflicts with Leeds Barroll's stimulating recent argument that he tended to do his writing for the stage when the theaters were open, and also with my speculations below about the orality of the Shakespearean theater. See Barroll's *Politics, Plague, and Shakespeare's Theater: The Stuart Years* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991).

32 For the doubling of roles, see Loughrey (n. 22), p. 127, and Scott McMillin's differing view in "Casting the *Hamlet* Quartos. The Limit of Eleven," in Clayton, ed. (n. 2), pp. 179–94.

33 See Craig (n. 23), pp. 78–82. His arguments are refined and amplified in Robert E. Burkhart, *Shakespeare's Bad Quartos* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), pp. 96–113.

34 Howard-Hill (n. 30); see also Ioppolo (n. 4), pp. 70–76.

35 See David Ward, "The King and *Hamlet*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43 (1992): 280–302; and, for a sense of the continuing malleability of the chronological arrangement of the texts, G. R. Hibbard's revision of the argument made in his Oxford Shakespeare *Hamlet* edition, "The Chronology of the Three Substantive Texts of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*," in Clayton, ed. (n. 2), pp. 79–89.

36 Quoted in Loughrey (n. 22), p. 124.

37 Ibid., pp. 124 and 126. Following Foucaultian theory of the origins of the "author," David Wiles has made a cogent argument for the demands of censorship as precipitating a more fixed, "literary" view of the playtexts in the late sixteenth century. See in particular his discussion of the role of the clown and fool in *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge, London, New York, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 11–15.

38 See, for example, Ursula Schaefer's essay, "Hearing from Books: The Rise of Fictionality in Old English Poetry," in A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack, eds, *Vox intexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages* (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 117–36. Like my own discussion to follow, Shaefer's is dependent on Ong and Goody (n. 14).

39 See Goody, *Interface* (n. 14), pp. 263–89; and Finnegan's critique (n. 14), pp. 59–85.

40 For the "invisibility" of versification on stage, see George T. Wright, *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 91–107. As Wright points out, even "good" Shakespearean dramatic verse is metrically rough. Indeed, consistently end-stopped and metrically correct lines might well have proved unsuccessful on stage. See also his "An Almost Oral Art: Shakespeare's Language on Stage and Page," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43 (1992): 159–69.

41 Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642*, 3rd edition (Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 209. However, Gurr himself would presumably not extend his generalizations about performance to the playtext itself, which he portrays in the usual way as polished by the author from its inception.

42 *Histrio-Mastix. Or, The Player whipt* ([London]: for Th. Thorp, 1610), sig. [C1]v.

43 I am indebted to Rita Copeland's work on Lollard pedagogy, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press as *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*.

44 See G. E. Bentley, *The Professions of Dramatist and Player in Shakespeare's 1590–1642*, one-volume paperback edition (Princeton and Guildford, Princeton University Press, 1986), *Dramatist*, pp. 76–79 and *Player*, pp. 3 That is not to suggest that actors never asked to read the parts thems rather than have them read by the playwright. Bentley suggests there must been some sort of preliminary culling out of materials, otherwise the rea would have taken up too much of the company's time. See the example *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl* in David Mann, *The Elizabethan Player: Contemp Stage Representation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 183–8

45 See Mann (n. 44), pp. 183–85: the author Haddit is loath to give the actor than a few minutes with a new jig lest the actor carry away enough of the to have the company poet recreate it. In this scene, however, it is clear tha actor actually reads a text rather than having it read aloud to him. He i reading to the company, but canvassing for works to be read to the com later on.

46 For *Orlando Furioso*, see Bentley, *Player* (n. 44), p. 83 n., citing W. W. *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses*, 1: 176–81. See also "The of 'Poore,'" ed. N. W. Bawcutt, *Collections Volume XV* (Oxford: The Ma Society, 1993), pp. 111–69.

47 Cited from *The Return from Parnassus*, ed. John S. Farmer, Tudor Facs Texts (1912; reprinted New York: AMS, 1970), sig. G3r.

48 My thanks to Guy Hamel for this point, personal communication, April, See also *Histrio-Mastix* (n. 42); Bentley's citation of a letter from Robert to Henslowe (*Dramatist* (n. 44), p. 77) in which Shaw reports that "we heard their book and like it"; Wells and Taylor (n. 4), p. 3; Gurr (n. 41), p. and on "hearing" plays more generally, Andrew Gurr, *Playing in Shakesp London* (Cambridge, New York, etc.: Cambridge University Press, reprinted 1989), pp. 85–97.

