A philosophical reading of *Hamlet*: A comparative study of the complexities of the earliest editions, Q1 (1603), Q2 (1604-5), and Folio (1623)

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To the best of my knowledge I confirm that the work in this thesis is my original work undertaken for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of ADH, De Montfort University. I confirm that no material of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or qualification at any other university.

Abstract

Chapter One traces the origins of the *Hamlet* narrative, examining the play's antecedent texts. The three early editions of the play are then studied in light of their relationship to the antecedent texts, and what is known about their provenance. The evolutionary nature of narratives and also knowledge is established as a key theme in this thesis.

Chapter Two considers how editions of *Hamlet* were reprinted and edited in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and how the issue of making sense of the various editions developed. The discovery of Q1 *Hamlet* is considered, along with theories that accounted for it. The work of the New Bibliography is examined, followed by a focus on how the New Textualists reframed the study of Shakespeare and perceptions of *Hamlet*. An account of the most recent theories on the play's provenance is then given.

Chapter Three begins a three-part examination of the philosophical content of *Hamlet*, which is underpinned by an account of Western philosophical thinking from Plato to Michel de Montaigne. The play's engagement with epistemology is here considered, through a focus on the philosophical conundrum of 'the problem of universals', which attempts to establish a thing's nature, and to account for likeness between similar things.

Chapter Four considers how the play frames the relationship between language and truth. Names and titles are considered, along with the efficacy of ceremonies, the tension between written and spoken words, and the relationship between words, thoughts and things. The theme of representation is established as a dominant philosophical motif, and a Eucharistic subtext is highlighted throughout the play.

Chapter Five considers how the play frames the natural world. Ophelia's association with flowers, the subject of land, and how the supernatural and the natural are related are examined. Following this, Montaigne's relationship to Shakespeare and *Hamlet* is analysed. This particular configuration of textual and philosophical analysis, in light of the play's bibliographical history, affords us perspectives newly observed in this thesis.

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Dedication

To Maria, Taylor, Lyle, Martha, Macy, Bertie, Hamish and my parents. Without the support of my family, and the licence to overly dominate our conversation and the study table, I could not have managed this most inspiring of challenges.

Contents

Introduction

       Hamlet opens with an existential question 'Who's there?', which paves the way for a plethora of philosophical questions that, like the opening one, remain unanswered. *Hamlet*'s conundrums continue to concern us four hundred years after the First Folio edition was published. The play also remains the archetype of Western theatre, which is why we, like William Shakespeare evidently, cannot leave it alone.

       According to Harold Bloom: 'after Jesus, Hamlet is the most cited figure in Western consciousness' (Bloom 1999, 32). Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor state that '"To be or not to be" must be the most frequently quoted (and parodied) speech in Western and indeed global cultural tradition', and that the play 'has been knowledgeably described as "the world's most filmed story after Cinderella"' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 15, 17). So embedded in our culture and psyche is the play that the *OED* records the allusive phrase (as early as 1775) '*Hamlet* without the Prince' (OED. Hamlet, *n*. 2), meaning a performance or event without the central figure. In this latter instance, the world has become the play, and the protagonist, us. The image of Hamlet reflecting on the skull has a life that transcends place, language and cultures, with Bloom and Jan Kott both likening the play to the Mona Lisa (Bloom 1999, 391; Kott 1991, 47). Modern cultural references to the play abound, from the plot of Disney's *The Lion King* (1994), to Bob Dylan's lyrics: 'can you tell me what it means "to be or not to be"' (Dylan 2020).

       Theatrical and filmic productions of the play also abound, and our greatest actors remain drawn to the central role as the ultimate challenge in demonstrating a taste of their quality. In the last eighty years Hamlet has been played by Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, Richard Burton, Nicol Williamson, Mark Rylance, Frances de la Tour, Robert Lepage, Robert Wilson, Steven Berkoff, Maxine Peake, Ian McKellen, Jude Law, Janet McTeer, David Tennant, Sam West, Rory Kinnear, Mel Gibson, Kenneth Branagh, Ethan Hawke, Adrian Lester, Paapa Essiedu, Michelle Terry and Cush Jumbo amongst others. Our most prominent directors have also been continuously drawn to the play, including Peter Brook, Trevor Nunn, Peter Hall, Franco Zeffirelli, Gregory Doran and Sarah Frankcom.

The play's continued ability to resonate has been noted by Kott who suggests that '*Hamlet* is like a sponge . . . it immediately absorbs all the problems of our time' (Kott 1991, 52). For A. D. Nuttall '*Hamlet* is the equivalent in literary art of Rorschach blot – that is, it is expressly framed for maximum ambiguity so that when onlookers think they are interpreting, they are really only revealing their own nature' (Nuttall 2007, 201). Paul Woodruff suggests that '*Hamlet* is uniquely constructed in such a way that we cannot reflect on the lead character without reflecting on ourselves' (Woodruff 2018, 60). The sponge-like *Hamlet* is yet to be squeezed dry because, as Nuttall suggests: 'Whatever you think of, Shakespeare will have thought of first' (Nuttall 2007, 307), so the play continues to reveal something new each time we engage with it. John Dover Wilson states that '*Hamlet* is Shakespeare's most realistic, most modern, tragedy . . .' encapsulating 'the spirit and life' of both Shakespeare's time and ours (Wilson 1959, 52). Wilson's statement was made in 1935, but arguably remains true today.

If, as A. N. Whitehead suggests, modern philosophy is a collection of 'footnotes to Plato' (Whitehead 1978, 39), we might consider contemporary theatre to be footnotes to Shakespeare, and to some extent *Hamlet*, as echoes from the play still abound. Anton Chekhov wrote his seminal play *The Seagull* as a homage to *Hamlet*, with a suicidal male protagonist who stages a play within the play and who resents his mother and her new love interest, a young girl who loses her sanity, observations on the shapes of clouds, and an opening line that asks 'Why do you always wear black?' (Chekhov 2002, 83). Charlotte Jones's 2001 play *Humble Boy* ends with Felix stating 'Let be' (Jones 2001, 101). In Mark Ravenhill's play *Faust is Dead* Alain states that 'We must embrace suffering' (Ravenhill 2001, 121). In *The Crucible* Arthur Miller's protagonist John Proctor asks 'How may I live without my name?' (Miller 2010, 130), and 'what is John Proctor?' (Miller 2010, 125). Samuel Beckett's play *Endgame* gives us a protagonist called 'Hamm' who asks 'Can there be misery . . . loftier than mine?' (Beckett 1964, 12). Tom Stoppard's play *Jumpers* has George suggest that 'language is an approximation of meaning and not a logical symbolism for it' (Stoppard 1972, 16), and Dotty suggests that 'good and bad . . . are not real properties of things . . . they are just expressions of our feelings about them' (Stoppard 1972, 32). Stoppard's play *The Hard Problem* reflects on consciousness, with Hilary suggesting that 'the body is made of *things*, and things don't have thoughts' (Stoppard 2015, 12). Andrew Bovell's 2016 play *Things I Know to be True* has Rosie inform us: 'I make a list of all the things I . . . actually know for certain to be true and the really frightening thing is . . . it's a

very short list' (Bovell 2016, 7). The issues addressed above mirror those engaged with by *Hamlet*, such as: how to be happy and cope with pain; the complexities of reputation and the value of a name; existentialism; depression and self-loathing; the philosophy of language, the nature of consciousness; to what extent the world is a subjective mind-centred thing or independent of our perceptions of it; and epistemological conundrums like the nature of truth and how we measure what we appear to know.

Just as our theatre is still engaging with questions that *Hamlet* poses, our great thinkers have continued to ponder these same conundrums, often looking back at the Dane for insight. As we shall see, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud, amongst many others, all turned to Elsinore for insight and inspiration, often proving Nuttall's point that Shakespeare appeared to have got there first. Daniel C. Dennett, like Hamlet, is a philosopher interested in the nature of consciousness, and he has also recently examined the subject of religion in his book *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*. On the significance of language in the advancement of religious practices Dennett writes that:

> Language gave us the power to remind ourselves of things not currently present to our senses, to *dwell* on topics that would otherwise be elusive, and this brought into focus a virtual world of imagination, populated by the agents that mattered the most to us, both the living but absent and the dead who were gone but not forgotten. (Dennett 2006, 114)

Here Dennett observes how language, thinking, remembering, imagining and coping with death all subtly connect. Later in the book Dennett reflects on how ceremonies that aim to take care of dealing with the dead are central to world religions. Dennett suggests that we have a tendency to want to hold on to our dead ancestors, which makes us perceive them as 'a *spirit*, a sort of *virtual* person created by the survivors' troubled mind-sets, and [they are] almost as vivid and robust as a live person' (Dennett 2006, 13). Here, as Dennett pushes the boundaries of our understanding of these nuanced philosophical matters, we notice a picture is being painted that looks much like *Hamlet*, with a protagonist whose obsession with his deceased father is amplified by a spiritual visitation that looks like a 'live person' who insists on remembrance, with the result of much 'dwelling'. As we shall see, the play repeatedly engages with the relationship between language, thoughts, memory, the imagination and loss, and our need to perform ceremonies in order to establish meaning and to cope with the death of loved ones. Erving Goffman's work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956) that

frames the establishing of a persona as analogous to an actor's performance also reminds us of *Hamlet* whilst pushing the boundaries of understanding (Goffman 1990). Repeatedly as we move towards greater philosophical insight, we see not only glimpses of *Hamlet*, but also that it might still have something to teach us.

Although, according to Bloom 'Categorizing Hamlet is virtually impossible' (Bloom 1999, 406), the protagonist and the play (at times indistinguishable) have inspired no shortage of theories that each make strong claims to isolate a particular major theme. Margreta de Grazia establishes the subject of land as a dominant motif (De Grazia 2007). Bloom and Anne Righter both argue that the play is self-consciously theatrical in its focus (Bloom 1999; Righter 1962). Nietzsche suggests that Hamlet's tragic flaw is his unique ability to see through the veil of illusion that is reality, resulting in an inability to act (Nietzsche 1995). Terence Hawkes describes Elsinore as a world that has imploded due to a breakdown of communication (Hawkes 1973). Michael Goldman views the play as a study of how we attempt to make sense out of our actions (Goldman 1985). E. M. W. Tillyard suggests that a key theme in the play is the tension that lies between our animal instincts and our perceived god-like rationality (Tillyard 1943). Jacques Lacan sees *Hamlet* as a study of our attempts to cope with death and mourning through ritual (Lacan in De Grazia 2007). Caroline Spurgeon highlights how the dominant imagery of the play concerns a mysterious disease, awaiting to destroy body, mind, and reputation (Spurgeon 1935). Rhodri Lewis has shown how *Hamlet* portrays humanity as essentially hunters and hunted, obliterating the established early modern Ciceronian conceptual framework that implies the existence of a caring brotherhood of man (Lewis 2017). Nuttall views the play as being 'a prolonged meditation on self-destruction', stating that 'Hamlet is Shakespeare's prime example of a thinker, and thought is making Hamlet ill' (Nuttall 2007, 202). These diverse theories serve to highlight the poetic, philosophical, artistic and cultural range of the masterpiece, which insists on refusing categorization, as Bloom suggests.

Alongside theories that offer readings of the play, we also continue to see new works such as Robert Watson's *Back to Nature*: *The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance*, Helen Hackett's *The Elizabethan Mind*, Andy Mousley's *Re-Humanising Shakespeare*, and Colin McGinn's *Shakespeare's Philosophy.* These books advance our understanding of early modern ecological perspectives as evidenced in Renaissance art, perceptions of the mind in Shakespeare's day, how Shakespeare frames what it is to be

human, and the philosophical scope of his plays respectively. They also serve to shed new light on *Hamlet*.

In addition to the proliferation of theories that account for the play's meanings lies an equally populated field of ideas that account for the natures of the three early editions: the First Quarto of 1603 (conventionally given the short name Q1); the Second Quarto of 1604-5 (conventionally Q2); and the Folio version of 1623 (conventionally F). Q1 is, by a long way, the shortest of the three and Q2 the longest, with F being only a little shorter than Q2. In spite of the four hundred years that have passed since the Folio edition was published, theories that account for these differing versions are still emerging and demanding our attention, with ideas on the subject coming from a significant number of modern Shakespeare scholars including Terri Bourus, Zachary Lesser, Gary Taylor, Stanley Wells, Gabriel Egan, Rory Loughnane, Paul Menzer, Paul Werstine, Richard Dutton, Andrew Gurr, Peter W. M. Blayney, Tiffany Stern, Simon Palfrey, Laurie E. Maguire, Thomas Clayton, Steven Urkowitz, Margrethe Jolly, Emma Smith, Robert Ellrodt and Bloom amongst others.

All of the above serves to answer the question 'Why study *Hamlet*?'. Its provenance remains uncertain, its philosophical complexity still challenges us, its artistic scope appears limitless, and its importance in Western art is so immense it is difficult to measure.

The following thesis will contain five chapters. Chapter One examines the antecedent texts that led to Shakespeare's play and studies the three early versions that have since dominated the *Hamlet* landscape. The second chapter looks at how we have made sense of the various editions, examining editorial approaches to the play and how advancements in Shakespeare study have influenced our framing of the work. Chapter Three makes the first of three philosophical readings of the play, focusing on the conundrum known as the problem of universals. For the philosophical readings of the play, we take Q2 as our central text and highlight whenever we find that Q1 or the Folio contains a textual variant that bears upon the interpretation. Chapter Four examines the text's framing of language and truth. Chapter Five looks at ways in which the play portrays and frames nature. This particular configuration of philosophical, textual and bibliographical analysis affords us insight into the play newly established in this thesis.

As a framework on which to structure this thesis I shall use as inspiration an Elizabethan worldview that was materialised in the Globe Theatre. Above the actors floated

'the heavens', in the form of the painted canopy overhanging the stage, and the nickname for the location that housed the highest audience members (Gurr 1980, 121). The stage platform below was the middle ground, where the actors engaged in the predominantly unique human action of talking to one another and to the audience. Below the actors' feet lay the wooden boards and under-stage, which represented the earth (and therefore the natural world) and the underworld with its mythological and hellish aspects (De Grazia 2007, 191). Chapters Three, Four and Five, focusing on three major philosophical themes, fit into this template of the heavens, the people living below it, and the natural world underneath their feet. Chapter Three examines the play in light of the problem of universals, which is a philosophical debate attempting to account for the nature of things and how we might explain similarity between things in a particular category. The origins of this issue are found in the ancient Greek philosopher Plato (born in the 420s BCE, died in the 340s BCE), and his theory of the realm of Forms, which exists on an ethereal plane beyond our material world. Chapter Four focuses on how the play engages with the subject of language, the distinctive attribute of humans and the medium of the work itself. Chapter Five examines the play's treatment of Nature in a range of the word's senses, and also Montaigne's influence on Shakespeare and *Hamlet*. Our gaze here follows that of Richard Burbage as stood performing Hamlet on the Globe stage: looking up at the heavens, across to his fellow people, and below to the earth.

We shall also see how some of the key philosophical themes in the play are mirrored in the play's bibliographical journey. Epistemological questions concerning the nature of things, reputations and names, as well as how the appearance of a thing might relate to its inner nature, dominate the play and the history of its transmission. The way in which language relates to our thinking and our understanding of the world is a feature of the text and an issue that surrounds it too. We shall also see how a Eucharistic subtext emerges, as the protagonist from Wittenberg repeatedly forces us to engage with the ways in which words and things operate as symbols, and how words, thoughts, beliefs and things relate to each other, all framed in a theatrical ceremony that offers a close parallel to a religious one. A thing's appearance might not represent its nature, a word's ability to denote something is repeatedly challenged, and the truth might be something we arrive at through indirectness. These conundrums resonate throughout the play and through the text's bibliographical history too.

Our purview of Western philosophical thinking from Plato to Michel de Montaigne encompasses all the key schools of thought of which Shakespeare could have

been aware. In the light of all the philosophies of which Shakespeare might have (in several cases must have) had knowledge this thesis offers a detailed reading of the play, alongside analysis of Shakespeare scholarship and *Hamlet*-study to the present day. Some aspects of post-Shakespearean philosophy will also be engaged with when considered pertinent. Throughout the thesis I will reference the first Quarto, second Quarto and Folio editions of the play by signature, and citations from the text will be in the original early modern spelling. Act and scene numbers and character names will be from the Arden 2006 edition.

The origins of the Hamlet narrative are explored in part one of Chapter One. Its beginnings lie in Medieval Norse sagas, and were recorded by the twelfth-century Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus, who wrote a blood-revenge narrative about Amleth, his faux insanity, and his murderous uncle. In the late sixteenth century Francois de Belleforest published an elongated French version of Saxo Grammaticus's narrative, with the added details of the protagonist (now 'Hamblet') suffering from melancholy, and the story being placed in a Christian framework. Academics generally agree that Belleforest's version directly influenced Shakespeare, and Saxo Grammaticus's composition did not. There is evidence, from 1589, that there existed a now-lost play in the London theatres about a protagonist called Hamlet, which also contained a ghost, and its provenance remains uncertain. Emerging from this examination is the evolutionary nature of narratives and myths, which mirrors the ways that language, ideas and theories on *Hamlet* also evolve.

This thesis turns next to the appearance of the story on the London stage in the late sixteenth, and in print the early seventeenth, century. There are three early editions of *Hamlet* attributed to Shakespeare -- Q1, Q2, and F -- with Q1 remaining especially problematic regarding its provenance. All three early texts share a range of features with both the Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest narratives, such as characters, plot, and imagery. Significant differences between the antecedent texts and Q1, Q2, and F are the inclusion of the Ghost and the players. Q1 seems to be the closest text to Belleforest's narrative, in parallels of plot, structure and dialogue, but it lacks some key themes present in Q2 and F. There is also a historic German play known as *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* (*Fratricide Punished*) that existed in manuscript form by the late eighteenth century but may be much older, which seems closely related to the text of Q1, and that might offer relevant details on the issues of Shakespeare's play's provenance. The names of these early *Hamlet* texts vary, therefore establishing a parallel between a bibliographical aspect of the play and the philosophical content of the work: the issue of names. Significant concepts arising here are:

the tension between a thing's appearance and its inner nature, the subject of likeness, and the role that language plays in the field of epistemology. On the surface Q1 appears to be a Shakespeare play, yet its nature might be perceived to contradict this view. The title-page statements of origin found on the Q1 and Q2 editions have received much analysis to ascertain their meaning and veracity, and the likenesses and differences between the three early texts have dominated our understanding of their provenance.

Chapter Two considers how the early editions of *Hamlet* were reprinted and, increasingly, edited and framed in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Q1 makes a belated appearance in this narrative as it was not, so far as we know, reprinted and it played no part in the text's transmission until it was rediscovered in 1823. The title pages of the three early *Hamlet* texts initiate a concern that is to dominate the play's bibliographical history, which is the subject of authenticity, itself a significant theme in the play. Opposing theories of Q1's precise origins soon emerged, with the matter of Shakespeare's genius and the merging of bibliographical and biographical matters becoming key features of *Hamlet* scholarship. Theories that accounted for the nature of Q1 included those of authorial revision and memorial reconstruction, and the 1872 Clarendon edition of *Hamlet* established Q1 as being not purely Shakespearean, but instead closely tied to a now-lost early *Hamlet* play.

The play was published in successive editions throughout the seventeenth century, and in the eighteenth century a new era emerged in Shakespeare editing, with the arrival of more detailed and methodical approaches to presenting a particular edition. These later editors brought a new level of expertise and opinion to the editing of *Hamlet*, whilst also holding contrasting opinions on many aspects of the work such as the treatment of textual cruxes, inserting act and scene numbers, and conflating different editions. Editorial scholarship demonstrates the paradoxical process of attempting to establish an original and authentic text through the act of creating a new edition. Here, again, the topic of authenticity arises, as well as the issue of evolution, as texts are copied and altered with the aim of somehow getting back to the original and purest version.

By 1900 scholars were pessimistic about the possibility of establishing an authentic Shakespearean text, due to the perceived unreliability of the first editions of the works, but in the early twentieth century a movement known as the New Bibliography emerged, which advanced Shakespeare scholarship. Specific texts were isolated as corrupt, therefore establishing the remaining authentic ones, and the theory of memorial

reconstruction was established in more detail and deemed to account for Q1, which was therefore dismissed as corrupt and in large part non-Shakespearean. The New bibliography perceived Q2 and F to be authorial, with Q2 being closest to Shakespeare's original intentions, and F being influenced by theatrical performances.

Next the thesis examines more recent developments in Shakespeare scholarship that are pertinent to our study of *Hamlet*. In the 1970s a school known as the New Textualists challenged the thinking and methods of the New Bibliography, which led to a rejection of the memorial reconstruction theory, a new acceptance of the importance of theatrical concerns regarding matters of authorship, and a re-framing of Q1. The New Textualists focused less on establishing a Platonic ideal *Hamlet*, and instead valued each discrete early text in its own right. A movement towards what is known as the un-editing of Shakespeare followed, culminating in Arden publishing all three discrete early *Hamlet* versions in 2006.

In the last forty years a succession of *Hamlet* editions have been published, each with contrasting methods and theories of provenance underpinning them. Editions have been based on Q2, on F, on Q1 and on conflated texts. Some scholars see the current status and relationship of the three early *Hamlet* texts as being problematic, due to the remaining mystery of Q1's provenance, and our inability to frame the relationship between Q1, Q2, F and their relationship to Shakespeare. One strand of recent thinking attributes Q1 to a younger Shakespeare (Bourus 2014) and supports the theory of authorial revision.

Scholars have offered a range of contrasting theories that account for the varying lengths of Q1, Q2 and F that include Q1 being an authorial first draft, Q2 being an extended text for a readership and Q2 being an extended text for court performances. As contrasting theories accounting for Q1, Q2 and F proliferate, agreement on the matter remains elusive. Again the issue of authenticity resonates here, as scholars struggle to agree on theories that account for Q1, and how authenticity should be framed when studying a document that is the result of a social practice like the theatre. How best to frame and represent the play in print and performance remains a point of contention.

Chapter Three turns from the play's transmission in multiple forms to its dramatic content as an exploration of the very problem of how we relate form to content. Can we speak of 'the play' or must we treat it as a set of things? A significant philosophical theme that the play engages with is how we comprehend a thing's nature, and how things with an

apparently similar nature relate to each other, which is known as the problem of universals. This conundrum arises from the work of Plato and his pupil Aristotle (384 to 322 BCE), and it closely relates to Plato's theory of Forms that establishes an ethereal realm that exists in parallel to our physical world. In his work *Categories* Aristotle attempts to define the different natures of all phenomena, and also to frame how these fields might be linguistically structured. The Neoplatonists Plotinus (born around 205 CE, died 270 CE) and Porphyry (born around 234 CE, died 305 CE) contemplated this metaphysical dilemma, with Porphyry suggesting that all humans contain both a universal element and an individuating essence that makes each person distinct. The fifth-century philosopher Boethius isolated the different perspectives on universals established by Plato and Aristotle, but refrained from offering a definitive statement on their exact nature. The thirteenth-century theologian and philosopher Thomas Aquinas wrote extensively on metaphysical and Christian philosophy championing the works of Aristotle in particular. Two of the most significant figures regarding the problem of universals are the Medieval philosopher-theologians William of Ockham and Duns Scotus, with the latter arguing for the existence of universals and the former believing that things are alike in appearance and name only. The relationship between a thing's nature, its name, and other similar things is also a key feature of the bibliographical history of *Hamlet*.

In philosophy, those who believe in the existence of universals, and in Plato's theory of Forms, are called Realists, but Realism also carries another sense, which is that the material world exists independently of our thoughts and perceptions. In contrast Idealism stands for the belief that reality is fundamentally mind-centred. Those who believe that universals exist, at most, as only names, such as Ockham, are called Nominalists, but here we shall wherever possible avoid over-categorizing into 'schools' the various philosophical beliefs under consideration. One reason to do this is that the names of 'schools' are often subsequent historical impositions and would not be recognised by those supposedly forming these groups, and another is that the terms themselves acquire unhelpful connotations over time. 'Realism', for instance, has a bewildering number of definitions in philosophy and yet more outside of it in the study of drama, pictorial art, cinema, and politics, and it needs to be qualified almost every time it is used.

Hamlet is notably concerned with likenesses, which also dominates the conundrum that surrounds the provenance of the three early texts, with the question of Q1's authenticity being concerned with measuring its likeness to Q2/F, and with an accepted

proliferation of similar-but-different manuscripts existing in Shakespeare's day. In the play, Laertes, Ophelia, the King and Old Hamlet are likened to paintings, and theatre is presented as a mirror through which we might see reality more clearly, establishing a self-referential aspect to the work, whilst offering contrasting views on the arts demonstrating Aristotelian, Platonic and Neoplatonic perspectives. No fewer than seven characters are likened to kings in the play, and the theory of the king's two bodies, framed by Ernst Kantorowicz (Kantorowicz 1957), is also implied by Hamlet, both of which focus our attention on concepts such as: the presentation of a persona; the theatrical nature of our lives; a Platonic ideal of kingship and the possibility of multiple selves.

During the Renaissance, with the emergence of professional theatres and a thriving publishing industry, the works of Greek and Roman philosophers flourished, alongside an interest in the role of the arts as epitomised by Philip Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetrie*, which argued for the Aristotelian belief in their value and importance. That Hamlet uses painted portraits of his father and uncle in order to remind his mother of the two characters' essential natures demonstrates the nuanced relationship between art and life. Throughout the text the relationship between a thing's external appearance and its inner nature is examined, with Ophelia and Caesar being perceived as mere surfaces of things (a painting and plaster on a wall respectively), and with Hamlet claiming to possess an inner aspect that is beyond sight or demonstration. The play also appears to exist as a Platonic ideal masterpiece that editors yearn to recover, and simultaneously as a range of diverse and faulty material manifestations, implying that *Hamlet* too has two bodies.

Linguistically the play often frames a thing by exchanging it for another, through the use of metaphor, thereby establishing a sense of indirectness regarding the perception of things. Recently George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have suggested that our thinking is metaphorical in nature, which therefore establishes the issue of likeness as being central to our comprehension of the world around us. This idea offers a parallel to classical beliefs about cognition and memory, as replica images are perceived to exist in the mind, establishing a further parallel with theatre, which itself depends on representation. As internal images are an integral part of remembering and perceiving, so, as R. A. Foakes has highlighted, the viewer or reader of *Hamlet* is to some extent creating the piece as they engage with it, by assembling their own mental gallery of images and meanings (Foakes 1993, 134).

The nature and identity of the Ghost lie beyond specification, it being likened to a range of things, including a corpse, the devil, and the air. Hamlet's comment about the Ghost assuming his father's person establishes a theatrical aspect to the spirit, which as Stephen Greenblatt observes (Greenblatt 2002), was an association that intrigued Shakespeare. The indeterminate nature of the Ghost is echoed throughout the play, with a proliferation of ontological indeterminacy, as evidenced in the repeated use of the term 'thing'. The subtext subsequently established is of an epistemologically sceptical Elsinore, as Watson has recently observed (Watson 2006). As well as being like an actor, the Ghost is also framed as mirroring God, with the Medieval philosopher John Scotus Eriugena suggesting that the Lord lies beyond both description and even existence. For a fleeting moment the play even hints at the Holy Trinity, as father, son and spirit unite on the platform in the single name of 'Hamlet'. If we try to establish the Ghost's nature through the lens of Aristotle's *Categories* we find that it remains outside of this framework.

The essence of *Hamlet* also appears to exist beyond specificity, taking a range of forms including: play texts, paintings, conceptual frameworks, a story with a male protagonist, a narrative with a female protagonist, a one-person-play, a film in English, a film in Russian with none of Shakespeare's words, a story about an eighty year old man, an insane man, a sane man, a sick man and a genius who outwits all he meets (to sketch some recent portrayals). The nature of things is an essential theme in the play, and this is established through a proliferation of likenesses and copies, an examination of the arts, a focus on how a thing's outside appearance relates to its inner essence, and a character who instigates the main events but who remains an ontological enigma. How a thing is represented is a key concern here, as words, perceptions and beliefs all relate to the apparent nature of something, whilst also existing in a state of flux, as language, views and ideas evolve.

Compared to other animals, a defining aspect of humankind is its use of an especially rich and subtle language, which is also the medium with which the play is created. As Hamlet talks much about the nature of things, the focus of Chapter Four is how language and truth are perceived to relate to each other in Elsinore. Ascertaining the truth about *Hamlet*, regarding its provenance, has also been an aim of Shakespeare scholars for centuries. After killing Polonius Hamlet teases the King with a riddle concerning worms, the eating of bodies, and Emperors, which, according to Greenblatt is a nod towards Martin Luther (born 1483, died 1546) that also establishes a Eucharistic subtext. Themes associated with this are

semiotics, the authority of words and ceremonies, representation, belief, and religion, all of which engage with the philosophy of language.

Plato establishes two theories that account for how we name things, which are called the Naturalist perspective and Conventionalism. The former suggests an innate relationship between a word and the thing it denotes, and the latter suggests there is no such relationship. The name of Q1, as well as its perceived nature, has seen dramatic changes since its discovery in 1823, soon labelled 'bad' and more recently viewed as the early work of a genius. If the *Hamlet* narrative written by Shakespeare was intended to be a fluid entity, due to the nature of the theatre and a possible non-theatrical readership, then this problematises the issue of establishing a single and fixed version of the work, as well as the matter of authorship and authenticity. Again the notion of a Platonic ideal *Hamlet* arises here, with a perfect ethereal version existing parallel to the inferior material versions constantly being produced. Again here we find the issues of how to gauge a thing's nature and authenticity, how a thing's appearance relates to its nature and name, and how language frames and effects these conundrums. Just how much a thing can change before it should be identified as something else was of interest to Greek philosophers including Plato, who believed that the essence of a statement or name could remain even if the words and letters used to form it changed. Whether it is important to know a thing's name in order to know its nature cannot be easily discerned from Plato, who argues both sides of this question. In the early quartos and the First Folio editions of *Hamlet* the title of the play differs -- is it a tragical history or just a tragedy? -- which some academics read to reveal aspects about the play's provenance, nature, and source influences.

Regarding the issue of words and truth Plato argues that the veracity of a statement can be less important than how effectively convincing it is, and whether it appears probable. That printed texts are vulnerable to corruption is also a Platonic observation, with the philosopher also arguing that writing hinders the faculty of memory, and that written words cannot speak for themselves when challenged. In order to reflect on the truth of a matter one first needs to contemplate the concept of truth, which is an issue notably addressed by Aristotle. The apparent truth of a matter is also of interest to Hamlet, who notoriously offers an Idealist view that the value of things depends on our thoughts about them. From a Biblical perspective 'truth' can be synonymous with God and 'the word' but has further connotations too. That the material universe was created through God's speech, and that God attributed the first names to things establishes a complex relationship between God, truth and

language. The search for the earliest, purest and most authorial versions of holy scripture mirrors the desire to establish the purest Shakespearean texts, with both facing problems such as translation, re-interpretation, and the evolution of language and linguistic meanings.

A figure who dominates the world of Biblical exegesis and scriptural translation is Martin Luther who was as verbose as Hamlet and could almost be imagined to have been his Professor at Wittenberg. Luther's work also led to millions of people having a more personal relationship with God, as they sat alone reading and reflecting on the Divine, which also encouraged an examination of one's own consciousness, thereby anticipating a key interest of Hamlet. Luther's methods for scriptural analysis are difficult to frame, as his work appears to have engaged with both literal and figurative readings of passages, which mirrors the work of source-hunters who attempt to trace the origins of particular editions of *Hamlet*. In contrast to Aquinas (born 1225, died 1274), Luther rejected the work of Aristotle when establishing Christian doctrines, preferring faith-based beliefs founded on Christ's words, as demonstrated in his understanding of the Eucharist, which he refused to explain through logic.

Due to the proliferation of printing and books, the Elizabethans were living through an epochal shift regarding language, speech, texts and thinking, as the individual was now able to engage with words in silence and alone, as opposed to having previously had a predominantly aural-oral existence. *Hamlet* appears to reflect this moment succinctly, with a protagonist who reads alone, talks alone, and ponders his mental faculties in some detail, whilst being surrounded by a world of lies and spying. Significantly during Shakespeare's day trust in words was to some extent diminishing, as Papal Bulls were burnt by Luther, and Latin proclamations in the Catholic Mass were deemed to have lost their agency. However, both Shakespeare and Hamlet also show faith in words, as evidenced by his life's works and the wit and verbosity shown by the Prince. M. M. Mahood suggests that Shakespeare's tragedies evidence a significant tension between scepticism and faith regarding the agency of words (Mahood 1957).

More recently thinkers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, Suzanne K. Langer, Terence Hawkes, Lev S. Vygotsky, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have engaged with how language relates to thoughts and things, how the mind works both pictorially and linguistically, and how our cognitive process might be metaphorical in its nature. According to Vygotsky and Nietzsche poetry affects us in an abstract way, which stands in contrast to

how our minds engage with prose. This raises nuanced and paradoxical challenges in the matter of studying a play. It is ironic that a play that engages with the nature of language and the relationship between thoughts, words, actions and motives, is performed by actors who must study these aspects whilst they develop their characters in rehearsal and performance. The meta-nature of the work resonates here. Issues that arise from this field, and that I shall examine are: the importance of names; the agency of words (both written and spoken); the value and authority of ceremonies that rely on words with agency; the relationship between a word and the thing it denotes; and the connection between thinking and speaking.

Hamlet's name appears to have evolved from the early Nordic protagonist 'Amleth', and according to De Grazia its etymological connection to a small village (a hamlet) hints at the play's key concern, which is land. Frequently throughout the play the term 'name' carries the sense of 'reputation', with the King, Laertes and Hamlet all showing some concern for their reputations. The King's struggle to pray at 3.3.35-72 synthesises the themes of names, reputations and inner natures, as he mirrors Hamlet's propensity to comprehend his own mind, whilst struggling to balance his actions with his words and his status in the eyes of God. Here the text also engages with the ethical issues of what constitutes a good reputation, how this relates to one's conscience, and whether a good reputation should be valued when falsely gained. Again here the bibliographical journey of Q1 resonates, as its name and reputation have changed drastically over the years, whilst its physical nature has remained constant. Sometimes in the play a name appears to be attributed mistakenly, for comic affect, with the implication that a thing or person's nature is effected by the unusual title. The issue of establishing an appropriate title is introduced in the opening line, where Barnardo's question 'Who's there?' is denied an answer. The Ghost is attributed a wide range of contrasting titles, therefore establishing the character as ontologically indeterminate, which exposes the nuanced relationship between truth, language, and epistemology. Hamlet's use of nicknames for various characters has the impact of mocking and controlling another's status, and might also be read to be signs of a confused mind, but whether his mind is actually disturbed or not remains unspecified, and a matter of subtext, led by an actor's delivery of a particular line and an audience member's reception of it. Meaning in the text is therefore not a concrete thing.

In Hamlet's apology to Laertes (5.2.204-21) Hamlet speaks of himself in the third person and establishes a sense of duality regarding his nature, which mirrors the state of multiple *Hamlet*s existing in print and production. The listener's understanding of the

sincerity of his apology offers a parallel to the Eucharist, where semantics, physical symbols, belief and subjectivity are key factors in the establishing of meaning. The play's representation of contrasting philosophical views brings to mind John Keats's concept of Shakespeare's 'Negative Capability' (Keats 1899, 277), where the writer can sit comfortably amidst opposing arguments without being inclined to establish a singular certainty or truth.

In *Hamlet* ceremonies that depend on words with agency (such as funerals and plays) are framed as being vulnerable to failure and disruption. Repeatedly vows are forgotten and broken when passions fade and motives change, and ritualistic affirmations are found to be hollow when particular aspects of the ritual are deemed flawed, such as inappropriate funeral rites and the inability to confess during prayer. Here the frailty of memory is an established motif, which ironically echoes the bibliographical narrative of Q1. Further irony lies in the continued cultural impact that *Hamlet* has achieved, whilst paradoxically highlighting the utter vulnerability of ceremonies centred on language.

The relationship between action and speech is a meta-theme throughout the play. Ophelia is asked to simulate the action of prayer, the King is unable to enact his own prayers, the Players are instructed by the Prince on how to balance action and word, and Hamlet reflects on thinking and doing. In a similarly self-conscious way the play also engages with attempts to comprehend subtext, as characters read body language, costumes, props, skin tones and words to establish motives and meanings. Hamlet's observation that the theatre holds a mirror up to nature engages with a range of philosophical concepts such as the relationship between words and truth, fiction and fantasy, and the complexities of language, where nuance, subtext, vocal tone, body language, and semantics all play significant roles in the establishing of meaning.

Theatrical Elizabethan manuscripts and printed documents were vulnerable to interference from unauthorised hands, and the documents found in Elsinore experience a similar frailty, with land-ownership deeds being ignored, royal seals being forged, poems being ridiculed, play texts being forgotten and altered, and animal skins deemed inappropriate for material on which to establish a legally binding document. Plato's theory that the written word is more vulnerable than the spoken word because it cannot answer for itself when abused is given practical illustration in the play.

We see here how the text engages with the complexities of language, including how names are framed, how identity is related to linguistic structures, how documents with

authority are vulnerable, and that ceremonies that depend on words with agency can be limited in their efficacy. All of this is achieved in a work that is itself a collection of words. The topics engaged with by the text also mirror the issues that editions of the play have encountered, with title-page statements being challenged, editions being rejected due to probable corruption or inappropriate content, and disagreements over semantics and theories about textual variations. How we might establish a thing's nature arises as a dominant theme, which is here seen through the lens of language. Questions are repeatedly asked about the importance and value of a thing's title and the ability of words to successfully represent objects, feelings, thoughts and the truth.

Turning from the unseen heavens and the realm of Forms in Chapter Three and the everyday world of language in Chapter Four, Chapter Five examines the play's account of the natural world, including Ophelia's close ties with flora, the ownership and use of land, and the synthesis of the natural and the supernatural. Alongside this, we shall also examine a parallel between Shakespeare and his contemporary Montaigne who wrote keenly on the natural world, and who also had a substantial impact on *Hamlet*. The term 'nature' is polysemous, with Raymond Williams having highlighted a range of its senses, demonstrating how it can stand for all things in the material world, a particular section of the world (such as plants and animals), and also, when capitalised, a god/goddess.

That our relationship with nature is closely connected to divinity is established in the Bible, where the sin of Adam and Eve severs humans and the world of nature. That a similar narrative is also found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* shows us that such a concept is not exclusive to Christian philosophy. In Ovid's narrative humankind is framed as being a blight on the natural world, which implies something unnatural or innately bad about humans, as well as implying that humans are an ecological threat. For the Elizabethans, according to E. M. W. Tillyard, humans existed in a hierarchy with inanimate objects and animals below them, and the angels and God above them, with our minds being viewed as a divine faculty, therefore making us god-like.

Just how the early moderns viewed the relationship between nature, God and humans is complex, with some believing that everything was subordinate to and controlled by God, and others attributing a god-like status to nature, and others still viewing humans (and possibly not nature) as having fallen from grace and being spiritually corrupted. The philosophical school of Stoicism influenced Christian philosophy, with the belief that there

was a natural order of things being a dominant idea. The bonds between the natural world and the individual were also strengthened by the belief in the concept of the humours, which were four liquids found in our bodies whose balance affected our mental and physical wellbeing, and these related to the four elements that surround us. Not only might the individual's health be somewhat reliant on a nuanced connection to the natural world, according to Watson and Tom MacFaul it was a popular belief that spiritual salvation might be found out in nature, which implies an un-fallen state for the natural world (Watson 2006; MacFaul 2015).

Stoics viewed living in agreement with nature as being essential to their philosophy, which, although difficult to define does imply an awareness and acceptance of the natural world. Stoic philosophy also included an ethical aspect, as kindness to one's fellow humans was believed to be innate. According to Lewis, *Hamlet* stands for a rejection of Cicero's Stoic-based philosophy of compassion, with Elsinore revealing to us a world where innate kindness is a myth, replaced instead by deception, mistrust and the ceaseless hunt for one's prey. Seneca the Younger (born 4 BCE, died 65 CE) influenced the Elizabethans as both a Stoic and a playwright, and his work, alongside that of Cicero (born 106 BCE, died 43 BCE), made a significant impact on Montaigne, who in turn influenced Shakespeare.

Scholars offer a range of views on the philosophical leanings of Shakespeare, with T. S. Eliot reading the influence of both Stoicism and Montaigne on him (Eliot 1932b). Jonathan Bate suggests a strong parallel between Montaigne and Hamlet, but does not see Shakespeare as a Stoic, viewing him rather as an Epicurean (Bate 2009). Montaigne's Scepticism is most evident in his 'An Apology for Raymond Sebond', where the idea of knowledge is questioned, customs and habits are targeted, and our supposed superiority over the animals is challenged. Montaigne's Epicurean tendencies are evidenced in his interest in physical needs and pleasures, and it is this aspect that, for Bate, mirrors the thinking of Shakespeare.

That the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural are nebulous is established in the first scene, where the absence of stirring mice appears to be related to the possible appearance of the Ghost. Animals are somehow in touch with the supernatural, whilst ethereal spirits are framed as being animalistic. Interest in the Ghost's skin tone and facial expression (which implies a biological/psychological aspect) is shown by Hamlet. This

interplay between the natural and the supernatural is highlighted in the opening scene as the characters discuss how the stars, pagan gods, the Christian God, and forces of nature respond to one another during times of significant political and spiritual disturbance, such as the assassination of Caesar and the anniversary of Christ's birth. Established here is a hierarchy, with God at the top, pagan gods, the planets and fortune somewhere below, and humans beneath these. However humans appear to increase their power and status when they show signs of Christian faith.