49 See William B. Long, "Stage Directions: A Misinterpreted Facto Determining Textual Provenance," *TEXT* 2 (1985): 121–37. I am also inde to the recent research, primarily on *Two Merry Milkmaids*, presented by L Leslie Thomson, and Alan C. Dessen at the Shakespeare Associatio America session on "Annotated Quartos and Elizabethan Staging Practi Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1994. Long's contribution is printed in red form as "Bookkeepers and Playhouse Manuscripts: A Peek at the Evide *Shakespeare Newsletter* 44 (1994): 3.

These scholars sometimes suggest that the prompter did no actual pro ing of actors; however, there are several references to prompting in our s of the term from the early to mid-seventeenth century. See Bentley, *I* (n. 44), pp. 80–82. Given that most of Bentley's examples are from the 1 and 1630s, it may be that prompting actors was becoming an increasi significant aspect of the Bookkeeper's job as the desire for precise renditic the language of the playtext as licensed became more prominent among acting companies.

50 Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Cu* (1990; reprinted Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 19 pp. 86–91.

51 See Mann (n. 44), pp. 5–6 and 54–73. On Shakespeare as actor and th definition of theater, I am indebted also to Gurr (n. 41); and to Meredith A Skura, *Shakespeare the Actor and the Purposes of Playing* (Chicago and Lon University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 1–63.

52 For more examples, see Jenkins' discussion (n. 4), p. 62.

53 *Pericles* represents a prominent exception, since it existed in several "bad" quartos published before 1623, the first-known of which appeared in 1609. Since it was not included by Heminge and Condell in the First Folio it is sufficiently anomalous to constitute a case unto itself that merits further study.

54 If "vttered" is not taken in its oral sense, the most plausible meaning is the *OED*'s obsolete usage c: "To produce or yield, to send out, supply, or furnish," which still preserves some of the aura of the marketplace. On the playhouse as a miniature market, see Barroll (n. 31); and Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare,* Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 1 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

55 John Marston, *The Malcontent* (London: for William Aspley, 1604). On humanist theorization of the relationship between thought and speech, see the early chapters of Martin Elsky, *Authorizing Words: Speech, Writing, and Print in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

56 As E. A. J. Honigmann notes in *The Stability of Shakespeare's Text* (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), pp. 47–77, a similar penchant for revision in the process of copying has been characteristic even of more recent authors operating much more squarely within the assumptions of print culture.

57 For instances of scribal publication of theatrical documents, see Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 65–70. In *Textual Companion* (n. 4), p. 19, Wells and Taylor cite Humphrey Moseley's assertion that when the actors' friends "desir'd a Copy, then they (and justly too) transcribed what they *Acted,*" but while Wells and Taylor argue that this transcription was legitimized by being made from a written copy (presumably the "promptbook"), I would argue that actors' transcription could well have been mnemonic (copied from the book of memory) and nevertheless legitimate. The resulting copy would be the play as acted with all the alterations for the stage, but still, as Moseley contends, in a form that carried the "*Authour's* consent." See the Beaumont and Fletcher folio *Comedies and Tragedies* (London: for Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley, 1647), "The Stationer to the Readers."

58 Nearly all pedagogical treatises of the period mention memory as highly important, but see in particular John Brinsley's discussion of the "places" in *Ludus Literarius: or, The Grammar Schoole* (London: for Thomas Man, 1612), pp. 182, 253–58.

59 See Dante, *The New Life,* trans. William Anderson (Baltimore: Penguin, 1964), p. 37; and "The Life of St. Thomas Aquinas" by Bernardo Gui and Bartholomew of Capua, trans. Kenelm Foster, in *Biographical Documents for the Life of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Blackfriars, 1949), all as cited in Carruthers (n. 50), p. 3. For Elizabeth I, see Sir John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae* (London: for W. Frederick, 1769), pp. 117–19, which records both the letter the queen is said to have written and the one she is said to have dictated. Similar mnemonic powers were attributed to Julius Caesar (Carruthers, p. 7).

60 Love (n. 57), pp. 52–53. On our reluctance to consider Shakespeare's oral sources, see Linda Woodbridge, "Patchwork: Piecing the Early Modern Mind in England's First Century of Print Culture," *English Literary Renaissance* 23 (1993): 5–45. For Jonson's comment, see *Discoveries* in *Ben Jonson,* ed. C. H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, vol. 8 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947), pp. 583–84.

61 Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 342–67.