According to De Grazia, when we move our attention away from the protagonist's psychological musings we find a dominant theme, which is land that is stolen, owned, desired, killed for, dug up, and used to house the dead. The sentinels open the play defending their territory, Hamlet watches Denmark slip through his fingers, the King attempts to control it through use of official documents, Ophelia has a fatalistic obsession with its flora, the Ghost burrows a hellish tunnel into it, and Fortinbras is gifted the entirety of the country as the play closes. The subtext associated with this motif is suffering and death, as the earth cradles rotting dogs' corpses, spits out bodies and skulls, provides us with poisons that are beyond cure, makes the biggest mountain a burial mound, and metaphorically becomes nothing more than an un-weeded garden.

The character of Ophelia is dominated by images of flowers, as she is compared to them, loses her sanity whilst distributing them, is pictured as a source of compost from which they might grow, ponders the etymology of their names, and dies whilst decorating a willow tree with them. Both Ophelia and the Queen reflect on colloquial aspects of naming flowers, which therefore engages us with the three philosophical themes we are examining here in this thesis. The perceived nature of plants relates closely to their appearance and their similarity to other plants, the words used to describe them expose the tension between a thing, our thoughts about that thing and the term that denotes it, and our closeness to nature appears to hinge on our linguistic relationship to it (for example, to know a flower's name is to know it more substantially).

If flowers have lethal connotations for Ophelia, the elements and animals are framed as being equally negative. Winds bite, water drowns and decays flesh, flames are hellish and the earth, as already noted, is associated with war, pain and death. Where earth and water meet is particularly hazardous in Elsinore, being the location of encounters with spirits, the place where Ophelia dies and sanity is lost, and also the setting of the entire play.

The animals of Elsinore merely suffer, either literally or metaphorically, as deer are stricken, horses are saddle-sore, rats and mice are trapped and killed, sables are skinned for our decoration, birds are glued to trees and pictured eating their own hearts, and sheep are slaughtered to be eaten and converted into parchment.

Repeatedly the play challenges us to examine how we perceive things, and how words, images and the concept of representation are synthesised in the establishing of meaning. Elsinore is a world where epistemological certainties are dissolved and scepticism reigns. We might attempt to comprehend a thing's nature through its appearance, its name, or our understanding and beliefs about it, but the play exposes the flux-like nature of these things, and the role that representation -- for all its inherent vicissitudes -- serves in our ability to find meaning in the world. The synthesis of this textual and bibliographical analysis with a philosophical reading of the play is a framing of the work that previous studies have not presented.

Chapter One. The Textual Origins

Textual History: An Overview

There are three predominant texts that precede and lead us to William Shakespeare's canonical *Hamlet*: the twelfth-century narrative of Amleth by Saxo Grammaticus, Francois de Belleforest's sixteenth-century story of Hamblet, and a now-lost Elizabethan play about a character called Hamlet. Here I shall examine these antecedent texts with the aim of establishing what is known about them and how they provide historical context to Shakespeare's play.

The earliest known narratives that underpin the story of *Hamlet* come from Medieval Nordic and Icelandic legends, according to Geoffrey Bullough (Bullough 1973, VII:5) and Israel Gollancz (Gollancz 1967, 36). Gollancz suggests that these 'various stages of heroic-myth and pseudo-history' (Gollancz 1967, 36) partially served as the basis for the narratives that constituted a history of Denmark assembled by Saxo Grammaticus (meaning Saxo the Grammarian) in his twelfth-century work *Historiae Danicae*. The work was first printed in 1514 in Latin, then translated into Danish and published in 1575, with an English edition becoming available in 1894. The name of the protagonist in the early folk legends is Amlotha (Bullough 1973, VII:5) and Amlodi (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 64), which becomes Amleth in Saxo's version. Harold Jenkins notes how the name 'seems to have signified a fool or simpleton' (Shakespeare 1982, 86). According to G. R. Hibbard Saxo's narrative, which depicts the story of Amleth who feigns madness in order to take revenge on his uncle for the murder of his father, 'conforms to the pattern of blood revenge so common in Norse saga' (Shakespeare 1987a, 6).

According to Anne Barton, Saxo's narrative of Amleth shows signs of having 'also remembered the Roman legend, retold by Livy at the end of the first century B.C. of Lucius Junius Brutus, a forbear of the Brutus in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*' (Shakespeare 1980, 7). Bullough agrees, and suggests that the tale of the Roman who expelled the Tarquins after the rape of Lucrece and escaped by feigning madness would be familiar to both Saxo and Shakespeare through the writing of the Roman historian Livy (Bullough 1973, VII:7). Hibbard suggests that 'it is quite possible that this similarity between Amleth and Lucius Junius Brutus may have helped to attract Shakespeare to the story' and that Shakespeare 'had already made use of the Roman hero twice in *The Rape of Lucrece* . . . and

in *Julius Caesar*' (Shakespeare 1987a, 6). Shakespeare's *Hamlet* sustains this nuanced relationship between the protagonist and Brutus of *Julius Caesar* with Polonius's observation that '*Brutus* kild me' in a performance of the Roman play 'i'th Vuniuersitie' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H1r). Gollancz suggests that 'Livy's influence on Saxo is unmistakable' (Gollancz 1967, 32).

Saxo's narrative of Amleth appears in Books III and IV of the *Historiae Danicae*. The chronicle begins with the brothers Horwendil and Feng whose father Gerwendil had been governor of the Jutes. Horwendil assumes power and defeats the King of Norway in battle, which results in his marriage to Gerutha. They have a son, Amleth. Feng jealously murders Horwendil and marries Gerutha 'capping unnatural murder with incest' (Gollancz 1967, 101). Feng's act of murder is public knowledge, but he justifies it with the false accusation that Horwendil was an abusive husband. Young Amleth is suspicious of his uncle and feigns madness with activities such as rolling in mud and talking in riddles so as to allow himself time to mature and to plan revenge. Feng suspects Amleth's faux insanity and attempts to have him seduced by a young woman in the forest, but Amleth is warned of the plan by his foster-brother and foils the trap. The protagonist demonstrates supernatural powers by 'invoking a cure' on his uncle, although the nature of the spell is not specified (Gollancz 1967, 107).

The narrative advances in a further attempt to outwit Amleth, as Feng arranges for him to visit his mother's chamber whilst a spy hides beneath some straw on the ground. Again Amleth detects the conspiracy and kills the spy before dismembering his body and feeding it to the pigs. He implores his mother to 'walk in the ways of virtue' (Gollancz 1967, 117) before he is dispatched to England supervised by two retainers who carry orders for the English king to assassinate Amleth. However, the English king is charmed by Amleth, who has altered the text of the commission and requests the king's daughter in marriage. The retainers are hanged and Amleth is given the king's daughter to marry, along with gold that he melts down and pours into hollow sticks. In a statement that resonates with Shakespeare's protagonist, the English king describes Amleth as having 'either more than mortal wisdom or more than mortal folly' (Gollancz 1967, 122). Amleth returns home, arriving on the day of his own funeral, which he had previously arranged before his departure. He sets fire to the court, exchanges swords with Feng and kills him as he awakens. The following day Amleth gives a lengthy oration to the masses, winning their support and loyalty and becomes king. He then returns to England with a shield that depicts key events in his life, and travels to

Scotland where he takes the queen to become his second wife, therefore becoming a bigamist. After returning home again Amleth is slain in battle by Wiglek who takes Amleth's Scottish queen as his own.

The general consensus amongst scholars is that Shakespeare did not read Saxo. Hibbard suggests that ' . . . it appears unlikely that he [Shakespeare] knew Saxo's version' (Shakespeare 1987a, 11), and Bullough states that 'I see no proof that . . . Shakespeare . . . used Saxo Grammaticus' (Bullough 1973, VII:15). Bullough notes however that some scholars have seen traces of Saxo in Shakespeare's play, in particular John Dover Wilson (Bullough 1973, VII:7). Jenkins refutes any direct indebtedness to Saxo, stating that ' . . . arguments in favour of it appear to be without substance' (Shakespeare 1982, 89). Barton describes Saxo's narrative as being 'simple, irrational, and obscurely gratifying' (Shakespeare 1980, 8), Jenkins frames it as a 'primitive and sometimes brutal story' (Shakespeare 1982, 88), and Stanley Wells and Michael Dobson see the work as a 'savage old Scandinavian legend' (Wells and Dobson 2001, 179).

Francois de Belleforests's *Histoires Tragiques* was first printed in French in 1570 and according to Stephen Greenblatt it was to become 'a publishing phenomenon in the late sixteenth century' (Greenblatt 2005, 295). Its fifth volume contained the Amleth story, taken from Saxo, and it was swiftly re-issued in at least ten editions. In 1608 an English edition was published with the translator remaining unknown. Belleforest's treatment of the narrative is almost twice the length of Saxo's version, and it is likely that the English translation is influenced by Shakespeare's play on account of the following parallel. In the French version, the spy in the queen's chamber hides underneath a covering, whereas the English text has him hiding 'behind the arras' (Furness 1877a, 2:97). When the protagonist detects the spy he cries 'A rat, a rat!' (Furness 1877a, 2:97), which are details of Shakespeare's play but not of Belleforest's French version. This theory of textual contamination was initially suggested by the nineteenth-century German scholar Karl Elze; Horace Howard Furness found it convincing (Furness 1877a, 2:89), and it is widely accepted today (Wells and Dobson 2001, 179).

Belleforest's version of the story establishes a close parallel to Saxo's narrative, with a few notable alterations. Saxo's characters of Horwendil, Feng and Gerutha become Horvendile, Fengon and Geruth, and Ambleth becomes Hamblet/Hamlet. Geruth is depicted as having had an affair with Fengon before the murder of her husband, which 'made divers

men thinke that she had beene the causer of the murther' (Furness 1877a, 2:94). Feng's murder of Horvendile takes place in public, but Belleforest suggests that the murder was planned so that 'no man once so much as suspected him' (Furness 1877a, 2:93). Bullough suggests that 'Belleforest has bungled this alteration of Saxo' (Bullough 1973, VII:11). In Geruth's chamber, the queen admits to some level of complicity regarding Fengon's murder of Horvendile, stating: 'I know well . . . that I have done thee great wrong in marrying with Fengon, the cruell tyrant and murtherer of thy father' (Furness 1877a, 2:100). She proceeds to commit herself to supporting her son with the statement: 'I am in hope to see an easie meanes invented for the revenging of thy fathers death' (Furness 1877a, 2:100). Another significant addition to the narrative made by Belleforest is the 'great melancholy' attributed to Hamblet (Furness 1877a, 2:104). Hibbard observes how this trait serves as a significant factor in the evolution of the protagonist from Saxo to Shakespeare, stating that:

> Belleforest . . . offered Shakespeare the ruthlessly efficient avenger of Saxo's story made more complex by a streak of melancholy in his nature; and Shakespeare added to that complexity by transferring the French writer's reservations about some of his hero's actions to that of himself. (Shakespeare 1987a, 11)

Belleforest describes Hamblet as being 'either a perfect foole, or else one of the wisest princes in his time' (Furness 1877a, 2:105). Belleforest's narrative also contains Hamblet's marriage to the English king's daughter, his faux madness, the reversal of the order of assassination that results in the death of Hamblet's fellow travellers, and the gift of gold that is transported in hollow sticks. Hamblet returns to Denmark, paradoxically, on the day of his own funeral celebrations, decapitates Feng, and delivers a lengthy oration that results in his accession to the crown.

Scholars have judged Belleforest's narrative to be verbose and overly principled in its nature. With regard to the text's increased length in comparison to Saxo, Jenkins suggests that 'Most of his elaboration, however, comes from his ubiquitous moralizing comment' (Shakespeare 1982, 90). Bullough agrees, stating that 'Every point is obscured by laborious moralizing . . .' (Bullough 1973, VII:12). Belleforest begins the narrative with an apology for the debased pagan society in which his story unfolds: 'You must understand, that long time before the kingdome of Denmark received the faith of Jesus Christ . . . the common people in those days were barbarous and uncivill' (Furness 1877a, 2:91). Later in the

narrative Belleforest justifies Hamblet's act of revenge by tenuously associating it with the 'wondrous works of the Almighty' (Furness 1877a, 2:104). Hibbard notes that Belleforest 'is not happy' with the story as a whole, and that he 'falls back on the providential idea of history' to compensate for its perceived flaws (Shakespeare 1987a, 11). Hamblet's ability to practice clairvoyance is attributed to the pagan world in which he lived, whereas, as Bullough notes, Saxo 'accepted divination as a natural characteristic of heroes' (Bullough 1973, VII:13). Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor suggest that 'Belleforest is embarrassed by the primitive barbarity of the story and is interested in trying to give it a Christian reading: while private revenge is wrong, Amleth was nevertheless an agent of God's justice' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 67).

Notable features in Belleforest's text include intensified misogyny and an exaggerated contrast between the king and his brother. Examples of these can be seen in Belleforests's comments on Geruth's affair with Fengon and his remark to the reader: 'let us leave her in this extremitie of lasciviousnesse' (Furness 1877a, 2:94). In the scene that takes place in Geruth's chamber Belleforest describes Fengon as 'an abhominable' king, in contrast to Horvendile who was 'farre more honester and better' (Furness 1877a, 2:98). A further notable feature is the even more explicit link made between the protagonist and 'Brutus' in a detailed passage in the second chapter (Furness 1877a, 2:95).

Scholars disagree on whether Shakespeare was familiar with Belleforest's version. Barton suggests that there is 'only a remote possibility that he was familiar with Belleforest' (Shakespeare 1980, 15). Jonathan Bate states that 'we cannot assume with any certainty that Shakespeare consulted Belleforest' (Bate 2008, 151). Thompson and Taylor suggest that Shakespeare 'may have read Belleforest in French' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 69). In contrast, Greenblatt states that Shakespeare 'carefully read the story as narrated in French by Francois de Belleforest' (Greenblatt 2005, 295), and Hibbard agrees, suggesting that Shakespeare went 'back to Belleforest where necessary' (Shakespeare 1987a, 14) when composing his work. James Shapiro suggests that Shakespeare 'was familiar with Belleforest' (Shapiro 2005, 320), and Harold Bloom agrees, writing that 'Shakespeare is not likely to have read Saxo, but he certainly began with the French storyteller Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*' (Bloom 1999, 398). Hibbard suggests that the titles of the first two quarto editions of *Hamlet* demonstrate an indebtedness to Belleforest, and that Shakespeare was 'borrowing from him the unusual description of the play on the title-pages of both the First and Second Quarto' that were both called a 'Tragicall Historie' (Shakespeare 1987a,

14). Furness is critical of the English translation suggesting that 'The prose narrative of 1608 is a bald, literal, and in many respects, uncouth translation from the *Histoires tragiques* of Belleforest, who was by no means an elegant writer' (Furness 1877a, 2:88). Bullough, Gollancz and Furness all include Belleforest's text in their studies of the sources of *Hamlet,* and Bullough and Gollancz include Saxo's narrative.

In 1821 Edmond Malone's biography *The Life of William Shakespeare* was posthumously published. It was this work that first established the theory that there was an Elizabethan *Hamlet* play before Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Shakespeare 1821a, 355). The evidence that supports Malone's theory is a small number of references made by contemporaries of Shakespeare that have since led to much speculation and disagreement. The earliest of these (examined below) is dated 1589, some 14 years prior to the first printed edition of the play attributed to Shakespeare, in 1603. This conundrum is intensified by the fact that the 'original *Hamlet*' (Shakespeare 1821a, 355) is no longer extant. Scholars have been divided regarding whether this early play was by Shakespeare. Recently however academics have convincingly argued that the work might well be Shakespearean (Bourus 2014; Taylor and Loughnane 2017). According to Emma Smith scholars have rejected the possibility that Shakespeare authored the earlier version 'due to ideas about *Hamlet*'s place in a developmental canon of Shakespeare's dramatic career' (Smith 2000, 178).

During the late nineteenth century, as Smith notes, 'Anglo-German bibliographers, using the German prefix meaning 'original or primitive', dubbed this lost play of the late 1580s the "Ur-Hamlet"' (Smith 2000, 179). The nature and provenance of this elusive text has haunted *Hamlet* scholarship in a fashion analogous to Hamlet's experience of the Ghost. Smith suggests that '*Hamlet*'s prehistory exists both within the play, in old Hamlet's (dis)embodiment of the past, and beyond and before it, in the persistent bibliographical evocation of a pre-*Hamlet*, a non-existent play known as the Ur-Hamlet.' (Smith 2000, 177). The canonical *Hamlet* is generally believed to have been authored between 1599 and 1603 (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 542).

The earliest reference to this now-lost *Hamlet* is to be found in Robert Greene's book *Menaphon*, published in 1589. The preface of this text included a commentary on contemporary literature by playwright Thomas Nashe entitled 'To the Gentlemen Students *of both Vniuersities*' (Greene 1880, 5). Included in Nashe's text is the following passage:

It is a common practise now a daies amongst a certain sort of shifting

companions, the runne through euery art and thriue by none, to leaue the trade of

Nouerint, whereto they were borne, and busie themselves with the indeuors of

Art, that could scarcelie latinize their neck-verse if they should haue neede ; yet

English *Seneca* read by candle light yeelds manie good sentences, as *Blood is a*

begger, and so forth : and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will

affoord you whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfulls of tragical speeches . . . The

sea exhaled by droppes will in continuance be drie, and *Seneca* let bloud line by

line and page by page, at length must needes die to our stage: which makes his

famisht followers to imitate the Kidde in *Aesop* . . . (Nashe 1589, **1r-A3r)

Nashe's observation mocks a certain school or 'sort' of playwrights whose education is

insufficient for them to read Seneca in its original Latin. Nashe's remarks about 'whole

Hamlets', '*Seneca*', '*Blood is a begger*' and 'tragical speeches' appear to establish the

existence of a *Hamlet* play in, and possibly prior to 1589. The reference to 'Kidde' is

traditionally read as an allusion to the playwright Thomas Kyd, with historical consensus

being that Kyd authored the *Ur-Hamlet*. Bullough writes that 'The innuendo . . . points to

Kyd as the author . . .' (Bullough 1973, VII:16), and Jenkins suggests that 'Nashe is focusing

on one practitioner . . . Thomas Kyd' and that it is therefore 'highly probable' that Kyd

authored the *Ur-Hamlet* (Shakespeare 1982, 83-84).   Bullough also observes over 20

parallels between the canonical *Hamlet* and Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (including an

avenger assuming madness, a play-within-a-play, and a woman dying by suicide) (Bullough

1973, VII:16). Bloom and more recently Bourus have rejected this argument (Bourus 2014,

2014), with Bloom arguing that ' . . . Nashe is referring to "a sort," that is a group, of writers;

that Kyd was one of them and a *Hamlet* one of their productions is as far as this deliberately

teasing passage can by itself take us' (Bloom 1999, 397). Bloom and Bourus independently

argue that Shakespeare authored the early play, with Bloom concluding that 'The *Ur-Hamlet*

of Thomas Kyd, that authentic ghost of Shakespeare scholarship, never has been found

because it never existed' (Bloom 1999, 395).

In June 1594 the theatrical entrepreneur Philip Henslowe recorded in his diary a

single performance of a *Hamlet* play that took place at Newington Butts and yielded eight

shillings: '9 of June 1594 Rd at hamlet . . . viij s' (Henslowe 1968, 21). Henslowe also notes

that the companies performing on this occasion were the Lord Admiral's Men, and the Lord

Chamberlain's Men (Shakespeare's company). Shapiro suggests that 'On 9 June 1594

Shakespeare, Burbage and Kemp were probably in the cast that performed it [*Hamlet*] at Newington Butts' (Shapiro 2005, 319). Referring to this particular performance Gary Taylor and Rory Loughnane state that ' . . . it seems reasonable to assume that it is the same play mentioned by Nashe' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 546). Henslowe's entry for 'hamlet' lacks the prefix 'ne' which was applied to other plays in his diary, and which is generally believed to mean 'new'. Taylor and Loughnane note that 'ne' might be read as meaning 'new in this venue, in which case "ne" would in fact on some occasions mean old' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 441). However Taylor and Loughnane conclude that 'ne' could more often than not be read to mean 'new' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 441), and Bourus states that all evidence 'strongly suggests that "hamlet" was not, in June 1594, a new play' (Bourus 2014, 152). This therefore increases the possibility that Henslowe's *Hamlet* and Nashe's *Hamlet* are the same work.

In 1596, two years after Henslowe's record of a *Hamlet* performance, the author Thomas Lodge published *Wits Misery and the World's Madnesse* (Lodge 1596) that recalls a detail from a performance of a *Hamlet* play that he had witnessed. Lodge refers to a 'deuil' or 'fiend' that 'walks for the most part in black vnder colour of grauity, & looks as pale as the Uizard of ye ghost which cried so miserally at y Theator like an oisterwife, Hamlet, reuenge' (Lodge 1596, H4v). The 'Theator' was the name of the Chamberlain's Men's residence, and Hibbard suggests that the company 'took it (*Hamlet*) with them' (Shakespeare 1987a, 13) when they left Newington Butts to change residence. Bourus suggests that Lodge's quotation is 'The most influential reference to *Hamlet* between 1589 and 1602' (Bourus 2014, 144) and Hibbard states that:

> This is much the most helpful information about the *Ur-Hamlet* that we have, since it shows that the play departed from Belleforest's narrative by introducing a ghost; and, as that ghost calls on Hamlet to take revenge, it follows that the murder must have been done in secret. (Shakespeare 1987a, 13)

Some scholars have argued that because the words 'Hamlet' and 'revenge' do not appear consecutively in the canonical version of the play, the now-lost early *Hamlet* is not Shakespearean. Bourus dismisses this by arguing that Lodge's quote is a memorial reconstruction (and is therefore vulnerable to corruption), and by citing examples of famous misquotations from films that demonstrate false accounts of words spoken in performance (Bourus 2014, 146). Recently Taylor and Loughnane have stated that 'the *Hamlet* tragedy

mentioned by Lodge and Nashe . . . could have been written by Shakespeare' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 546).

Possibly the first document that identifies Shakespeare as the author of a play about Hamlet is a note written by Gabriel Harvey inside a copy of Thomas Speght's edition of Geoffrey Chaucer's works, published in 1598 (Chaucer 1598). (Harvey's particular edition can be found in the British Library at: MS 42518 folio 422 verso). Reflecting on the popularity of contemporary writers Harvey notes that 'The younger sort takes much delight in Shakespeares Venus, & Adonis; but his Lucrece, & his tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke, haue it in them, to please the wiser sort' (Chaucer 1598). Because the note is handwritten and undated it remains unclear as to when after the book's publication it was made. Earlier in the marginalia Harvey refers to the Earl of Essex in the present tense. The Earl was executed on February 25th 1601, so it is reasonable to accept that the reference to the Earl of Essex pre-dates this time. With reference to Harvey's mention of Essex, Hibbard suggests that 'It therefore follows that *Hamlet* had been composed and, presumably, acted before that . . .' (Shakespeare 1987a, 4). Taylor and Loughnane note that recent inking and palaeographical evidence places the note 'between late 1599 and 1612' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 545).

A fifth significant document regarding the now lost *Hamlet* is the text of *Palladis Tamia* by Francis Meres published in 1598. Here Meres offers a commentary on contemporary playwrights, and pays tribute to Shakespeare whilst referring to some of his plays:

> . . . so the sweete wittie soule of *Ouid* liues in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witness his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, &c. As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among ye English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witness his *Gétlemé of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labors lost*, his *Loue labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame*, & his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the 2. Richard the 3. Henry the 4. King Iohn, Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo* and *Iuliet* . . . (Meres 1598, Oo2r–Oo2v)

The absence of a *Hamlet* play in Meres's list has led some scholars to conclude that Shakespeare's version was not yet written at this time. Hibbard suggests that 'Its absence

from that list amounts to strong presumptive evidence that it had not yet been staged, and goes far towards establishing a *terminus a quo*' (Shakespeare 1987a, 3). Thompson and Taylor note however that ' . . . an accidental omission . . .' of *Hamlet* by Meres 'is not inconceivable' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 47). Bourus also points out that Meres's list fails to include other plays by Shakespeare which are now acknowledged as being written prior to 1598 (Bourus 2014, 159). This therefore leaves the possibility that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was in existence when Meres wrote his list.

Here we have evidence of a play about Hamlet being performed as early as 1589 that was mocked by academics but was familiar enough to be recognised merely by the protagonist's name. It appears likely that Shakespeare knew the play, and possibly performed in it. Attempts by academics to picture this elusive drama, based on such limited evidence, have led Smith to suggest that 'The various accounts of the Ur-Hamlet by eminent textual scholars seem to be entirely learned, entirely rational and entirely plausible, and yet their foundations are extraordinarily insubstantial' (Smith 2000, 189). Smith even questions the existence of a pre-Shakespearean *Hamlet* play stating that 'the Ur-Hamlet is a creature of fantasy dressed up in the pseudo-science of late Victorian bibliographic invention and of Bardolatry' (Smith 2000, 189). Recently Taylor and Loughnane 'provisionally date the original *Hamlet* to late 1588 . . .' and state: 'We find the arguments for Shakespeare's authorship of the early *Hamlet* more convincing than any alternative explanation' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 547). Bloom imagines Shakespeare as having had a life-long relationship with *Hamlet*, suggesting that it 'could have been his very first play' (Bloom 1999, 398), and that 'Shakespeare *never* stopped rewriting it' (Bloom 1999, 391). The three narratives examined above, being Saxo's Amleth, Belleforest's Hamblet, and the now-lost Hamlet play, are the foundations underpinning Shakespeare's masterpiece.

The origins of *Hamlet* Q1 (1603), Q2 (1604-5), Folio (1623) and *Fratricide Punished*

There are three early editions of *Hamlet* that attribute their authorship to Shakespeare. These are also bibliographically the most significant editions of the play for reasons that will be examined below. These editions are known as the First Quarto (1603), the Second Quarto (1604-5) and the Folio edition (1623), hereafter referenced as Q1, Q2 and F respectively. A further peripheral text that is closely associated with these early editions, and therefore having significance in matters relating to the origins of Shakespeare's play, is a German version of *Hamlet* entitled *Tragoedia Der Bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dannemark* known as *Fratricide Punished* in English. Here I shall examine these texts in order to ascertain what they take from the antecedent *Hamlet* texts of Saxo Grammaticus and Francois de Belleforest. Due to the unusual nature of the German play I shall examine this text separately to Q1, Q2 and F. I will look at the publication dates and title pages of each work and examine what collective and individual parallels these plays might have with the antecedent texts. I will reference Q1, Q2 and F by signature, and citations from the texts will be in the original early modern spelling. I will reference Belleforest's narrative of Hamblet as translated into English in Furness's Variorum edition of *Hamlet* (Furness 1877a), from where I will also reference *Fratricide Punished*. I will reference Saxo Grammaticus's narrative of Amleth from Israel Gollancz's study *The Sources of Hamlet* (Gollancz 1967). When referencing act and scene numbers for *Hamlet,* I will use those established by the Arden 2006 edition.

A surviving copy of Q1 was first discovered in 1823 and there are now just two extant copies. At 15,983 words it is less than half the length of Q2 and the nature of its text has long challenged scholars with regard to the work's authenticity. Whether the writing is an early draft of the play by Shakespeare or a corruption of the canonical version is a matter that still divides scholars, and the key theories that surround this argument will be examined in more detail in a later section. The title page of Q1 reads:

> THE Tragicall Historie of HAMLET Prince of Denmarke / By William Shake-
> speare. As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the
> Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and
> else-where. (Shakespeare 1603, A1r)

With regard to the performances advertised on this title page, Thompson and Taylor note that: 'Unfortunately, no one has been able to corroborate these statements by producing hard evidence of any particular performance in London, Cambridge or Oxford' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 56). The first page of the play's text in Q1 offers the same wording in a head title: 'The Tragicall Historie of HAMLET Prince of Denmarke' (Shakespeare 1603, B1r), but its running headers give a variant title: '*The Tragedie* [or '*Tragedy*'] *of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*'.

Only seven copies of Q2 are extant, three dated 1604 on the title page, and four dated 1605, so the edition is usually dated '1604-5'. This might be explained by the print run of the title page starting in late 1604 and finishing in early 1605 (in which case alteration of the type was unusually fussy), or it might reflect stop-press correction to the type (in which case we do not know whether the earlier or later date is correct.). It is Shakespeare's longest play with 28,628 words. The title page of Q2 reads as following: '*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' (Shakespeare 1604-5, A1r). The head title on the first page of dialogue in Q2 offers a different title: 'The Tragedie of HAMLET Prince of Denmarke' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1r) .

The Folio edition of the play was printed in 1623 and is about four per cent shorter than Q2 at 27,602 words. It is placed within the volume of 36 plays after *Macbeth* and preceding *King Lear*. This edition of the play carries the title: 'THE TRAGEDIE OF HAMLET, Prince of Denmarke' on its title page in the volume (Shakespeare 1623b, n4v), shortened to '*The Tragedie of Hamlet*' in its running headers and '*The Tragedy of Hamlet*' in the collection's list of contents called its Catalogue (Shakespeare 1623b, A6r).

The first official record of a Hamlet play that is commonly accepted as being Shakespeare's work is an entry made in the Stationers' Register on July 26th 1602 by James Roberts. The entry details read as follows: 'Entred for his Copie vnder the hands of master PASFIELD and master waterson warden A booke called '*the Revenge of HAMLET Prince [of] Denmarke*' *as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes*' (Arber 1967, 3:212). With regard to the proprietorial aspect of this registration, Bourus explains that 'Roberts paid a fee of six pence to secure what we would now call his copyright' (Bourus 2014, 29). On the subject of the authorship of this specific book Thompson and Taylor note that:

Almost every scholar assumes this is a reference to Shakespeare's play, and the reference to the Chamberlain's Men certainly supports the assumption, although the author is not mentioned and this is not precisely the play's title as it appears in any printed version. (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 49)

If the lack of an author's name establishes some uncertainty regarding this particular play's provenance, the matter is further complicated by the fact that James Roberts was not involved in the publishing or printing of Q1, but he did print Q2 for Nicholas Ling, who, along with John Trundle had published Q1. As Thompson and Taylor and Bullough observe, the nature of the relationship between the Hamlet play registered by Roberts in 1602, and Q1 and Q2 remains uncertain (Thompson and Taylor 2006,78; Bullough 1973, 7:3). Bourus has recently examined this question in detail in her book *Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet: Print, Piracy and Performance*. According to Bourus, Roberts was likely to have been somehow involved in the process of publishing Q1, and she suggests that 'Roberts was … probably responsible for the changes of wording between his 1602 entry in the Stationers' Register and the 1603 title page' (Bourus 2014, 33).

We have seen here that Q1, Q2 and F offer us a protagonist named Hamlet, in contrast to the Amleth of Saxo Grammaticus and the Hamblet of Belleforest. The 1608 English edition of Belleforest's narrative does use the name 'Hamlet' as well as 'Hamblet' (Furness 1877, 2:98). However, as we have seen, it is likely that this translated version of Belleforest's text, which post-dates the publication of Q1 and Q2 as well as reported performances and written editions of a 'Hamlet' play, was influenced by one or more of these versions. The name 'Hamlet' is also found in Nashe's observations on 'whole *Hamlets*' (Nashe 1589, **3r), and in Philip Henslowe's record of a 'hamlet' performance in 1594 (Henslowe 1968, 21), as well as Thomas Lodge's recollection of hearing an actor cry 'Hamlet, reuenge' (Lodge 1596, H4v) in a theatrical performance. Harvey's observations on Shakespeare's 'tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke' (Chaucer 1598) provides a close parallel to the title in the opening page of Q2, as well as the title in F (but, as we have noted, the exact date of this hand-written comment is uncertain). The fact that Harvey compares Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to texts that were published for a readership -- 'Venus, & Adonis' and 'Lucrece' (Chaucer 1598) -- offers intriguing implications regarding the status of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a text for the closet as well as the stage (a theory we shall examine later). Whether Nashe, in 1589, was referring to a Hamlet narrative full of 'good sentences' that he had read, or of 'tragical speeches' that he had seen/heard at the theatre remains

uncertain (Nashe 1589, **3r). Of significance here is the evidence that a protagonist named 'Hamlet' was in existence as early as 1589, fourteen years before the name's first use in a published play formally attributed to Shakespeare. We have also seen how Hibbard suggests a 'borrowing' from Belleforest for the title pages of Q1 and Q2, and how 'the unusual description of the play on the title-pages of both the First and Second Quarto' imply a strong echo of the French '*Histoires Tragiques*' (Shakespeare 1987a, 14).

When we look at textual influences that Q1, Q2 and F might have taken from the antecedent texts we find an array of possible relationships. A range of configurations arise, where, for example, elements from the two source texts of Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest are evidenced in one of the three early *Hamlet* texts, or, one of the source texts might be evidenced in all three seventeenth-century editions. The nature of the textual influences is also a nuanced matter. This is evidenced in the range of terms used by Margrethe Jolly in her detailed comparative study of Belleforest's text, Q1 and Q2, entitled '*Hamlet* and the French connection' (Jolly 2012). Here, Jolly highlights and analyses 'borrowings', shared 'features', 'ideas . . . that may be considered transpositions', 'relocated' elements, 'echoes', aspects that 'follow' the source, plot details that 'appear to be drawn' from a particular text, and details of a text that are 'closer' to another text (Jolly 2012, 83-105). A textual influence might come in the form of a plot detail, a structural aspect, a motif, a particular word, or the development of an idea that is merely a seed in the source text (therefore making the certainty of the influence a contentious matter). An example of the nuanced nature of possible textual influences can be seen in Thompson and Taylor's suggestion of a potential parallel between the burning of the King's castle in the texts of Belleforest and Saxo Grammaticus, and Hamlet's celebration in Q1 of the 'false fires' that stimulated the King's conscience at the inner-play (Shakespeare 1603, F4v). If a textual influence is agreed on here, then we have the detail of a literal fire in the source narratives becoming a metaphorical fire in the later text. (Nuttall's work *Shakespeare the Thinker* makes a detailed analysis of how Shakespeare might have developed such details in the creation of his works). It is also worth noting here that Jolly's study draws upon the French edition of Belleforest's tale published in 1570, and that my analysis is taken from the English translation of 1608, which latter might well have been influenced by readings or performances of the script underlying Q1, Q2 or F.

The stories of Saxo Grammaticus's Amleth, and Belleforest's Hamblet, and the texts of Q1, Q2 and F all share some significant plot elements, which are as follows. The Norwegian king is killed by the protagonist's father. The protagonist's father is murdered by

his uncle who then takes his brother's title and wife. The populace is lied to about the nature of the crime. The crime is framed as being murderous and also incestuous. The protagonist, being suspicious of his uncle and fearing for his own life, decides to feign madness in order to establish some personal safety and to await an appropriate opportunity to exact revenge. In the narrative there lies a reference to a 'Brutus' of classical Rome. The protagonist frequently speaks in riddles and demonstrates significant vocal and intellectual dexterity. Courtiers of the king are used to ascertain the protagonist's state of mind. The king is suspicious of the protagonist's feigned madness and arranges surreptitious tests to uncover the truth of the matter. A young woman is used to lure the protagonist into exposing his true nature and motives. The protagonist sees through the set-up and disrupts it with irrational behaviour. The relationship between the young woman and the protagonist predates events in the entrapment scene, and is one of some intimacy.

Plot parallels between the Danish and French antecedent texts that are worthy of note include the following. An assistant to the king suggests that a meeting between the protagonist and his mother be arranged in her quarters in which the assistant could hide and overhear their dialogue. In this meeting the protagonist becomes aware of the spy and stabs him to death before he is aware of the listener's identity. The protagonist accuses his mother of being sexually deviant, and of having questionable virtues, and asks her to reflect on the natures of her first and second husbands. The queen's sexual appetite is likened to that of beasts. The protagonist disposes of the spy's body in a hidden place, and the king demands to know the corpse's whereabouts. The king decides to send the protagonist to England, escorted by two courtiers who carry a written order for the English monarch to put the protagonist to death. The protagonist discovers the plot and alters the text on the death warrant (falsifying the king's hand) so that the courtiers are both executed. The protagonist returns to Denmark, arriving at a funeral. Soon after arriving home the protagonist stabs the king to death. Excessive drinking and the use of swords are established motifs in the texts. The protagonist shows some concern with his legacy and future reputation.

Characters that have equivalents in the texts of Belleforest, Saxo Grammaticus, Q1, Q2 and F (using Q2's forms of the names) include: Old Hamlet, Hamlet, the Queen, Polonius, Horatio, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, old Fortinbras, and the King of England. Characters that are present in Q1, Q2 and F but are absent from the narratives of Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest are: the Ghost, Laertes, Osric, the Players, the Gravedigger, and young Fortinbras. (As we shall see however, it has been suggested that

traces of the Ghost may be found in Belleforest's narrative). Lodge's recollection of the 'ghost which cried so miserally at ye Theator like an oisterwife, Hamlet, reuenge' (Lodge 1596, H4v) establishes a spectre as a significant character in a Hamlet play as early as 1596. As we have also seen, it is likely that Shakespeare was an actor in this production. Lodge's description also includes the terms 'miserally', 'pale', and 'walks for the most part in black' (Lodge 1596, H4v). The images of a miserable protagonist, a pale ghost and a Hamlet who is dressed in mourning can all be found in Q1 (2.27, 2.145, 2.33), Q2 (1.2.66, 1.2.231, 1.2.78) and F (1.2.64, 1.2.217, 1.2.75).

Jolly's comparative study of Belleforest's text, Q1 and Q2 establishes over 'fifty echoes from the French source' that are 'exactly parallel, adapted or transposed' that can be found in Q1 and Q2 (Jolly 2012, 88). Amongst these references, Jolly also notes twenty-five specific features that 'confirm that both the quartos [Q1 and Q2] are securely rooted in the French text' (Jolly 2012, 88). It is likely that Jolly's study did not include the F *Hamlet* due to its similarity to Q2.

A notable detail from Belleforest that is developed in Q1, Q2 and F is the agreement between the protagonist's father and the king of Norway that after their duel the vanquished will 'lose all the riches he had in his ship' (Furness 1877, 2:92). This idea is embellished in all three of the early *Hamlet* editions (in Q1 at 1.76, in Q2 at 1.1.87, in F at 1.1.87), where the vanquished agrees to lose his lands. Another detail from Belleforest that is present in Q1, Q2 and F is the idea that one's soul can be overtaken by a devil. Belleforest writes that 'a reasonable soul becometh the habitation of a meaner sort of devels' (Furness 1877a, 2:104). This image can be read in an observation made by Hamlet at 7.430 in Q1, in 2.2.532 in Q2, and at 3.1.593-4 in F. Geoffrey Bullough recognises the influence of Belleforest's text here, and suggests that the image 'may have influenced the *Hamlet* plays into making Hamlet wonder about the power of devils when thinking about the Ghost' (Bullough 1973, 7:13).   Later we shall examine Magreta de Grazia's theory concerning the motif of land in the play, and how the ontological nature of the Ghost resonates as a key philosophical theme.

Although Belleforest's text does not explicitly contain a ghost, Jolly suggests that Belleforest's two references to the 'ombres' (in the French version), which represent 'the shades of his father' might well be 'a suggestion for a Ghost' (Jolly 2012, 89). Jolly points out that the term 'ombre' is used in the scene where the protagonist visits his mother's

bedchamber, which in Q1, Q2 and F also include an appearance of the Ghost. For Jolly this is strong evidence of textual influence from Belleforest to Q1, Q2 and F. After Belleforest's protagonist has murdered his uncle, he states that 'his soule may rest among the blessed spirits' (Furness 1877a, 2:108), which is also a close parallel to the disturbed and restless Ghost featured in Q1, Q2 and F.

A notable aspect of the Belleforest text that is advanced in Q1, Q2 and F is the psychological and philosophical complexity of the narrative, which is largely absent from Saxo Grammaticus's Amleth story, which we have earlier seen described as being both 'primitive' and 'savage' (Shakespeare 1982, 89; Davies and Dobson 2001, 179–83). Belleforest's narrative engages with the tension between the passions and reason (Furness 1877, 2:95), likens sexual desire to beastliness (Furness 1877, 2:95), notes the complexities of legal matters and the faculty of memory (Furness 1877, 2:98–99), contrasts the external aspects of the presentation of self in comparison to the internal condition (Furness 1877, 2:100–101), and examines the nature of fortune and conscience (Furness 1877, 2:102). These themes are all key aspects of Q2 and F, and to a lesser extent Q1.

Before Belleforest's protagonist is sent to England, we find passages of image clusters that show anticipations of the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy of Q1, Q2 and F. Here, Belleforest mentions cowards, the benefits of virtuous living, the nature of death, arguments for and against living, reflections on 'interpreises' and the 'minde', as well as observations on eternity and fortune (Furness 1877a, 2:101–2). Jenkins suggests that 'the "To be or not to be" soliloquy appears to derive something from Belleforest' (Shakespeare 1982, 95).

Traces of Belleforest that are found in Q2 and F, but not in Q1 include an observation about 'the art of piracie' (Furness 1877, 2:92), which Jolly suggests might be the inspiration for Hamlet's encounter with the pirates at 4.6.13-28 in Q2, and 4.2.13-31 in F (Jolly 2012, 91). Also of note is the detail of the protagonist's filthy clothes in the texts of Saxo Grammaticus (Gollancz 1967, 103) and Belleforest (Furness 1877, 2:94). In Q2 and F Hamlet's attire is described by Ophelia as being 'fouled'/'foul'd' respectively (Shakespeare 1604-5, E2r; 1623b, E1v), whereas in Q1 Ofelia describes a dishevelled rather than an unclean protagonist (Q1 6.42-44). Jolly highlights seven examples that establish explicit unique parallels between Belleforest's text and Q2 (Jolly 2012, 93). An exclusive transposition from Saxo Grammaticus's text to Q2 and F is the mention of the protagonist's 'utter lethargy' (Gollancz 1967, 105). In Q2 Hamlet explains to Rosencrantz and

Guildenstern that he has ceased all physical activity and 'forgon all custome of exercises' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F2r). The same phrase is found in F at 2.2.277, but any mention of Hamlet's lethargy is absent from the equivalent scene in Q1 at 7. 232-283.