62 See D. F. McKenzie, "Speech-Manuscript-Print," in *New Directions in Textual*

Studies, ed. Dave Oliphant and Robin Bradford with an introduction by J Carver (Austin: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center of the Univ of Texas at Austin, 1990), pp. 86–109. In a recent lecture at the Universi Texas, the art historian Joan Holladay offered several medieval exam among them the Wilhelm Ms. of Heinrich II, Landgrave of Hesse, in w the patron as projected author is shown in miniature as part of a decor capital at the beginning of the text as a way of suggesting that the words follow are to be imagined as possessing the "truth" of oral communicatio

63 See *The Malcontent,* sig. [A4]r; and for Armin, Wiles (n. 37), p. 140. On serr and other religious materials, see McKenzie (n. 62); Keith Thomas, ' Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England," in Gerd Baumann, ed., *Written Word: Literacy in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 97–131; and Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640,* Cambr Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 1991).

64 For a reading of the portrait and front matter, see Leah S. Marcus, *Pu Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley and London: Univ of California Press, 1988), pp. 2–25. In the 1620s and 1630s, as Th L. Berger has pointed out to me, such title-page illustrations became common on playbooks, no doubt for the same reason: they reduced distance between the play as staged and the play as read.

I am reminded of a similar instance from our own technologically s literate age: the newest version of Norton Disk Doctor displays a grave mc image of a doctor at work while the software analyzes the disk. Surely, fo the purpose is similar: to reassure us that something personal, healing, car and clinically sound is being accomplished even though we can't s happening.

65 T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (in Oriya translation) (India: Pra Ch., by arrangement with Faber & Faber, 1956).

66 Ong and Goody (n. 14). See also Wiles (n. 37), pp. 109–10, which applies Bernstein's theory of "restricted codes" and "elaborated codes" to precisel transition under discussion here.

67 See Jenkins, ed. (n. 4), p. 305, where the word is given as "pajock" and glo as a "base contemptible fellow" (n.); Wiles (n. 37), p. 59, glosses the ter "patched or motley fool." My argument here is indebted to Wiles' interp tion of the aftermath of the play-within-a-play scene in *Hamlet* as full of allus to Kemp's departure from the company, pp. 57–60.

68 See Wiles' biography of Kemp (n. 37), pp. 24–42.

69 See Jenkins, ed. (n. 4), who offers a useful discussion of the many ways in w F constitutes a more "literary" text than Q2, pp. 61–62; Joseph Loewens "Plays Agonistic and Competitive: The Textual Approach to Elsin *Renaissance Drama,* n.s. 19 (1988): 63–96, which discounts Q1 but offers i esting analysis of the differences between Q2 and F; and Wilson, "The Cop 'Hamlet,' 1603" (n. 7), pp. 161–62.

70 Q1 calls the play a "Tragicall Historie" on the title page and head title, b "Tragedy" or "Tragedie" in the running titles; Q2 calls it a "Tragicall Hist on the title page but a "Tragedie" in the head title and running titles; in First Folio, the play is fully invested with the dignity of "Tragedie" as a ger designation.

71 Alfred Hart, *Stolne and Surreptitious Copies: A Comparative Study of Shakespe Bad Quartos* (Melbourne and London: Melbourne and Oxford Unive Presses, 1942), p. 104.

72 See Wilson, "'Hamlet' Transcript" (n. 7), pp 240–41. Wilson cites not the original 1613 edition, but James Halliwell's reprint, *Tarlton's Jests, and News Out of Purgatory* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1844), which expurgates some of the material. Since Tarleton died in 1588, for Wilson at this early stage of his thinking about *Hamlet* the presence of the jests indicated a very early date for this segment of the play – a view I find highly plausible. More recent memorial reconstructionists, with almost the same degree of plausibility, see the passage as "castigating the Tarlton tradition which had become outworn in the hands of his successors," Duthie (n. 6), pp. 232–34.

6 JOHN MILTON'S VOICE

1 Cited from the *London Magazine* in Alfred W. Pollard, "The Bibliography of Milton," *Library*, n.s. 37, vol. 10 (1909): 1–33.

2 See the recent discussions of the poem's occasion in David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London, Boston, Melbourne, and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 269–85; and John Leonard, "'Trembling ears': The Historical Moment of *Lycidas*," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 21 (1991): 59–81.

3 In the 1637 edition, the work belongs to John Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales and his family. The title page carries no reference to Milton, but identifies the work as "A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634: *On Michaelmasse night, before the* Right Honorable, Iohn *Earle of Bridgewater, Vicount* Brackly, *Lord Praesident of* Wales, And one of His Maiesties most honorable Privie Counsell." Lawes' dedicatory preface to Bridgewater's eldest son mentions an anonymous author who has not "*openly acknowledg'd*" the work, but redirects its authorship to the Bridgewater family, through whom the "Poem . . . *receiv'd its first occasion of birth.*"

In the 1645 *Poems*, "A Maske" is set apart from the rest of Milton's works by a separate title page, but the title page clearly identifies it as Milton's, "A Mask Of the same Author Presented At *Ludlow*-Castle, 1634. Before The Earl of Bridgewater Then President of Wales." Both the Michaelmas occasion and Bridgewater's status as a Privy Counsellor disappear from this version, which also includes "The Copy of a Letter Writt'n by Sir Henry Wootton, To the Author" praising the poem and its author.

By the time of the 1673 *Poems*, the maske has lost its separate title page and become assimilated into the body of Milton's works. It bears the same title as the head title from the earlier editions, "A Mask presented at Ludlow-Castle, 1634. &c." Even its connection with the Council of Wales and the Earl and his family who had "birthed" the masque has disappeared in this version.

Of course, by 1645 "A Maske" had already lost other elements of its occasion that would have been evident in the performance. As C. W. R. D. Moseley remarks in *The Poetic Birth: Milton's Poems of 1645* (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1991), p. 201, "The complexity and richness of presentation of the masque, and the peculiar relationship of an audience to people they know acting a part, necessarily disappears in *Poems* (1645)."

4 For differing interpretations, see Pollard (n. 1); William Riley Parker, *Milton: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 2: 1108–12; Hugh Amory, "Things Unattempted Yet: A Bibliography of the First Edition of *Paradise Lost*," *Book Collector* 32 (1983): 41–66; John Barnard, "Bibliographical Context and the Critic," *TEXT* 3 (1987): 27–46; and Peter Lindenbaum, "The Poet in the

Marketplace: Milton and Samuel Simmons," in Paul G. Stanwood, ed., *Of I and Politics: New Essays on Milton and His World*, Medieval and Renaissance T and Studies vol. 126 (Binghamton, New York: MRTS, 1995), pp. 249–62. also Lindenbaum's "Milton's Contract," *Cardozo Arts and Entertainment Journal* 10 (1992): 439–54; and his "John Milton and the Republican Moc Literary Production," *Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991): 121–36. My th to the author, who was kind enough to send me his work in manuscript.

5 See R. G. Moyles, *The Text of* Paradise Lost: *A Study in Editorial Proc* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

6 See Stephen B. Dobranski, "*Samson Agonistes* and the "Omissa," presente MLA, San Diego, 1994, and forthcoming in *Studies in English Litera 1500–1900*; similar material will appear in his University of Texas dissertat "The Labor of Book-Writing: A Critical and Textual Analysis of John Mi and the Seventeenth-Century Book Trade," scheduled for completion du 1995 or 1996.

7 Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxf Clarendon Press, 1993); and Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the En Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995). I grateful to Professor Marotti for sending me an early copy of his book ju I was finishing the present chapter.

8 See, for example, the discussion of *sparagmos* in Michael Lieb, *Milton an Culture of Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

9 Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson, eds, *Re-membering Milton* (New and London: Methuen, 1987).

10 In addition to Love and Marotti (n. 7), I am strongly indebted to my stu Margaret Downs-Gamble, whose dissertation on "John Donne's Monst Body," Department of English, University of Texas, 1993, got me thin about authorial embodiment. She is presently working on a book about an poems in manuscript.

11 See in particular, the volume editor's essay on Herbert in Randall McLeod, *Crisis in Editing: Texts of the English Renaissance: Papers given at the Twenty-Fi Annual Conference on Editorial Problems University of Toronto 4–5 November* (New York: AMS Press, 1994), pp. 61–172; and more generally, Marc discussion (n. 7), p. 289; Martin Elsky, *Authorizing Words: Speech, Writing, Print in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University P 1989), pp. 147–68; Jonathan Goldberg, *Voice Terminal Echo: Postmodernism English Renaissance Texts* (New York and London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 101 and the broader discussion of poetic patterning in Neil Fraistat, *The Poem the Book: Interpreting Collections of Romantic Poetry* (Chapel Hill and Lon University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 3–21.

12 The discussion to follow is indebted both to L. C. Martin, ed., *The Poetical V of Robert Herrick* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956); and to J. Max Patrick, *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick* (1963; reprinted New York: W. W. Nor 1968).

13 See Martin, ed. (n. 12); and the discussion of some of the variants in Lea Marcus, "Robert Herrick," in Thomas N. Corns, ed., *The Cambridge Compa to English Poetry, Donne to Marvell* (Cambridge and New York: Cambr University Press, 1993), pp. 171–81.

14 *Quarterly Review* 4 (August, 1810), Article XII, pp. 171–72. See also the n elaborate discussion in Leah S. Marcus, *Childhood and Cultural Despair: A T and Variations in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Pittsburgh: University Pittsburgh Press, 1978).