According to Jolly however, the relationship between Belleforest's text and Q1 is closer than the one between the French text and Q2 or F, with Q1 having 'more borrowings, despite being the shorter play' (Jolly 2012, 102–3). Amongst the significant details that link Q1 to Belleforest's text, is the protagonist's youthfulness. Belleforest describes Hamblet as being 'young' (Furness 1877, 2:95) and having to wait to attain 'man's estate' (Furness 1877, 2:94). In her comparative analysis of Q1, Q2 and F, Bourus observes that 'the first edition emphasizes Hamlet's youth in more specific ways, not present in the other texts' (Bourus 2014, 107). Bourus also observes that Q1 does not contain the reference in the graveyard scene that establishes Hamlet as being aged 30, which can be found at 5.1.134-153 in Q2 and 5.1.140-160 in F. Also, Bourus notes that Q1 does not have the Queen describe Hamlet as being 'fat and scant of breath', which she does in Q2 (Shakespeare 1604-5, N4v), and that Q1 does not have Hamlet remember fondly a man who died twenty-three years before (Bourus 2014, 109). In Q2 at 5.1.173-4, and in F at 5.1.171 Yorick's skull is described by the gravedigger as having been interred for twenty-three years, implying the thirty year old Hamlet is recalling someone he knew twenty-three years ago when he was seven. Recently, however, Rhodri Lewis has offered a reading of the Graveyard scene (across Q1, Q2 and F), where it is possible (especially in the Folio edition) to infer that it is the Gravedigger who is thirty, and that Hamlet is a youth (Lewis 2017, 315–24).

A further significant detail that links Q1 to Belleforest's text is the close succession of the proposal for the protagonist to be ensnared by a beautiful girl and its implementation. In Belleforest's narrative these episodes take place consecutively (Furness 1877, 2:95–96). As Jolly observes, in Q1, ' . . . in scene 7, Corambis proposes that the King and he should "stand close in the study"; five lines later Hamlet enters . . .' and is confronted with Ofelia (Jolly 2012, 95). In Q2 and F these episodes do not take place consecutively. Another substantial parallel between Q1 and Belleforest's narrative is the agreement the Queen makes with her son, when they meet in her closet, to support him in his task of revenge. In Belleforest's text the queen acknowledges the murder and devotes herself to her son's cause (Furness 1877, 2:100–101). In Q1 the Queen denies knowledge of the murder but vows to support her son with the statement that 'I will conceale, consent, and doe my best, / What stratagem soe're thou shalt deuise' (Shakespeare 1603, G3v).

We have seen here an abundance of features that are common to the texts of Saxo Grammaticus, Belleforest, Q1, Q2 and F. We have also seen evidence that Belleforest's text accounts for a substantial amount of the structural and thematic features in Q1 and Q2, making it the strongest candidate of being a source for Shakespeare's play. Jolly's study also shows us that of the three Shakespeare text's, Belleforest's narrative is most closely related to Q1 due to aspects of structure, plot and dialogue that are mirrored. We have also seen that there are no substantial differences between Q2 and F in regard to their relationship with the play's sources. Jolly concludes her comparative analysis of Belleforest's text, Q1 and Q2 by stating that 'Altogether Q1 has more borrowings, despite being the shorter play', and that 'Critically, Q2 is more distant than Q1 in its development of several ideas' (Jolly 2012, 212).

Elements of Q1, Q2 and F that are absent or barely evident in the source texts of Belleforest and Saxo Grammaticus include: the Ghost, the Players and the inner-play, the fencing match, the suicide of the young girl, the King at prayer, the parallel revenge plots of Laertes and Fortinbras, the graveyard scene, the protagonist's death happening simultaneously with the murder of his uncle, and the absence of a specific plan or method for revenge (in the source texts the method of revenge is carefully planned by the protagonist from the start of the tale). Some of the significant themes of Q2 and F, (and to a lesser extent Q1) that are largely absent from the texts of Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest include: the imagery of skin conditions, ear abuse and disease (Spurgeon 1935), humankind's relationship to land (De Grazia 2007), the tension between humankind's god-like intellect and its animalistic passions (Tillyard 1943), the dominant textual motif of hunting (Lewis 2017), and the depth of philosophical, political and psychological insight, as examined by Sigmund Freud (Freud 1976, 366–68), Friedrich Nietzsche (Nietzsche 1995, 23), T. S. Eliot (Eliot 1932b, 141–46), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Goethe 2011), Wells and Bloom (Bloom 1999) amongst others.

The German play *Fratricide Punished* was first published in 1781 based on a manuscript dated 27 October 1710, which is now lost. As Thompson and Taylor note, there is a record of a company of English players performing a play entitled *Tragoedia von Hamlet einen Printzen in Dennemarck* in Dresden on June 24th in 1626, which they suggest 'may well be' *Fratricide Punished* (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 46). With regard to *Fratricide Punished*'s content and nature Thompson and Taylor describe it as being 'a much compressed version of Shakespeare's plot, done in prose, lacking almost all the soliloquies, Ophelia's songs and the graveyard scene, but with some added scenes, including a Senecan

prologue, some added characters and some added farcical business' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 46).

Aspects of the plot in *Fratricide Punished* that are parallel to the texts of Belleforest, Saxo Grammaticus, Q1, Q2 and F include: a protagonist whose father has been murdered by his uncle and who feigns madness in order to exact revenge, the use of a young girl to entrap the protagonist, an inner-play, a scene in the protagonist's mother's chamber where a spy is discovered and killed, the protagonist being sent to England to be assassinated with a subsequent escape from this fate where the King's attendants are killed instead, the protagonist's return from England, the swapping of swords and the king's death. However the text of *Fratricide Punished* evidences a closer relationship to the texts of Q1, Q2 and F than it does to the works of Belleforest and Saxo Grammaticus. That the protagonist's name in *Fratricide Punished* is 'Hamlet' ties the work to Q1, Q2 and F, as well as to the aforementioned Hamlet narratives noted by Nashe, Lodge, Henslowe and Harvey. The presence of 'the Ghost of the old King of Denmark' (Furness 1877, 2:121) in *Fratricide Punished* also links the text to the Hamlet play referred to by Lodge, as well as to Q1, Q2 and F. Further plot details that link the German text to the three early *Hamlet* plays attributed to Shakespeare include: the young girl's name being 'Ophelia' (therefore connecting this text to Q2 and F, which offer the same spelling), the King's advisor being called Corambus (an echo of Q1's Corambis), the visit of the Players, the inner-play (including a dumb-show), poison administered by ear for murder, the suicide of Ophelia, Hamlet's opportunity to kill the King whilst at prayer, the visitation of the Ghost in the Queen's chamber (and the Queen's inability to see it), the fencing match, and the death of Hamlet as the revenge is completed.

Aspects of *Fratricide Punished* that have no parallel in Q1, Q2 and F include: the aforementioned prologue spoken by 'Night' and the three 'Furies' (Furness 1877, 2:122); the entrance of a character 'from above' (Furness 1877, 2:122); farcical aspects such as how the '*Ghost from behind gives* [the sentinel] . . . *a box on the ear*' (Furness 1877a, 2:123); the two jesters Phantasmo and Jens; and Ophelia's suicide by throwing herself down a hill (Furness 1877, 2:141). The method of Ophelia's suicide, which closely follows a mention of 'Dover' (Furness 1877, 2:139) might even suggest an influence of *King Lear*. The prologue to *Fratricide Punished*, described by Thompson and Taylor as being Senecan in its nature (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 46) shows close parallels to the prologue in Seneca's *Medea*, with both featuring Hecate, night, Furies, murder, revenge, justice, air-travel, and literal and metaphorical references to light and darkness (Seneca 2010, 73–74; Furness 1877a, 2:122).

Regarding the provenance of *Fratricide Punished*, Thompson and Taylor note that 'Scholars cannot agree whether the play derives from Q1 . . . from Q2 . . . or from the *Ur-Hamlet* (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 46–47). The German Shakespeare scholar Albert Cohn suggests that *Fratricide Punished* 'approaches most nearly to that form of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which we find in the Quarto of 1603' (Furness 1877a, 2:116), which is an opinion shared consistently amongst the academics cited in Furness's Variorum edition of *Hamlet* (Furness 1877a, 2:114–20). The closeness of the names Corambus/Corambis and the placement of the nunnery scene are two key elements that support this opinion.

More recently Tiffany Stern has proposed that it is 'at least half-possible' (Stern 2013a, 345) that *Fratricide Punished* is the text of a puppet-play (Stern 2013a). Factors that support this argument include: the gender of the characters and casting logistics, the stage directions implying that characters enter and exit in flight, the brevity of some scenes (with 3.3 lasting two lines), fast entrances and exits, and the farcical nature of some of the stage business as mentioned above (Furness 1877a, 2:121–42). Zachary Lesser has described *Fratricide Punished* as being 'a strangely slapstick and farcical play' and noted Stern's argument in his remark that 'it has even been suggested that it is the script of a Punchinello-type puppet show' (Lesser 2015, 6).

Coda.

We have seen here a range of details that connect the antecedent texts with Shakespeare's play. In their shared phrase 'tragical history' the titles of Q1 and Q2 appear to mirror the title of Belleforest's narrative. The registration of a Hamlet play a year before the publication of Q1 offers yet another, and still unexplained version of the play's title: 'The Revenge of Hamlet'. We have also seen that the texts of Q1, Q2 and F share substantial features with the narratives of Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest. The French Hamlet narrative is shown to be the key source for Q1, Q2 and F, and the relationship between Q1 and Belleforest's tale is the closest, due to echoes of plot, structure and dialogue. We have also seen that the name 'Hamlet' and the character of the Ghost link the texts of Q1, Q2 and F to the Hamlet narratives noted by Nashe, Lodge, Henslowe and Harvey.

Some of the key features of the texts of Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest are present in *Fratricide Punished*, but the German play evidences a closer relationship to Q1, Q2 and F than it does to Saxo Grammaticus's or Belleforest's works. Textual analysis

suggests that *Fratricide Punished* is most closely related to Q1. The texts of Q1, Q2 and F also contain a significant amount of structural features that are absent from both source texts, such as an inner-play and the young girl's suicide. We have seen that Belleforest's text does offer some of the moral, philosophical, psychological and theological textual motifs present in Q1, Q2 and F. However in Q2 and F, and less so in Q1, these themes are notably advanced, both philosophically and poetically. These themes include the abuse of ears, hunting, humankind's relationship to land, reflections on consciousness, the presence of a mysterious disease and observations on the arts. We have also seen the nuanced nature of textual analysis, where parallels are established through the observation of similar features as well as through the identification of echoes, possible transpositions and developed motifs. This makes the process of source-hunting and comparing texts an activity that is informed by the art of interpretation as much as the measuring of objective data. The evidence here supports the argument that Shakespeare read Belleforest's text, or that the Hamlet narratives mentioned by Nashe, Lodge, Henslowe and Harvey carried much detail from Belleforest's narrative, and that Shakespeare was exposed to them or it. Either way, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* shows significant parallels to the antecedent texts, but also equally significant thematic, structural, poetic and philosophical differences.

Chapter Two. Making Sense of the Variations

Hamlet editions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

We have seen that the title page of Q1 *Hamlet* advertises itself as being faithful to the play as performed: 'As it hath beene diuerse times acted' (Shakespeare 1603, A1r). In contrast the title page of Q2 promises a text whose authenticity is based on it being 'Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie' (Shakespeare 1604-5, A1r). The title page of the first Folio offers a similar claim to authenticity, assuring readers that the collection has been 'Published according to the True Originall Copies' (Shakespeare 1623, ᵖA1+1r). These statements set a precedent in Shakespeare scholarship that still resonates today, which is a concern for the most authentic version of a play, the truest rendition of the text that most closely honours the creative mind and hand of Shakespeare. Later we shall examine historical and modern theories that account for the above statements concerning the provenance and authenticity of the early editions of *Hamlet*. Here, however, my aim is to follow the trajectory of *Hamlet* as published throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, up to the discovery of Q1 in 1823, which initiated new perspectives on the provenance of the play and the methods employed by Shakespeare. At the heart of *Hamlet*'s journey across these centuries lies the attempt to establish a single text that boasts utmost authenticity.

During his lifetime Shakespeare saw the publication of three *Hamlet* texts that were attributed to him: Q1 (1603), Q2 (1604-5), and a third quarto edition, Q3, in 1611, which was based on the text of the second quarto. The title page of Q3 mirrors the claim made in Q2, that it is published 'according to the true and perfect Coppy' (Shakespeare 1611, title page). A fourth and undated quarto edition of *Hamlet* (Q4) followed a few years later. This version is based on the Q3 text and scholars remain uncertain as to whether it preceded or followed the publication of the Folio in 1623. In 2001 Eric Rasmussen examined deterioration of the publisher's device across extant copies of Q4, concluding that it was printed between 1619 and 1622 (Rasmussen 2001, 21–29), establishing Q4 as being a possible source of reference or copy-text for the Folio version of the play. However, in 2007 R. Carter Hailey concluded that Q4 was printed in 1625, as a result of his paper dating and

watermark analysis (Hailey 2007, 367–87). This recent data, accepted here, therefore removes the possibility that Q4 was used in the process of publishing the F *Hamlet.* The title page of Q4 advertises itself as being 'Newly Imprinted and inlarged, according to the true and perfect Copy lastly printed' (Shakespeare 1625, title page).

The Folio *Hamlet* was published in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death. As well as the assurance that the texts were based on 'True Originall Copies' (Shakespeare 1623, $^\pi$A1+1r), the preliminaries by Heminges and Condell also note how previously readers had been 'abus'd with diuerse, stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious imposters' (Shakespeare 1623, $^\pi$A3r). If this comment is targeted at Q1 *Hamlet* as well as some other early quartos (a theory we shall examine later) then it might be the last early modern reference to the first quarto of the play, which almost completely disappears from the *Hamlet* narrative until 1823.

The complexity of establishing a text's authenticity is evidenced in an examination of Heminges and Condell's claim that the contents of the Folio were based on 'True Originall Copies' (Shakespeare 1623, $^\pi$A1+1r). If the term 'True originall Copies' implies 'manuscripts which in turn embodied a writing in which the author's mind and hand went together' (Taylor et al. 2017, 1:liv), which John Jowett has recently suggested, then, as Jowett observes, Hemminges and Condell were making a false claim, as some of the Folio plays were based on previously published quarto editions rather than on Shakespeare's manuscripts. Even if a text is based on the author's manuscript, there is still a plethora of opportunities for textual corruption throughout the publishing process, from the author's pen to the printed book, as Jowett recently highlights in his essay 'Shakespeare and The Kingdom of Error' (Taylor et al. 2017, 1:xlix–lxiv). Jowett notes the possibility of: authorial error, scribal error, compositor error, omission, transposition, substitution, and interpolation, the last four of which Jowett describes as being 'the logical four coordinates of error' within the printshop (Taylor et al. 2017, 1:lii). If we also acknowledge the theatrical aspect of Shakespeare's work, that he was an actor and a writer for actors, then we must also acknowledge his familiarity with the flexible nature of texts in rehearsal and performance, where lines might be altered, cut, or improvised. We might as a result therefore argue, as Jowett does, that the author was 'complicit in deliberate non-authorial alterations to the manuscripts that became the basis for printed texts' (Taylor et al. 2017, 1:lvii). The connotations for such an understanding complicate the work of an editor of *Hamlet* who, with Q2 and F, is also dealing with multiple versions of the text. These examples highlight some

of the issues to be considered when editors attempt to establish textual authenticity. These factors remain relevant to today's editors.

We have seen that the texts of Q2 and F *Hamlet* share a significant number of passages, and that Q2 is longer at 28,628 words in comparison to F's 27,602 words. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor also note that '1,914 words of F's dialogue . . . are not to be found in Q2, while 2,887 words of Q2's dialogue . . . are not to be found in F' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 80). Some of the textual variants between the two versions are grammatically and semantically minimal, and the effect of swapping a word with its counterpart would make little impact. An example of this can be seen in Horatio's comment about the sun rising over an 'Eastward hill' in Q2 (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3v), and an 'Easterne Hill' in F (Shakespeare 1623b, NN5r). Other variants significantly alter a statement's meaning. An example of this is Hamlet's comment to Horatio that 'There are more things in heauen and earth *Horatio* / Then are dream't of in your philosophie' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v) in Q2, whereas in F Hamlet ends his statement with a reference to 'our Philosophy' (Shakespeare 1623c, OO1v). Two variations between Q2 and F that involve longer passages of text are the omissions in F of Hamlet's speech 'This heauy headed reueale east an west' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v) lasting 22 lines, and Hamlet's soliloquy 'How all occasions doe informe against me' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K3r), lasting 35 lines, which are both found in Q2. The first of these two speeches is known as 'the dram of eale' speech, which ends with the following statement: 'the dram of eale / Doth all the noble substance of a doubt / To his owne scandle' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v). Thompson and Taylor refer to this quotation as 'a famously obscure passage' and define its general meaning as: ' . . . a very small quantity . . . of badness can damage a good thing or person . . . to the extent of bringing it or them into disrepute' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 1.4.36-8n). This textual crux is one of the most noted in Shakespeare's canon. For the remainder of this study I will use these four examples of textual variants as representative samples to illustrate the editorial choices made in editions of the play throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There are of course many other differences between the editions considered here, but focussing on how the early editors treated these four cruxes, arising from the originary quarto/Folio differences, is a useful heuristic for starting to trace the growth of an editorial tradition that will become considerably more complex and conflictual in the 19th and 20th centuries, as we shall see.

A second edition of the Folio was published in 1632, and in 1663 and 1664 a third edition was produced with the addition of six plays now not believed to be

Shakespeare's. A fourth edition of the Folio was printed in 1685. These editions contain a *Hamlet* that is derivative of the first Folio text in a single line of descent: each successive Folio being printed from its predecessor. A fifth quarto of *Hamlet* was published in 1637 that was based on Q4. Its title page advertised an edition that was printed 'according to the true and perfect Copy last printed' (Shakespeare 1637, title page). The five quarto editions do not contain act and scene divisions, but the Folio edition does until 2.2 after which they cease (Shakespeare 1623c, OO2v).

During the second half of the seventeenth century a succession of single editions of *Hamlet* were published known as the 'Player's Quartos'. Serving as souvenir versions of the play, they often offered a text that recorded particular performances, offering statements such as: 'As it is now Acted at his Highness the Duke of York's Theatre' (Shakespeare 1676, title page). The names of the actors are recorded in the preliminaries, with 'Mr Betterton' (Thomas Betterton being one of the leading actors of the Restoration) playing the title role in the 1676 production (Shakespeare 1676, A2v). The 1676 edition offers the following in its introduction: 'This play being too long to be conveniently Acted, such places as might be least prejudicial to the Plot or Scene, are left out upon the Stage . . . are here inserted according to the Original Copy' (Shakespeare 1676, A2r). So here, somewhat confusingly, the volume appears to promise an edition of the play that truthfully represents a particular performance, which is a shorter edited version of the text, whilst also being an edition that includes passages normally omitted in performance. There is also an ironic tension between the lauded author whose 'Original Copy' is implicitly afforded a high status, and the playwright who was incapable of writing a play short enough to act 'conveniently'. As a consequence of these 'Players Quartos' being successional derivatives of each other, Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor state that 'None of these editions has any authority' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 396). The 1676 edition also conflates the texts of F and Q2 with the inclusion of F's 'Eastern hill' (Shakespeare 1676, B3r), and Q2's 'Dram of eale' (Shakespeare 1676, C4r–C4v) and 'How all occasions' speeches (Shakespeare 1676, I3v).

The early Shakespeare editors

The eighteenth century saw a new era in the publishing of Shakespeare's texts with the arrival of a succession of editions of the complete works that were collated by editors and scholars who demonstrated a more methodical approach to their work. The first of these figures is Nicholas Rowe. Wells and Taylor state that: 'The editing of Shakespeare began with the publication of the first editions of his works in the 1590s, but literary historians usually regard Nicholas Rowe as Shakespeare's first editor' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 53). On this shift in editorial approaches Gabriel Egan states that 'The intellectual development of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editions can be characterized as an increasing regard for historical context and a willingness to undertake systematic comparison of the early editions to ascertain their relative authority' (Egan 2010, 6). Rowe's 1709 edition of Shakespeare's works was based on the 1685 Folio, and it included the first extended biography of Shakespeare. Rowe modernised the spelling and punctuation, divided all the plays into acts and scenes throughout, and wrote for each a Dramatis Personae. Although the edition was based on the fourth Folio, Rowe's *Hamlet* includes passages from Q2 or its derivative editions. The title page of Rowe's edition states that it is 'Adorn'd with cuts [engravings] / Revis'd and Corrected' (Shakespeare 1709, 1:title page). Rowe also offers ethical and artistic observations on the plot, such as his comment on Hamlet's decision to restrain himself from being physically violent towards his mother when visiting her closet: 'Tis with wonderful Art and Justness of Judgement, that the Poet restrains him from doing Violence to his Mother' (Shakespeare 1709, 1:xxxiii). Regarding the provenance of the play Rowe suggests that '*Hamlet* is founded on much the same Tale with the *Electra* of *Sophocles*' (Shakespeare 1709, 1:xxxi). Rowe's text relies on the Folio's 'our Philosophy' (Shakespeare 1709, 5:2389), which is established as being in 1.3 (Shakespeare 1709, 5:2383), and the Folio's 'Easterne Hill' (Shakespeare 1709, 5:2372). The edition prefers Q2's soliloquy 'How all occasions' (Shakespeare 1709, 5:2435), but it excludes the entire text of the 'dram of eale' speech, instead following the Folio reading of this passage (Shakespeare 1709, 5:2383). Rowe does not state in any detail what his editorial methods are, and it appears to be an instinctive operation. John Dover Wilson suggests that Rowe and 'the old editors' based their decisions 'almost wholly upon their personal judgement and good taste' (Dover Wilson 1932, 181).

In 1725 the poet Alexander Pope published a multi-volume edition of the complete works. In his 1709 edition Rowe had criticised Shakespeare for not adhering to Aristotle's dramatic unities of time, place and action (Shakespeare 1709, 1:xviii) found in his *Poetics*. Pope used his introduction to reject Rowe's critique, stating that: 'To judge therefore of *Shakespear* by *Aristotle*'s rules, is like trying a man by the Laws of one Country, who acted under those of another' (Shakespeare 1725, 1:vi). Pope also theorised about Shakespeare's working methods, and, possibly inspired by the title page of Q2 (see above), suggests that Shakespeare was a reviser of texts and that he had 'enlarged [*Hamlet*] to almost as much again as at first' (Shakespeare 1725, 1:viii). Pope was suspicious of the accuracy and authenticity of the Folio, blaming '*Heming* and *Condell*' for its numerous 'errors' leaving it in a 'far worse' state than that of 'the Quartos' (Shakespeare 1725, 1:xvi). For Pope though the quartos were also strewn with error as they were created 'by the actors' whilst being presented as being 'charged upon the Author' (Shakespeare 1725, 1:xvi). Pope interpreted Hamlet's instruction to the actors to refrain from improvising as also being the preference of Shakespeare (Shakespeare 1725, 1:xvi). Wells states that Pope was 'more systematic than Rowe in consulting the early quartos and emending the text from them, and in modernizing spelling and punctuation' (Wells 2002, 202).

Pope's edition advertises texts that are 'collated and corrected by the former editions' (Shakespeare 1725, A1r), and *Hamlet* is described as being a tragedy 'from Fable' (Shakespeare 1725, 6: title page). In contrast to Rowe, Pope relies on Q2's 'your philosophy' (Shakespeare 1725, 6:374), which in Pope's edition is placed in 1.9 (Shakespeare 1725, 6:372). Agreeing with Rowe's version, Pope prefers the Folio's 'Eastern Hill' (Shakespeare 1725, 6:351) and Q2's 'How all occasions' soliloquy (Shakespeare 1725, 6:433-4). Pope also omits the entire text of the 'dram of eale' speech, following the Folio reading, but he does include these lines as a footnote with the following comment: 'These 21 lines following are in the first edition, but since left out, perhaps as being thought too verbose' (Shakespeare 1725, 6:365-6). Of interest here is the exclusion in this footnote of the final statement 'the dram of eale . . . his owne scandle' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v). For Pope, the main bulk of the speech is so 'verbose' that it is relegated to a footnote, whereas the final two lines are not even worthy of that status, and are erased from his contribution to history.

In 1733 Lewis Theobald published an edition of the complete works. He discusses in some detail the issue of textual contamination in early modern drama, suggesting an array of dubious methods used to establish manuscript copies. Theobald states that 'many

Pieces were taken down in Short-hand, and imperfectly copied by Ear, from a Representation: Others were printed from piece-meal Parts surreptitiously obtain'd from the Theatres, uncorrect, and without the Poet's Knowledge' (Shakespeare 1733, 1:xxxvii). Theobald also finds the Folio of questionable authenticity suggesting that 'When the *Players* took upon them to publish his Works entire, every Theatre was ransack'd to supply the Copy; and *Parts* collected which had gone through as many Changes as Performers, either from Mutilations or Additions made to them' (Shakespeare 1733, 1:xxxviii). Ironically, we shall see how Theobald inserted his own 'Changes' or 'Mutilations'.

Theobald relies on the Folio's reading of 'Eastern Hill' (Shakespeare 1733, 7:231) and Q2's 'your philosophy' (Shakespeare 1733, 7:257), which is placed in a numerically unspecified scene, following an earlier instruction that the 'scene changes to a more remote part of the platform' (Shakespeare 1733, 7:250). The Q2 soliloquy 'How all occasions' is also included in the edition (Shakespeare 1733, 7:327). Theobald, unlike Pope, does include the 'dram of eale' speech in the main body of his dialogue, but its final statement 'the dram of eale . . .' is re-written by Theobald. In his footnote Theobald states: 'I do not remember a Passage, throughout all our Poet's Works more . . . deprav'd in the Text, of less Meaning to outwards Appearance, or more likely to baffle' (Shakespeare 1733, 7:248). Theobald substitutes Q2's reading of the text with his own emendation: 'The dram of Base / Doth all the noble substance of worth out, / To his own scandal' (Shakespeare 1733, 7:248) with a footnote stating that 'it is purely *conjectural*, and founded on no *Authority* of *Copies*' (Shakespeare 1733, 7:247). Ironically a passage about a thing's vulnerability to corruption is increasingly finding itself vulnerable to just that.

In 1765 a further edition of Shakespeare's works was produced by the writer and lexicographer Samuel Johnson promising a work containing 'the corrections and illustrations of various commentators' (Shakespeare 1765, 1:A1r). Johnson's introduction offers insightful reflections on the works, such as his observation that:

> Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous or critical sense either tragedies or
> comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of
> sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with
> endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination . . .
> (Shakespeare 1765, 1:xiii)

Johnson also comments on the debate about Shakespeare and Aristotle's unities initiated by Rowe and Pope, suggesting that 'Whether Shakespeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide' (Shakespeare 1765, 1:xxix). Like Pope and Theobald before him Johnson professes scepticism about the authority of the early quartos, stating that 'the few which appeared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and therefore probably without his knowledge' (Shakespeare 1765, 1:xiv). Johnson also targets early modern publishers noting that 'The faults of all are indeed numerous and gross . . .' (Shakespeare 1765, 1:xlvi). Even Shakespeare appears to be somewhat guilty of obstructing the delivery of his own true voice, as demonstrated in the following statement, which also covers a range of culprits blamed for textual contamination:

> The stile of *Shakespeare* was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed and obscure; his works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally skilful, who still multiplied errors; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches, and were at last printed without correction of the press. (Shakespeare 1765, 1:xlvi)

Johnson's statement still resonates today amongst Shakespeare scholars, as evidenced in Jowett's essay *The Kingdom of Error* (Taylor et al. 2017, 1:xlix–xlv). Wells observes that Johnson's preface 'has become a classic of Shakespeare criticism' (Wells 2002, 231).

On the provenance of *Hamlet* Johnson informs us that 'old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of *Hamlet* in plain *English* prose, which the criticks have now to seek in *Saxo Grammaticus*' (Shakespeare 1765, 1:xxxiv), which is offered with no further explanation. Johnson includes as a footnote to his Dramatis Personae a record of the publication dates of the quartos of *Hamlet*, with the comment that 'I have only the third Quarto and Folio' (Shakespeare 1765, 8:128). Isolating the most authorial editions of *Hamlet* Johnson adds that 'The Play is printed both in the folio of 1623, and in the quarto of 1637, more correctly, than almost any other of the works of *Shakespeare*' (Shakespeare 1765, 8:128). The paradox of having two contrasting 'correct' editions that will be synthesised into a third, different, but also 'correct' version of the play is not expanded upon here by Johnson. It is an issue however that later editors have addressed in more detail, which we shall examine in due course.

Johnson's *Hamlet* relies on the Folio's 'eastern hill' (Shakespeare 1765, 8:127), and Q2's 'your philosophy' (Shakespeare 1765, 8:172), which is placed in 1.9 mirroring Pope's structuring (Shakespeare 1765, 8:169). Q2's 'How all occasions' soliloquy is also included (Shakespeare 1765, 8:255). Johnson also includes Q2's 'dram of eale' speech, which he places in italics in the main body of dialogue but with Theobald's recently composed final statement '*The dram of Base . . .*' (Shakespeare 1765, 8:159). As a footnote in this variorum edition Johnson includes Theobald's statement explaining his reasoning for inserting his own composition at the conclusion of this speech (Shakespeare 1765, 8:159-60).

Three years after Johnson's edition, in 1768, Edward Capell published an edition of the complete works. Its title page also refers to the issue of authenticity and offers a works '*set out by himself in quarto, or by the Players his Fellows in folio, and now faithfully republish'd from those Editions*' (Shakespeare 1768, A1r). Commenting on the authenticity of some of the quartos he suggests that they are 'either first draughts, or mutilated and perhaps surreptitious impressions of those plays, but whether of the two is not easy to determine' (Shakespeare 1768, 1:2). Capell also notes, regarding the Q2 and F *Hamlet* texts, that 'there are . . . great variations' (Shakespeare 1768, 1:3). Summarising the questionable state of both the quartos and some of the Folio texts Capell notes:

> . . . you have, upon the whole, a true but melancholy picture of the condition of these first-printed plays: which, bad as it is, is yet better than that of those which came after; or than that of the subsequent folio impression of some of these which we are now speaking of. (Shakespeare 1768, 1:5)

Wells notes that Capell 'collected the largest and most important collection of early editions of Shakespeare's plays that had so far been assembled . . . [and] he realized the importance of working from the first reliable edition of each play' (Wells 2002, 230). With regard to the provenance of the play Capell cites Belleforest's tale of Hamblet as its source, stating: 'That Shakespeare took his play from it, there can likewise be very little doubt' (Shakespeare 1768, 1:53). Capell prefers Q2's 'eastward hill' (Shakespeare 1768, 10:9), and Q2's 'your philosophy' (Shakespeare 1768, 10:32), which in this edition takes place in 1.5 (Shakespeare 1768, 10:26). Q2's 'how all occasions' soliloquy is also included (Shakespeare 1768, 10:95). Q2's 'dram of eale' soliloquy is included with Theobald's ending 'The dram of base . . .' (Shakespeare 1768, 10:24). Capell's collection is not a variorum edition, and

contains scarcely any footnotes, and the fact that Q2's 'dram of eale' lines are replaced by ones written only 35 years earlier goes without mention.

In 1790 the Irish barrister Edmond Malone published his edition of Shakespeare's plays. His title page advertises an edition 'collated verbatim with the most authentick copies, and revised with the correction and illustrations of various commentators' (Shakespeare 1790, 1: title page). Margreta de Grazia writes that Malone was driven 'by the desire to separate the authentic Shakespeare from the spurious' and that 'he returns to the early quartos and Folio and aims at the ideal of reproducing them verbatim' (de Grazia in Wells and Dobson 2001, 277). Malone had already attempted to establish a chronological order for Shakespeare's plays, and he was the first scholar to use Philip Henslowe's diary in his research. Wells describes Malone as being 'The best all-round scholar who had so far worked extensively on Shakespeare' (Wells 2002, 233).

Regarding the provenance of the play Malone notes that 'The original story on which this play is built, may be found in Saxo Grammaticus the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels' (Shakespeare 1790, 9:182). Evidencing his detailed research Malone discusses comments on *Hamlet* made by Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe, as well as the 1602 entry in the Stationers' Register of a *Hamlet* play (as discussed above). Malone observes that 'A play on the subject of *Hamlet* had been exhibited on the stage before the year 1589, of which Thomas Kyd was, I believe, the author. On that play . . . and on the . . . *Historie of Hamblet*, our poet, I conjecture, constructed the tragedy before us' (Shakespeare 1790, 9:184). Malone suggests that 'Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written, if my conjecture be well founded, in 1596' (Shakespeare 1790, 9:184).

Malone's *Hamlet* employs the Folio's 'eastern hill' (Shakespeare 1790, 9:195), and Q2's 'your philosophy' (Shakespeare 1790, 9:238) placed in 1.5 (Shakespeare 1790, 9:227). Q2's 'How all occasions' soliloquy is also included (Shakespeare 1790, 9:355). The 'dram of eale' speech is included in the dialogue with a footnote from Malone stating that 'This and the following twenty-one lines have been restored from the quarto' (Shakespeare 1790, 9:220). However Malone ends the speech with Theobald's composition 'the dram of base . . .', but with 'dout' replacing Theobald's 'out', as in the following: 'The dram of base / Doth all the noble substance of worth dout, / To his own scandal' (Shakespeare 1790, 9:221). As a footnote Malone includes Q2's version of this dialogue and adds that 'To *dout* . . . in

Shakespeare's time . . . signifies . . . to *do out*, to efface, to extinguish' (Shakespeare 1790, 9:221).

In 1821, two years before the discovery of Q1, James Boswell completed and published an edition of Shakespeare's works that was initiated by Malone, but incomplete at his death in 1812. This variorum edition is known as 'Boswell's Malone'. Boswell carefully explains his thinking during the editorial work, which allows great insight into the bibliographical process. He notes, for example, how 'beteem', found in Hamlet's soliloquy 'O, that this too too solid flesh would melt' (Shakespeare 1821b, 7:201) was for a long time 'supposed to be a corruption', until recently found in a translation of Ovid (Shakespeare 1821b, 1:xiv). In this edition the Folio's 'eastern hill' is preferred (Shakespeare 1821b, 7:190), along with Q2's 'your philosophy' (Shakespeare 1821b, 7:255), which is placed at 1.5 (Shakespeare 1821b, 7:239). Q2's 'How all occasions' is also included (Shakespeare 1821b, 7:420-1). The 'dram of eale' speech is included in the text, but its final statement is taken verbatim from Q2. Boswell offers the following explanation: 'These lines are evidently corrupt; but such difference of opinion has prevailed as to the best mode of amending them, that I have given the original text, and left it to the reader to judge between contending criticks' (Shakespeare 1821b, 7:229).

Horace Howard Furness's variorum edition of *Hamlet* (1877) allows us insight into these 'contending criticks' regarding the appropriate textual solution to the 'dram of eale' crux. In excess of forty-two scholars are cited, offering no less than thirty-five possible versions of the statement. The following demonstrates the range of thinking and textual interpretation in the previous two hundred and fifty years. Charles Heath suggests that Shakespeare 'Might have written "The dram of base Doth all the noble substance *oft eat* out"', but, however, that 'the true reading is: "Doth all the substance *soil with doubt*"' (Furness 1877b, I:83). Samuel Weller Singer offers: 'The dram of *bale* Doth all the noble substance *often* doubt' (Furness 1877b, I:84). John Payne Collier suggests that ''ill' might be misprinted *eale*' (Furness 1877b, I:84), and Nicolaus Delius offers the reading: 'The dram of *bale* Doth all the noble substance *off and out*' (Furness 1877b, I:84). Periergus Bibliophilus suggests 'The dram of base Doth, all the noble substance *o'er*, a doubt' (Furness 1877b, I:84), and F. A. E. Leo makes the observation: '"A doubt' I understand as a misprint for *a draught*"' (Furness 1877b, I:85). Samuel Bailey suggests that 'for 'eale' read *evil*' (Furness 1877b, I:86), and Robert Cartwright suggests that 'Shakespeare may perhaps have written "Doth all the noble substance *over-clout*"' (Furness 1877b, I:87). P. A. Daniel writes: 'I

propose 'the *bran* of *meal* Doth all the noble substance of *it* doubt' (Furness 1877b, I:88) and James Halliwell-Phillips echoes Boswell with his summary that 'This passage appears to be hopelessly corrupt, no emendation yet proposed being in the least degree satisfactory, nor have I any plausible suggestion of my own to offer' (Furness 1877b, I:87).

Following the trajectory of editions of *Hamlet* over a two-hundred-year course we have seen here the repeated attempt to establish a single and most authorial version of the play, resulting in a range of contrasting editions. We have seen that textual authenticity has been an important factor in the marketing of the play, and that authenticity has been associated with performances of the play, the most recent edition of the text, and the reading that is believed to lie closest to Shakespeare's autograph. Both the early quarto and Folio editions have been lauded for their authenticity and derided for their corruptness, which has left editors with the task of reading between the lines in order to decipher or create the truest version. In his book *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the late Renaissance* Robert Watson examines ecological perspectives in early modern literature and art. Reflecting on the Reformation Watson observes that 'Protestantism claimed to be returning to the true origins of Christianity, scraping away the accretions which had grown on the Catholic Church like barnacles over time' (Watson 2006, 8). This nautical metaphor might suitably be applied to our study here as we observe the Luther-like search for the truest text, where the barnacles of printing errors, or actors' interpolations, or earlier editors' errors, or even Shakespeare's slips are isolated and corrected and removed. However, as Jowett has noted, some barnacles might have been factored in by the creator, making them an authentic aspect of the play's ever-changing nature as it sails its way through centuries of performance and print.

Our examination of the textual variations between Q2 and F, including the 'dram of eale' speech, highlights a range of editorial challenges such as: deciding whether a figure of speech is either extremely complex and authorial or entirely corrupt; deciding how deeply to make an incision into a text when one is torn between altering a single letter and removing ten words; deciding on the appropriateness of re-writing text attributed to Shakespeare (whether that be modernising spelling or changing multiple words); and selecting passages from two discrete editions to be conflated into a single new edition. Seeing how the 'dram of eale' speech was excluded by Rowe, included as a footnote in an edited format by Pope, included in the main body of dialogue by Theobald with his own composition embedded in it, included in italics by Johnson with Theobald's ending, included by Capell, but not in italics and with Theobald's ending, included by Malone with a re-written version of Theobald's

ending, and returned to Q2's original version by Boswell, has demonstrated the range of contrasting textual decisions that are made by editors, who all profess to be offering an authentic version of the play.

Gary Taylor has observed: 'since we do not *know* what Shakespeare wrote, someone has to *decide* what Shakespeare wrote' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 1). The editors we have examined have all attempted to do just that, through detailed study of early modern theatre practices, biographical research, and insightful analysis of the plays. Just as Hamlet views the actor's script as a malleable entity where he might insert 'some dosen lines, or sixteene lines' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F4v), *Hamlet'*s editors throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have found themselves in a similar position due to issues of semantics, artistry, instinct, and the logistics of publishing.

The Cambridge Macmillan Shakespeare

A significant advancement in the editing of Shakespeare's works came with the publication of the Cambridge-Macmillan edition (1863-6), edited by W. G. Clark, John Glover and W. Aldis Wright. Egan observes that this edition was 'the first produced by university-employed scholars using an openly expressed bibliographical methodology arrived at after examining afresh the entire textual situation of Shakespeare' (Egan 2010, 6). The editors state their aim as being to 'base the text on a thorough collation of the Folio and quarto editions' (Shakespeare 1863, 1: ix). Regarding disagreements between the quarto editions and F the editors state that 'Where we have Quartos of authority, their variations from F have been generally accepted. . .' (Shakespeare 1863, 1: xi). The edition also offers a detailed explanation of editing choices that deal with metre, grammar and the modernisation of spelling. According to Egan 'This kind of attention to detail was new in the editing of Shakespeare' (Egan 2010, 7), and 'The Cambridge-Macmillan edition was widely received as the culmination of all possible efforts to recover Shakespeare's true words' (Egan 2010, 8). Wells notes how this edition 'formed the basis of the plain-text Globe edition of 1864 which was to remain the standard for a century and more' (Wells 2002, 314).

The Cambridge-Macmillan edition relies on Q2's 'eastward hill' (Shakespeare 1863, 8: 11), and 'your philosophy' (Shakespeare 1863, 8: 43). The 'dram of eale' speech is included in its entirety, as found in Q2 (Shakespeare 1863, 8: 30-1), as is Hamlet's 'How all occasions do inform against me' soliloquy (Shakespeare 1863, 8: 127). Also of interest here

is the inclusion of the entire Q1 *Hamlet* text, which immediately follows the conflated F/Q2 text. In 1872 Clark and Wright edited *Hamlet* for the Clarendon Shakespeare, which, as we shall see, made a significant impact on the perceived provenance of the play. Two further editions of the play that are particularly significant in this study, are Furness's variorum edition published in 1877, and the Arden 2006 edition, whose first edition of the play came out in 1899 and was edited by Edward Dowden.

The Discovery of Q1: 1823

As we have seen, the 1603 edition of *Hamlet* was discovered in 1823 by Sir Henry Bunbury, in his Suffolk mansion library. Apart from a single reference to it in a list of plays in the 1660s (Lesser 2015, 10), it appears to have been forgotten for two centuries. Lesser observes that 'The foundational Shakespearean editors of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries . . . had certainly never seen it' (Lesser 2015, 10). A second copy of Q1 was discovered in 1856, and these remain the only extant exemplars. In 1767 Richard Farmer revealed the earliest mention of a *Hamlet* play in the early modern era in his *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*, where he analysed the comments of Nashe and Lodge, as examined above, (Farmer 1767). On the provenance of Shakespeare's play, Farmer suggests that the discovery of Nashe's observation, dated at 1589, 'will carry the original *Hamlet* somewhat further back than we have hitherto done' (Farmer 1767, 86). Whether Farmer's use of 'original' is meant to imply Shakespeare's early version of the play or a *Hamlet* play by another author is not clarified. As we shall see, the early *Hamlet* play and Q1 were soon to be associated with each other.

In 1825 the company Payne and Foss published the first reprint of Q1 with the introductory note: 'originally written by Shakespeare, which he afterwards altered and enlarged' (Shakespeare 1825, A3r). This statement offers an array of implications that Lesser sees as being significant factors in the subsequent study of Shakespeare. One implication in Payne and Foss's comment is that Shakespeare revised his plays, which Lesser acknowledges was a commonly accepted belief amongst eighteenth-century Shakespeare editors (Lesser 2015, 30). Prior to the discovery of Q1, in response to the title page of Q2 (see above) Alexander Pope had suggested that Shakespeare 'entirely new writ . . . *Hamlet* enlarged to almost as much again as at first' (Shakespeare 1725, 1: viii), and reflecting on the provenance of *Hamlet* Edmond Malone imagined Shakespeare's 'first sketch' of the play (Shakespeare

1790, 1: 310). In their preliminaries of the 1623 Folio John Heminges and Henry Condell state that they received Shakespeare's manuscripts in a neat and faultless form, noting that 'we haue scarce recieued from him a blot in his papers' (Shakespeare 1623, $^{\pi}$A3r). This statement is often read to argue that Shakespeare did not revise, and that his works were created fully formed through flashes of inspiration. In contrast, however, Ben Jonson's dedication in the same edition pictures a man who needed to toil and re-work his creations in order to perfect them. Commenting on Shakespeare's methods Jonson writes: 'he / Who casts to write a liuing line, must sweat, / (such as thine are) and strike the second heat' (Shakespeare 1623, $^{\pi}$A5+1v). Lesser notes that, as a consequence of the above comments, we might suggest that 'the debate over whether Shakespeare revised -- and whether, if he did, this was a good thing -- goes all the way back to 1623' (Lesser 2015, 26). This question remains pertinent still.

Although Malone pictured Shakespeare as a reviser, he also believed that the *Hamlet* play referred to by Nashe and Lodge 'was not Shakespeare's drama, but an elder performance . . . Perhaps . . . written by Thomas Kyd' (Shakespeare 1790, 1: 305). As Thompson and Taylor note, 'Thomas Kyd's play *The Spanish Tragedy* (*c*.1589) has many plot similarities to *Hamlet* which are not to be found in Belleforest,' including 'a ghost . . . a play-within-a-play, a faithful friend called Horatio . . . and a female suicide' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 70). The association between Q1 and Kyd has endured.

A further significant element in Payne and Foss's comment is, as Lesser observes, a Romantic view of Shakespeare. Margaret Drabble's definition of Romanticism establishes a movement that highly values "individual experience" whose "watchword is 'Imagination'" (Day 1996, 1). As Lesser notes in his book *Hamlet After Q1: An Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text* initially, after Q1's discovery, there was a propensity amongst scholars to attribute the authorship of the text solely to Shakespeare, in this Romantic vein. Payne and Foss's term 'originally written by Shakespeare' establishes the image of the individual genius creating original masterpieces, alone, through the engagement of his imagination. A further inference to be made from Payne and Foss's introduction is that the first published edition of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was the first version written by him. These theories were soon to be questioned and challenged.

Lesser also suggests that Payne and Foss, Malone and Pope, all made biographical assumptions from their readings of the title page of Q2 (Lesser 2015, 28, 60),

which promises a text 'enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie' (Shakespeare 1604-5, title page). To infer from this statement that Shakespeare was wishing to set the record straight after having been dissatisfied with an earlier, shorter, and imperfect publication of his *Hamlet*, is, for Lesser, to allow the biographical to overly influence and impede the bibliographical, because the biographical aspect here is speculative. Lesser notes that 'Even before 1823, bibliography had implied biography . . .' (Lesser 2015, 60). Lesser suggests that ' . . . ever since Bunbury's discovery' there has been a tendency 'to read the bibliography of Hamlet through the biography of Shakespeare' (Lesser 2015, 62), and that to some degree we might achieve greater bibliographical insight by separating the two practices. However, the *Hamlet* analysis of Harold Bloom, Terri Bourus, A. D. Nuttall, Stephen Greenblatt, and Freud amongst others suggests that the synthesising of these fields remains a warranted and fruitful activity (Freud 1976; Bloom 1999; Bourus 2014; Nuttall 2007; Greenblatt 2002). As Thompson and Taylor observe:

> Shakespeare's only son Hamnet or Hamlet died in August 1596, and his father John was to die in September 1601. It is difficult to dismiss the relevance of these experiences to the writing of *Hamlet*, a play which begins with the death of a father and ends with the death of a son, both called Hamlet . . . (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 36)

A major proponent of the revision theory that initially accounted for Q1 was Charles Knight who reflected on Payne and Foss's statement with the observation: 'We believe that this description is correct . . . this remarkable copy gives us the play as originally written by Shakespeare' (Shakespeare 1846, 1:87). Accounting for the questionable nature of some of the text Knight states that ' . . . the *Hamlet* of 1603 is a sketch of the perfect *Hamlet*, and probably a corrupt copy of that sketch' (Shakespeare 1846, 1:87–88). For Knight, the 'corrupt' aspects of Q1 were often down to errors by 'the printer' (Shakespeare 1846, 1:90). In 1845 *The Edinburgh Review* concurred with Knight's theory and described Shakespeare as 'an original dramatist', perceiving Q1 to be 'the work in its earlier form' (Furness 1877a, 2:18–19).

In contrast to the idea that Q1 represents an early draft of the play that Shakespeare later revised stood the theory that Q1 was a reported and corrupted version of the text behind Q2/F, taken down during performance. The major proponent of this theory

was John Payne Collier, who, as Furness notes, was the first to suggest that 'the copy of 1603 was printed from manuscript taken down in short-hand from the player's mouths' (Furness 1877a, 2:14). Commenting on Q1 with notable nonchalance about academic rigour Collier states that:

> . . . it will be unnecessary to go in detail into proofs to establish . . . That [the] great part of the play . . . was taken down in short-hand . . . [and] the short-hand writer . . . filled up the blanks badly from memory, or employed an inferior writer to assist him . . . [and that] the drama . . . was, in all its main features, the same as the more perfect copy of the tragedy printed with the date of 1604. (Shakespeare 1843, 7:191)

Here, in Collier's suggestion that stenography accounted for the manuscript behind Q1, the supposition that the first printed *Hamlet* was the first written version is rejected. According to Collier, the manuscript behind Q2 came first, and Q1 followed it. What Collier and Knight do have in common however, as Lesser observes, is the Romantic belief that Shakespeare was the originator of the *Hamlet* masterpiece. For Collier, Q1 evidences a corrupted version of the greater work by Shakespeare. For Knight, the process of *Hamlet*'s revision need not be muddied with associations with an earlier version by another author, because, as Knight suggests: 'Not a tittle of distinct evidence exists to show that there was any other play of *Hamlet* but that of Shakespeare' (Furness 1877a, 2:10). For Knight, the play referred to by Nashe and Lodge was 'Shakespeare's original sketch' (Furness 1877a, 2:10). Knight believed, like Bourus and Emma Smith have recently argued, that the early modern era saw only one *Hamlet* author, which was Shakespeare (Smith 2000; Bourus 2014), (Furness 1877a, 2:18–19). In 1866 Alexander Dyce suggested that, in Q1, 'we have Shakespeare's first conception of the Play, though with a text mangled and corrupted throughout, and perhaps formed on the notes of some short-hand writer, who had imperfectly taken it down during representation' (Furness 1877a, 2:23). Dyce's theory for Q1 synthesizes the two ideas that generally sat in opposition to each other, but, as we shall see, Wells and Gary Taylor would later suggest that the two theories need not be mutually exclusive, agreeing with Dyce.

Shortly after the publication of the Payne and Foss facsimile, in 1825, *The European Magazine* published an article by Ambrose Gunthio that suggested Q1 was 'surreptitiously taken down piecemeal in the theatre by a blundering scribe' (Bourus 2014, 69). In her recent examination of note-taking methods at sermons and modern theatrical

performances, Tiffany Stern suggests that Gunthio was 'probably J. P. Collier' (Stern 2013b). The art of disguise was not alien to Collier, who was eventually exposed as being a prolific Shakespearean forger (Schoenbaum 1991, 256–66).

In 1857 the German philologist Tycho Mommsen published an article that advanced the theory that came to be known as memorial reconstruction, which for the following hundred and fifty years dominated the debate about Q1. Suggesting two figures behind the creation of Q1 Mommsen proposed 'the one being probably . . . an actor, who put down from memory, a sketch of the original play, as it was acted . . . [and] the other . . . a bad poet, most probably a "bookseller's hack"' (Mommsen 1587). This theory, like Collier's, firmly associates Q1 with performance, and also frames stationers and actors in a dubious light, both of which are factors that would continue to haunt the reputation of the 1603 edition. In 1915 Henry David Gray advanced this theory, suggesting the actor playing Marcellus as the main agent behind the memorial reconstruction, because 'Marcellus is the only character in the play whose lines are given with approximate accuracy throughout . . .' (Gray 1915, 174).

In 1863 the editors of the Cambridge-Macmillan Shakespeare edition stated their agreement with Mommsen and Collier's theory of a memorially reconstructed Q1 text, stating that 'The edition of 1603 is obviously a very imperfect reproduction of the play, and there is every reason to believe that it was printed from a manuscript surreptitiously obtained . . . from short hand notes taken during the representation' (Shakespeare 1863, 8: viii). However, as Lesser notes, a few years later, Clark and Wright reedited the text for the Clarendon Shakespeare edition in 1872, and here they made 'an epochal shift' in their perceptions of Q1 (Lesser 2015, 54). The Clarendon edition suggests that certain aspects of Q1 'cannot be explained by the carelessness of [a] short-hand writer', and also that there is 'no evidence for Shakespeare's connexion with the play before 1602' (Shakespeare 1872, viii). The Clarendon editors conclude that the 'old play' of *Hamlet*, which they saw as not being Shakespeare's, was partially evidenced in Q1, and that Q1 'represents the play after it had been retouched by [Shakespeare] to a certain extent, but before his alterations were complete' (Shakespeare 1872, x). This theory destroys the Romantic perception of Shakespeare as promoted by Collier and Knight, framing him instead as an adaptor of scripts written by other people, albeit a brilliant one. Lesser suggests that Clark and Wright's theory therefore 'threatened the organic unity of Shakespeare's play', and that it directly led to the 'birth of the *Ur-Hamlet*' (Lesser 2015, 55–56).

The 'thoughtful philosophy' that Knight believed Q2 was 'full of' (Shakespeare 1846, 1:94) and that Q1 lacked, could now be accounted for by the intellectual and artistic limitations of the earlier version's originator, as opposed to the youthful mind of a younger Shakespeare, or the limited memory of a reconstructor. Two significant anomalies in the relationship between Q1 and the canonical version are the titles of Polonius and Reynaldo in Q2/F, who are Corambis and Montano in the 1603 edition. Richard Grant White (1822-1885) suggests that this disagreement 'cannot be attributed to accident or haste' (Furness 1877a, 2:29–30), which might have been argued to have accounted for other seeming errors in Q1 under the memorial reconstruction theory. Even Collier could not account for these name differences in his theory of stenography, suggesting that 'we may not be able to determine why these changes were made' (Furness 1877a, 2:24).

Theories accounting for the origins of Q1 began to multiply. The German text *Fratricide Punished* (examined above) titles the King's aid Corambus and this therefore establishes a link between the two texts. In Furness's variorum a Mr Latham (first name unknown) suggests that the old *Hamlet* play mentioned by Nashe and Lodge was not by Shakespeare, and that 'it is wholly or partially preserved in the text of the *Bestrafte Brudermord*' (Furness 1877a, 2:11). In his examination of the provenance of Q1 Grant White also highlighted a significant number of parallels between Q1 and F, suggesting that 'the surreptitious text of 1603 and the authentic text of twenty years later had a common origin' (Furness 1877a, 2:29). Frederick Gard Fleay suggested yet another theory to explain the origins of Q1, which was that ' . . . the early *Hamlet* of 1589 was written by Shakespeare and Marlowe in conjunction; and that portions of it can be traced in Q1 . . .' (Furness 1877a, 2:36). On the Christopher Marlowe connection to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* Thompson and Taylor suggest that 'it certainly looks as if the speech which Hamlet asks the Player to recite in 2.2 was influenced by a play by Christopher Marlowe . . . *The Tragedy of Dido Queen of Carthage*' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 72). Both narratives describe the fall of Troy and the death of Priam. Marlowe's dialogue between Aeneas and Dido includes: '*Priams* misfortune' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, A4r); 'The *Cyclops*' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, A3r); 'milke white' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, B1v); 'strumpet' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, C2v); 'Fortune' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, B1r); 'the hatefull Greekes' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, B3v); '*Hecuba*!' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, B3v); 'the Horse' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, B4v); 'Grecians . . . whose sterne faces shin'd the quenchles fire, / that after burnt the pride' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, B4v); 'Yong infants swimming in their parents

bloud' (Marlowe and Nashe 1594, C1r); and 'the funeral flame that burnt faire *Troy*'
(Marlowe and Nashe 1594, C1r). In Q2 we find the following parallel images: '*Priams*
slaughter' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3r); 'Cyclops hammers' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3v), 'the
milkie head' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3v); 'strumpet Fortune' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F4r);
'Striking . . . at Greekes' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3v); '*Hecuba*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F4v);
'th'omynous horse' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3v); 'complection smeard . . . With blood of
fathers, mothers, daughters, sonnes' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3v); and also 'the parching
streetes . . . rosted in wrath and fire' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3v).

We have seen here a range of responses to the discovery of Q1. Initially it was
framed as an early undeveloped draft of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare, later to be revised into a
more sophisticated piece. This was soon to be contrasted with the theory that Q1 represented
a memorial reconstruction of the text behind Q2, which establishes the 1603 text as post-
dating the manuscript behind Q2. Both of these theories allowed for Shakespeare to be the
sole originator of the work, until the Clarendon edition suggested a link between Q1 and the
supposedly non-Shakespearean *Hamlet* recorded by Nashe and Lodge. This development
allowed for theories that associated Q1 with Kyd, Marlowe and *Bestrafte Brudermord*, as
well as Q2 and F. We have seen that Q1 was repeatedly associated with performance, and
that unethical stationers and actors were viewed as being blameworthy regarding perceived
faults in the 1603 text, which was first performed in William Poel's production at St George's
Hall, London, in 1881 (Kennedy 2001, 348).

In 1902 Sidney Lee wrote an introduction to a facsimile of the Chatsworth
exemplar of the 1623 Folio in which he suggests that 'the author's manuscript and the
authentic transcript . . . frequently lay beyond the publisher's reach' (Lee 1902, xii) in early
modern publishing. Lee perceived the quarto and Folio editions of Shakespeare's plays as
being 'printed from more or less imperfect and unauthorised playhouse transcripts which
were obtained by publishers more or less dishonestly' (Shakespeare 1623c, xii). For Lee, as
Egan observes, 'With neither the quartos nor the Folio to trust, the possibility of a reliable
Shakespeare text disappears . . .' (Egan 2010, 13). According to Egan, this 'pessimistic
conclusion' (Egan 2010, 13) reached by Lee was about to be overturned. A shift towards
optimism would soon be initiated by Alfred W. Pollard, who in 1909 published a work that
advanced a movement that came to be known as the New Bibliography.

In his book *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* (1909), Pollard makes a new reading of a statement by Heminges and Condell in the preliminaries of the 1623 Folio that establishes optimism regarding the search for Shakespeare's authorial intentions. According to Pollard, the warning about 'stolne, and surreptitious copies' of previously published Shakespearean play-texts that had been 'maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors' (Shakespeare 1623, ᵗA3r) was targeted at five specific quarto editions, which included Q1 *Hamlet*. These five texts were therefore labelled by Pollard as 'bad' in contrast to the other 'good' texts. On Q1 Pollard observes:

> That the quarto of 1603 is a bad piracy is generally admitted, as also that it represents the play in an intermediate stage between the lost *Hamlet* . . . and the fully Shakespearean *Hamlet* of the Folio and the second and subsequent quartos . . . Some passages appear to have been written down from memory, while blunders seem also to have been introduced in the course of putting together the different reports. (Pollard 1909, 74)

Here memorial reconstruction is implied, as is piratical behaviour by publishers, as well as further unexplained textual errors and an association between the early *Hamlet* and Shakespeare's play, mirroring the Clarendon edition's perspective. Q1 is also implicitly associated with performance. Thompson and Taylor note that Pollard's theory 'explained a "bad quarto" as being an unauthorized reconstruction of a "good" text sold to the printing-house by disaffected actors or commercial rivals of Shakespeare's company' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 85). On the significance of Pollard's 1909 text, Laurie E. Maguire states that its 'importance in directing the course of twentieth-century textual criticism . . . is impossible to overestimate' (Maguire 1996, 28).

Alongside Pollard, other prominent British figures in the New Bibliography include G. I. Duthie, John Dover Wilson and W. W. Greg. An American branch of the movement also developed, known as the Virginian School, and together these figures re-shaped methodologies for Shakespeare scholarship. Maguire states that 'A common denominator' for these scholars was 'an interest in scientific and mathematical exactitude' in the practice of bibliography (Maguire 1996, 29). As Egan explains in *The Struggle for Shakespeare's Text* the New Bibliographers were primarily engaged with a specialist branch

of study known as analytical bibliography, which divides into three sub-genres: 'physical bibliography (concerned with the book as a made object . . .), historical bibliography (concerned with the contexts for book publishing . . .), and textual bibliography . . . concerned with establishing the correct words of a writer by removing the errors of transmission' (Egan 2010, 5). What was deemed to be a more systematic or scientific method than had previously been used was developed to answer questions such as: how many different types of manuscripts existed; did Shakespeare revise his plays; where and what were the possible causes of textual error in the journey of a play-text from the writer's hand to the published book? what theories or theory might account for the suspect or 'bad' texts; how might attempting to identify scribes bring us closer to Shakespeare's hand; and what might be gleaned from an examination of speech-prefixes, stage directions and marginalia? Egan states that Pollard's later book, *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates and the Problems of the Transmission of his Text* (1917), would be 'the first book-length argument for New Bibliography's key principles of editing' (Egan 2010, 22). One of the main aims of the movement was to confidently decipher, as Wilson put it 'What Shakespeare actually wrote' (Dover Wilson 1932, 175), and 'The unmistakable impress of the master's hand' (Dover Wilson 1932, 178). According to Egan, Pollard appeared to make a significant step in this direction by raising 'confidence in the accuracy of the good quartos [on the principle that the good quartos were based on Shakespeare's papers]' (Egan 2010, 22). Maguire states that Pollard 'In *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* . . . traces his subject back to one founding original: multiple texts derived from a single authorial version' (Maguire 1996, 52).

Pollard's complex theory accounting for the reported nature of Q1, which had already been advanced by Mommsen, would soon be refined. In the introduction to his 1910 edition of the 1602 quarto version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (which was another of Pollard's five 'bad' quartos) Greg fully develops the theory of memorial reconstruction. Here the actor playing the Host is identified as the culprit because the quarto and Folio editions of the play show stronger parallels when this character enters. Greg notes ' . . . the comparative excellence of the reporting of those scenes in which the Host is on the stage' (Shakespeare 1910, xxxviii). According to Greg, the early modern capacity for memory was sufficient to retain, roughly, an entire play, and that, regarding the *Merry Wives* quarto 'a very few visits to the theatre would have enabled a pirate of even moderate parts or experience to vamp up such a text' (Shakespeare 1910, xxvii).

Maguire, whose 1996 work *Shakespeare's Suspect Texts* examines and challenges the theory of memorial reconstruction, describes key ingredients of the theory as follows:

> . . . actors deprived of the playbook of a text they had performed in London; actors on tour in the provinces . . . provincial audiences with less theatrical stamina and cruder artistic palates requiring shorter plays and more comic turns; actors' inaccurate memories . . . and adaptation to enable the company to perform with the reduced numbers. (Maguire 1996, 4)

The image here is of actors touring the provinces, performing a text they have memorially reconstructed (badly) because they do not carry a copy of their play, entertaining under-educated country-folk with short attention spans through performances of unsophisticated abridged plays.

The key textual traits that Greg isolated as being signifiers of a memorial reconstruction include: external echoes, internal repetitions, insertions, expanded clowning, omissions, shortened speech lengths, aural errors, wrecked verse and transpositions (Shakespeare 1910). In her examination of the memorial reconstruction theory Maguire examines these signifiers in detail (Maguire 1996, 159–223), and her analysis results in substantially different conclusions than those reached by Greg, as we shall later see. Greg's theory reduces the number of agents initially suggested by Mommsen. Maguire notes: 'Whereas before we had memorial reconstruction by diverse agents for the purposes of publication, now we had memorial reconstruction by actors for performance' (Maguire 1996, 74). Egan states that 'By the 1950s the theory of memorial reconstruction was firmly established as an orthodoxy that accounted for the bad quartos' (Egan 2010, 113), and Maguire suggests that 'by 1945 "bad quarto" had narrowed in meaning to "memorial reconstruction"' (Maguire 1996, 15). In her study, published in 1996, the number of texts deemed to be suspect had risen from Pollard's five to forty-one.

If a theory of Q1 requires a theory of Q2/F, theories of early modern published plays require a theory about the manuscripts behind them, and this was a key interest for the New Bibliography. Categories of manuscripts, largely established by Greg, include foul papers (the initial hand written drafts), fair copies, which were 'the cleaner final version' (Egan 2010, 26), scribal transcripts (hand-written copies), and play-books (the version used in the theatre now known as the prompt-book). One of these would be the copy used by printers, and much focus has been given to this matter throughout Shakespeare bibliography.

Pollard believed that, to reduce the risk of piracy, only a single manuscript of the play existed, serving all these purposes. Pollard states: ' . . . it is thus a bibliographical presumption that it [the play] reached the players in the author's original autograph . . . [and that] the same manuscript was used as a prompt-copy' (Pollard 1915, 63). According to Pollard ' . . . when a play was printed by anyone except a pirate, it was the text of the prompt-copy that was set up' (Pollard 1915, 63). This theory became known as the 'continuous copy' model. Greg suggested an alternative, binate theory of two co-existing forms of manuscript: foul papers and prompt-book. As Egan states, for Pollard the printer's copy was the theatrical prompt-book, whereas for Greg, it was the author's foul papers (Egan 2010, 65).

In his influential study of the possible manuscripts behind Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, John Dover Wilson concluded that the Folio edition 'clearly derived from a prompt-book version', and that it was 'a virtual certainty that Q2 was printed directly from Shakespeare's manuscript' (Dover Wilson 1932, 182). Wilson did however suggest that 'the texts of 1605 and 1623 suffered corruption at the hands of scribers and printers' (Dover Wilson 1932, 175). According to Wilson, Q1 is 'of very slight authority as compared with the two main texts' but 'the compositor [of Q2] appears to have consulted the text of Q1 in order to help him read difficult words' (Dover Wilson 1932, 180). That the text of Q1 was deemed to have influenced the printing of Q2, with the manuscript behind Q1 being believed to possibly post-date the manuscript behind Q2, demonstrates the challenging and nuanced nature of textual analysis. An example of the complex nature of textual interpretation can be seen in Wilson's theory about the fight in the grave between Laertes and Hamlet in Q1 (Shakespeare 1603, I1v). After '*Leartes leaps into the* graue', Q1's stage direction tells us that '*Hamlet leapes in after Leartes*' (Shakespeare 1603, I1v) and they subsequently tussle. Wilson suggests 'That a scuffle takes place in the grave itself is the stage direction, and the evidence of Q1, which presumably reports what the pirate saw at the Globe, is sufficient testimony I think that this was what Shakespeare himself intended' (Dover Wilson 1932, 186). The text of Q1 was deemed corrupt, unauthorial, 'bad', and 'of very slight authority', but some of the action that it reports was deemed legitimate and true. Here, through stage-directions, we find Shakespeare's intentions out. Also demonstrated here is how a supposed piratical reporter's memory might be influenced by what he saw as well as what he heard. An examiner of texts deemed memorial reconstructions therefore needs to consider this factor.

A further significant *Hamlet* study arising from the New Bibliography is Duthie's *The 'Bad' Quarto of Hamlet* (1941), which offers a detailed examination of the 1603 edition. In the introduction Greg pictures a wide range of sources from which Q1 is perceived to have derived. Certain passages are noted as being '. . . the original composition of the reporter', combined with 'scattered portions of the full text' (with 'full' here meaning the canonical version), (Duthie 1941, x). As well as representing some of the canonical text, Q1 is also pictured as containing bits of 'other Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean plays', and some 'Kydian verse', whilst also demonstrating 'a fundamental connection [with] *Brudermord*' (Duthie 1941, x–xi). Duthie suggests that the early *Hamlet* play referred to by Nashe, Lodge and Henslowe is 'too early for us to suppose . . . Shakespearean' (Duthie 1941, 76). Duthie's book argues that Q1 is 'a memorial reconstruction made by an impoverished company of players working in the provinces' (Duthie 1941, 34). Duthie's study associates Q1 with a wide range of influences, including: Q2, F (Duthie 1941, 181); '*Der Bestrafte Brudermord*' (Duthie 1941, 187) with the German text being perceived as being 'itself a memorial reconstruction' (Duthie 1941, 240); 'a hack poet' (Duthie 1941, 92); 'Belleforest's text' (Duthie 1941, 203); Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (Duthie 1941, 203) and an 'old play' of *Hamlet* (Duthie 1941, 190–95). Duthie also even acknowledges that ' . . . there *may* have been a stage in the text-history of *Hamlet* which could be described as a Shakespearean first draft' (Duthie 1941, 63). Duthie's text is littered with terms that establish the legitimacy of Q2/F, such as 'good', 'genuine', 'authentic', and 'the full play' (Duthie 1941, 98, 14, 120). His book utterly rejects and condemns Q1, and its impact on Q1's reputation was substantial and long-lived. As we shall see however, four decades later new ideas emerged that questioned the New Bibliography's methods, and in 2010, in light of more recent research, Egan suggests that Duthie 'was unable to adduce evidence proving that Q1 *Hamlet* is a memorial reconstruction' (Egan 2010, 111). Lesser notes that 'After Duthie's novel version of memorial reconstruction, claims that Q1 was linked to an earlier Shakespearean draft of the *Ur-Hamlet* became virtually forbidden in scholarly circles' (Lesser 2015, 189).

Here, in the work of the New Bibliography, we have the arrival of a more methodical, and seemingly scientific approach to Shakespeare study, and a range of associated issues appear to be clarified. Memorial reconstruction is firmly established as a theory that accounts for suspect texts. Quartos that are authoritative, coming from Shakespeare's manuscripts, are identified, as are the disingenuous 'bad' quartos. Stationers, actors, and the theatre itself are perceived as unethical and corrupting in matters relating to

the transmission of Shakespeare's work. Q2 *Hamlet* is deemed the most authorial, being printed from Shakespeare's hand-written papers, and F *Hamlet* is established as being a legitimate theatrical version of the play, albeit with both suffering aspects of corruption. The problem posed by Q1 appeared to be solved. Its status established as illegitimate and un-authorial, and its provenance associated with: memorial reconstruction, authorial revision, *Fratricide Punished*, Thomas Kyd, the early *Hamlet* play acknowledged by Nashe, Lodge and Henslowe, the manuscripts behind Q2 and F, and even Marlowe.

The New Textualists

The thinking of the New Bibliography dominated Shakespeare study until the 1970s, when a range of scholars, known as the New Textualists, began to question established conceptual frameworks. Maguire observes that 'Serious challenges to New Bibliography first came in 1975 with an article by Constance B. Kuriyama, followed by articles from Michael Warren and Randall McLeod (1981), William B. Long (1985) and Paul Werstine (1987)' (Maguire 1996, 22). Other significant figures in the movement include Marion Trousdale, De Grazia, Peter Stallybrass, Steven Urkowitz and Scott McMillin (some of whom will be examined below). A key pillar removed from the edifice of the New Bibliography was the theory of memorial reconstruction, which failed to withstand detailed scrutiny. Maguire notes that 'As the 1980s progressed, the challenge to memorial reconstruction widened' (Maguire 1996, 8). Richard Dutton states that 'The first really cogent objections to "memorial construction", especially as it was coupled with the provincial touring hypothesis, were delivered in Paul Werstine's landmark essay, 'Narratives About Printed Shakespeare Texts: "Foul Papers" and "Bad" Quartos' (1990)' (Dutton 2016, 142). Here Werstine unpicks the 'nearly absurd simplicity of Pollard's system of classification' of 'good' and 'bad' quartos (Werstine 1990, 65) stating that 'there is no documentary evidence that any actor(s) ever memorially reconstructed a play' (Werstine 1990, 81). The challenge to memorial reconstruction culminated in Maguire's own study, in 1996, which Bourus acknowledges as being the theory's 'most devastating skeptical critique' (Bourus 2014, 38). Maguire establishes 'three major confusions which affect studies of memorial reconstruction: unmethodical diagnostic criteria, insufficient understanding of Elizabethan memory, and the limited context of the field of inquiry . . . [as well as] imprecise terminology' (Maguire 1996, 14-15). As Bourus observes of Maguire's analysis:

> Of the 18 categories of such "evidence" only two proved to be reliable . . . Of the
> 42 texts condemned by Greg . . . Maguire did not find a single example that was
> "unquestionably" a memorial reconstruction, and only four for which "a strong
> case can be made." The 1603 *Hamlet* was not among them. (Bourus 2014, 38)

More broadly, as Egan explains, the New Textualists saw the New Bibliography as being overly optimistic 'about seeing beyond the early editions to the manuscripts from which they were made' (Egan 2010, 3). As well as this, the New Textualists also saw their predecessors as focusing on the wrong target, which was an ideal Platonic manuscript, sitting ethereally some removes from the physical documents in front of them. The author-centric nature of the New Bibliography was replaced by a more theatre-centric view, where documents were seen as arising from a 'socially dispersed agency' (Egan 2010, 227) that included the work of an author or authors, scribes, actors and stationers. As Egan states, 'New Textualism held that plays originated not with an author but a playing company' (Egan 2010, 205). Egan also observes that the New Textualists preferred to give all extant texts separate merit, 'Seeing early editions as *equal-but-different* versions rather than ranking them according to their accidental deviation from a supposed archetype' (Egan 2010, 197). According to Egan, a further key aim of the New Textualists was to work out ' . . . how much difference needs to exist between two texts for them to be considered distinct and unconflatable versions' (Egan 2010, 147). As we shall see in Chapter Three, the play itself engages with the philosophical conundrum of establishing the natures and names of things that appear similar.

The terminology of the New Bibliography was viewed as being, at times, partisan, unscientific and too reductive. Peter W. M. Blayney suggests that Pollard's theory regarding piratical publishers and corrupt texts 'owed far more to Pollard's vivid imagination than to any real evidence' (Blayney 1997, 383). Maguire rejects the terms 'good' and 'bad', titling her book *Shakespearean Suspect Texts* and explaining that 'suspect text . . . [means] a text for which memorial reconstruction of all or part has been suspected by critics' (Maguire 1996, 16). McLeod suggests that 'The real problem with good and bad quartos is not what the words denote, but why we use terminology that has such overt and prejudicial connotations' (McLeod in Maguire 1996, 15). These 'prejudicial connotations' appear to have come from a desire to safeguard Shakespeare's hallowed status by isolating the seemingly weaker texts and framing them with a theory that neatly keeps them distanced from Shakespeare.

As memorial reconstruction waned, the theory of authorial revision gained momentum. Urkowitz rejected Duthie's study of Q1 suggesting that it 'illustrates the limiting conceptual framework, the circularity of argument, and the failure of theatrical imagination found also in other analyses of the "bad" quartos as memorial reconstructions' (Urkowitz 1992, 59). Open to the possibility of Q1 being an early Shakespearean version of the play, Urkowitz suggests that 'earlier drafts may be much less finished than those we know about' (Urkowitz 1992, 58). This brings us back to the initial response to Q1's discovery in the early nineteenth century: Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* young and later revised it. Maguire also notes how the 'theory that plays were abridged for provincial performance' (established by Pollard and Wilson) was deconstructed [rejected and disproved], first by W. J. Lawrence, and later by Paul Werstine' (Maguire 1996, 25, 68).

Lesser observes that with the New Textualists came a 'movement to un-edit Shakespeare, to prise apart the traditionally conflated editions of multiple-text plays' (Lesser 2015, 209). Gary Taylor and Michael Warren's influential *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of 'King Lear'* (1983) offered a collection of essays that supported the publication of two discrete editions of *King Lear* because of a belief that the 'quarto and Folio texts of *King Lear* represent different stages in the play's history of authorial revision' (Lesser 2015, 209). In 1986 Gary Taylor and Wells produced the Oxford *Complete Works*, which included two *King Lear* texts based on the quarto and Folio versions. However, their edition offered only a single conflated *Hamlet* text, and its standpoint on Q1 was very much anchored in the thinking of the New Bibliography: 'It is now generally agreed that the copy for Q1 was a memorial reconstruction . . . The evidence for this conclusion is discussed in detail by Duthie . . .' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 398). Later, Wells and Taylor admitted regret at not including two versions of *Hamlet* in this edition (Wells and Taylor 1990). However, this regret concerned discrete editions of Q2 and F, with Q1 not entering into the equation. Egan does not view Gary Taylor as a New Textualist, even though he embraced a more theatre-centric approach to editing, suggesting that 'Taylor refined New Bibliographical thinking by redirecting editorial attention away from authorial papers and towards the collective authority of first performances . . . [creating] the "new" New Bibliography' (Egan 2010, 154).

Here we have a fundamental shift in Shakespeare bibliography towards a place where texts are allowed 'equal authority' (Lesser 2015, 213), and the titles 'good' and 'bad'

are rejected, which therefore alters the status of all the early quartos, allowing them similar value. Texts are perceived as social documents, testing the boundary lines normally established by the term 'authorial'. If a text was revised by one or more authors, and then manipulated through rehearsal and performance by theatre companies, then printed by stationers after going through the hands of copiers and scribes and play-book keepers, then its fixity is slippery, and the point at which a single, perfect version was established might be impossible to isolate. As Lesser observes, 'Studies of the materiality of the dramatic script have attended the multistage process of revision (authorial and theatrical), denying any single moment of origin for a play such as *Hamlet*' (Lesser 2015, 12). This stands in contrast to the New Bibliographers, who De Grazia and Stallybrass describe as being 'intent on preserving the authentic Shakespeare, undefiled . . . by the process of being realized as public performance and published book' (de Grazia and Stallybrass 1993, 80). The theory of memorial reconstruction loses its credibility, and authorial revision re-emerges. Dutton observes that the theory of memorial reconstruction and its association with performance 'had propped each other up for the best part of a century', but both have now 'tumbled like the monuments of ousted dictators' (Dutton 2016, 143). The New Bibliography's theories about play-house manuscripts have been challenged by William B. Long, and the conflated text is being replaced by multiple-text editions, which, as Lesser notes, is 'epitomized by the Arden third series *Hamlet*' (Lesser 2015, 55), which offers discrete versions of all three early *Hamlet*s.

Recent editions and Current theories

Since the emergence of the New Textualists we have seen the publication of several major editions of *Hamlet*, and the following is an account of the thinking behind them. Harold Jenkins's 1982 Arden *Hamlet* is based on Q2, with Jenkins stating that 'I naturally include also anything preserved in F which I take to have been lost from Q2; but all words and phrases in F which I judge to be playhouse additions . . . I omit' (Shakespeare 1982, 75). This demonstrates the author-centric approach preferred by the New Bibliography, which Jenkins was allied to. Jenkins did not see Shakespeare as a reviser of his plays, stating: 'My conception of Shakespeare is of a supremely inventive poet who had no call to rework his previous plays' (Shakespeare 1982, 5), and that theories of Shakespearean revision stand 'quite without evidence of plausibility' (Shakespeare 1982, 19). For Jenkins, Q1 is an 'abridged and garbled' memorial reconstruction (Shakespeare 1982, 6), and sceptics

of the memorial reconstruction theory are asked to contemplate the following: 'if you come upon a mutilated corpse you don't deny a murder because nobody has reported one' (Shakespeare 1982, 20). Jenkins supports Duthie's view of Q1, believing it to be derivative of the manuscript behind Q2, and also informed by Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (Shakespeare 1982, 31). Jenkins also suggests that it is 'highly probable' that the early *Hamlet* play referred to by Nashe and Lodge (see above) was written by Kyd (Shakespeare 1982, 84). Agreeing with Wilson, Jenkins sees Q2 as being based on 'an authentic manuscript . . . the author's own foul papers' (Shakespeare 1982, 37). According to Jenkins, F was based on 'not so much a promptbook as a preliminary revision of the manuscript upon which a promptbook might be based . . . a text adapted for the theatre but with some options still left open' (Shakespeare 1982, 59). Jenkins also suggests that '*the actors* have indeed left their mark upon F' (Shakespeare 1982, 62), which serves to weaken the text's authenticity, and is evidenced in repeated words, believed to be actors' interpolations, such as at Hamlet's death: 'The rest is silence. O, o, o, o' (Shakespeare 1623b, QQ1r). Although it might be 'adapted for the theatre', Jenkins suggests that F 'contains more than can be supposed to have been regularly played at the Globe' (Shakespeare 1982, 56).

In 1985 Philip Edwards edited *Hamlet* for *The New Cambridge Shakespeare* with the General Editor Philip Brockbank informing the reader that the series aims to provide an edition that is 'more attentive than some earlier editions have been to the realisation of the plays on the stage' (Shakespeare 1985, v). Edwards's text conflates Q2 and F because, according to him, 'neither version . . . has a guaranteed superiority over the other' (Shakespeare 1985, 32). According to Edwards Q2 is based on Shakespeare's 'foul-papers' that included 'passages which Shakespeare had marked for deletion', which the compositors had nevertheless still included (Shakespeare 1985, 29). According to Edwards, we can therefore see in Q2 'Shakespeare's rejected first thoughts . . . [and] some of Shakespeare's second thoughts' (Shakespeare 1985, 19). Edwards suggests that Shakespeare revised the fuller Q2 manuscript, which is evidenced in F, which represents a version that 'seems to contain authorial deletions and changes and also bears signs of the play being got ready for the stage' (Shakespeare 1985, 24). For Edwards, the manuscript behind F was what Fredson Bowers called an 'intermediate transcript' (Shakespeare 1985, 20), which was used for guiding rehearsals and copying parts, but wasn't the final performance playbook. According to Edwards, the length of Q2 (being 3,674 lines) meant that 'there is no chance' of such a play 'being acted in full' (Shakespeare 1985, 20). However, with F being 3,535 lines long,

and with the average play length, according to Edwards, being under 2,500 lines (Shakespeare 1985, 20), the Folio version would be in a similar category. According to Edwards, the length of the Folio version provides a 'strong argument' against the Folio text being based on the promptbook (Shakespeare 1985, 20).

Edwards views Q1 as a memorial reconstruction and agrees with Gray's Marcellus theory (see above), (Shakespeare 1985, 24). Edwards suggests that, although corrupt, Q1 still might well reflect 'the shortened acting version of Shakespeare's own theatre' (Shakespeare 1985, 30), again associating the 1603 text with performance. Edwards also suggests that the early *Hamlet* mentioned by Nashe and Lodge was probably written by 'Kyd or one of his fellow dramatists' (Shakespeare 1985, 3). For Edwards, if there is a Platonic 'ideal version' of *Hamlet*, it exists 'somewhere between' Q2 and F (Shakespeare 1985, 32). In a view that mirrors theories of Andrew Gurr and Lucas Erne (examined below) Edwards perceives Q2 as an extended version of the story that was designed to be shortened for the stage, resulting in a landscape where 'there is more than one *Hamlet* we might be talking about' (Shakespeare 1985, ix). This comment will resonate throughout this thesis. Though Brockbank's introduction promises a text that is sensitive to theatrical practices, Edwards somewhat confusingly later informs us that 'it is sadly true that the nearer we get to the stage, the further we are getting from Shakespeare' (Shakespeare 1985, 32), which anchors his approach firmly in the New Bibliography.

In 1986 Wells and Gary Taylor edited the Oxford *Complete Works* whose editorial decisions were inspired by the belief that 'Shakespeare intended his works to be acted . . . not read' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 3). In an edition that produced two discrete but apparently authorial texts of *King Lear*, authorial revision is framed as being common practice: 'Shakespeare's artistic peers in other countries revised . . . Shakespeare's countrymen did so too' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 17). Wells and Taylor do however agree with Pollard regarding the nature of Q1 *Hamlet*, which they note as being a 'corrupt' text and a memorial reconstruction (Wells and Taylor 1987, 26). The idea that Q1 *Hamlet* and the other suspect texts are first drafts that were later revised by Shakespeare is, according to Wells and Taylor, 'fundamentally untenable' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 27). Wells and Taylor also suggest that 'Memorial Reconstruction and authorial revision should not be regarded as incompatible alternatives' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 28), and that an edition of Q1 was referred to in the printing of Q2 (Wells and Taylor 1987, 397). The manuscript behind Q2 is perceived, as Wilson saw it, as being 'Shakespeare's own foul papers' (Wells and Taylor

1987, 399), and they suggest that 'the manuscript authority for F was a late and apparently literary scribal transcript' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 399). With regard to the disagreements between Q2 and F, Wells and Taylor note that: 'it seems to us intrinsically probable that Shakespeare was responsible for much of the verbal variation between Q2 and F' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 400). For Wells and Taylor, Shakespeare wrote the text of Q2, then 'he revised the text in a number of ways' and 'F derives . . . from that fair copy' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 400), making it 'a theatrical manuscript' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 400). For this reason Wells and Taylor 's *Hamlet* was based on the Folio (Wells and Taylor 1990, 17).

Wells and Taylor's edition was followed, in 1987, by G. R. Hibbard's *Hamlet* for the Oxford Shakespeare series. Hibbard bases his edition on F, which he suggests was printed from a 'fair copy' made by Shakespeare that contained the author's cuts and revisions 'to make a better acting version with a wide appeal' (Shakespeare 1987b, 109). Hibbard views Q2 as being 'Shakespeare's first draft' and a 'manuscript giving a complete version of the play' (Shakespeare 1987b, 90). Hibbard suggests that since the middle of the seventeenth century the public perception of *Hamlet* was that it existed in a binary form, that 'there were two *Hamlet*s' (Shakespeare 1987b, 20). One of these was a 'Shakespearean text, already establishing itself as a literary masterpiece' and popular amongst readers. The second *Hamlet* was a 'play script' (Shakespeare 1987b, 20), like the 'Players Quartos' (see above) meaning a shortened version used for performance, which itself would vary from production to production, as is still the case today. (Below we shall examine recent theories that account for the lengths of Q1, Q2 and F). Hibbard suggests that since Theobald's edition of the play (1733) editors have believed 'that there was one "true" text of the play, the "full" text, that would include all the passages peculiar to the Second Quarto and all those peculiar to the First Folio' (Shakespeare 1987b, 23). Hibbard notes that Jenkins's 1982 edition attempts just that (Shakespeare 1987b, 23). For Hibbard, Shakespeare did revise, but Q1 is not evidence of this. Perceived as being 'completely illegitimate and unreadable', with 'passages of sheer nonsense' (Shakespeare 1987b, 69), Hibbard dismisses Q1 as a memorial reconstruction and a text written 'to provide a prompt copy for . . . a band of actors playing outside London' (Shakespeare 1987b, 76). According to Hibbard the early *Hamlet* text referred to by Nashe was not Shakespeare's work, but Shakespeare took from it 'whatever he found useful' (Shakespeare 1987b, 14), which he then synthesised with aspects of Belleforest's Hamblet narrative to create his own play. Hibbard's approach considers the theatrical nature of the play, but his conceptual framework is rooted in the New Bibliography. Lesser calls the

*Hamlet*s of Jenkins, Edwards and Hibbard 'the three great editions' that were 'all based on Duthie's work' (Lesser 2015, 212).

The 2006 Arden *Hamlet*, edited by Thompson and Taylor offers three discrete *Hamlet* texts: Q1, Q2 and F. Thompson and Taylor argue that each early *Hamlet* 'has a case' to be considered as 'authentic' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 91), hence their 'refusal to choose' between them or conflate them (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 12). Deciding to 'treat each text as an independent entity' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 92), the editors suggest they are offering 'three representations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 93). This phrase appears to endorse Q1 as being authorial, or somehow sets it on equal footing with Q2 and F. Thompson and Taylor suggest that even 'the concept of "Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" need[s] careful handling' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 93). Acknowledging that they do not know 'the degree to which any of [the three editions] represent the author's or authors' intentions' Thompson and Taylor suggest that the texts 'have a claim to be regarded as separate plays as well as separate versions of the same play' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 3). Regarding Q2's esteemed status Thompson and Taylor agree with their predecessors, stating that 'if one were forced to choose just one of the three early texts of *Hamlet* as, on the balance of the evidence, the most likely to have authority, it would have to be Q2' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 11). Noting that 'it is not logically impossible' that the *Hamlet* play referred to by Nashe and Lodge was an earlier version by Shakespeare (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 46), Thompson and Taylor also observe that 'Few scholars in the last hundred years have ever claimed that Q1 is based on an authorial manuscript' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 12). However, since Arden's multiple-text edition of *Hamlet* in 2006, Gary Taylor and Bourus have argued just that, with both now believing that Q1 evidences an authorial early version (as examined below). Thompson and Taylor note their aim to avoid the problems associated with attempting to produce a single edition of *Hamlet*, which they suggest requires one to reproduce either a 'lost text' that represents an early authorial manuscript or performance, or an 'ideal text', which is Shakespeare's 'intended definitive text' that was possibly never fully manifested (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 91). Lesser describes this editorial approach as "unediting" (Lesser 2015, 209).

Both Lesser and Bourus challenge the standpoint and to some degree the achievement of the 2006 Arden *Hamlet*. Lesser also argues that the edition exposes a crossroads at which Shakespeare bibliography has arrived. Lesser suggests that 'Thompson

and Taylor's *Hamlet* crystallizes the dominant postmodern approach to the Shakespearean text', which is an approach that has 'now reached . . . exhaustion' (Lesser 2015, 55).   Lesser argues that trying to 'sidestep' the problems of provenance regarding *Hamlet* has been a strategy that has 'served us well' (Lesser 2015, 22). However, according to Lesser, Thompson and Taylor 'consistently [decline] to put their understanding into action' (Lesser 2015, 212), with the 2006 edition offering no 'new theories of Q1 and its relationship to Q2 and F' (Lesser 2015, 212), which presumably is what Lesser believes is needed. Lesser accuses Thompson and Taylor of reverting 'to what is essentially a less confident version of the traditional twentieth-century theory that Q1 is a memorial reconstruction of a performance text recorded by F, with Q2 in some way derived from Shakespeare's manuscript' (Lesser 2015, 213). Lesser suggests that 'Thompson and Taylor cannot quite anchor Shakespeare to these three texts' and that '"Shakespeare" can only hover around these texts rather than firmly endorse them', (Lesser 2015, 208). Lesser states: 'These texts can now be said to be "Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" only in a highly attenuated sense' (Lesser 2015, 208), which for him is unsatisfactory. Reflecting on the irony of traditional *Hamlet* editing practises, Bourus notes that:

> Since the nineteenth century, the single version of *Hamlet* contained in most editions of Shakespeare . . . combines elements from all three of the original seventeenth-century texts, thereby producing a fourth text that was probably never performed or read in Shakespeare's lifetime, but which is for most people "the" *Hamlet*. (Bourus 2014, 3)

One might think that Bourus would therefore welcome the three-*Hamlet* Arden edition. However, Bourus, like Lesser, is disappointed with it stating that 'two of them were lumped together in a more expensive and less accessible separate volume, treated as mere appendices to the diamond in the crown, the 1604 version' (Bourus 2014, 3). Critical of the citing of Jenkins and Duthie, Bourus suggests that the Arden edition is still shackled to the thinking of the New Bibliography, claiming: 'to all intents and purposes Thompson and Taylor simply reiterate the hypothesis defended in the 1982 Arden *Hamlet*, the conflated traditional text edited by Harold Jenkins' (Bourus 2014, 39).

By 2014 Gary Taylor had changed his mind regarding the provenance of *Hamlet.* In an introduction to Bourus's *Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet* Taylor states that 'Bourus has convinced me that I was wrong about the early texts of *Hamlet*, wrong about the 1589

reference to *Hamlet*, wrong about the date(s) of Hamlet, wrong about Shakespeare's changing relationship to the play' (Bourus 2014, xiii). For Taylor, like Bourus, Q1 *Hamlet* is now perceived as an early draft by Shakespeare, initiated when he was around 25.

In 2017 Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Bourus and Egan were general editors of the *New Oxford Shakespeare Complete Works*, whose *Hamlet* is based on Q2. Alongside this, Taylor and Egan edited the *New Oxford Shakespeare Authorship Companion* in which Gary Taylor and Rory Loughnane trace the chronology of Shakespeare's works. Here Taylor and Loughnane state that 'there is no longer any consensus about memorial reconstruction', and that the theory 'cannot provide unambiguous evidence' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 448). Taylor and Loughnane are prepared to accept the possibility that 'the *Hamlet* tragedy mentioned by Lodge and Nashe could be represented by the 1603 quarto, and could have been written by Shakespeare' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 546). Gone is Malone's conjecture that the early *Hamlet* was by Kyd (see above), and that Q1 is a memorial reconstruction. Returned is the theory proposed by Payne and Foss in 1825, that Q1 was possibly 'originally written by Shakespeare, which he afterwards altered and enlarged' (Shakespeare 1825, A3r). Taylor and Loughnane suggest that they find 'the arguments for Shakespeare's authorship of the early *Hamlet* more convincing than any alternative explanation' (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 547).

These six editions of *Hamlet*, spanning thirty-five years, expose a range of contrasting and shifting perspectives on the play, highlighting a crossroads in Shakespeare Bibliography. Jenkins, Edwards and Hibbard demonstrate an author-centred approach that adheres to the theories of Pollard, Duthie and the New Bibliography. Their conflated texts based on either Q2 or F aim to produce a play they believe to be closest to Shakespeare's hand, whilst Q1 is dismissed as un-authorial, but nevertheless somehow useful in gauging aspects of *Hamlet* in performance during Shakespeare's day. Gary Taylor and Wells's edition of the play embraces the early modern theatre's influence on the play, therefore acknowledging the social nature of the document(s) at hand. Although only a single *Hamlet* was offered, Wells and Gary Taylor later acknowledged the emerging belief that both texts were different enough and authorial enough to consider not conflating them. Gary Taylor's volte-face on the provenance of *Hamlet*, as a consequence of Bourus's work, evidences the evolutionary nature of Shakespeare scholarship.

The Arden edition appears to have broken free from the acknowledged limitations of the New Bibliography, with value given to each different-but-equal text, and with theatre practices influencing aspects of the editions. However, for Bourus, there remain unwanted traces of Pollard's hierarchy, and for Lesser the edition leaves the play or plays and its/their author(s) stuck, like the Ghost, in an unsatisfactory limbo, which the edition fails to free them from. Citing Jill L. Levenson's term 'a mobile text', and Egan's phrase 'alternative versions of the same play', as evidence of recent linguistic turns that attempt to deal with the current bibliographical conundrum, Lesser suggests that 'declining to speculate on the bibliographic relationship between these "alternative versions," the New Textualism ultimately has no way to explain precisely how (or even *that*) they are "the same" play' (Lesser 2015, 211). We shall see in our philosophical examination of *Hamlet* that one of its significant concerns is the issue of boundaries between similar entities, establishing a parallel between the philosophical content of the play and the work's bibliographical history.

Each edition of *Hamlet* is informed by the recent bibliographical developments that surrounds it, and *Hamlet* in particular stimulates much theorising, not only because of its intellectual depth and impact on Western thinking, but also because of the lengths of the three texts. As a consequence, a range of theories has been advanced that account for the lengths and nature of these texts, and the following is an examination of them.

In 1992 Thomas Clayton collated twelve essays that represented recent thinking on Q1's provenance. Here Hibbard revises his opinion on the dates of the manuscripts behind Q1 and F, suggesting that 'it looks more likely that Q1 preceded F rather than vice versa' (Hibbard 1992, 89). Sidney Thomas supports the views of Pollard and Duthie suggesting that 'the verse of Q1 is of a mediocrity impossible to attribute to Shakespeare' (S. Thomas 1992, 255). Giorgio Melchiori argues that Q2 is 'the original "literary" version of *Hamlet*', that 'Q1 is a very seriously debased report of an authorially revised version for the public stage', (Melchiori 1992, 208), and that F is 'a transitional document, no longer a reading text for the wiser sort, nor yet a "book" for stage performance' (Melchiori 1992, 209). Urkowitz offers a New Textualist view asking 'What harm would come if readers could see how the three early texts transform *Hamlet* into different fluid shapes, even though we cannot be sure about the provenance of each word or even each scene?' (Urkowitz 1992, 289).

Blayney's analysis of early modern stationers 'The Publication of Playbooks' (1997) offers a range of theories that account for the various types of manuscripts to be found in Shakespeare's day. According to Blayney, the copy sent to the stationers for printing might have been the author's own hand-written 'final' copy, known as 'the fowle papers' (Blayney 1997, 392). The playhouse manuscript, known as 'the allowed book' (that we now refer to as the promptbook) would 'not usually' have been used by the stationers for the printing process, according to Blayney (Blayney 1997, 392). However, Blayney suggests that the playhouse manuscript might have been transcribed, either by a scribe or by the author himself (Blayney 1997, 393) for use in the printshop. According to Blayney, obsolete promptbooks also existed, that 'might vary from revival to revival' which might also find their way to the printers (Blayney 1997, 394). A key finding of Blayney's work is the suggestion that 'Actors [made] copies of plays for private friends' (Blayney 1997, 394). These informal copies were either taken down from the playhouse manuscript (that could have had passages in it marked for omission), or made 'partly or wholly from memory' (Blayney 1997, 394), resulting in some passages being 'noticeably garbled' (Blayney 1997, 394). It is Blayney's belief that this is the explanation for Pollard's 'bad' quartos, but he also suggests that 'it may often be difficult or impossible to deduce the full history of the manuscript underlying a printed text' (Blayney 1997, 393).

The image of a hand-written text in the private possession of an actor offers a parallel to the texts envisaged by Simon Palfrey and Stern in their study *Shakespeare in Parts* (2007). According to Palfrey and Stern each actor received their lines in 'parts', consisting of a roll of paper that 'contained on it all the words the actor was going to speak . . . preceded simply by a short cue' (Palfrey and Stern 2007, 1). According to Palfrey and Stern 'Actors in the early modern theatre never received the complete text of the play in which they were to perform' (Palfrey and Stern 2007, 1), which was partly in order to reduce the likelihood of the play falling into the hands of rivals or printers.

Gurr has proposed a theory that Shakespeare provided an overly long version of some of his plays, which, after being approved by the Master of the Revels, would be edited and reduced by the theatre company to suit their performances. This 'ideal' or longer version of the play is the 'maximal' text, from which a 'minimal' text could be crafted (Gurr 1999, 70). Gurr suggests that 'It was from the basis of that ideal text that the more minimal reality was drawn out for performance. The minimal versions changed according to the local and immediate conditions of performance' (Gurr 1999, 70). The extent of such editing appears to

be unlimited, with Gurr suggesting that 'From such a maximal text the players could make any number of cuts' (Gurr 1999, 76). Gurr links this textual plasticity to *Hamlet*, suggesting that 'even . . . specially adapted venues could not easily have supplied the trapdoors needed for *Hamlet*' (Gurr 1999, 78), which might therefore lead to textual cuts and amendments. This theory reinforces the fluidity of a playtext, and challenges the semantics of the term 'authorial'. Gurr states that 'Whether the four thousand lines of the Folio *Hamlet* were ever spoken even at the Globe is a question to which we can give no confident answer' (Gurr 1999, 79). Gurr suggests that the 'suspect texts' examined by Maguire might 'have a substantial claim' to be evidence of these minimal texts in performance (Gurr 1999, 85), but adds that the question behind these texts 'probably has no single answer' (Gurr 1999, 85). The idea of Shakespeare revising his work is, according to Gurr, now accepted by 'most of us', and he suggests that 'we ought to add the idea of more transient revisions introduced by his playing company for performance' (Gurr 1999, 87). Copious examples of *Hamlet* in performance over the last century, both on film and in the theatre, demonstrate a preference for practitioners to extensively manipulate the play's text.

Erne, in *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Erne 2013)*,* has suggested that Shakespeare wrote for a readership as well as for the stage. According to Erne, Shakespeare 'cared for a readership for his playbooks and . . . knew there would be one' (Erne 2013, 17). Erne argues that some of Shakespeare's longer plays, such as Q2/F *Hamlet* were 'basically literary' (Erne 2013, 216), whilst the shorter Q1 *Hamlet* evidences a text 'that had undergone the company's preparation for actual performance' (Erne 2013, 216). According to Erne, 'The variant substantive texts of the early editions are key witness . . . to the difference between the writing practice of Shakespeare the dramatist, on the one hand, and the performance practice of Shakespeare and his fellows, on the other' (Erne 2013, 218). This theory pictures a play-text as being a social document with no identifiable single author. These ideas initiate significant complications for an editor of *Hamlet*, such as whether establishing 'What Shakespeare actually wrote' (Dover Wilson 1932, 175) is relevant and possible, and whether one's edition is for performance or reading. Here, the play's ontological indeterminacy reflects a key philosophical motif in it, as we shall examine shortly.

Erne views Q1 as a 'partly problematic' text (Erne 2013, 218), suggesting that it '*is* a bad text insofar as it contains badly versified passages, misplaced lines, and expressions distorted by imperfect textual transmission' (Erne 2013, 218). Q1 is, however, according to

Erne, 'the best witness' of 'what would actually have been performed' (Erne 2013, 218) in Shakespeare's day, showing yet again the consistent association between Q1 and performance made by scholars. Erne cites Gary Taylor and Maguire (Erne 2013, 230) in his argument against the idea that Q1 is evidence of a shortened text for provincial tours, suggesting that this is a theory 'based on prejudice rather than on firm evidence' (Erne 2013, 230). Erne also references the work of Scott McMillin who has shown that in performance Q1 needs more actors than Q2 does, therefore removing the possibility that the earlier text is theatrically more economical (Erne 2013, 231). A possible explanation for Q1's 'problematic' nature, according to Erne, is that it recalls a faulty performance of Shakespeare's play, due to actors who retained and recited only the gist of the lines. Erne cites Greg, and more recently Leah Marcus who have both advanced this theory (Erne 2013, 235). For Erne, it is the longer passages of complex rhetoric in Q2/F *Hamlet* that would have been 'deliberate' cuts for performance, such as 'the first twenty-six lines of Claudius's opening speech of the second scene' and Hamlet's 'mirror up to nature' speech (Erne 2013, 249). According to Erne, 'they are not necessary for the understanding of the plot' and 'are chiefly of value for readers and not for spectators' (Erne 2013, 249). That such passages of dialogue have repeatedly been featured in performances of *Hamlet* does however challenge this assumption. Erne also suggests that Q2 repeatedly offers stage directions, such as how the Ghost 'spreads his armes' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r) so as to allow its reader to picture the story. In contrast, Ernes suggests that 'a spectator of the play behind Q1' will see the actor moving his arms, making the stage direction (which is absent from Q1) redundant (Erne 2013, 246). The spectator of the play behind Q1 however would also see how '*Leartes leapes into the graue*' (Shakespeare 1603, I1v), which is included in the text as a stage direction, but is absent from Q2, with the action being implied by Laertes's speech, as he instructs the gravedigger to 'hold off the earth a while, / Til I haue caught her once more in mine armes' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4v). For Erne the longer *Hamlet*(s) is a poem unlimited, authored by a Shakespeare whom Heminges and Condell advise us to 'Reade', 'againe, and againe' (Shakespeare 1623, πA3r).

In 2014 Bourus published *Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet*, in which she argued that the early *Hamlet* play referred to by Nashe, Lodge and Henslowe (see above), and Q1, are all evidence of Shakespeare's early draft of the play. According to Bourus the less sophisticated text of Q1, which she argues centres on a younger protagonist, suited a younger Richard Burbage who would have performed the role. Bourus suggests that as Burbage

advanced in his craft, the more complex texts of Q2 and F were tailored to suit his range and dexterity. Throughout the book Bourus argues in detail how 'theories of "memorial reconstruction" by an actor-thief cannot account for the 1603 text' (Bourus 2014, 8), and neither can theories of piratical publishers. Bourus highlights the subjectivity of today's readers and watchers of *Hamlet*, noting how 'Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, *no one has encountered the first edition first*' (Bourus 2014, 63). Bourus questions Maguire's conclusion on Q1 as being 'Possibly' a memorial reconstruction 'but if so a very good one' (Maguire 1996, 256) with the challenge: 'Is a memory that forgets more than 42 percent of the text a "very good one"?' (Bourus 2014, 39). Margrethe Jolly's recent comparative analysis of Q1 and Belleforest's tale of Hamblet is used to bolster Bourus's argument, especially Jolly's conclusion that Q1 'has more borrowings (from Belleforest)' than Q2/F 'despite being the shorter play' (Bourus 2014, 99). How a pirated memorial reconstruction would take us closer to Shakespeare's source (with agreement amongst many scholars that Shakespeare drew on Belleforest – see above) is hard to explain. As we have seen, Bourus's argument has persuaded Gary Taylor to change his mind completely on the provenance of Q1.

In *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist* Dutton proposes that Shakespeare revised some of his plays for court performances, which, according to Dutton, were presentations that 'stood at the centre of [his] professional life' (Dutton 2016, 147). Dutton argues that Shakespeare's revising served to lengthen his texts, and that he would 'write expansively and with increased rhetorical range' during this process (Dutton 2016, 169), to suit the greater intellectual capacity of his target audience. Dutton highlights a neat parallel with Hamlet's expansion of *Gonzago* for its court performance (although inspired by a different motive). Dutton views Q1 as 'probably' produced by 'a form of "memorial reconstruction"' (Dutton 2016, 169), being nevertheless a reconstruction of Shakespeare's early draft. With regard to the revision of this early version however Dutton suggests that 'If Shakespeare did revise . . . he did so starting with the original manuscripts – not with their poorly transmitted print versions' (Dutton 2016, 169). Dutton views Q1 as 'an Elizabethan play', due to its being 'fraught with anxieties about regime change' (Dutton 2016, 238). In contrast, Q2 and F are perceived as Jacobean texts, being 'revised when the outcome of the succession was a fait accompli' (Dutton 2016, 238). According to Dutton, Shakespeare's addition of Fortinbras to the plot 'is critical' (Dutton 2016, 233), because it enabled the theme of succession to

underpin the narrative, eventually resulting in performances of 'the vastly expanded play at the court of Fortinbrasse himself, James I' (Dutton 2016, 235).

So here we have a diverse range of theories that account for the manuscripts behind the three early *Hamlet* texts, which includes the following: the shorter text of Q1 being an unauthorial garbled memorial reconstruction of a performance based on the manuscript behind Q2; the shorter text of Q1 being a faulty reconstruction of a *Hamlet* performance in which the actors retained only the gist of their lines; a shorter Q1 text that represents an early and authorial but less sophisticated draft of the play by Shakespeare; a shorter Q1 text that represents a truncated performance of a longer play for provincial audiences in settings that demanded significant textual alteration; a shorter Q1 text that evidences an informal version of the play made by a *Hamlet* actor for one of his friends; the shorter Q1 text representing Shakespeare's early adaptation of a pre-existing play, possibly by Thomas Kyd; a shorter 'minimal' Q1 text that represents a truncated version of a longer text, performed in London; Q1 being the result of note-takers in the audience; the longer Q2/F text representing an extended and revised version of the play for an intellectually advanced audience at court; the longer Q2/F text representing a poem-unlimited for the wiser sort of readership; and the longer Q2/F script being an ideal, 'maximal' text from which the company would carve out their bespoke shorter versions (of which there might have been many as the play was re-staged). In addition to this was the proliferation of documents containing individual parts, spread out amongst the actor's residences throughout London, some of which might have ended up in publishing houses.

The canonical *Hamlet* is still viewed by academics as being written around 1600, with Hibbard's estimate of between 1599 and 1601 (Shakespeare 1987b, 4) being commonly accepted. More recently Taylor and Loughnane suggest a date between 1602 and 1603, with the original *Hamlet* ranging from 1575-89 (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 542).

Coda.

We have seen here how the discovery of Q1 and the emergence of the New Bibliography and the New Textualists all impacted on Shakespeare bibliography and biography. Initially, theories accounting for Q1 tied the play's origins solely to Shakespeare, but it soon became associated with other seemingly non-Shakespearean texts, which demanded new theories concerning his methods, working practices, biography and the early

texts. After reaching a point where all hope of discovering exactly what Shakespeare wrote was abandoned, due to a belief that his writing had been irrevocably damaged in the hands of stationers and theatre practitioners, hope was salvaged in the emergence of the New Bibliography. A more detailed and scientific approach to Shakespeare study led to theories that accounted for the early texts, and the prospect of uncovering Shakespeare's own intentions appeared achievable. However, over time these ideas were not able to withstand further scrutiny, and were eventually rejected, along with the objective that lay behind them, which was to find the ideal version encoded within the faulty material documents at hand. The New Textualists established a new conceptual framework, where texts are viewed as being social documents, and where each individual document is given its own discrete independent value. This however exposes further questions, both practical and metaphysical, which Lesser suggests the New Textualist methodology is struggling to answer, such as: are the early *Hamlet* texts to be perceived as being the same play; how do we attribute authorship to them, and is this a relevant objective; how does the 'mobile' nature of a text impact the job of editing; how do we manage the practical desire of editors, readers and performers to have just one *Hamlet*; how do we synthesise bibliography and biography; and how do we establish a play-text 'as an independent entity'? Alongside this, new persuasive theories are emerging that account for the three early *Hamlet*s that stand in opposition to each other. Recent editions of the play evidence these advancements, with a wide range of editorial approaches handling the complexities of *Hamlet* in significantly different ways. Q2 remains the dominant *Hamlet*, and Q1 is still associated with performance. De Grazia and Stallybrass suggest that we are now faced with 'the problem of a work's non-identity with itself' (De Grazia and Stallybrass 1993, 258), which is ironic, being Hamlet's problem too. Wells and Taylor's observation is brought to mind here, that: '"most" editions of *Hamlet* amount to being an "editorial reconstruction"' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 4).

   We shall see in the following philosophical reading of *Hamlet*, issues that surround the text mirror some key themes that run through it. These include: the concept of likeness and how similar things have to be in order to be deemed the same; the relationship between truth and language and the complexities involved in assessing the veracity of written and spoken statements; the concept of authenticity; the concept of representation; and the influence of Plato's theory of forms, where a Platonic ideal is imagined just beyond the material world. The framing of this philosophical analysis, in light of the play's bibliographical history, is a perspective newly framed in this thesis.

Chapter Three. *Hamlet* and the Problem of Universals

In 5.1 of *Hamlet* we find the protagonist in a graveyard just outside the castle. As he watches the gravedigger Hamlet picks up a skull and imagines that it once belonged to a lawyer. Hamlet asks Horatio: 'where be his quiddities now' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M2v). Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor note that Hamlet's question refers to 'excessively subtle scholastic arguments concerning the *quidditas* or essence of a thing' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 5.1.94n). Although one definition of quiddities is the use of subtle wit in an argument (the kind that might be employed by a lawyer), it is the metaphysical reading that I would like to pursue here. The philosophical conundrum Thompson and Taylor are referring to was a central issue in classical and Medieval philosophy and is known as the problem of universals. The matter concerns the question of whether things that are similar contain a shared metaphysical constituent known as a 'universal'. A parallel issue also lies at the heart of *Hamlet* study, which has been dominated by the nature of the relationship between the three early texts.

Although the problem of universals is associated with Medieval philosophy, the issue arose in response to the work of Plato and his student Aristotle. Plato established a theory that proposes all things in the world, including physical phenomena as well as abstract concepts, are imperfect copies of their perfect counterparts that exist in a non-physical realm, and these ideals are known as Ideas or Forms. Anthony Kenny suggests that Plato offered his theory of Forms as a solution to a variety of philosophical questions, with one of them being the problem of universals (Kenny 2004, 54). Plato examines the theory of Forms through devices such as allegory and metaphor, exemplified in the *Simile of the Cave*, in *The Republic* (Plato 1955, 316–25). Here humankind's ignorance of the realm of Forms is likened to the perception of reality experienced by cave dwellers exposed only to shadows of real phenomena.

According to Plato, we can access the world of Forms only through metaphysical practices that enlighten the mind, which allow access to a heightened reality located beyond our senses. In the Cave allegory a single cave dweller escapes the darkness and perceives the true nature of reality as exposed by the light of the sun. Plato states that 'When the mind's eye is fixed on objects illuminated by truth and reality, it understands and knows them . . . but when it is fixed on the twilight world of change and decay . . . its vision is confused' (Plato

1955, 308). Other Platonic dialogues that discuss these Forms include *Meno*, and *Symposium*, but a particularly succinct definition can be found in Plato's letter to the Syracusans, the *Seventh Epistle*. Kenny summarises Plato's definition in the *Seventh Epistle* by establishing six theses. The first one reads as follows: '*The Principle of Commonality . . . Wherever single things are F, this is because they participate in or imitate a single Idea of F*' (Kenny 2004, 50). In this principle the concept of universals is established. All humans for example might be perceived as participating in or copying the Form of humanness, making it a universal essence attributable only to humans.

The concept of universals accounts for similarity between all things that appear to belong to the same grouping. In this conceptual framework chairs share the universal of chairness and all red things share the universal of redness. Noticeably, Kenny suggests that things within the same ontological family ('F') are either participating in or imitating their 'single Idea'. The implication is that each thing on earth, including all physical phenomena as well as abstract concepts such as love, virtue and beauty, is an imperfect likeness of its eternally perfect ethereal Platonic counterpart. The distinction between participation and imitation (being something, and being like something) will be important in the following analysis of *Hamlet.* As we have seen, Q1 *Hamlet* has long been regarded as a poor imitation of Q2/F, which have both been viewed as good imitations of the *Hamlet* play William Shakespeare intended.

A further key text regarding the problem of universals is Aristotle's *Categories.* In this complex study Aristotle categorises all the things that can be the subject or the predicate of a statement. The work simultaneously categorises everything that can be comprehended by humans. Aristotle establishes ten categories, titled as follows: Substance; Quantity; Quality; Relation; Place; Time; Posture; Position; Action; and Affection (Aristotle 1935, I:17–19). The *Categories* engage with ontology, grammar, and semiotics due to the relationship between how something might be described or signalled and the perceived nature of that particular thing. Aristotle is classifying expressions as well as the nature of the phenomena that those expressions signify. In his definition of Substance, Aristotle suggests that it is 'that which is neither asserted of nor can be found in a subject' (Aristotle 1938, 19). Aristotle offers the example of being 'a particular man or a horse' (Aristotle 1938, 19) and explains that 'no substance as such can admit of degrees in itself' (Aristotle 1938, 31). For Aristotle, Substance is the whole of something, and therefore it cannot be an attribute or aspect of it. Q2 and F have been perceived as texts whose Substance might be described as

being 'Shakespeare's *Hamlet'*. In contrast Q1 has predominantly been viewed as containing parts of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* and non-Shakespearean parts, therefore establishing a text whose nature (and therefore Substance) is different from Q2/F.

Aristotle suggests that Substance can be divided into two sub-categories: primary and secondary substances. A primary substance might be the individual man, and the secondary substance might be the species of mankind, which is a universal and can be predicated of the individual man. In his analysis of Substance, Aristotle examines how the terms 'species', and 'genus' might be used as predicates ('predicables'), and what their relationship to each other might be. Aristotle suggests that: 'a particular man we include in the species called "man" and the species itself in its turn is included in the genus called "animal"' (Aristotle 1938, 19–20). Later, as we shall see, Porphyry, Boethius and the Medieval philosophers examined Aristotle's *Categories* in considerable detail, so as to develop their accounts of universals.

Five hundred years after Aristotle, the philosopher Porphyry composed a study of Aristotle's *Categories*, entitled *Isagoge.* Porphyry was a Neoplatonist, a term applied in the nineteenth century (the *OED*'s first quotation is from 1832) that describes followers of Plato who advanced and developed specific Platonic theories that are both philosophical and mystical. Porphyry's tutor was Plotinus, composer of *The Enneads* and a primary figure in Neoplatonism. Plotinus advanced a complex mystical practice of self-knowing, where one's attention is taken inwards towards the soul, the intellect and ultimately to union with 'the One' (Plotinus 1991, 108). For Plotinus, the One is equivalent to Plato's Supreme Good, which is the ultimate Form or Idea (Plato 1935, 306; Plotinus 1991, 108). The soul, the intellect and the One are regarded as being the underlying substance of everything and known collectively as the hypostasis. The Neoplatonic philosophical perspective therefore adopts the doctrine of Idealism, which holds that reality is fundamentally mental in nature. In *Isagoge*, Porphyry examines how an individual human being might consist of a universal human nature whilst simultaneously containing a distinct quality that makes that individual unique. Porphyry states that 'the characteristics of Socrates cannot be the same for any other particular. But the characteristics of man – I mean, of man in general – are the same for several things, or rather for *all* particular men insofar as they are men' (Porphyry the Phoenician [Porphyry of Tyre] 1994, 7). This observation offers a parallel to a key theory propounded by the Medieval philosopher Duns Scotus, which we shall shortly examine. Porphyry examined various aspects of universals but avoided the subject of their exact

ontological nature. Regarding the precise nature of universals, Porphyry stated: 'I shall beg off saying anything about (a) whether genera and species are real or are situated in bare thoughts alone, [and] (b) whether as real they are bodies or incorporeals' (Porphyry the Phoenician [Porphyry of Tyre] 1994, 1). The belief that universals exist in 'bare thoughts alone' would later be known as Conceptualism.

The sixth-century Roman philosopher Boethius added to the study of universals in his translation of Porphyry's *Isagoge,* along with two commentaries on it. Boethius summarised the contrasting Aristotelian and Platonic perspectives on universals as follows: 'Plato thinks genera and species and the rest are not only understood as universals, but also exist and subsist apart from bodies. Aristotle, however, thinks they are understood as incorporeal and universal, but subsist in sensibles [material phenomena]' (Boethius 1994, 25). For Aristotle then, *Hamlet*'s lawyer's quiddities disintegrated when his body did, whereas for Plato they are eternal perfect abstractions that are no longer shared by the lawyer. Boethius, like Porphyry, was hesitant in committing to a definitive statement on the exact ontological nature of universals. Commenting on the perspectives of Aristotle and Plato, Boethius states that 'I did not regard it as appropriate to decide between their views. For that belongs to a higher philosophy' (Boethius 1994, 25). It was this lineage of metaphysical analysis, from Plato to Boethius, that underpinned the thinking of a group of Medieval theologians and philosophers regarding the problem of universals. This conundrum had been rigorously examined by Porphyry and Boethius, but both had openly refused to attempt to define the nature of their existence. This left an intriguing philosophical paradox for the philosophers of the Medieval era to grapple with.

Medieval philosophy is dominated by figures who were members of the Catholic church and are often therefore considered to be equally theologians and philosophers. They were primarily followers of either the Franciscan or the Dominican orders. The most notable of these is the Dominican Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who through the influence of his mentor Albert the Great brought the teachings of Aristotle to the heart of Western philosophy and Christianity. An example of Aquinas's merging of Aristotelian and Christian concepts can be seen in Aquinas's five proofs of God. Aquinas's first proof is based on the concept of change. Aquinas suggests that there must be a force behind all things that change but a prime or original force is the initiator of all movement. Aquinas states that: 'So we are forced eventually to come to a first cause of change not itself being changed by anything, and this is what everyone understands by *God*' (Aquinas 1993, 200). This concept can be found in

Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and is known as the *prime mover* or *unmoved mover*. Aristotle suggests that 'there is something which moves without being moved' (Aristotle 1935, I:146). Aquinas agreed with Aristotle on the nature of universals, believing that they existed only within physical phenomena, and that it was an error to hold the Platonist opinion that 'universals were things outside the realm of sense' (Aquinas 1993, 23).

The Late Middle Ages saw the arrival of two philosopher-theologians who significantly impacted the problem of universals: Duns Scotus (1266 – 1308), and William of Ockham (1285 – 1347). Duns Scotus suggests that humans have two key metaphysical constituents. The first is a common universal human nature, which is what makes them similar to one another. The second is what makes each human unique, and is known as a *haecceitas* or 'thisness' (Kenny 2005, 87). Explaining the simultaneous existence of the two metaphysical constituents in each individual, Duns Scotus suggests that 'besides the nature [that is the same] in this individual and in that one, there are some primarily diverse items by which this and that individual differ, this one in this respect and that one in that' (Scotus 1994, 102). In isolating the nature of the two qualities Duns Scotus states that 'one is formally the entity of singularity and . . . one is formally the entity of the nature [universal human nature]' (Scotus 1994, 107). This theory of an individuating metaphysical constituent coexisting alongside a shared universal common nature can be seen in Porphyry (examined above). According to Duns Scotus, an individual such as Socrates contains two distinct qualities: an individuating principle and a common human nature. The common human nature is also shared by Plato, which accounts for their similarity. The individuating principle is what causes Socrates to be a unique individual, rather than being identical to Plato.

For Duns Scotus, the simultaneous existence of these two metaphysical constituents logically accounted for our similarity and our individuality. For Ockham however, it was not possible to account for the co-existence of the *haecceity* and the universal human nature. He found that the question of the relationship between the two metaphysical constituents was an unsolvable paradox. Ockham states that: ' . . . if a common nature were the same thing as an individual difference, there would be as many common natures as there are individual differences; and, consequently, none of those natures would be common, but each would be peculiar to the difference with which it is identical' (Ockham 1998, 83). Ockham believes that neither the *haeceitas* nor universals exist in any form other than as mental concepts and as words or terms. Ockham states that 'Every universal is an intention

of the mind' (Ockham 1998, 81), and that 'no universal is a substance existing outside the mind' (Ockham 1998, 79). One of Ockham's arguments against the existence of universals was that logically they lead to the suggestion that Socrates's death would entail the death of all humans, as they share a common universal human nature:

> If the nature in Socrates is truly common, then since when Socrates is destroyed everything essential to him is destroyed, it follows that some common nature is truly destroyed and annihilated. But certainly some common nature remains in this case, insofar as another individual remains. (William of Ockham 1994, 163)

Ockham is often now called a Nominalist, because he believed that things denominated by the same name ('nomen' in Latin) share nothing except that fact. For Nominalists, all that exists are singularities. Such a standpoint has been taken by the Arden 2006 *Hamlet* offering three discrete instances of an early modern *Hamlet* play. Whether this equates to three different *Hamlets*/Hamlets is a question recently posed by Gabriel Egan, who suggests that 'editors no longer, but should, consider [them] as a singularity' with an argument underpinned by recent scientific approaches to consciousness (Egan 2008). Ockham suggests that 'common names signify only particulars. Thus, the name "man" does not signify anything other than the thing which is a particular man' (Ockham 1998, 86).

The titles used to describe different beliefs in this area of philosophy are nuanced and varied. Kenny points out that it would be more accurate to call Ockham a Conceptualist, due to his belief in universals as mental constructs or concepts. For Ockham, universals such as redness and humanness do exist, but in language and thought only. This however leads to a further philosophical conundrum regarding where and how language and thoughts exist (which will be examined in Chapter Four). Those who believe in the existence of universals are known as Realists. This includes Aristotelians like Aquinas who believe that universals exist only in discrete objects, and also Platonists who believe that universals exist as independent abstract entities. The Conceptualist view might be regarded as sitting midway between Realism and Nominalism. As noted in the Introduction the term 'Realism' has another sense in philosophy, denoting the belief that reality (including all worldly phenomena) exists independently of our perceptions of it. This doctrine is seen to stand in opposition to Idealism (see above).

The issue of likeness was a key aspect regarding the problem of universals and was used by both Realists and Nominalists to establish their argument. Kenny suggests that for Realists acceptance of an objective truth regarding the similarity between two things (for example, that Socrates is like Plato as they are both humans) equates to a belief in universals (Kenny 2005, 152). In contrast, Kenny suggests that for Nominalists such as Ockham likeness was a concept that was used to argue against the existence of universals. Kenny notes that: 'The relation of likeness is an important one for Ockham, because of its connection with real qualities: everything that has a certain real quality P is like everything else that has that quality' (Kenny 2005, 211). But for Ockham, this likeness only exists in each individual entity. For Ockham, likeness proves a similarity between two entities, not the existence of universals (Kenny 2005, 211). Here we see that likeness stands at the centre of the problem of universals, with Realists and Nominalists reaching opposing conclusions about its significance. When Q1 *Hamlet* was discovered in 1823 it was deemed to have a Shakespeare-nature or quality, as it appeared to share significant constituents with Q2/F. However, soon it was believed to only share a name with Q2/F, rather than a nature. For Terri Bourus the nature of Q1 does evidence a Shakespeare-essence, albeit one in the earlier stages of its evolution (Bourus 2014). Later we shall examine the possible usefulness of a Darwinian framework regarding this conundrum and the nature and authority of names.

Although Ockham denied the existence of universals in general, he was prepared to accept their existence in relation to God and the Trinity. According to Ockham, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit uniquely share a universal nature, whilst also existing as discrete entities. In his analysis of the Trinity, Ockham states that 'it is unique to God that three things are numerically one thing, and therefore the numerically one thing is each of those three things . . . it is unique to God and surpasses every understanding' (William of Ockham 1994, 157). This set of contrasting beliefs made Ockham vulnerable to criticism. Kenny suggests that it led to 'the suspicion that he was a proponent of a double truth: that something could be true in theology that was false in philosophy.' (Kenny 2005, 211). Later we shall see how *Hamlet* momentarily establishes a parallel to the Trinity, when Hamlet speaks to the Ghost at 1.5.10-112.

In summarising the tension between the two arguments of Nominalism and Realism, Paul Vincent Spade suggests that Nominalists perceive universals as 'metaphysical impossibilities' therefore exposing realism as an incoherent theory (Spade 1994, pvii). In contrast, Realists might ask how we account for commonly accepted groupings such as

humans and chairs if universals do not exist. Spade suggests that 'realists have always had the most explaining to do in metaphysics', and that 'nominalists have always had the most explaining to do in epistemology' (Spade 1994, viii).

Here we should note that the terms 'genus' and 'species' in the above context belong to the fields of Logic and Philosophy, and are subsets within the term 'universals'. Carrying a similar sense, 'genus' and 'species' are also used in Zoology and Botany to classify groupings of animals and plants. Regarding the nebulous nature of the term 'species' Charles Darwin observed that 'No one definition has as yet satisfied all naturalists' (Darwin 2009, 49). Darwin's language might be of use in our examination of *Hamlet* as the conceptual framework he establishes in *On the Origin of Species* offers a close and useful semantic parallel. A textual stemma is similar to a family tree, as seen in Wells and Taylor's diagram for the origins of *Hamlet* (Wells and Taylor 1987, 401). Aspects of Darwin's phraseology could prove helpful in shedding light on our world of textual origins, literary offspring, apparent mutations, the evolution of texts (for example the modernisation of words), and how we judge whether apparently different texts derive from the same parent-source. In his examination of artificial selection Darwin observes that 'Breeders habitually speak of an animal's organisation as something quite plastic, which they can model almost as they please' (Darwin 2009, 37). This is analogous to how a director or an actor or even an editor might view a text. With regard to natural selection Darwin suggests that if a being changes 'however slightly in any manner profitable to itself' then its chances of survival increase (Darwin 2009, 14). The concept of a thing evolving (or being manipulated so as to evolve) in a beneficial way has a strong parallel with Shakespeare's motives to revise, and the printer's motives to establish a particular format, and the director's motive to mould a production in a particular way, and an actor's decision to manipulate a text in performance. Also, as we have seen, all of these practices involve a degree of transforming the thing that is being reproduced. Our viewing of the bibliographical journey of *Hamlet* through the lens of Darwin's conceptual framework might assist our understanding of how we contextualise and frame the play.

Regarding the issue of framing different early editions of a play, such as the three *Hamlet* texts and the two early *King Lear* texts, R. A. Foakes suggests that 'if the basic structure remains roughly the same, these versions are rightly considered as variants of one work' (Foakes 1993, 135). This evokes Eubulides's heap-of-sand paradox, where one is asked to consider at which point is a heap established if we build up a collection of grains of

sand, starting with one. How do we measure 'roughly the same'? One answer might be to compare aspects of the plot, or another might be to compare essential imagery and motifs in the texts (its DNA?). In her examination of the dominant imagery in a conflated Q2/F version of *Hamlet* Caroline Spurgeon observes that 'In *Hamlet* there hovers all through the play in both words and pictures the conception of disease, especially of hidden corruption infecting and destroying the wholesome body' (Spurgeon 1935, 213). The significance of this is that Spurgeon's noted theme is comparatively absent from Q1, which lacks Q2's 'dram of eale' speech (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v), the sickness/skin metaphor 'the natiue hiew of resolution / Is sickled ore' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G2v), and Q2's reference to the earth's diseased atmosphere 'pestilent congregation of vapoures' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F2r), to highlight three of many such absences. From this perspective, Q1 appears to be a different species.

Richard Dawkins's theory of the 'meme' could be equally useful and relevant here too. In his development of Darwin's ideas Dawkins suggests that 'all life evolves by the differential survival of replicating entities' (Dawkins 1976, 192), which is expanded on in his book *The Selfish Gene*. Here Dawkins also suggests that there is a cultural equivalent to the gene, which he coins a 'meme'. This word stands for an idea that 'catches on [and] can be said to propagate itself, spreading from brain to brain' (Dawkins 1976, 192). An example of a meme is the concept of God (Dawkins 1976, 192). Significantly Dawkins suggests that 'When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain', and that 'The meme is actually realized physically, millions of times over, as a structure in the nervous system' (Dawkins 1976, 192). Dawkins even suggests that 'it might be convenient to think of memes . . . as active agents, working purposefully for their own survival' (Dawkins 1976, 196). In this conceptual framework *Hamlet* and/or Hamlet is a meme. This offers a parallel to the Platonic ideal of Hamlet (or *Hamlet*), which might account for our tendency to perceive the play as a single entity, even when we are aware of its three early versions, its plethora of differing textual editions, and an even greater range of contrasting versions in performance over the last four hundred years. The meme or Platonic ideal appears to be constant, whereas the myriad of versions made out of matter vary in their nature and durability. An example of another Hamlet-based meme is the emerging idea, and now frequent tendency of *Hamlet* productions, to place the 'To be or not to be' monologue earlier in the narrative, as it is found in Q1 (in Q2/F the monologue is placed later in the narrative). This directorial choice is demonstrated in Sean Mathias's recent production of *Hamlet* (2021) at the Theatre Royal

Windsor with Ian McKellen as the protagonist. The idea of grafting Q1's placement of the soliloquy onto a Q2/F-based production of the play suggests a belief that it will increase the play's chances of success and survival. According to Dawkins's concept of the meme-as-active-agent, this decision might not have been taken by Mathias, but instead was led by the idea itself. Our framing of *Hamlet* as a meme having autonomous agency is a concept hitherto unseen in previous studies of the play, which here extends our ability to comprehend the work's place in our psyche.

This lineage examining the problem of universals, from Plato to Ockham, accounts for the philosophical picture that was established when *Hamlet* was written. This philosophical conundrum will underpin the following textual analysis of *Hamlet*, which I will start by examining the concepts of likeness and representation. My attention will focus on how art is portrayed as being able and unable to offer a likeness of humanity, the abundance of textual representations or likenesses of kings, and the theory of the king's two bodies. Following this I will make a detailed examination of the ontological and metaphysical nature of the Ghost, and its symbolic significance in the play. My analysis of the Ghost will include: an examination of the relationship between language and epistemology; parallels between the Ghost, Hamlet, God and the acting profession; and an examination of the Ghost from the perspective of Aristotle's *Categories*. This offers us insight into the play that previous studies have not exposed. Throughout the chapter I will reference the second quarto by signature, and citations from the text will be in the original early modern spelling. When referencing act and scene numbers for *Hamlet,* I will use those established by the Arden 2006 edition. Character names will be taken from the Arden 2006 edition.

Hamlet, Art and Life

The word 'like' appears eighty-five times in the play. Alongside its repeated use we find synonyms such as 'seem' and 'as', as well as extended use of simile, metaphor and internal plot parallels. These serve to establish Elsinore as a world of seeming, replicas and imitation. As we have seen, the bibliographical narrative of *Hamlet* is dominated by identical issues. As Peter W. M. Blayney states, replica copies of plays and parts were abundant in the early modern era, and as Richard Dutton and Andrew Gurr argue, texts were expanded and diminished, therefore creating copies that were at variance to original drafts. Q1 has shifted from seeming to be an early draft of Shakespeare's play, to seeming to be an un-authorial

pirate copy, to being reconsidered as authorial and relevant no matter what its provenance. Conflated editions of the play combining Q2 and F written in modern English have also seemed to be Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In performance productions have re-ordered the scenes, edited and altered and translated the text and significantly changed the plot whilst seeming to be Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Robert Lepage's 1996 production entitled *Elsinore*, and opening with the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy is generally viewed as being a version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* although it has a different name, substantial structural differences to Q2/F, and a cast of one actor (Lavender 2001, 103).

In 4.7 the King encourages Laertes to plan Hamlet's murder. In order to provoke Laertes the King likens him to a picture: '*Laertes* was your father deare to you? / Or are you like the painting of a sorrowe, / A face without a hart?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L4v). The King's likening of Laertes to a painting offers a parallel to the King's comparison of Ophelia to a picture in 4.5: 'poore *Ophelia* / Deuided from herselfe, and her faire iudgement, / Without the which we are pictures, or meere beasts' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K4v). These figures of speech that both liken a person to a painting serve to establish the text as a meta-study of art. Here I will examine the text's referencing of the arts, and how they are framed as being able to reflect the human condition.

Both of the above quotations imply that a picture of a person is a likeness of the person's external aspect only, lacking the depth and inner essence of the individual. Ironically the Greek word for 'animals', as used in Aristotle's *Categories* can carry the senses of meaning both 'man' and 'portrait' as noted by H. P. Cooke and Hugh Tredennick (Aristotle 1938, 13). The King's likening of Laertes and Ophelia to portraits both imply that the artworks could not embody or represent internal elements. The King's comment to Laertes implies a painting's inability to portray love or courage ('hart'). The comment concerning Ophelia implies a painting's inability to portray or contain an aspect of reason ('faire iudgement'). The Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus held a similar belief regarding the limitations of art, and accordingly refused to sit for a portrait as his biographer Porphry recalls:

> He showed . . . an unconquerable reluctance to sit to a painter or a sculptor, and
> when Amelius persisted in urging him to allow of a portrait being made he asked
> him, 'Is it not enough to carry about this image in which nature has enclosed us?

Do you really think I must also consent to leave, as a desirable spectacle to posterity, an image of the image? (Plotinus 1991, Cii)

Here, for Plotinus, the body, or the outer visible aspect of the body, is not to be confused with the essence of the person, which for Platonists is the immortal soul. For Plotinus the body is like a painting as it is a mere representation or 'image' of the invisible soul within, and a painting is only able to capture this external ephemeral aspect. According to Plotinus, in order to access the divine we should lead our attention inwards, nurturing our understanding of the immortal soul, therefore becoming closer to union with the mystical inner essence that Plotinus calls 'the One' (Plotinus 1964, plix). Hamlet's claim that 'I haue that within which passes showe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B4v) carries strong Neoplatonic implications of inward looking reflection. It also echoes Plotinus's belief that such an inner essence cannot be caught by a portrait painter. In the Bible we find the suggestion that God is the only one who can see 'that within which passes showe', evidenced in the Book of Samuel: 'For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord beholdeth the heart' (The Bible 1599, 1 Samuel 16.7). Hamlet's statement does not specify whether he believes that his inner essence lies beyond the eyes of man only or beyond the eyes of both man and God.

For Plotinus, a painting might represent what a person looks like, but that likeness bears no relation to the person's true nature, so in effect it would be misleading or even a lie. Plotinus's scepticism about art can be traced to Plato's *Republic* where the arts are banished from the ideal state as they are deemed, negatively, to be concerned with imitation (Plato 1955, 427–31). Plato believed that everything on earth is an inferior replica of its perfect counterpart in the realm of Forms or Ideas. For Plato, imitation in the arts leads us one step further away from knowing the perfect Form of that entity.

In contrast, Aristotle's examination of dramatic theory *Poetics* suggests that humankind's ability to imitate is a fundamental aspect of our nature. Aristotle suggests that 'the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood . . . he is the most imitative of living creatures' (Aristotle 1997, 5). Furthermore, Aristotle believed that universal truths could be accessed through the arts, which is something that other fields of learning could not match as their concern was to establish specific details about the world, which, in comparison, offered limited value. Aristotle suggests that: 'Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular (Aristotle 1997, 17). As we shall see, it is to the world of theatrical

representation that Hamlet turns to in order to expose the essence of nature and also the King's conscience.

Shakespeare's contemporary Philip Sidney agreed with Aristotle's belief that it was through the arts that we could discover 'the universal'. Sidney responded to Plato's rejection of art in his work *An Apologie for Poetrie,* in which he suggests that through the artist's imagination we can gain an understanding of the world that even surpasses what we might learn through the observance of nature:

> Onely the Poet . . . lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, dooth growe in
> effect into another nature, in making things either better that Nature bringeth
> forth, or, quite anewe, forms such as never were in Nature . . . (Sidney 2002, 216)

For Sidney, Plato's perfect universal Forms are accessed via the poet's 'own invention', that is, in his imagination or his mind. Sidney described the poet's ability to outshine nature in his statement that 'Her [nature's] world is brasen, the Poets only deliver a golden' (Sidney 2002, 216). Here Sidney's metaphor uses the metals brass and gold to describe the natural world and the imaginary world created by poets, respectively. For Sidney, nature's creation is made of brass, whereas the imaginary world of poets is made of the superior substance, gold. According to Sidney 'Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapistry' (Sidney 2002, 216) as the one offered by the poet. Robert Watson challenges Sidney's metaphor questioning its semantics and overall claim:

> Sidney's assertion that poets "deliver a golden" world hovers revealingly between
> a boast that poets uncover deep truth and a confession that they cannot deliver the
> real world; "Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry" but tapestries are
> only representations of reality woven by the human hand and mind. (Watson
> 2006, 35)

Later we shall examine in more detail the relationship between metaphors, the concept of likeness, and a recent theory on the cognitive process and its apparent metaphorical nature.

Hamlet suggests that theatre provides us with a likeness of humanity, with the implication that this likeness exposes us to a deeper level of understanding. In 3.2 he uses the image of a mirror to educate the Players on the craft of acting. According to Hamlet, 'the purpose of playing . . . was and is, to holde as twere the Mirrour vp to nature' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G4r). We might read in Hamlet's metaphor that the arts merely reflect 'nature', but

it could also be read to mean that the arts reveal a deeper truth about nature than is commonly understood or seen. Rhodri Lewis observes that amongst many Renaissance theorists it was thought that 'works of creative imagination could reveal things as they really were, and not as they seemed to be on the surface' (Lewis 2017, 200). Such a perspective therefore stands in contrast to the King's implied Neoplatonic belief (above) that a painting is unable to portray the inner essence of a person.   In 3.4 Hamlet repeats the mirror-as-facilitator-of-self-knowing metaphor when he informs his mother that: 'You goe not till I set you vp a glasse / Where you may see the most [inmost] part of you' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I2r). The mirror that Hamlet is here referring to, like the one that Hamlet speaks of to the actors, is not constructed of glass, but is instead constituted of words and gestures and the images and emotions that consequentially arise in both speaker and listener. Both Hamlet and the Players will put on a performance and engage their listener's imagination with the aim of revealing the true nature of things to their respective audiences. This parallel between the performance by the Players, and Hamlet's 'performance' to his mother, suggests a blurring of the boundaries between fantasy and reality, performance and real life.

Through Indirections: Representation and Reality

In the closet scene of 3.4 Hamlet uses two stage properties of portrait paintings to make a comparative analysis of his mother's previous and current husbands. Hamlet steers his mother through an examination of the artworks:

> Looke here vpon this Picture, and on this,
> The counterfeit presentment of two brothers,
> See what a grace was seated on this browe,
> *Hiperions* curles, the front of *Ioue* himselfe,
> An eye like *Mars*, to threaten and command,
> A station like the herald *Mercury,*
> New lighted on a heaue [heaven], a kissing hill,
> A combination, and a forme indeede,
> Where euery God did seeme to set his seale
> To giue the world assurance of a man,
> This was your husband, looke you now what followes,
> Heere is your husband like a mildewed eare,

Blasting his wholesome brother, haue you eyes

(Shakespeare 1604-5, I2v–I3r)

Here we find layer upon layer of likeness. Hamlet is using painted representations of his father and uncle in order to establish a lack of similarity between the two men. A second set of comparisons is then used to highlight the attributes of Hamlet's father. According to Hamlet's reading of his father's portrait, the qualities of no less than four classical Gods can be inferred from the work: '*Hiperions* curles', 'the front of *Ioue*', 'An eye like *Mars*', and 'A station like the herald *Mercury*'. These four characters, Hyperion, Jove, Mercury and Mars, whom Hamlet is likening to his father, can only be known to Hamlet via works of art or fiction that he has previously encountered. According to Aristotle our memory is based on retained images (Aristotle 2017, 84). So here we have Hamlet recalling memorised images (likenesses) of classical Gods that were initially established through a form of fiction, which he then likens to a replica of his father in order to stimulate an idealised image of Old Hamlet in his mother's mind. A further layer of complexity regarding likenesses and representations arises when we acknowledge the theatrical nature of the scene.

This scenario offers a parallel to the provenance of the three early *Hamlet* texts, where memory, faulty recollections and replicas are significant issues. The idea of a dispersed collection of images or memories being gathered here by Hamlet anticipates recent thinking on how the memory works, and how errors in our memory are likely to occur. Julia Shaw observes that 'memory illusions are possible because each of our experiences is stored as multiple fragments, and these fragments can be recombined in ways that never actually happened' (Shaw 2016, 81). These 'multiple fragments' of what experiences/memories are made up of mirror the fragmented nature of early modern plays, as described by Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern (see above) in their study of the parts that a play was physically fractured into when being dispersed amongst the cast. As Blayney noted, such an activity was likely to lead to alterations or errors when the play was re-grouped as a single entity (see above), which he suggests Q1 is an exemplar of.

When the First Player describes Pyrrhus's murder of Priam, he relates how Pyrrhus pauses momentarily before killing the king, again establishing the idea of a person being a painting. Hamlet has already noted how Pyrrhus is covered 'head to foote' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3v) with the blood of previous victims. The First Player describes Pyrrhus as being frozen still before slaying Priam:

> . . . for loe his sword
>
> Which was declining on the milkie head
>
> Of reuerend *Priam*, seem'd i'th ayre to stick,
>
> So as a painted tirant *Pirrhus* stood
>
> Like a newtrall to his will and matter
>
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3v)

Ann Thompson and John Thompson suggest that 'Pyrrhus is "painted" here in a double sense; he is still painted with blood but, because he is motionless, he is also like a mere representation or painting of himself' (Thompson and Thompson 1987, 113). There are echoes here of how Plotinus perceives the human body as an 'image', as described above. Thompson and Thompson suggest that the description of Pyrrhus being coated (painted) in blood, and resembling a painting as he stands motionless, shifts the notion of painting 'from referring to a surface *over* a substance to designating a surface which is merely a surface.' (Thompson and Thompson 1987, 113). Pyrrhus here also establishes a likeness of Hamlet at 3.3.73-79 who is unable to lower his sword on the King in prayer. The image of Pyrrhus here also echoes the King's likening of Ophelia and Laertes to paintings (or surfaces), as examined above.

A further likening of someone to being merely a surface can be seen in the Graveyard scene. In 5.1, Hamlet's examination of the Gravedigger's skulls leads him to acknowledge the ephemeral and changing nature of our bodies, including those of great leaders:

> Imperious *Caesar* dead, and turn'd to Clay,
>
> Might stoppe a hole, to keepe the wind away.
>
> O that that earth which kept the world in awe,
>
> Should patch a wall t'expell the waters flaw.
>
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r)

Here, Caesar is depicted as being decomposed and used to plaster the exterior of a house. Where Ophelia and Laertes were likened to surficial versions of themselves, Caesar has, through death, been reduced to actually becoming 'merely a surface'. The text's propensity to engage with the motif of likeness, and that this echoes key aspects of the problem of universals, has not hitherto received critics' attention.

The image of Ophelia being divided from herself, and of Horatio's comment to Marcellus that the Ghost is as like the King 'As thou art to thy selfe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B2r) establishes the self as a plurality, which again ties the philosophical content of the text to the work's bibliographical journey. Reflecting on a notable piece of advice from Polonius to Laertes (1.3.77), Joshua Landy suggests that: 'Hamlet has many, many selves to which to be true' (Landy 2018, 176). The recent age-blind casting of eighty-two year old Ian McKellen as the student Hamlet posits a similar paradox. In the latter two of these instances it is Hamlet as well as *Hamlet* that, as Margreta de Grazia frames it, must be experiencing a sense of 'non-identity with itself' (de Grazia and Stallybrass 1993, 258). Another aspect of the issue of multiple identities or personas can be seen in Nick Curtis's recent review in the *Evening Standard* of Ian McKellen's performance of Hamlet. Curtis writes: 'No one's here for the concept. We've come to see England's greatest living classical actor – and Magneto, and Gandalf' (Curtis 2021). Here, in the mind's eye of each audience member, what is being experienced is a Hamlet comprised of multiple fictional characters as well as the celebrity persona of the actor. If the *Hamlet* characters and the actors playing them have a seemingly split nature or multiple personas, then the existence of multiple versions of the play in print and production might be viewed as a fitting scenario. Both the protagonist and the play refuse to be reduced to a singularity, yet are predominantly perceived as one.

Images, Imagination and the Real

Just as likenesses in the arts are a substantial motif in the play, likenesses established through metaphor and simile abound in the text. Here we shall examine a philosophical framing of linguistic and mental images, and their relationship to the experiencing of a play, which will then underpin further analysis of *Hamlet*, with a focus on likenesses of kings, and the nature of the Ghost. Earlier we saw that Aristotle's *Categories* are concerned with establishing the ontological nature of things and also what might be said about them. The complex nature of language, especially in metaphysical matters, was acknowledged by Aquinas who suggests that 'the words we use of God apply to him metaphorically' (Aquinas 1993, 237). In summarising our ability to comprehend God, Aquinas states that 'his perfection is above every conception of our minds' (Aquinas 1993, 237). The implication here is that God can only be discussed and known through likenesses (metaphors). To speak of or comprehend God, humankind must therefore 'By indirections find directions out' (Shakespeare 1604-5, E1v).

The idea that God can only be known through a form of likeness offers a parallel to classical perspectives on epistemology and the imagination. In his analysis of the Trinity, St Augustine of Hippo examines the Aristotelian theory that our ability to see and perceive involves the creation of images in the mind. St Augustine states that: 'By our reason we conclude that it would have been utterly impossible for us to perceive anything, unless some likeness of the body that was seen came into existence in our senses' (Kenny 2005, 215). For Augustine, the perception of reality hinges on referencing likenesses or copies of entities in the mind. Watson suggests that early modern science was intrigued by this epistemological theory, observing that 'nascent cognitive science suggested that, even in the presence of the thing, human perception of that object is itself a copy, a mental representation, created by a complex overlay of electrochemical systems' (Watson 2006, 71). Lewis explains how, from an Aristotelian perspective, these images are retained in the memory and are also vulnerable to corruption due to the faculty of imagination:

> The act of remembering could not take place without the imagination actualizing the images stored in the memory, but the very receptiveness of the memory made it susceptible to the imaginative faculty impressing upon it images that had no experiential or discursive warrant. (Lewis 2017, 137)

More recently, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have suggested that our 'conceptual system is largely metaphorical' (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 3) in their work *Metaphors We Live By*. Their research suggests that the way in which we perceive and comprehend the world is based on likenesses, and that metaphors in our language are evidence of this. Instead of perceiving metaphors merely as characteristics of language, Lakoff and Johnson see them as models that represent the way in which our cognitive process works. As a metaphor expresses one thing in terms of another thing, for Lakoff and Johnson, the mind also makes sense of the things in the world by comprehending them (and expressing them) in terms of other things. According to Lakoff and Johnson we interpret the world by reducing it to entities that can be spatially measured. They suggest that 'Most of our fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors' (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 17). Horatio's comment that 'the morne in russet mantle clad / Walkes ore the dewe of yon high Eastward hill' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3v), might be used to support this theory. Here Horatio is comprehending the sunrise as a discrete object, metaphorically transformed into a person, who is covered by another discrete object (a 'russet

mantle' or red shawl), that united, move over another discrete entity (the dew-laden hill in the east).

According to Foakes the imagination plays a key role in not only perceiving a work of art, but also, in a sense, completing it, which establishes complexities regarding the subject of artistic creativity. Foakes suggests that a work of art, such as the performance of a play, is completed fully the moment the viewer engages with it, as the realisation of the piece is a synthesis of observed and observer. Foakes states that 'In reading or watching a play we fill out and energize in an activity of the imagination the inevitable incompleteness and artifice of the representation' (Foakes 1993, 34). Highlighting the unique nature of each observer's experience of a play Foakes suggests that:

> Each performance or reading of a play requires of the actor, viewer or reader an active involvement and creative input which round out through an activity of mind the dramatist's words and directions. So each enactment or reading will be different, but each will be constructed, with the aid of the 'eye of mind', from the same materials, the reading texts, with theatrical markings in stage directions and the like, which are the source of all interpretations and concepts of Shakespeare's artistry. (Foakes 1993, 134)

If the experiencing of a performance or text results in a different creation each time it is engaged with, as the observer is actively involved in the creation of the work, then the issue of identifying who the creator is, or when the work is/was created, or if the work has a fixed nature, becomes philosophically complex. Here we are reminded of Roland Barthes's work *The Death of the Author*, in which he states that 'a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader . . .' (Barthes 1977, 148). In light of this idea on the shared responsibility for the perceived creation of a piece of literature or play performance, we might see the apparent problem of the three early *Hamlet*s and the attribution of their authorship in a new light.

Here we have seen how textual references to the arts, and their concern with imitation and likenesses, expose an array of philosophical issues that resonate regarding the problem of universals. Art is represented as being able to reveal hidden truths about the nature of our existence, which reflects the perspectives of Aristotle and Sidney.

Contrastingly, the arts are also represented as something that offer an inferior representation of the world, a perspective associated with Plato and Neoplatonic philosophy. The likening of a person to a painting prompts an examination of the relationship between external appearances and one's inner essence. This offers a parallel to the problem of universals, which is concerned with the relationship between the external appearance of objects and their inner nature. References to the arts also serve to establish *Hamlet* as a meta-study of art. We have also seen how likeness was a central aspect of epistemology in classical philosophy, and how the use of similes and metaphors was believed central to our ability to perceive God. Knowledge of the world was also seen to depend on the creation and retention of internal mental images or likenesses. The mind is also seen as a significant factor in the creation or fulfilment of *Hamlet*, as the observer's perceptions make a key contribution to the play's very being.

Representations of kings

In 1.1. Barnardo, Horatio and Marcellus are confronted by the Ghost as they keep watch on the castle platform. Barnardo suggests that the Ghost appears 'In the same figure like the King thats dead' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v) and asks Horatio: 'Lookes a not like the king?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v). Horatio replies in the affirmative: 'Most like' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v). In 3.4 when Hamlet visits his mother's closet, he references a portrait of his father, the old king (examined above), and asks his mother to 'Looke heere vpon this Picture' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I2v). Referencing a second painting, this time of his uncle the King, Hamlet suggests that the image is like 'a mildewed eare' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3r). Here I shall examine representations, likenesses, and perceptions of kings and the King.

Likenesses and representations of kings abound throughout the play. As we have seen, the play opens with a likening of the Ghost to the now deceased Old King Hamlet. Although the spirit is 'like the King' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v) it remains ambiguous as to whether it actually is the old king or one of an array of other possible entities. As we shall later see in our analysis of the Ghost, the text leaves the matter unresolved. In 1.2, the King invites Hamlet to 'Be as our selfe in Denmarke' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1r). Thompson and Taylor gloss this term as meaning: 'behave as if you were king' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 1.2.122n). Ironically the closest Hamlet will get to assuming kingship is through pretence or play. It is doubly ironic that this invitation to play at monarchy comes from the

man who destroyed Hamlet's role model for such a performance, and who also stole 'the precious Diadem' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v) from within the protagonist's reach. Hamlet is also imagined as king by Fortinbras, the King's successor, in the play's closing comments. In a timely arrival at Elsinore, Fortinbras observes that Hamlet 'was likely, had he beene put on, / To haue prooued most royall' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G2r). But Hamlet was not 'put on', and his kingship remains as insubstantial and fantastical as that of Laertes, who is fleetingly pictured with the crown in the Messenger's report of the masses in uproar, who cry: '*Laertes King*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L1r).

Before the First Player assumes the role of King in *The Mousetrap,* he recites a speech describing the death of the classical king Priam of Troy (2.2.405-35). The speech details how Pyrrhus revenges his father's death by killing Priam, establishing a parallel with Hamlet's promise to the Ghost to revenge his own father's murder. The speech is also meta-theatrical with its purpose being to demonstrate the actor's 'quality' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F3r). So emotionally convincing is the Player's recital of the speech that Hamlet is prompted to bemoan his own inability to take similar revenge on the King. In self-loathing Hamlet observes that: 'I . . . peake, / Like John-a-dreames, vnpregnant of my cause, / And can say nothing' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F4v). Regarding Hamlet's complaint about his inability to speak, Thompson and Taylor note that 'it is perhaps ironic that he wants to imitate the Player rather than Pyrrhus' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 2.2.504n). With his 358 speeches ranging in length from one to sixty lines, making the role the largest in Shakespeare's canon, Hamlet's complaint that he can 'say nothing' is doubly ironic.

The staging of the inner play, *The Mousetrap*, establishes three likenesses of kings: the silent monarch of the Dumb Show, the Player King, and the observing 'real' King. This scenario engages us with the theatrical nature of being a monarch, and magnifies the meta-nature of *Hamlet*. Both player-kings enact their own deaths, re-enacting the regicide as described by the Ghost at (1.5.55-91). Their performances are watched by the King, who is in turn being observed by Hamlet and Horatio, who are in turn being observed (along with the rest of the characters) by the audience in the theatre. According to Anne Righter this intricate interplay of performance and observation blurs the boundaries between theatregoer and performer:

As the "reality" of the play world opens out into a further level of illusion, the audience in the theatre is confronted with an image of itself in the persons of

those actors who sit as spectators within the play. The real and the fictitious

audiences are drawn together . . . (Righter 1962, 73)

Righter also suggests that there is a parallel between the king portrayed on stage and the

reigning monarch of the day: 'Not only is the actor on the stage committed in the world of

illusion to play the king, but the living monarch may see in the player's performance a true

dimension of kingship itself' (Righter 1962, 102). In the case of *Hamlet* (and common

throughout Shakespeare) the actor playing the King is committed to playing a monarch who

is struggling with kingship, in this case as the King is 'crippled by a consciousness of blood-

guilt' (Righter 1962, 109). Righter suggests that this tension, between the individual and the

title they hold reinforces the actor-like nature of kingship. Righter observes that: 'The

contrast between the individual and the part which he assumed at the moment of coronation is

so obvious that it evokes the image of the actor' (Righter 1962, 109). If we imagine James I

watching a performance of *Hamlet*, by the suitably titled King's Men, the presentation of *The

Mousetrap* establishes multiple layers of monarchy, pretence and likeness. Here, the King is

also a likeness of Hamlet, whose entire narrative is a struggle to find peace with, and

understanding of, his role.

In 4.3 Rosencrantz and Guildenstern interrogate Hamlet regarding the

whereabouts of Polonius's corpse. Rosencrantz demands: 'My Lord, you must tell vs where

the body is, and go with vs to the King' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K1v). Hamlet replies with a

riddle: 'The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body' (Shakespeare 1604-5,

K2r). Thompson and Taylor note here that some 'editors suggest an allusion to the theory of

the king's two bodies (natural and political), whereby Hamlet casts doubt on the legitimacy

of this King, implying that his kingship does not reside in his physical body' (Thompson and

Taylor 2006a, 4.2.25-6). Ernst Kantorowitcz suggests that the theory of the king's two

bodies dates back to the Medieval era, and that it envisages two discrete aspects that

simultaneously exist within a king. One of these is an ideal Platonic form of kingship that 'is

invisible and immortal' (Kantorowicz 1957, 5). This aspect is an 'absolute perfection' of

kingship and is believed to co-exist alongside the second part, which is the king's mortal,

imperfect body. The immortal aspect is seen as owning a superior status to the mortal aspect

(Kantorowicz 1957, 9). A parallel can be noted here with the New Bibliography's perception

of the ideal Platonic *Hamlet* standing some removes from the imperfect physical editions that

have replaced each other in succession down the years.

We have seen here how multiple images of kings develop the philosophical themes of likeness and representation in the play. We see how a Platonic perspective of kingship was embedded into early modern culture and how king was perceived as existing as a duality, containing an idealised immortal aspect that was synthesised with a mortal and vulnerable physical body. The implied presence of multiple kings also echoes the theme of nebulous boundaries between different entities, which we shall also find in our study of the Ghost. We can see a parallel between the theory of the king's two bodies and Duns Scotus's theory of the individuating *haecceitas* co-existing alongside the universal human nature with both theories imagining the individual consisting of two fundamental constituents. A parallel can also be noted here with the New Bibliography's perception of the ideal Platonic *Hamlet* and the imperfect physical editions that have replaced each other in succession down the years. The longstanding political problem of 'where is the king?' is of the same kind as the longstanding editorial problem of 'where is the play?', and the former being asked within the latter gives us sight of an author for whom these intellectual problems were of deep and enduring interest.

The Ghost and its nature

As examined, Duns Scotus suggests that each human contains two defining metaphysical constituents: the common universal essence, and the *haecceity* or 'thisness', which gives the person their uniqueness. If we examine the text to ascertain a sense of particularity regarding the Ghost's ontological nature we find a range of contrasting descriptions. Some terms attributed to the Ghost imply an entity that is to some degree comprehensible, such as 'poore Ghost' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2r). However the Ghost is also referred to in terms that imply something beyond comprehension or specificity, such as: 'this thing' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v), and 'This present obiect' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r). Here I will examine the Ghost, focusing on its philosophical, theological and metaphysical connotations, and its function in the play as a symbol or likeness of Hamlet, God, and the profession of acting.

In *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Stephen Greenblatt observes that when Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*, any 'legitimate, sanctioned belief in ghosts' (Greenblatt 2002, 152) had gone. The Catholic doctrine of purgatory had also been rejected during the Reformation, along with 'the whole elaborate system of suffrages, offerings, chantries, requiem masses and other

means to assist the dead in their pain' (Greenblatt 2002, 133). Greenblatt suggests however that ghosts hadn't been completely banished from society, but had (significantly aided by Shakespeare's canon) found a new resting place: the early modern stage.

The Ghost of Old Hamlet appears in three scenes, but its presence haunts the entire play. A notable issue regarding the Ghost is the contradictory natures and titles that are attributed to it. Throughout the text it is referred to as: 'this thing'; 'this dreaded sight'; 'it'; 'this apparision' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v); 'image' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B2r); 'illusion'; 'obiect' [object] (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r); 'This spirit' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3v); 'him'; 'the King your father'; 'a figure like your father' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2r); 'My fathers spirit' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3r); 'dead corse [corpse]'; 'King'; 'royall Dane'; '*Hamlet*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v); 'poore Ghost' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2r); 'honest Ghost' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4r); 'boy'; 'trupenny'; 'this fellowe in the Sellerige'; 'olde Mole'; 'perturbed spirit'; 'a stranger' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v); 'a deale [devil]' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G1r); 'a damned ghost' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G4v); 'th'incorporall ayre' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v); 'My father'; and 'This bodilesse creation' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4r). Notable and contrasting images here include descriptions of the Ghost as Hamlet's father, the devil, incorporeal, a fantasy, indeterminable, a king, and a dead body.

Traditionally, according to Jean-Claude Schmitt (Greenblatt 2002, 104), in order to ascertain a ghost's nature and motives, it was questioned by a 'scholler' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v). Greenblatt records how the spirit would be cross examined with six key questions (Greenblatt 2002, 103). Translated from Latin, these questions read: Who?, What?, Why?, Which?, How? And Therefore? Horatio's attempt to discover the ontological nature of the Ghost, through his question 'What art thou' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v), is an example from the above list, which also bears resemblance to Aristotle's category of 'Substance', which we shall examine in detail, below.

Regarding both the Ghost's nature and the character's association with other figures in the play, we see that a central motif that arises is the issue of likeness. The Ghost is described as being like Old Hamlet, as in the description: 'a figure like your father' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2r). There are also intimations in the text that the Ghost is like Hamlet. Textual associations and parallels even imply an ontological overlap between both characters. In parallel closet scenes (one described by Ophelia in 2.174-197, the other enacted in 3.4.100-134), Hamlet and the Ghost are mirrored as ghostly figures horrifying

their witnesses. Ophelia describes Hamlet appearing 'pale' and 'As if he had been loosed out of hell' (Shakespeare 1604-5, E2r) creating a parallel to the 'fires' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v) from which the 'pale' Ghost has temporarily escaped to visit Hamlet, (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v). Both closet scenes take care to describe how the Ghost and Hamlet make their exits through the doorway, with Ophelia's story of Hamlet recalling how 'out adoores he went' (Shakespeare 1604-5, E2r), and Hamlet's observation of the Ghost noting: 'Looke where he goes, euen now out at the portall' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4r). Why an 'incorporall' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v) entity such as the Ghost would need to use a doorway is paradoxical, but might have its explanation in the mechanics of stagecraft. Hamlet's statement 'I am dead *Horatio*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, O1r) also offers an ironic parallel to the conversation between the seemingly dead Old Hamlet and his son at 1.5.1-90. These parallels suggest a blurring of the ontological boundaries between the two Hamlets, both one step removed from the status of monarch. Here there is a suggestion that it is Hamlet junior who is the one who has assumed his 'noble fathers person' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3r).

Not only do we find a parallel in the text between the Ghost and Hamlet, we also find an implied parallel between the Ghost and the profession of the actor. Greenblatt suggests that this parallel was conscious in Shakespeare's mind, stating that: 'More than anyone of his age, Shakespeare grasped that there were powerful links between his art and the haunting of spirits' (Greenblatt 2002, 157). An explicit example of this comparison can be found in Prospero's epilogue concluding *The Tempest*'s short inner play: 'These our actors / As I foretold you, were all spirits, and / Are melted into air, into thin air' (Shakespeare 1989, 1.4.148-50). In conversation with Horatio, Hamlet uses a theatrical analogy when planning the evening's meeting on the battlements. Imagining the Ghost's appearance Hamlet states: 'If it assume my noble fathers person, / Ile speake to it' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3r). When they meet that evening, Hamlet is told by the Ghost that 'I am thy fathers spirit' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v). Hamlet's initial response is to believe the spirit, stating that: 'It is an honest Ghost' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4r). However, Hamlet soon doubts the sincerity of the Ghost stating that 'The spirit that I haue seene / May be a deale [devil]' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G1r). Hamlet is aware (being something of an expert on the craft of acting) that just to 'assume' another person is not necessarily to 'be' the person assumed.

Again, Shakespeare is encouraging us to contemplate just how definite or nebulous the boundaries between seemingly different entities might be. Above we saw the implication of multiple kings somehow overlapping, and here a similar feature resonates with

the Ghost. Again we might notice a parallel with the history of the text, where multiple and different versions of the play, in both print and performance, are perceived as being both the same and also different things. This textual motif, its bibliographical parallel and philosophical resonance has not been given appropriate weight and attention in previous studies.

If the Ghost is a 'thing', then it is not alone in the play. Lewis points out that 'Indeterminate entities proliferate: there are twenty-eight occurrences of "thing" or "things", and "something" occurs fifteen times. Things appear to exist, but as it is impossible to say what they are, their reality cannot be taken for granted' (Lewis 2017, 38). The text provides examples of 'things' that remain unspecified, as well as known entities reduced to the status of a 'thing'. An example of the former can be seen in Marcellus's warning that 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmarke' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2r), which leaves the exact nature of the 'thing' in question ambiguous. An example of the latter is evidenced in Hamlet's statement that 'The King is a thing' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K2r). According to Thompson and Taylor this observation serves to insultingly reduce the monarch to the status of an object (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 4.2.26-8n). As Lewis points out, although Hamlet tells Horatio that 'There are more things in heauen and earth *Horatio* / Then are dream't of in your philosophie' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v) neither 'Hamlet nor *Hamlet* can describe them' (Lewis 2017, 38). Such indeterminacy has led Watson to describe *Hamlet* as being '*arguably* the most epistemologically skeptical play of all' (Watson 2006, 78). If, however, Hamlet could describe all the 'things' that lie beyond the dreams of Horatio's philosophy, their value would be subjective according to the Folio *Hamlet* text, in which Hamlet states that there is nothing (no thing) 'either good or bad, but thinking makes it so' (Shakespeare 1623b, F1v). This proliferation of indeterminacy challenges us to contemplate the limits of our knowledge and the way this relates to both language and the cognitive process, which will be examined in Chapter Four.

In 3.4 when Hamlet visits his mother's closet, the Ghost returns but the text implies that it is seen only by Hamlet, whose eyes are fixed 'On him, on him' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v). The Queen says she sees 'Nothing at all' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v). For Lewis, this description signals a shift in the Ghost's ontological nature, suggesting that 'its indeterminacy has shaded into annihilation' (Lewis 2017, 38), which might be read as establishing a parallel between the Ghost and God. According to Kenny, the Medieval philosopher John Scotus Eriugena saw the term 'nothing' as a suitable title for God.

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Eriugena believed that 'God does not fit into any of Aristotle's ten categories of being' (Kenny 2005, 32). For Eriugena, an appropriate word to describe the divine, who is doing 'something better than existing', is 'Nothing' (Kenny 2005, 32).

If we consider the implied merging of the characters of Hamlet and the Ghost, along with the implied God-like nature of the Ghost, and the suggestion that the Ghost is a distinct entity whilst simultaneously being Old Hamlet, then we might read from this a parallel with the Holy Trinity. This image is crystalised in 1.4.39-45 when Hamlet first addresses the Ghost, establishing the presence of 'father', son and 'spirit', three and one, united as '*Hamlet*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v). Here we are reminded of Ockham's belief that in the case of the Holy Trinity, uniquely, universals do exist. Whether the trinity of the three early *Hamlet* texts share a common nature is, as examined, a point of contention amongst scholars.

Throughout the text, repeated attempts are made to establish the Ghost's ontological nature. So broad is the range and scope of these investigations that they can be aligned with the fields established in Aristotle's ten categories, which, to recap, are as follows:

> what (or Substance), how large (that is, Quantity), what sort of thing (that is, Quality), related to what (or Relation), where (that is, Place), when (or Time), in what attitude (Posture, Position), how circumstanced (State or Condition), how active, what doing (or Action), how passive, what suffering (Affection), (Aristotle 1938, 19)

Here, I will examine the text for references to the Ghost's nature that show a significant relation to the fields established in Aristotle's *Categories*.

Horatio's question 'What art thou' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v) is an attempt to uncover what Aristotle would consider to be the spirit's 'Substance' or 'Quality'. The Ghost's initial silence leaves the issue unresolved, but when it does offer the response that 'I am thy fathers spirit' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v), the ambiguous nature of the statement leaves the matter unresolved. As we have seen, suggestions as to what the Ghost is also include contradictory and ambiguous terms including: 'illusion' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r); 'dead corse [corpse]' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v); 'This bodilesse creation' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4r); 'a figure like your father' and 'the King' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2r). Whatever its substance or quality (or substances and qualities) may be, they defy categorisation through

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their implied multiple and contradictory natures. This is most explicitly demonstrated in the closet scene of 3.4, when the Ghost is engaged in conversation with Hamlet whilst being perceived as 'Nothing at all' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v) by the Queen.

For Aristotle, one's emotional or biological inner state ('Affection') could be ascertained through the observation of changes in skin tone. In the *Categories* Aristotle states that 'There are numerous changes of colour that clearly arise from affections. When men are ashamed, then they blush; when alarmed, they turn pale' (Aristotle 1938, 69). Hamlet pays particular attention to the Ghost's skin tone, asking Horatio whether it was 'Pale, or red?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2v), and later, during the closet scene, informing his mother to observe 'how pale he glares' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v). Horatio also notes an internal or moral aspect regarding the Ghost, suggesting to Barnardo and Marcellus that 'it started like a guilty thing, / Vpon a fearefull summons' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r).

Attempts to establish what the Ghost's 'Relation' might be, either to Hamlet or its surroundings, result in further contradictions. Hamlet's suggestion that the Ghost is his 'father' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v), momentarily reduces the entity to a single comprehendible definition. However, as the Ghost is described in the same speech as possibly being a 'dead corse', a 'spirit of health' and a 'goblin' it yet again evades categorisation or definition (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v). With regard to the Ghost's spatial location, or 'Place', the text offers the specific site of 'vppon the platforme' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2v) for its sighting in Act one. However, once it appears, it is also acknowledged as being 'th'incorporall ayre' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v), and '*Hic, et* vbique' [here and everywhere] (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v), which suggest something beyond spatial limitations or boundaries. This therefore makes the Ghost's size or 'Quantity' also immeasurable.

As we have seen, the Ghost's temporal location ('Time') appears to be beyond specificity, existing in eternity, and therefore beyond the limitations of time. Yet the Ghost is aware of time passing, since it comes to Gertrude's chamber to chide Hamlet for being tardy. The forms of 'Action' attributed to the Ghost include staring, departing and gesturing. Hamlet observes to his mother 'how pale he glares' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v), and demands of Horatio if it 'fixt his eyes vpon you' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2v), to which Horatio replies in the affirmative. As we have already seen, particular interest is paid to the manner in which the Ghost exits the stage. Hamlet observes how it 'steales away' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4r) from his mother's closet, Horatio recalls how it 'shrunk in hast away' (Shakespeare 1604-5,

C2v) from the platform, and Marcellus notes that 'It faded on the crowing of the Cock.' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r). Its most substantial action however is speaking. In 1.5 the Ghost has eighty-seven lines, and in 3.4 a further six lines. All of these lines (apart from 1.5.149, 1.5.155, 1.5.160, which are spoken after the Ghost has left the stage and might be heard by Horatio and Marcellus) are for Hamlet's ears only, as the spirit refuses to speak to the sentinels in 1.1, and the Queen states that she experiences no sensory awareness of the Ghost in the closet scene.

With regard to the Ghost's 'State' or 'Condition', it is observed as being 'very pale' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2v), and 'in compleat steele' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v). If the actor playing the Ghost does appear in armour, as the second comment implies, then this raises complex philosophical issues regarding the Ghost's physical limitations. For example, is the armour of 'compleat steel' and the Ghost's 'tronchion' [truncheon] (B1v 1.2.206) of the same metaphysical nature as the ethereal spirit? Descriptions of the Ghost's 'Posture' or 'Position' include: 'With martiall stauke' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B2r), 'Armed at point, exactly *Capapea*' [head to foot] (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2r), as well as the complex and ambiguous terms 'as the ayre, invulnerable' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r), and 'such a questionable shape' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v).

Here we have seen how despite repeated attempts to define its nature, attempts that encompass all ten of Aristotle's *Categories*, the Ghost remains a metaphysical enigma, like Eriugena's God. Arguably two categories are somewhat measurable: Affection and Action. However, these measurements are thrown into some doubt when the full range of descriptions of the Ghost's nature are considered (listed above). Can 'the ayre' be pale, and can a 'dead corse' talk? This examination of the Ghost's nature, through the lens of Aristotle's *Categories*, affords us an original insight into *Hamlet*, previously unobserved.

Coda.

We have seen here how the theme of likeness, a central issue regarding the problem of universals, is a dominant textual motif and one that the play's editorial and performance history has also been concerned with. The King's likening of Ophelia and Laertes to paintings serves to establish *Hamlet* as a meta-study of art where the world is examined and discovered through likenesses. The arts are represented as being incapable of capturing the depth of human experience, and simultaneously as being the vehicle through which we might most fully comprehend nature. The King's comparisons of Ophelia and

Laertes to paintings suggest the Platonic perspective that imitation in the arts fails to bring us closer to a true understanding of the world. Hamlet's observations on the craft of acting imply the opposite. They offer the Aristotelian perspective, which suggests that it is through the performative arts that nature might be truly revealed. The motif of likeness also resonates with the issue of the text's divided nature in the forms of Q1, Q2 and F, as well as further contrasting editions and productions. Likeness is central to early modern perspectives on epistemology, with internal mental images or copies playing a fundamental role in humans' cognitive processing. The role of the imagination is also found to be significant in the actual creation or temporary completion of *Hamlet* each time it is experienced. This particular configuration of analysis, observing the way in which the play engages with the issue of likeness, and how this resonates throughout the problem of universals emerges only when we consider the play in the light of the precise philosophical theories of which its author is likely to have been aware.

Our examination of the Ghost reveals the presentation of an ontologically ambiguous entity and the philosophical issue of how we categorise things. The Ghost is referred to as being incorporeal and corporeal, as being both restricted by time and beyond temporal limitations, and as being ubiquitous. The character of the Ghost implies parallels with Hamlet and with the profession of acting. So wide ranging is the text's inquiry into the Ghost's nature that it encompasses all ten of Aristotle's *Categories*, however it remains largely beyond the scope of Aristotle's study. From early modern perspectives this therefore establishes a parallel between the Ghost and God, both being immeasurable, and beyond the limits of nature, language, knowledge and metaphysics. Momentarily, when the spirit, the father and the son are united on the platform sharing the single title of 'Hamlet' the concept of the Holy Trinity is established. The Ghost, like the actors, is attributed a variety of titles or roles. Its entrances and exits are documented in some detail, and those who witness it appear to suspend their disbelief, momentarily, enabling themselves to blur the distinction between fantasy and reality.

The epistemological and linguistic uncertainty that surrounds the Ghost highlights the epistemological uncertainty that underpins the play, and that lies at the heart of the problem of universals. Similarly, attempting to pin down exactly what or where *Hamlet* is proves very difficult. According to Foakes, its creation is a shared experience, completed during the moments of reading or observing, and constantly therefore in a state of flux and subjectivity. This complicates the issue of ascertaining who is responsible for the work and

how best to represent it in print and performance. Dawkins's idea of the meme and Plato's theory of Forms offer us ways of comprehending how *Hamlet* and Hamlet exist in the public psyche as a seemingly stable, consistent, and singular concept in the face of divergent editions and productions of the play. Barthes's observation that 'a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures' resonates regarding *Hamlet*. If we link this idea to Foakes's theory on perception, we see a lineage from Saxo Grammaticus to Francois de Belleforest, to Shakespeare and his fellow actors and stationers, to future editors, actors and directors and finally to all readers and audience members, who all share some responsibility for the apparently ongoing creation of *Hamlet* .

We have seen that kingship is a prominent theme throughout the text with multiple representations of monarchs serving to suggest a theatrical aspect to kingship. The performance of *The Mousetrap* establishes layers of monarchical pretence. Here, the King observes the Player King as keenly as Hamlet observes the King's behaviour. The concept of the king's two bodies, implied in the text, establishes a Platonic universal perfection of kingship, which mirrors the concept of the ideal *Hamlet* text sought by the New Bibliography. The King is also likened to a role that an actor might play. The tension, established here, between the concepts of likeness and authenticity resonates regarding the problem of the three early *Hamlet* texts and all subsequent editions.

We have found in our examination of the text an array of perspectives that show parallels to both the Realist and Nominalist views with regard to the problem of universals. The Ghost is referred to as being so 'like' Old Hamlet, that Hamlet addresses him as 'father' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v). We might suggest that this implies the Realist perspective that an extreme likeness between two entities is the result of shared metaphysical constituents. However, moments before this, Hamlet refers to the spirit as a 'goblin' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v) evidencing epistemological scepticism and the idea that similar looking things do not necessarily belong to the same ontological family.

We have seen that the characters might be considered as being essentially and primarily symbolic figures that represent multiple concepts, whilst seeming to have metaphysical boundaries that overlap with other characters. The play in print and performance also challenges us to consider how a seemingly single entity can exist in a plethora of forms and natures, and how or whether we should attempt to classify editions in relation to each other. The repeated use of symbolism and ambiguity in the text, along with

repeated sub-textual meta-theatrical motifs, blurs the boundaries between between fantasy and reality. Repeatedly the text is concerned with the external appearance of something and how this might relate to its hidden inner (and seemingly more 'real') nature. This establishes a strong parallel between *Hamlet* and the problem of universals and between the world of the play and the story of its texts. Darwin's conceptual framework regarding evolution is a useful reference for our bibliographical and textual analysis, as is Dawkins's theory of the meme. The whereabouts of the dead lawyer's quiddities remains a mystery, existing either as abstract universal entities, as mental constructs, or merely in name only. For Aristotle, the lawyer's quiddities disintegrated when his body did, whereas for Plato they are eternal perfect abstractions. For Hamlet, like Porphyry and Boethius before him, the question of their nature remains unresolved. Similarly unresolved, and disappointingly so for Zachary Lesser (see above) is the nature and relationship of the three early *Hamlet* texts.

Those engaged with Shakespeare and *Hamlet*, like Darwin's engagement with the natural world, have their attention in two directions. On the one hand we look back to re-connect with the origin of our species, attempting to access what we believe to be the original or very first version. Simultaneously we find ourselves engaged in the process of making something new, whether that be an edition or a production of the play. These creations carry a different sense of the term 'original', implying a thing never done before. The juxtaposition of this retrospective and forward-thinking activity is evidenced in the marketing of Branagh's 1996 *Hamlet* film. The DVD jacket promises the 'first-ever full-text film' of the play (Branagh 1996). The 'full-text' aspect of this promise implies the complete original version as Shakespeare wanted or produced it. However, ironically, a conflated Q2/F version of the play (that the film delivers) is a result of artificial selection that, as we have seen, post-dates Shakespeare's life. The promise of a 'first-ever' aspect of the work reminds us of the Darwinian parallel we have noted, where the 'evolved organism' (Lesser 2015, 175) that is *Hamlet* remains in a state of flux because of our interference with its nature. Each *Hamlet* is inevitably a 'first-ever' if, as Foakes suggests, it is the observer who completes its creation.

Our philosophical analysis of the play through the lens of the problem of universals affords us a hitherto unexamined aspect of the work. Our examination of the issues of likeness and the arts, the blurring of ontological boundaries between things, the presentation of multiple kings, the tension between a thing's external appearance and its inner essence, the momentary image of the Holy Trinity, and the Aristotelian reading of the

Ghost's nature, all framed within the problem of universals, offers us new philosophical insight into the play.

Chapter Four. *Hamlet* and the Relationship between Words and Truth

We have seen that the Globe theatre, as its name implies, represented a microcosmic model of the universe, with its canopy signifying heaven (Gurr 1980, 121), the under-stage symbolising hell (de Grazia 2007, 191), and the platform between the two serving as the place where humans/actors spend their days 'crauling' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G3r) and talking. Theatre, by its very nature, is dominated by talking and language, the attribute that according to Charles Darwin 'has justly been considered as one of the chief distinctions between man and the lower animals' (Darwin 2004, 106), and it is this attribute that shall here be the focus of my attention. From our analysis of the subject of Universals we saw that Nominalists perceive them as existing in name only, whether those words be spoken, written or mental. Here we shall examine what words appear to be doing in the play.

Of all of Shakespeare's characters, Hamlet is the most verbose, speaking 11,973 words in Q2. Much of his dialogue is concerned with a search for meaning, and his insightful observations have continued to intrigue the world's greatest thinkers. Hamlet is described by Friedrich Nietzsche as having 'penetrated into the true nature of things' (Nietzsche 1995, 23). Harold Bloom even raises the protagonist's comprehension of human nature as being above history's great philosophers, suggesting that 'Hamlet, more than any philosopher, actually makes us see the world in other ways, deeper ways than we may want to see it' (Bloom 1999, 426). If profound insights into the nature of the human condition are somehow revealed through *Hamlet*, then the question arises as to how the play represents one of the key relationships in that condition, the relationship between language and the truth. This question becomes even more nuanced when we acknowledge the fictional nature of the text, and its meta-theatrical content, including an inner play and observations on the theatre and acting. The issue of ascertaining the veracity of statements (such as Q1's title-page claim that it is by Shakespeare and that it has been performed in the universities of Cambridge and Oxford), and the issue of the authority of the three early *Hamlet* texts also tie the themes of truth and language to the play's bibliographical narrative.

In 4.3 the King questions Hamlet on the whereabouts of Polonius's body, whom Hamlet has just killed:

King. Now *Hamlet*, where's *Polonius*?

> *Ham.* At supper.
>
> *King.* At supper, where.
>
> *Ham.* Not where he eates, but where a is eaten, a certaine conuacation of politique
> wormes are een at him: your worme is your onely Emperour for dyet
>
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, K2r)

In his analysis of this passage, and in particular the close proximity of the words 'Emperor', 'worms', and 'diet' Stephen Greenblatt highlights a possible reference to the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther, stating that 'Scholars duly note the allusion to the Diet of Worms, where Luther's doctrines were officially condemned by the Holy Roman Emperor . . .' (Greenblatt 2002, 241). Regarding this passage, Joshua Landy suggests that Shakespeare is 'making absolutely sure we're thinking about Luther' (Landy 2018, 158). Analysing the impact of the allusion Greenblatt suggests that

> . . . its principal function, I think, is to echo and reinforce the theological and, specifically, the Eucharistic subtext, not only in the bitter jest that was just spoken but in the reverse riddle that follows: "A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm." (Greenblatt 2002, 241)

The 'Eucharistic subtext' that Greenblatt is referring to centres on the theological debate about the transubstantiation of the bread and wine during the Catholic Mass. As we shall see, Luther rejected the Catholic Church's beliefs about the Eucharist. Behind the contrasting beliefs of Luther and the Church stood differing conceptual frameworks that arose from analysis of the same scriptural text 'This is my body' (Luke 22:19), which shall be examined below. Shakespeare's use of the location of Wittenberg as the university town in which Hamlet and Horatio are students (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1r) further serves to associate the protagonist with Luther, who became a professor of theology there in 1512, and whose life, like Shakespeare's and Hamlet's, is dominated by language.

The above analysis exposes some of the complexities of language that are addressed in the play. As we shall see, closely associated with language are the subjects of thinking, meaning, truth, representation, and action. The following will be a reading of the second Quarto of *Hamlet* in light of an initial examination into the major Western philosophical and theological theories concerning the relationship between language and

truth. Throughout this chapter I will reference the second Quarto by signature, and citations from the text will be in the original early modern spelling. Act and scene numbers and character names will be taken from the Arden 2006 edition.

In his works *Cratylus* and *Phaedrus* Plato examines the nature of language, focusing on the value and meaning of names, and the art and impact of rhetoric. C.D.C. Reeve suggests that 'names' is here 'a category that includes proper names, common nouns, adjectives, participles, and infinitives' (Plato 1998, xi). In the dialogue *Cratylus* Plato explores two contrasting theories that explain how things attain their names. In one suggestion, later to become known as the Naturalist theory, there is a direct relationship between the inner essence of a particular object, and its name. The character Hermogenes suggests: 'there is a correctness of name for each thing, one that belongs to it by nature . . . there is a natural correctness of names' (Plato 1998, 1). Socrates suggests that 'it's the work of a rule setter . . . to make a name' and that this person should be supervised by 'a dialectician' whom Socrates defines as being 'someone who knows how to ask and answer questions' (Plato 1998, 14–15). A conundrum here is deciding on who these rule setters and dialecticians are. As we have seen, Alfred. W. Pollard and G. I. Duthie were once afforded the appropriate status to practically re-name Q1 *Hamlet* as 'The "Bad" Quarto' (examined in Chapter Two). This view, and name, are now largely rejected. This demonstrates the Heraclitean belief that everything is in a state of flux, which is a philosophy that was later adopted by Plato (Aristotle 1933, 43). Heraclitus (c. 500 BCE) proposed that 'everything flows like a river' (Laertius 1925, II:378), and we should therefore be sceptical about epistemological certainty. Anthony Kenny suggests that for Heraclitus 'it is change that is the Way of Truth, and stability that is the Way of seeming' (Kenny 2004, 204). As we have seen, *Hamlet* in all its forms appears to be in a perpetual state of flux, whilst also seeming to be a fixed single entity.

If the fluid status of Q1 subtly evidences the philosophy of Heraclitus, the flux-like nature of language itself is an even more vivid example. Richard Dawkins observes that 'Geoffrey Chaucer could not hold a conversation with a modern Englishman' because the form and content of their shared language would be unrecognizable to each other even though every intervening generation could speak with its predecessor (Dawkins 1976, 189). Dawkins states that 'Language seems to "evolve"' (Dawkins 1976, 189). Charles Darwin had previously stated something similar suggesting that 'The survival or preservation of certain favoured words in the struggle for existence is natural selection' (Darwin 2004, 113). Darwin

suggests that ' . . . natural selection necessarily acts by the selected form having some advantage in the struggle for life over other forms' (Darwin 2009, 117). This implies that English has been evolving in a way that is independent of humankind's control or conscious interference. (The implications of this idea, in regard to how it impacts on Shakespeare study and editorial practices, is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it appears to be a significant and possibly under-researched area). As we have seen in our citations of the early *Hamlet* texts, the play that left Shakespeare's hand evidences and utilises a different variety or sub-species of the English language than the one now used in modern editions published today and in this thesis.

From this perspective, *Hamlet* is evolving, and doing so in a way that is beyond our authority or control. In light of our earlier examination of the theories of Gurr, Richard Dutton and Gary Taylor regarding maximal and minimal texts, extended court performances, and revisions by Shakespeare, *Hamlet* has never been a fixed entity. This is further established by Egan's examination of the seven extant exemplars of Q2 *Hamlet*. Here Egan observes that there are textual disagreements even between different exemplars within the same edition, known as press variants. According to Egan, some of these variants offer the conundrum where different words are used but both make good poetical sense rather than being printing errors that produce nonsense (Egan 2012, 344). This adds to the complex task of establishing a single text of *Hamlet,* or an authorial text, or even a single text of Q2. That a modern edition of *Hamlet* stands at such a distance, linguistically, from the early texts, must also add to and complicate the debate about the attribution of authorship examined in the previous chapter.

The question then arises as to whether the Platonic Form of a particular thing, for example *Hamlet*, is also in a state of flux. In *Cratylus* Socrates examines the fixity of Forms and suggests that ' . . . if there are such things as the beautiful, the good, and each one of the things that are, it doesn't appear to me that these things can be at all like flowings or motions' (Plato 1998, 95) therefore establishing a state where all things on earth are subject to change, but Platonic Forms are not. This establishes a tension with the previously acknowledged Heraclitean theory of change, which Aristotle tells us Plato adhered to.

Plato's *Cratylus* also offers a contrasting view to the Naturalist theory, with the suggestion that names are nothing more than arbitrary labels assigned by society. Describing what later became known as the Conventionalist theory, Hermogenes suggests that 'the

correctness of names is [not] determined by anything besides convention and agreement' (Plato 1998, 2). Later in the dialogue the Naturalist theory is examined further, and the character Cratylus suggests that it contains an element of divinity proposing that 'a more than human power gave the first names to things, so that they are necessarily correct' (Plato 1998, 91).

Cratylus establishes an association between names and Plato's theory of Forms, examined in a previous chapter. In likening the work of a blacksmith to that of a skilled linguist, Socrates states that ' . . . different blacksmiths, who are making the same tool for the same type of work, don't all make it out of the same iron. But as long as they give it the same form -- even if that form is embodied in different iron -- the tool will be correct' (Plato 1998, 13). The implication here is that something can be named or described appropriately even when using a variety of different words or even, arguably, languages.

There is an implication in *Cratylus* that one's knowledge of an object's nature is related to one's knowledge of its name. Socrates suggests that 'anyone who knows a thing's name also knows the thing' (Plato 1998, 88). However, *Cratylus* also offers a contrasting perspective, suggesting a disparity between an object's name and its nature. Socrates informs Cratylus that ' . . . it's one thing to be a name and another to be the thing it names . . . a name is an imitation of a thing' (Plato 1998, 78). Examining the imitative nature of names, Socrates likens a name to a painting, suggesting that an 'appropriate' painted likeness of an object is like the giving of a suitable name, which might be described as being 'correct and *true*' (Plato 1998, 79). Socrates suggests that a poorly painted likeness, or the inappropriate designation of a name, would therefore be considered to be somehow '*false*' (Plato 1998, 79). As we have seen, however, the seeming appropriateness of a name can change over time, as in the reputation of Q1. Also, observed earlier, Q1 offers two different names: 'The Tragicall Historie of HAMLET Prince of Denmarke', on the opening page (Shakespeare 1603, B1r), and 'The Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke' as its running header (Shakespeare 1603, B3r). A further name given to Q1, and since rejected, is 'bad'.

Reflecting on the agency of words, Socrates suggests that there is an innate potential power in them and that 'someone who knows about names looks to their force or power' (Plato 1998, 21). Those who 'know' about names, are, according to Socrates, 'the kind of craftsman most rarely found among human beings' (Plato 1998, 11). However, Socrates concludes the dialogue with the suggestion that there is an epistemological limit to

the study of names, remarking that 'anyone who investigates things by taking names as his guides and looking into their meanings runs no small risk of being deceived' (Plato 1998, 88).

With regard to the relationship between speech and truth, Socrates states that the truth of a statement is of less importance than what the listener might deem to be 'probable' (Plato 2005, 59):

> . . . no-one cares in the slightest for the truth about these things but only for what is convincing; and what is convincing is what is *probable*, which is what the person who means to speak scientifically must pay attention to… the *probable* is what must be pursued, and that means frequently saying goodbye to the truth. (Plato 2005, 59)

For Socrates, the skilled rhetorician may not need to be concerned with speaking the truth, but she will require an understanding of it. Socrates states that one can only establish what is 'probable' or a likeness to the truth if one has 'a precise knowledge of the likeness and unlikeness of the things that are' (Plato 2005, 45). So the skilled or 'scientifically' capable orator requires: an understanding of the truth of a subject, and the ability to portray a likeness of the truth.

Phaedrus concludes with Socrates's suggestion that the written word is inferior to speech, due to its fixed and inflexible nature. Writing is also deemed to hinder the faculty of memory, with Socrates suggesting that it 'will produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it' (Plato 2005, 62).   The fixed nature of a written word is likened by Socrates to a painting (Plato 2005, 63), and both are deemed limited or vulnerable because they cannot speak for themselves. Socrates suggests that when a text 'is ill-treated and unjustly abused, it always needs its father to help it' (Plato 2005, 63). Perhaps this is why Socrates is believed to have written nothing down (Morrison 2011, 1). Without Shakespeare, *Hamlet*'s father, here to clear things up, we struggle to ascertain whether Q1 represents a thing whose reputation has been unfairly 'ill treated' or an authorial *Hamlet* play, that has been 'unjustly abused'.

If the skilled rhetorician need not be concerned with speaking the truth, but does need to be familiar with it, then the question of how one is to ascertain the truth becomes significant. One of the earliest definitions of the truth can be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Here Aristotle states: 'To say that what is is not, or that what is not is, is false;

but to say that what is is, and what is not is not, is true; and therefore also he who says that a thing is or is not will say either what is true or what is false' (Aristotle 1935, I:201). Here, Aristotle is suggesting that the truth of a proposition consists in its correspondence with the apparent facts, and in the twentieth century this idea became known as the Correspondence theory. Opposition to this theory has highlighted the subjective manner in which we ascertain the facts, and that, as Simon Blackburn notes, 'we have no access to facts independently of the statements and beliefs that we hold' (Blackburn 1994, 81). This lack of objectivity was registered by Aristotle who prefaced his theory on the truth with the statement that 'appearance is not true in itself, but true to the percipient' (Aristotle 1935, I:197). Hamlet's comment in the Folio *Hamlet* that 'there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so' (Shakespeare 1623b, F1v) echoes Aristotle's observation. This sense of epistemological subjectivity is evidenced in the contrasting beliefs on Q1 proposed by Duthie and Terri Bourus.

The way in which the Bible establishes a relationship between language and truth is both complex and also fundamental to its philosophical and theological message. In the gospel of John we find the statement that 'In the beginning was that Word, and that Word was with God, and that Word was God' (The Bible 1599, John 1:1). We are later informed that through the arrival of Christ on earth, 'that Word was made flesh' (The Bible 1599, John 1:14). Christ is then described as being the 'Truth' (The Bible 1599, John 14:6). In the first book of Genesis, God speaks the heavens and the earth into existence, and duly names each part that he has created (The Bible 1599, Genesis 1:1-31). So here we have a theological conceptual framework that establishes God's speech as containing such agency that it can bring a physical world into existence. God and the Word are perceived as being inter-changeable, as are Christ and the Word and truth. The Word is also presented as existing in the form of a human body, through the earthly existence of Christ, and some names are deemed to have divine origins.

If God is established as being the Word, then the question arises in what language(s) are we to access this Word? In examining the nuanced task of translating the gospel of John 1:1 from Greek to English, John Barton and John Muddiman highlight the multiple meanings of the Greek verb '*ēn*' and the significance of this both theologically and linguistically. They write that 'The Greek verb ēn has three different meanings . . . an existential (the Word was), a relational (was with God), and an identificational (the Word was God)' (Barton and Muddiman 2001, 962). This gives some indication of the complexities of

Biblical exegesis, with its challenges of theological, philosophical and ontological interpretation, and matters of translation. If God's Word is the 'truth', which carries with it a sense of objectivity and singularity, how might one translate it into a language where the semantic and linguistic framework is different? That the words 'Gospel' and 'truth' have been synonymous since the thirteenth century, according to the *OED* (gospel, *n*.4), evidences the Bible's significance in Western culture, language and thinking.

A figure whose life was dominated by scriptural exegesis and translation, and whose presence subtly haunts *Hamlet*, is Martin Luther, a man obsessed with the subjects of language and the truth of God's message. He spent decades on Biblical exegesis in order to ascertain the essential meaning of God's word. He spoke four thousand sermons, leading William. R. Russell to remark that 'Martin Luther talked his way into human history' (Russell 2017, xii). A similar observation might be made of Hamlet. By translating the Bible into the German vernacular, Luther aimed to facilitate a form of direct contact between each individual and God. Luther also believed that the Word of God has agency, and to read it or to hear it is transformational, as he explains in the following statement about the sale of indulgencies:

> . . . the Words created heaven and earth and all things (Psalm 33:6) . . . I will preach it, teach it, write it . . . I disagreed with indulgencies and with all the papists . . . All I did was preach, teach, and write about God's Word . . . the Word hurt the papacy more than any prince or emperor ever had. I did nothing. The Word did everything. (Luther qtd in Russell 2017, 40)

Fred W. Meuser suggests that according to Luther speaking the Word of God was even more transformative than merely reading it. Meuser states that for Luther:

> Preaching always meant setting loose the Word of God in the Scriptures by speaking it heart to heart. Through the spoken living word, not primarily the word read privately or publicly, the Holy Spirit leads people to Christ, works repentance and faith, and bestows the gifts of the Spirit. Without the word spoken by a believer, the Gospel cannot do its work. (Meuser qtd in McKim 2003, 141)

Meuser's observation regarding the sincerity of the speaker suggests that the Word needs an extra ingredient (faith) in order to become fully effective when spoken. This carries a strong

parallel to the advice a director might give to an actor, and also mirrors J. L. Austin's theory on words and speaking (examined below).

With regard to his Biblical exegesis, scholars disagree on how literally Luther read the Word of God. Luther biographer Lyndal Roper writes that 'Because Luther himself never went in for biblical literalism, he tried to get to the heart of what the text was saying, and was not afraid to bring out what he thought were its emphases' (Roper 2017, 208). The implication here is that various subjective linguistic and semantic indirections were employed by Luther in order to find God's directions out. In contrast, Meuser suggests that 'Luther's great insight was that . . . We need not go beyond the Word to find God' (McKim 2003, 137). This might be interpreted to mean that a straightforward literal reading of scripture was what Luther preferred. It might, however, be read as evidencing Luther's rejection of the sacerdotal traditions of the Catholic Church, and his desire to remove the intermediaries whom he believed stood between the individual and God. The comments of Roper and Meuser also expose the often figurative nature of language when discussing textual analysis. Phrases such as getting 'to the heart' of a text, or to not 'go beyond the word' are difficult to explain, and appear to demonstrate metaphorical conceptual frameworks, which we shall examine in more detail below. Also exposed here is the issue of how meaning is established when a person reads a text. Below we shall look at Terence Hawkes's theory with regard to the issue of establishing meaning whilst engaging with Shakespeare's texts.

Luther rejected the pagan Aristotle, whose work, he believed, was incompatible with matters of scriptural revelation. An example of how Aristotelian logic was traditionally used to establish a particular Christian doctrine can be seen in the use of his *Categories* to explain the theory of transubstantiation. During the Catholic Mass, the priest recites the words of Christ in Luke 22:19, where Jesus offers bread to his disciples and claims 'This is my body' (The Bible 1599, Luke 22:19). Catholics believe that the bread and wine are literally transformed into the body and blood of Christ, whilst however retaining the appearance of bread and wine. John Barton points out 'literally' is appropriate but paradoxical in this instance as the bread and wine are believed to be transformed absolutely into Christ's body, but in appearance they still resemble bread and wine (Barton 2019, 388). In order to explain the nature of the bread and wine after the transubstantiation, Catholics hold that they retain their accidents after the transformation, whilst their essence had changed. 'Accidents' are the qualities of a thing that combine to establish the thing's 'substance', which is one of Aristotle's ten categories that describe the nature of all things in

existence. Traditional belief held that these accidents were distinct from an object's essence, which meant that the bread and wine retained their original appearance due to having retained their accidents, but their essential nature was miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Christ.

Catholic reasoning concerning the Eucharist was dismissed by Luther who stated that 'it is an absurd and unheard-of juggling with words, to understand "bread" to mean "the form, or accidents of bread," and "wine" to mean "the form, or accidents of wine"' (Martin Luther 2018, 91). So vehemently did Luther reject Aristotle that he went on to state that 'No one can become a theologian unless he becomes one without Aristotle' (Roper 2017, 105), whom he also labelled a 'blind heathen teacher' (Roper 2017, 69). Luther did believe however that the body of Christ is present in the Eucharist, but stated that this belief was based on faith as opposed to reason or even philosophy. Luther wrote that:

> . . . if I cannot fathom how the bread is the body of Christ, I will take my reason captive to the obedience of Christ . . . and clinging simply to His word, firmly believe not only that the body of Christ is in the bread, but that the bread is the body of Christ. (Martin Luther 2018, 92)

Here we might be reminded of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's idea of the suspension of disbelief (Coleridge 2014, 2:208) whilst engaging with the arts, examined below, which echoes Aristotle's work in his *Poetics.*

Here we have seen how the Christian and the classical traditions attempt to deal with the notion of 'the sign' both in the form of the word and in the form of the Eucharist. The nature of representation is called into question, as a noun's relationship to its referent is questioned and the consecrated bread is deemed to either stand for or become Christ's body. The question of what it means for one thing to stand in for another is especially pertinent in our analysis of drama, where actors represent characters, and Hamlet professes to 'know not seemes' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B4v). Below we shall see how more recent theories on language view the relationship between words, things, thoughts, truth, and understanding.

According to Terence Hawkes, Shakespeare and his contemporaries were on the cusp of a linguistic paradigm shift. Hawkes suggests that the Elizabethans still 'lived in a culture dominated by the human voice and ear, an oral-aural world . . .' (Hawkes 1973, 49), but that this dynamic was actively moving towards a more literate culture, where the printed word was gaining dominance. According to Walter Ong, the Elizabethans had 'an oral set of

mind' (Ong qtd in Hawkes 1973, 49) due to society still containing a large percentage of non-literate people. On the relationship between writing, speech, vision and thought Ong observes: 'Writing . . . was and is the most momentous of all human technological inventions . . . Because it moves speech from the oral-aural to a new sensory world, that of vision, it transforms speech and thought as well' (Ong 1982, 84). So, for Ong, how we think is influenced by the form that the language we engage with takes.

Hawkes states that Shakespeare's plays were written for 'an audience of people who communicated primarily by talking and listening' (Hawkes 1973, 49). Ong suggests that this linguistic dynamic informed how an individual related to the world around them, and that an early modern individual would 'not feel the exterior objective world and the interior personal world as distinct from one another . . . to the extent that we do' (Ong qtd in Hawkes 1973, 49). Hawkes suggests that for the early moderns self-knowledge was primarily associated with talking and listening (as opposed to reading), and an individual would be more likely to 'realize themselves aurally, rather than visually' (Hawkes 1973, 73). This concept holds particular resonance regarding the idea of Hamlet entering the stage reading a book and reciting soliloquies to his audience in the service of self-realisation. In the following chapter we shall examine Robert Ellrodt's argument that Shakespeare, *Hamlet* and Michel de Montaigne, through literature, advanced the concept of self-consciousness in the early modern era.

Hawkes observes that today 'in our society the written word enjoys a kind of "official" primacy which in turn awards to literature a "formal" status' (Hawkes 1973, 32). According to Hawkes we have now 'replaced much of our own oral spontaneity by writing and its "rules"' (Hawkes 1973, 47). Whether *Hamlet* is perceived to exist most formally in print or in performance is hard to gauge. Whether more people engage with the play through reading it or watching it performed is difficult to ascertain. (Recently John Gibson and Paul Woodruff have examined how we engage with the play's philosophy in different ways, depending on whether we read it, or watch it being performed' (Gibson 2018; Woodruff 2018)). As we have seen, each printed edition and theatrical production offers a different text. Richard Dawkins's concept of the meme also establishes *Hamlet* as a popular idea, or concept, which exists in the mind.

In *Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Language and Drama in Society* Hawkes argues that language is humankind's 'distinctive feature' and that therefore drama is its

'distinctive art' (Hawkes 1973, 27). Hawkes observes that seeing a play at the Globe, where speaking and listening was the essential currency, therefore enabled the early modern audience to be confronted with 'its own "shape"' (Hawkes 1973, 51). Hawkes suggests that in Shakespeare we find the view that 'talking and listening make man human' (Hawkes 1973, 105), and conversely that 'The destruction of reciprocal talking and listening reduces man to the level of the beasts' (Hawkes 1973, 76). Hawkes suggests that in *Hamlet* we see 'A world which destroys words' (Hawkes 1973, 111), both written and spoken, as well as the act of listening. For Hawkes, a central dynamic of *Hamlet* is the breakdown of communication, with the prominent business of spying evidencing this corrupted state of affairs. David Hillman suggests that there is an even wider sense of societal collapse in Elsinore: 'Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is framed by the historical breakdown of . . . social bonds . . . on which the protagonists depend for the meaning and worth of their lives' (Hillman 2018, 72)

M. M. Mahood, in *Shakespeare's Wordplay,* suggests that another significant factor in the perceived status and nature of language in the early modern era was an emerging scepticism about the power of words. As a result of the Reformation, including resistance to the Pope's authority and a rejection of the concept of transubstantiation in the Mass (examined above), the authority of words was coming into question. Mahood suggests that 'In Shakespeare's lifetime the old hierarchy of delegated verbal authority was breaking up, and many words which had once seemed to hold magical efficacy were losing their connotative power . . .' (Mahood 1957, 174). This led to the emergence of what Hawkes describes as a 'gap between words and things' (Hawkes 1973, 100), and the rise in popularity of proverbs such as 'fine words fill not a firlot' (Mahood 1957, 171). However such a truism is constructed with words and according to Mahood the paradox of how humankind should frame its relationship with language was of particular interest to the writer of *Hamlet* : 'No one could play so long and brilliantly with words as Shakespeare did without asking himself: what is the relationship of words to things – the meaning of meaning?' (Mahood 1957, 169). For Mahood, Shakespeare's 'own dilemma between linguistic scepticism and faith in the power of words' (Mahood 1957, 179) dominates his writing, and in particular, his tragedies. Mahood suggests that for characters such as Hamlet, the structure that underpins both language and ethics crumbles: 'For all Shakespeare's tragic heroes, words lose their meaning. The verbal rules and principles, the moral code by which they have lived, have ceased to correspond to things-as-they-are' (Mahood 1957, 181).

We have seen in Chapter Three that Aristotle and Philip Sydney lauded poetry as the supreme means through which humankind might access greatest insight and understanding (Sidney 1948, 8; Aristotle 1997, 17). That poetry was the medium in which Shakespeare worked implies his agreement with their standpoint. In contrast the seventeenth-century philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke propounded scepticism about figurative language. In his *Leviathan* Hobbes argues that words are abused 'when used metaphorically; that is, in other sense than that they are ordained for' (Hobbes 1996, 21) resulting in deception. John Locke believed that figurative speech does 'nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement' (Locke qtd in Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 191). This echoes Plato's scepticism about the arts due to their association with artifice and pretence (as examined in a previous Chapter Three). However, both Hobbes and Locke did highlight a close association between words, concepts and meaning, which, as we shall see remains a central concern regarding our understanding of language today. Hobbes wrote that understanding is 'nothing else but conception caused by speech' (Hobbes 1996, 260), and Locke stated that words 'signify nothing immediately but the ideas in the mind of the speaker' (Locke 1998, 272). For Hawkes, the implied distance between a word and the thing it signifies is central to Shakespeare and his protagonists: 'That words are mere conventional sounds molded by the tongue, and reality is something else again, is constantly on the minds of all the characters' (Hawkes 1973, 83). Locke also suggests that words, as symbols of concepts, offer a generalised representation of things: 'Words become general by being made the signs of general ideas' (Locke 1998, 262). As we shall see, some modern perspectives agree with Locke's point here.

More recently Susanne K. Langer in *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942) has advanced theories on the relationship between words, thoughts, meaning and the arts. Reflecting on the way in which words relate to thoughts, meaning, and behaviour Langer writes:

> In talking *about* things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves; and *it is the conceptions, not the things, that symbols directly "mean"*. Behaviour towards conceptions is what words normally evoke; this is the typical process of thinking. (Langer 1942, 61)

Here, the gap between a word and the thing it denotes appears to have widened. So symbiotic is the relationship between words and thought, according to Langer, that she suggests

'without language there seems to be nothing like explicit thought whatever' (Langer 1942, 103). For Langer, thoughts and words help us to make sense of the world, and 'The transformation of experience into concepts . . . is the motive of language' (Langer 1942, 126). Sanford Budick suggests that 'Hamlet . . . conducts his primary battles . . . with language in a world of ideas' (Budick 2018, 135).

Hawkes suggests that our reality is predominantly a linguistic one, and that 'we perceive these "realities" through the spectacles of our languages' (Hawkes 1973, 12). Langer agrees and uses the example of how nature-lovers often 'do not feel that they are truly in touch with it until they have mastered the names of a great many flowers and trees' (Langer 1942, 126). This echoes Plato's Naturalist theory, where to know a thing is synonymous with knowing its name. As we shall see in Chapter Five the role of Ophelia is dominated by attempts to get close to nature, where she collects and names flowers, experiences a crisis of meaning, and becomes one with it as she loses her life. On the significance of words, Langer suggests that it is 'as though the primary world of reality were a verbal one' (Langer 1942, 126). The verbose nature of Hamlet, and observations on him by Friedrich Nietzsche and Harold Bloom regarding his ability to perceive the true nature of things (see above), resonate with Langer's comment.

Langer's contemporary Lev S. Vygotsky framed language as 'the social means of thought' (Vygotsky 1971, 51) but associated language and the cognitive process with images as well as words. Vygotsky states that 'a word . . . is not a straightforward symbol for a concept but rather an image, a picture, a mental sketch of a concept . . . [like] a small work of art' (Vygotsky 1971, 75). This concept was established by Socrates (see above). It also reflects Aristotle's view of the cognitive process: 'The thinking faculty, then, thinks the forms in images' (Aristotle 1986, 209). Ludwig Wittgenstein offered a similar proposition, suggesting that 'We picture facts to ourselves' (Wittgenstein 1974, 8). According to Wittgenstein's contemporary Gilbert Ryle the concept of pictures viewed through our mind's eye is mistaken. Ryle suggests that, cognitively, 'imaging occurs', but 'images are not seen' (Ryle 1949, 247). For Ryle, '. . . there are no such objects' that we mentally picture (Ryle 1949, 251). Instead, Ryle believes that a man mentally recalling his nursery from childhood 'is not being a spectator of a resemblance of his nursery, but he is resembling a spectator of his nursery' (Ryle 1949, 248). So for Ryle, a memory is established when an individual impersonates themselves in the activity of viewing the object being remembered. This

therefore introduces an aspect of mimesis into the cognitive process, and the contemplation of one's reality.

Echoing Locke's theory on the relationship between words and things, Vygotsky suggests that the 'world of experience must be greatly simplified and generalized before it can be translated into symbols' (Vygotsky 1971, 6) and that '. . . a generalized reflection of reality is the basic characteristics of words . . .' (Vygotsky p153). If this is the case, then the idea of relating language to truth and meaning deepens in complexity, and it also asks us to consider the natures of poetry and prose. However, conceptual generalisations only arise because of language, as, according to Vygotsky, 'Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them' (Vygotsky 1971, 125). Vygotsky supported a theory forwarded by the philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), who suggested that poetry and prose stimulates our minds in different ways from each other. Vygotsky suggests that from a cognitive and sensory perspective 'Poetry . . . is inseparable from music, while prose depends entirely on language and is dominated by thought' (Vygotsky 1971, 142). Nietzsche viewed poetry as having transcendent qualities as it 'seeks to be . . . the unvarnished expression of truth . . .' (Nietzsche 1995, 24). Nietzsche also framed music as having transcendental qualities, observing 'the utterly incomparable world of harmony' (Nietzsche 1995, 7). That poetry and prose stimulate our cognitive faculties in contrasting ways is a poignant proposition with regard to our analysis of *Hamlet*, which shifts between the two forms -- or is itself entirely a *Poem Unlimited* (Bloom 2003). Regarding the relationship between philosophy, experience and poetry, Tzachi Zamir suggests that: 'philosophy may sometimes be an experience and so its creation in a reader may require experience-establishing tools. In some cases, poetry in particular is able to provide these tools' (Zamir 2018, 12). The finer neurological points of this idea however remain outside the scope of this current investigation.

Vygotsky's work is particularly pertinent as he references the methods of the influential Russian theatre practitioner Konstantin Stanislavski. In examining the relationship between thought, speech and meaning Vygotsky suggests that 'To understand another's speech, it is not sufficient to understand his words -- we must understand his thought. But even that is not enough -- we must also know its motivation' (Vygotsky 1971, 151). Stanislavski's method of attempting to deduce a character's thoughts and also motives (in order to help the actor establish a more complex and rounded character) is referenced by Vygotsky (Vygotsky 1971, 151) to demonstrate what is actually taking place between all

humans who communicate with each other. So, Stanislavski's art is imitating life, and successful communication requires the understanding of words, concepts and even motives. (The complex issue of establishing a fictional character's thoughts is not explicitly addressed by Vygotsky).

From Wittgenstein's point of view attempting to read the thoughts that might underpin a statement is a very difficult exercise. In a Hamlet-like clothing metaphor Wittgenstein states that:

> Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the form of the body, but for entirely different purposes. (Wittgenstein 1974, 19)

Of particular interest here is the idea that language does not relay what we are thinking, which stands in contrast to earlier views examined. Wittgenstein does not specify in straightforward terms exactly what purposes the 'outward form' or words are designed for, apart from stating that they are 'enormously complicated' (Wittgenstein 1974, 19). Introducing Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Bertrand Russell observes that 'language is always more or less vague, so that what we assert is never quite precise' (Wittgenstein 1974, x).

If comprehending a person's thought is difficult, understanding a word is not always a simple matter either, as it may contain a plethora of meanings and nuance. Citing *Hamlet* as an example Vygotsky observes that

> . . . a word that keeps recurring in a book or a poem sometimes absorbs all the variety of sense contained in it and becomes, in a way, equivalent to the work itself. The title of a literary work expresses its content and completes its sense to a much greater degree than does the name of a painting or of a piece of music. Titles like *Hamlet* . . . illustrate this very clearly . . . the whole sense of a work is contained in one name. (Vygotsky 1971, 147)

Both Locke and Hawkes have suggested something similar. Locke states that 'There comes by constant use to be such a connexion between certain sounds and the ideas they stand for, that the names heard almost as readily excite certain ideas' (Locke 1998, 258). Hawkes suggests that the word '*Hamlet*' has 'taken on a huge and complex symbolizing function'

coming to signify 'the utterance of an oracle, the lubrication of a sage, the masterpiece of a poet-philosopher replete with transcendent wisdom about the way things are, always have been, and presumably always will be' (Hawkes 1992, 4).

If language is associated with an attempt to make sense out of the human experience, for the philosopher J. L. Austin speaking can be the doing of something more than passively passing comment on matters and thoughts. Austin's book *How to Do Things With Words* suggests that some statements, such as those used in marriage vows and naming rituals, actively change things within the world. In such cases 'the uttering of [a] sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action (Austin 1971, 5). As a consequence, Austin calls such a statement a 'performative' (Austin 1971, 7). Here 'performative' carries a different sense to the one familiar in common parlance, where the term is associated with theatrical performance. Austin perceives language as not only asserting things, but as doing things. According to Austin, for our performative to succeed ' . . . a good many other things have . . . to be right if we are said to have happily brought off our action' (Austin 1971, 14). These 'other things' include a range of factors from the statement being spoken by an appropriate person to the speaker being sincere and having appropriate thoughts and feelings. These factors closely resemble the topics that a group of actors might discuss in rehearsal of a play. Regarding the possible veracity of performatives Austin states that 'statements are true or false [but] performatives [are] not so' (Austin 1971, 14). Austin's work could be seen to agree with the theories of Luther and Plato: that sermons have a transformational agency, and that words have an innate power.

Austin's theory complements the ideas in Michael Goldman's book *Acting and Action in Shakespearean Tragedy*. Goldman suggests that all action, including speaking, is a 'a movement from self to world' (Goldman 1985, 18). Linking the themes of speech, action, thought, and motives, Goldman suggests that 'The difficulty of making sense out of action, one's own action and other people's, is a central motif' in *Hamlet* (Goldman 1985, 14). On the subject of making sense of out words, according to Hawkes we should re-appraise how we traditionally view the dynamics of this process, especially with regard to Shakespeare. Hawkes suggests that instead of seeing the words in a play like *Hamlet* as having various meanings that were implanted by its creator, it might be more appropriate to suggest that 'We *use* them in order to generate meaning' (Hawkes 1992, 3). Hawkes suggests that 'Shakespeare doesn't mean: *we* mean *by* Shakespeare' (Hawkes 1992, 3). Here, fixed meanings do not lie dormant in the text, awaiting their excavation by us. Instead meaning is

released in us as a consequence of our engagement with the art. This reminds us of A. D. Nuttall's image of Shakespeare and the Rorschach inkblots (see above).

More recently, as we have previously examined, in their book *Metaphors We Live By* George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have suggested that *pace* Hobbes and Locke our 'conceptual system is largely metaphorical' (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 3) and that metaphors 'are among our principal vehicles for understanding' (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 159). Two examples of this theory are how we conceptualise states as containers, as in the phrase 'I'm in love', and that 'happy' is perceived to be up, and 'sadness' down (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 8; 2003, 31). Lakoff and Johnson state that ' . . . truth is always relative to a conceptual system that is defined in large part by metaphor' (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 159). Lakoff and Johnson argue for a view of reality that sits between the objective views of Locke, where words have fixed meanings and facts are concrete, and the subjective views of Sidney, where the imagination and feelings play a more significant role. As metaphor is viewed as being central in establishing our 'imaginative reality', Lakoff and Johnson propose 'An experientialist approach' to framing the world, because ' . . . ordinary reality is . . . imaginative by its very nature' (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 193). In light of this theory, Locke and Hobbes's objections to metaphors are incompatible with Lakoff and Johnson's. We have also seen how Plato's work (his language and arguably his thinking) is dominated by analogies, metaphors and similes.

We have seen here an array of classical, Medieval and Renaissance perspectives on the relationship between truth and language. In *Cratylus* we find an implied association between the names of things and their essential nature. Names are also perceived as being derived from a divine source and this association between God and language is magnified in Christianity. Socrates also proposes the view that names are ephemeral signs bearing no significant meaning. Aristotle defines a true statement as one that corresponds to the apparent facts. For Socrates the skilled rhetorician should be familiar with the truth, but will appeal to listeners most by delivering a likeness to the truth. From a Platonic perspective, a thing well named or described carries in its title an essence of its Form. However a name is also perceived as being an imitation of the thing named. The written word is deemed inferior to the spoken word, due to its inflexibility and its impact on the faculty of memory. Classically, words are perceived as having an innate power.

The Bible associates God with the truth, the Word and Christ, and imagines God's speech as having a supernatural agency. For over a millennium theologians such as Luther have attempted to access the earliest scriptural texts in order to ascertain the most original or purest form of God's message. From a Platonic perspective this offers no barrier to accessing the true meaning of God's Word, as it is possible for the essential meaning of a statement to survive rephrasing and translation. Through the spread of Christianity in the west, the truth and the Word of God have become synonymous. As we have seen, attempting to access or establish what Shakespeare wrote has been a similarly complex and sensitive matter involving contrasting editorial approaches, disagreement about what constitutes 'original', what licence can be taken with Shakespeare's work and an English language that has evolved substantially since the 'original' was written.

We have seen here how documents stamped with the authority of the Church have been revered as divine and contrastingly burnt. Differing interpretations of scriptural passages, resulting in opposing perceptions of the truth of a statement, have fractured the Church and congregations alike, just as contrasting theories on the text(s) of *Hamlet* have divided scholars. The combined factors of translation, interpretation and faith have repeatedly produced conflicting perspectives on what might be claimed to be God's truth. Our examination of multiple readings of John 22:19 demonstrates the subjectivity of Biblical exegesis. Even Luther's statement on his approach to scriptural analysis offers the possibility of contrasting interpretations. For some, God's truth is perceived as being accessible via a literal reading of scripture. For others, truth is deduced from figurative readings. For Luther, God's message may also be shrouded in mystery, elusively remaining beyond the scope of our reason.

We have seen here how *Hamlet* was written and first performed at a time when Elizabethans were experiencing a significant shift in their relationship to language and the perceived authority of the word. Also, as society became more literate, and the word of God became available to each individual, the nature of self-knowledge and inner reflection changed. A scepticism about the authority of words was however balanced with faith in poetry and the arts to reveal and expose significant insights into human nature. As we shall see, these issues resonate throughout the play.

We have seen how scholars have attempted to understand the complex relationship between words, thoughts, motives, actions and meaning. Thinking is perceived

as having both linguistic and pictorial elements, and the language of cogitation frequently uses the understanding-is-seeing metaphor. Poetry has been deemed to contain a quality that transcends rational linguistic thinking, affecting the listener in a manner similar to music. Language is viewed as a vehicle with which to communicate our inner thoughts, but also as the substance of our thinking, and the raw material that enables thinking to happen. Attempts have been made to decipher the nature of the relationship between thoughts and words and motives, but consensus has not been reached on this. The idea that language makes public one's thoughts is countered by the argument that thoughts are actually disguised by words. Austin's theory that some speech is equivalent to the performing of an action adds an element of agency to the art of oration. On the agency of thoughts and words in Elsinore, Andy Mousley suggests that: 'Thought -- and thought's concretisation in language -- can do anything in *Hamlet*' (Mousley 2015, 31).

Again, resonating through this analysis is the subject of representation. The truth of a situation might not be as pertinent as an explanation that is not true but similar and probable. A likeness could usurp the real thing. The way in which we think and talk and perceive reality appears to be dominated by one thing representing another. A word might represent a thought or a thing, and a statement might represent a situation, but the converse might also be the case, and deciphering between the two can be as nuanced as Biblical exegesis. Knowing whether a speech represents an intention is deemed by some close to impossible. A word like 'Hamlet' might represent a vast array of ideas, meanings and beliefs, to the extent of it being immeasurable. A Eucharistic subtext is established here as beliefs give words meaning and a sense of truthfulness. This is also analogous to the theatre where an actor ponders subtext and represents a character, who, through the belief of the audience member, becomes that character, even though their physical appearance resembles the actor playing the role. Mousley suggests that Shakespeare's work enables us to vicariously experience things in a way that transforms us and our understanding of the human condition. With a Eucharistic subtext Mousley suggests that: 'Literature as epitomised by Shakespeare, then is, amongst other things, the quasi-religious act of incarnation, of turning word and idea into flesh' (Mousley 2015, 10). That our conceptual framework appears to be linguistic and metaphorical deepens the ties between reality, imagination, beliefs, words and the truth. We shall see that these themes abound in *Hamlet.*

In the following reading of the play we will allow the above philosophical considerations to underpin our analysis of the play's engagement with: names and titles;

words with agency; the efficacy of ceremonies; documents and their authority; textual references to the truth. This will afford us a new framing of the play.

Names and Reputations

The protagonist's name has evolved from two sources: 'Amleth' of *Historiae Danicae* by Saxo Grammaticus, and 'Hamblet' of the *Histoires Tragiques* by Francois de Belleforest. Bloom notes that the name Amleth 'derives from the Old Norse for an idiot' (Bloom 1999, 390) which evidences Plato's Naturalist theory. We are not certain, however, whether it was Shakespeare who coined the name 'Hamlet'. Thomas Nashe's observations in 1589 on 'whole *Hamlets*' (see above) predates the publication of the First Quarto of *Hamlet* by fourteen years. It was therefore probably the unknown author of the now lost early *Hamlet* play who christened the protagonist with the modern form of his current title.

In '*Hamlet without* Hamlet' Margreta de Grazia highlights a further sub-textual association with the protagonist's name. According to de Grazia a dominant motif in the play is the relationship between humans and land, with Hamlet's dispossession being a key component. Suggesting a scriptural aspect to the text De Grazia observes that:

> The play . . . subscribed to the biblical narrative in which man's life is rounded in dust. Man issues from earth, returns to it, and during the interim is involved in its acquisition (through inheritance, purchase, conquest) or working (gardeners, ditchers, grave-makers, pioneers). (De Grazia 2007, 43)

De Grazia also observes the frequent etymological links between the names of characters and the land. As we have seen in the previous chapter, 'Denmark' is used to represent both a nation (a land), and the monarch who rules it, as in 'Denmarke drinkes today' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1r). If the title of 'the King' is synonymous with the vast expanse of land that is Denmark, it is ironic that the dispossessed Hamlet has a name linked etymologically with a hamlet, described by De Grazia as: 'a cluster of homes: a kingdom in miniature' (De Grazia 2007, 6). The Gravedigger's name also offers an etymological link to the land. Appropriately standing entrenched in the earth during 5.1, 'good man deluer' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v) is both literally and figuratively a man of the land. The name attributed to him in the speech prefix, the title of 'Clown' also carries earthly connotations, being derived from '*colonus*, a tiller of the soil' (De Grazia 2007, 44). His reference to 'Adam's profession' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M2r) establishes an etymological parallel between the Gravedigger and

the first human, as 'Adam' stems from *adamah*, which De Grazia points out 'is Hebrew for red earth or clay' (de Grazia 2007, 44).

In 4.4 Hamlet finds himself conversing with an army captain about a 'patch of ground' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K3r) that the Norwegian army plan to annex from Poland. Describing the worthless nature of the piece of land the captain states that it 'hath in it no profit but the name' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K3r). Here 'name' carries the sense of 'reputation', implying that the notoriety achieved through conquering the plot of land will be of greater value than the real estate taken. This reading of 'name' for 'reputation' resonates throughout the text and can be found in comments made by Laertes, the King and Hamlet. In 4.1 Claudius reflects with Gertrude on the damage that might be done to their reputation through Hamlet's killing of Polonius. The King states his desire for any news of the event to 'misse our Name, / And hit the woundlesse ayre' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K1v). In 5.2 Laertes responds to Hamlet's apology with a comment concerning the preservation of his own reputation, stating: 'I haue a voyce and president of peace / To [keep] my name vngord' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N4r). So important to Hamlet is his name/reputation that he uses his last words to instruct Horatio to 'report me and my cause aright / To the vnsatisfied' (Shakespeare 1604-5, O1r) after his death. Here, Horatio's name resonates, as he is asked to give an 'oratio'. Fear of a spoiled reputation leads Hamlet to lament 'what a wounded name / Things standing thus vnknowne, shall I leaue behind me?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G2r). Hamlet's request for Horatio to go on and 'tell my story' (Shakespeare 1604-5, O1v), might also be an attempt to encourage reciprocal talking and listening in the future, which has been lacking in Hamlet's days. In the above instances, one's title is no mere arbitrary noun. Instead it is inextricably linked with society's perception of the individual, which according to these examples is a factor of some significance. Plato's Naturalist theory resonates here as a nuanced relationship between a person's name, their inner essence and their reputation is acknowledged.

The King's concern with his name/reputation is matched by his concern for his spiritual state, as his attempt at prayer in 3.3.36-98 demonstrates. However, his realisation during prayer that he 'cannot repent' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I1v) as long as he retains his title or 'Crowne' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I1r) leads him to choose his title/name over a clear conscience, establishing a tension between words, thoughts and actions. Aware of his corrupt nature, he is also aware of God's knowledge of it. On earth he might appear to have escaped justice, but 'aboue, / There is no shufling' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I1v). Acknowledging a

failed attempt to pray, the King bemoans how 'My words fly vp, my thoughts remaine belowe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I2r). This evidences Goldman's observation regarding a key theme in the play, as the King struggles to make sense out of his own actions, including prayer and murder. For the King 'aboue' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I1e) is the only place where 'the action lies / In his true nature' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I1v). For the majority of the court the King's language has disguised his thoughts, but according to the King, this is not possible when it comes to God, therefore establishing an apparent likeness between one's conscience and God. Hamlet also appears to somehow see through the King's false rhetoric, due to his 'propheticke soule' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v). From Austin's point of view, performatives fail when the appropriate thoughts, intentions and feelings (Austin 1971, 40) are not present. The King's predicament evidences this. The King might be being truthful here, but his performative (prayer) is 'unhappy' (Austin 1971, 14), and his state therefore 'wretched' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I1v). We have previously seen how characters in the play frequently reflect each other. René Girard suggests that here the King mirrors the protagonist, suggesting that 'Even Claudius presents Hamlet-like symptoms' (Girard 1991, 284) in his attempt to comprehend his mind and inner state.

This exposes complex moral and philosophical questions such as: what is the value of a good reputation/name if it is falsely acquired? Is the reputation an individual acquires of greater significance than the truth of that person's nature? Hamlet's anxiety about leaving behind a 'wounded name' (Shakespeare 1604-5, O1v) might be a concern for a good future reputation that serves to conceal a bad life. However it might be the desire for a good future reputation that truthfully reflects what he perceives to have been a good life. The text does not specify which is the case. The reputation of Q1, tainted by Pollard and Duthie is now facing something of a restoration, as Bourus argues that recent examination of its nature and context warrants a new title. Exactly what that title should be remains a point of contention for scholars. This parallel concern with titles and reputations, both within and surrounding the play, is an observation previously not considered or noted by other studies.

As well as textual examples that evidence the Naturalist theory of names, we find in the play incidences of names and titles being seemingly mistakenly attributed, often with comical effect. Hamlet appears to be particularly attached to the word 'mother', saying it thirty-six times throughout the play. In one of these instances it is applied to the King:

    Ham:

> Farewell deere Mother.
>
> *King*: Thy louing Father *Hamlet*.
>
> *Ham*: My mother, Father and Mother is man and wife,
>
>   Man and wife is one flesh, so my mother:

(Shakespeare 1604-5, K2v)

Here, Hamlet's playful examination of semantics alters both the name and nature of the King. In 2.2 Hamlet doubles the familial titles of Claudius and Gertrude when discussing their ignorance with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, stating that 'my Vncle-father, and Aunt-mother, are deceaued' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F2v). What might appear on the surface to be an oxymoronic statement, is actually an accurate one. Thompson and Taylor point out that 'While the King is Hamlet's uncle and has also become his stepfather, his mother, the Queen has by the same marriage also become his aunt' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 2.2.313n).

Names are frequently elusive or paradoxically doubled throughout the text. The theme of uncertainty regarding names is established in the opening lines when Barnardo's request for a title, 'Whose there?', is resisted by Francisco who replies: 'Nay answere me' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1r). The King first addresses the protagonist as 'my Cosin *Hamlet*, and my sonne.' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B4v). Hamlet replies with: 'A little more then kin, and lesse then kind' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B4v). Thompson and Taylor read Hamlet's reply as an implication that 'the King is claiming an excess of kinship in designating himself as father as well as uncle . . .' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 1.2.65n). If the King is casting himself in the role of Hamlet's father, from the protagonist's perspective the relationship exists in name only. However, Hamlet's complaint to the King that he is 'too much in the sonne' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B4v) might be, according to Bloom, bitter wordplay that implies 'an anxiety that Hamlet may be Claudius's son' (Bloom 2003, 8). The Ghost is afforded above twenty titles including: 'the ayre' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r), 'a deale [devil]' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G1r), 'father' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4r), and 'Mole' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v), as examined above, and its nature is elusive. Arguably without knowing a thing's nature, one cannot know its name, and vice versa. The inconstancy of names, examined here, adds resonance to our examination of the idea of multiple selves in the previous chapter, and it also resonates in the bibliographical journey of the play as we have seen.

Hamlet demonstrates contrasting beliefs about the appropriate use of names. He playfully titles Polonius 'a Fishmonger' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F1r), and a 'great baby'

(Shakespeare 1604-5, F2v). In 5.2 Osric is given the names of two birds and a flying insect: 'water fly', and 'chough' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N2r) and 'Lapwing' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N3r). In 3.1 however he scolds Ophelia with the accusation that 'you nickname Gods creatures' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G3r). Hamlet's judgement of Ophelia implies both Christian faith and the classical and Christian view that names have divine origins. His attribution of absurd titles to Osric and Polonius might be read in a variety of ways. The names might imply the presence of traits associated with the nicknames. Such an example could be the association between the words 'Lapwing' and 'devil' as highlighted by Keith Thomas (K. Thomas 1983, 64), therefore establishing a slur on Osric's character. Contrastingly, Hamlet's use of 'Fishmonger' may well be an attempt to demonstrate something regarding his own nature, namely his faux insanity. The contradiction between Hamlet's comment to Ophelia and his own linguistic behaviour is unresolved. Bloom suggests that 'Hamlet rarely means what he says or says what he means' (Bloom 1999, 253), which makes the actor's job of analysing subtext and motives, especially when preparing to play Hamlet, even more complex. As we have seen, for Vygotsky and Stanislavski, the deciphering of subtext is a key aspect of life and also of being an actor. However, for Wittgenstein words do not necessarily lead us to the cognitive process behind them and any such attempt at deciphering them may be in vain.

Shortly before the duel, Hamlet makes something like an apology that Thompson and Taylor describe as being more 'evasive' than apologetic (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 5.2.204-21n). In a speech that attempts to contextualise the relationship between a person's name, their actions, their sanity and their moral culpability, Hamlet discourses on his recent behaviour:

> what I haue done
> . . . I heare proclame was madnesse,
> Wast *Hamlet* wronged *Laertes*? neuer *Hamlet*.
> If *Hamlet* from himselfe be tane away,
> And when hee's not himself, dooes wrong *Laertes*,
> Then *Hamlet* dooes it not, *Hamlet* denies it,
> Who dooes it then? his madnesse. Ift be so,
> *Hamlet* is of the faction that is wronged,
> His madnesse is poore *Hamlets* enimie,
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, N3v)

In this speech, Hamlet claims that his madness exists as an aspect of himself that is somehow separate to the authentic Hamlet. The authentic Hamlet is established through being given the title 'Hamlet'. In contrast, the inauthentic Hamlet loses that title and is instead given another name: 'his madnesse'. That Hamlet was motivated earlier in the play, to 'put an Anticke disposition on' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v) somewhat undermines the strength of his argument regarding his diminished responsibility. He now accounts for his earlier actions with a narrative that establishes himself as the victim. On the surface both Hamlet and *Hamlet* are experiencing a sense of 'non-identity with itself' (De Grazia and Stallybrass 1993, 258). Whether Hamlet's reasoning in the above statement is just, sincere or cunning wordplay is partly down to how the reader or actors and audience involved perceive it. As Hawkes suggests, the meaning is generated by us, and is therefore in a state of flux. Here words might be one thing, and reality (if Hamlet's motives can be viewed in those terms) another. Judging whether Hamlet's apology is sincere or even intellectually reasonable evokes the problems we saw about the Eucharist where belief, meaning and subjectivity are key influential factors.

If words are deemed to have a value or agency, we also find that they are presented as ephemeral, superficial noise. Whether he is referring to a comment made by Polonius (as in the Folio edition), or by himself (as in the second Quarto), Hamlet's statement that 'By and by is easily said' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H4v) implies a sense of superficiality with regard to the action of speech. If speaking is easy, so is deceiving according to Hamlet. Confronting Guildenstern, Hamlet asks him to play a recorder, with the instruction: 'giue it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent musique' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H4r). Hamlet sees this activity as being 'as easie as lying' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H4r). If the action of speech, or lying, is little more than the production of hot air, the Queen's observation that 'words be made of breath / And breath of life' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4v) suggests a more complex and even Biblical view of the act of oration. Hamlet himself has already observed 'how infinit in faculties' humankind is (Shakespeare 1604-5, F2r). Fine words might not fill a fettle, but ironically the ability to make such a statement evidences the supreme faculties of reason and language. Here the play evidences its ability to represent a spectrum of opposing views on a single topic, to sit comfortably within a paradox, which brings to mind John Keats's 'Negative Capability', wherein ' . . . a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.' (Keats

1899, 277). The efficacy of language is one of these uncertainties that the play refuses to resolve.

Words with Agency

According to Plato, some words have a 'force or power', which implies a sense of agency when read or spoken. This theory is echoed by Luther who as we have seen wrote of the transformative effect of the recitation of scripture. Both Plato and Luther suggest that the spoken word is more powerful than the written word. In *Hamlet* words (both spoken and written) are portrayed as having some agency, yet their potency is also called into question, as we shall now examine.

In 1.5 the Ghost informs Hamlet that he was as good as his word when he married Gertrude, and that 'the vowe / I made to her in marriage' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D3r) was upheld. The efficacy of promises is a theme the play has a keen interest in. A couple of lines earlier the Ghost suggests that the 'seeming virtuous Queene' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D3r) was unable to keep her vow. According to Hamlet, another queen who may or may not be capable of keeping her promise is the Player Queen. During the *Murder of Gonzago* Hamlet informs his mother, possibly sarcastically, that 'shee'le keepe her word' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H2v) in reference to her vow never to re-marry. A promise imbued with religious significance is Hamlet's demand for Horatio and Marcellus to remain silent regarding the Ghost's visitation in 1.5. Between them, Hamlet and the Ghost insist ten times that Horatio and Marcellus 'Sweare' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v) to keep silent on the matter. Although Horatio and Marcellus promise 'by heauen' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4r) to remain silent, this is deemed insufficient, and Hamlet insists that they make the oath 'Vppon my sword' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v). Thompson and Taylor note that 'The hilt of a sword could be used to stand in for a crucifix' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 1.5.146n). Whether the ceremonial use of the fetishised sword would satisfy Hamlet's requirements remains unknown, as the ritual fails to take place. The reason is not made explicit in the text, which includes three failed attempts to complete the ceremony at three different locations. Hamlet's instructions: 'weele shift our ground' and 'once more remooue good friends' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v) fail to achieve the completion of the task. De Grazia suggests that it is the Ghost's interruptions and its figurative location of being in hell (with the text placing the Ghost *'vnder the Stage'* (Shakespeare 1604-5, D4v)) that makes the ceremony impossible:

When underground, occupying the region theatrical tradition continued to reserve for devils, the Ghost falls into the ranks of the damned and diabolic. It is for this reason, it appears, that the swearing ceremony over the cross of the sword cannot proceed. Two forces are in conflict. While the cross-like sword sanctifies the spot, the Ghost's presence beneath hexes it. The swearing ceremony replays the old contest between heaven and hell for the middle zone between. (De Grazia 2007, 41)

Later, this 'middle zone' will occupy Hamlet's mind when he asks Ophelia 'what should such fellowes as I do crauling betweene earth and heauen' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G3r).

Immediately following the Ghost's departure Hamlet vows to remember the Ghost's command to revenge his murder with the following statement: 'now to my word, / It is adew, adew, remember me. / I haue sworn't.' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D3v). The text implies that Hamlet writes down the Ghost's instruction in his notebook: 'My tables, meet it is I set it downe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D3v). Hamlet promises to retain the Ghost's instruction with the statement that 'thy commandement all alone shall liue / Within the booke and volume of my braine' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D3v). Here, the mind has metaphorically become a valued document. In 1.3 Polonius prefixes his fatherly instructions to Laertes with the request: 'these fewe precepts in thy memory / Looke thou character' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C4r). (Here, 'character' carries the sense of 'write down to remember'). From a Platonic perspective it is ironic that Hamlet and Polonius perceive writing as an aid to memory, as according to Socrates in *Phaedrus*, it is likely to 'produce forgetfulness' (Plato 2005, 62) and achieve the opposite effect. From the Ghost's perspective Hamlet does seem to forget what he has sworn, and in 3.4 he haunts Gertrude's closet to reprimand Hamlet, demanding: 'Doe not forget this visitation / Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v).

The concept that vows made in the heat of passion are forgotten when the passion fades is noted by Polonius. Warning his daughter against Hamlet's advances, Polonius states that 'I doe knowe / When the blood burnes, how prodigall the soule / Lends the tongue vowes, these blazes daughter / Giuing more light then heate, extinct in both / Euen in their promise, as it is a-making' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C4v). For Polonius, a promise made in the heat of passion is as ephemeral as a burst of flame. The inner play echoes this idea when the

Player King warns his queen: 'What to our selues in passion we propose, / The passion ending, doth the purpose lose,' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H2r).

Reflecting on Austin's theory of 'performatives' (examined above) A. D. Nuttall observes that performatives are found at 'a point of intersection, where language becomes practice and so meshes with the extra-linguistic world' (Nuttall 2007, 91). If Bloom is correct in his observation that 'Hamlet, more than any philosopher, actually makes us see the world in other ways, deeper ways than we may want to see it' (Bloom 1999, 426), then a recital of the 'To be or not to be' monologue by an actor playing Hamlet is psychologically changing the nature of those who witness it. For Dawkins, the audience/reader is also being transformed biologically, as a meme (idea) is 'realized physically' in the minds of individuals (Dawkins 1976, 192). A close parallel is therefore established between the recitation of *Hamlet* and the recitation of scripture, according to Luther's views on preaching (examined above), as both have the power to fundamentally transform those who come into contact with them. This closeness of the religious and the poetic experience is captured in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's observation on how we invest belief in something we know to be fantasy when engaging with the arts. As briefly noted above, Coleridge wanted the reader of his poetry to experience or invest a 'semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith' (Coleridge 2014, 2:208). When the preacher invests belief in her sermon, and the actor invests belief in her script, and the congregation/audience also invest belief or 'poetic faith', then a transformation takes place. Here a Eucharistic subtext resonates within church and theatre. Again here we also see the blurring of boundaries between supposedly different entities, as Nuttall observes, where the linguistic and extra-linguistic world's 'mesh'. (In Chapter Five we shall examine yet another apparent blurring of boundaries, between the natural and the supernatural).

The relationship between speech and action is a recurrent theme in the play. Frequently the two are framed as being inharmonious. In response to her promise to never re-marry after his death, the Player King warns his wife that 'what we doe determine, oft we breake' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H2r). According to the Player King, not only do we forget promises made in the heat of passion, it is essential that we do: 'Most necessary tis that we forget / To pay our selues what to our selues is debt' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H2r). According to the Player King, as 'our fortunes change', so should 'our loues' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H2r). By implication, the vows we have made regarding them should change too. Polonius's

instruction to Ophelia regarding the portrayal of faux prayers ('cullour / Your lowliness [loneliness]') is followed by his reflection on such deceits: 'with deuotions visage / And pious action, we doe sugar ore / The deuill himselfe'. The King's aside responding to this exposes the now dysfunctional relationship between the King's conscience, his speech, and his previous murderous action:

> O tis too true,
>
> How smart a lash that speech doth giue my conscience.
>
> The harlots cheeke beautied with plastring art,
>
> Is not more ougly to the thing that helps it,
>
> Then is my deede to my most painted word:
>
> O heauy burthen.
>
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, G2r)

The King's figure of speech implies that the disparity between a prostitute's plain cheek and the makeup used to beautify it is of the same magnitude as the disparity between his murderous action and any words he might use to conceal it. That the King's conscience has been given a lash by Polonius's speech brings J. L. Austin to mind, as words have done something. The image of a 'painted word' echoes Plato's association between an inferior quality painting and a lie. The term also brings to mind Vygotsy's image of a word being 'a mental sketch of a concept . . . [like] a small work of art' (Vygotsky 1971, 75), which for Vygotsky represents a generalisation of something, as opposed to a false statement. Robert Humphrey Gyde has convincingly argued that Shakespearean characters are always sincere in their asides and soliloquies (Gyde 1990, 77). In light of this the words the King says to the court regarding his mourning for Old Hamlet (1.2.1-5) might represent a false account of his thinking, whereas those he offers in the above aside portray a sincere one. If, as Hawkes and Langer suggest, our engagement with reality is dominated by language, then our ability (or inability) to discern false and true statements is both problematic and significant.

Hamlet's pledge to 'speake dagger' to his mother 'but vse none' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H4v) again evidences a tension between speech and action. Later, when visiting the Queen's closet he assumes the spirit has re-appeared to remined him about 'Th'important acting' of the 'dread command' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3v). In matters of revenge, Hamlet has so far failed to take the advice that he gave the Players, to: 'sute the action to the word, the word to the action' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G4r). In 4.7 Laertes is encouraged to

contemplate his own ability to balance speech with action, regarding his own father's murder. The King demands of Laertes: 'what would you vndertake / To showe your selfe indeede your fathers sonne / More then in words?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L4v). Earlier, Laertes had warned his sister of the constraints that Hamlet faces regarding the fulfilment of pledges he has made, informing her that it is 'the maine voyce of Denmarke' (the whole country) that directs prince Hamlet's actions (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3v), rather than Hamlet's individual voice or will. Ophelia is warned that 'It fits your wisdome so farre to belieue' that Hamlet has the autonomy to 'giue his saying deede' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3v). Ironically, when Hamlet does finally manage to action the Ghost's command of 'Reuenge' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v), it only serves to undo his father's greatest achievement, soon handing the crown back to Fortinbras, and Norway.

Words and Ceremonies

Ceremonies are rarely portrayed as being successful in the play, either in their completion or their lasting impact. The secular ceremony at the heart of the text, the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*, is disturbed then abruptly abandoned. Not being able to limit his involvement to that of co-author and acting tutor, Hamlet interrupts the performance as a heckler calling out: 'Beginne murtherer' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H3r). He then casts himself as narrator, describing the murderer's actions: 'A poysons him i'th Garden' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H3r). Consequently Polonius gives the order to 'Giue ore the play' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H3r) and the performance is abandoned.

A ceremony that is repeatedly framed as being spoiled or incomplete throughout the text is that of a funeral. The text implies that the rituals of the Ghost's funeral ceremony were harshly undone shortly after their completion. His consecrated 'canoniz'd' bones are described as having now 'burst their cerements' (grave-clothes), (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v). In addition, the metaphorical 'marble iawes' of the sepulchre in which he was interred are pictured as having 'cast' him 'vp' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v). Thompson and Taylor read this detail as meaning that 'The tomb is . . . vomiting the Ghost from its mouth' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 1.4.61n). Laertes's description of Polonius's funeral describes a ceremony that is minimal to the point of being incomplete: 'his obscure funeral, / No trophe sword, nor hatchment ore his bones, / No noble right, nor formall ostentation, / Cry to be heard as twere from heauen to earth' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L2v). Lacking any memorial tablet and formal

ceremony, Polonius's funeral leaves behind no evidence of his name, and does not allow for any ritualistic settlement between him, in his death, and God. Ophelia's funeral is equally troublesome for Laertes. Hamlet's observation of her stark interment leads to his conclusion that such 'maimed rites' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r) are evidence of a person that did 'Foredoo it owne life' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r). In response to Laertes's question to the Priest or '*Doctor*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r) 'What Ceremonie els?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r), Laertes is informed that ecclesiastical authority has been overturned by state authority in regard to the formalities of Ophelia's funeral:

> *Doct*. Her obsequies haue been as farre inlarg'd
> As we haue warrantie, her death was doubtfull,
> And but that great commaund ore-swayes the order,
> She should in ground vnsanctified been lodg'd
> Till the last trumpet: for charitable prayers,
> Flints and peebles should be throwne on her:
> Yet here she is allow'd her virgin Crants,
> Her mayden strewments, and the bringing home
> Of bell and burial.
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r)

Thompson and Taylor note that 'the great command' is often read to mean the authority of the King (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 5.1.217n). Earlier the Gravedigger noted that it was the 'crowner' (coroner) who insisted on a 'Christian buriall' for Ophelia (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v). Whether the authority of the coroner is greater than that of the King on this matter is not made explicit in the text. The Priest argues that instead of 'charitable prayers', flowers and the rituals of a Christian burial, Ophelia deserves being buried in unsanctified ground and covered with stones. Ironically the lack of ceremony and dignity with which Ophelia is buried is made worse by the behaviour of Laertes and Hamlet. The occasion is reduced to a brawl as they fight and argue over whose grief is greatest, with Hamlet claiming that his outweighs 'forty thousand brothers' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4v). De Grazia notes that Jacques Lacan, one of Sigmund Freud's disciples, suggests that *Hamlet* 'is a play about mourning' (De Grazia 2007, 20). Quoting Lacan, De Grazia observes that 'Death, when not repaired by rituals, leaves a gap or "hole in the real"' (De Grazia 2007, 21). According to Lacan this 'hole', 'can never be made good' (De Grazia 2007, 21). Nuttall suggests that

Shakespeare's work is 'haunted by a sense of rituals and beliefs that are no longer efficacious, that have been *emptied out*' (Nuttall 2007, 19). Again we find a performative to be 'unhappy' due to the questionable nature of the ceremonial ingredients, including the suitability of the script, the props, and the thoughts of the speaker. That this theme is a significant motif in the play is ironic. With regard to the way in which revenge tragedies resonate in society David Hillman suggests that: 'In a general sense, revenge tragedies symptomize the failure of funerary rites and obsequious care for the dead to do the "cultural" work that is being asked of such rituals' (Hillman 2018, 117). Disrupted burials also appear to have been a personal concern for Shakespeare, whose gravestone warns: 'curst be he yt moves my bones' (Horsler, Gorick, and Edmondson 2010, 119).

Documents with Power

Hamlet repeatedly engages with the efficacy of authoritative documents. In 1.2 the King sends the ambassadors Cornelius and Voltemand to Norway to respond to young Fortinbras's demands that Norwegian land previously taken by Old Hamlet should now be returned. The King points out that the authority of the ambassadors to negotiate is limited, and the limits of their power is detailed in some documents they are given:

> we heere dispatch
> You good *Cornelius*, and you *Valtemand*,
> For bearers of this greeting to old *Norway*,
> Giuing you no further personall power
> To business with the King, more then the scope
> Of these delated articles allowe:
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, B4r)

Thompson and Taylor note that the second Quarto uses 'delated', meaning 'committed' to limiting the authority of the ambassadors. The Folio text uses 'dilated', meaning 'expanded', which would refer to 'the scope' of the documents and their contents (Shakespeare 1604-5, 1.2.38n). On their return from Norway the ambassadors produce a document that formally requests permission for Norway's soldiers to travel across a part of Denmark. Noting the contents of the document, Voltemand observes: 'On such regards of safety and allowance / As therein are set downe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, E3v). Both documents examined here set out

to establish the extent of royal and legal powers with regard to matters concerning international relations and the ownership and control of land. Such a document as this permission to travel serves to limit the potential conflict between two monarchs who hold almost unlimited authority within their own kingdoms. This agreement allows their power over each other to be constrained.

The subject of authorised documents that relate to land and ownership arises earlier in the play. In 1.1 Horatio is asked by Marcellus to explain the recently increased amount of industry regarding the manufacture of arms. Horatio details how old Fortinbras forfeited some land as a consequence of being killed in battle by Old Hamlet: 'our valiant *Hamlet*, . . . Did slay this Fortinbrasse, who by a seald compact / Well ratified by lawe and heraldy / Did forfait (with his life) all these his lands' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B2r–B2v). As authoritative as this 'seald compact' was in the eyes of Old Hamlet and Old Fortinbras, its worth has appeared to diminish for young Fortinbras, hence the need for Claudius to send his ambassadors to Norway to remind him. Young Fortinbras ignores or rejects the 'seald compact' and plans to forcefully undo its authority in taking the land back 'by strong hand' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B2v). A document that young Fortinbras respects the authority of is referred to in 4.4. When he enters with his army he instructs his Captain to remind the King of the authorised permission he has been given to march across Denmark: 'Tell him, that by his lycence *Fortinbrasse* / Craues the conueyance of a promisd march / Ouer his kingdome' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K3r). Here, therefore, a document is presented as being as authoritative as an individual perceives it to be. The same principle of subjective textual authority governs the play's print history, as we saw in Chapter Two. Again we see the play's concern with authoritative documents anticipating its own bibliographical history, and may infer that Shakespeare was as alert to the affordances of written documents as he was (by longstanding critical agreement) alert to the affordances of performance.

In 4.3 the King speaks a short soliloquy in which he informs the audience of his plans to have Hamlet executed in England. As though he were addressing the English king, Claudius states: 'And *England* . . . thou mayst not coldly set / Our soueraigne processe, which imports at full / By Letters congruing to that effect / The present death of *Hamlet*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K2v). Earlier, the King had described his plan as being 'seald and done' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K2v) with 'sealed' carrying the senses of both 'completed' and 'stamped with wax'. This detail is also observed by Hamlet who informs his mother of the formal nature of his banishment to England with the observation that 'Ther's letters seald'

(Shakespeare 1604-5, I4v). Hamlet's death warrant, signed and sealed by the King, does not find its recipient, but instead it finds Hamlet, who gives it to Horatio (Shakespeare 1604-5, N1v). In its place Hamlet has forged 'a new commission' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N1v), which will result in the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The significance of sealed documents, stamped with authority, resonates throughout the play. Regarding the death warrant, Horatio asks Hamlet 'How was this seald?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N1v). Hamlet replies in detail, beginning with an acknowledgement of divine providence regarding his escape:

> *Ham*: Why euen in that was heauen ordinant,
> I had my fathers signet in my purse
> Which was the modill of that Danish seale,
> Folded the writ vp in the forme of th'other,
> Subscribe it, gau't th'impression, plac'd it safely,
> The changling neuer knowne
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, N1v–2r)

We have examined earlier Plato's suggestion that a likeness to the truth can be even more effective than the truth itself. Here Hamlet has manufactured a double likeness, with devastating consequences for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. First, the material document that Hamlet forges with such attention to detail that it will not be suspected ('The changling neuer knowne'), and secondly, the composition and content of the text that successfully dupes the English king into believing what might be probable as being true. (Hamlet's extensive fortune at finding suitable parchment and writing equipment as well the carrying of his father's ring is presumably explained in his acknowledgement of divine providence). In light of his theory that Hamlet could be the extramarital child of the King, Bloom suggests that 'Hamlet . . . is a kind of changeling, nurtured by Yorik' (Bloom 2003, 9).

Presumably in the death warrant Hamlet has forged the King's name, which is perceived by the English king as being authentic. This therefore demonstrates the vulnerability of texts in matters of authorisation, in comparison to the spoken word. As we have seen in *Phaedrus*, Socrates notes that when a text 'is ill treated and unjustly abused, it always needs its father to help it' (Plato 2005, 63). Without the King being present to warn the English monarch of the fraud, the text stands as authentic and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern die. Writing extends the reach of a monarch's power to places beyond the reach

of his spoken word, but at the risk of exposing his authority, his 'writ', to subversion along the way. Again we see how an issue that surrounds the bibliography of the text is also a significant theme within it.

The physical nature of authorised documents is noted by Hamlet in his discourse with Horatio in the graveyard. Following his observations on the 'conueyances' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M2v) once owned by a corpse he is studying, Hamlet inquires: 'Is not Parchment made of sheepe-skinnes?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M2v). Horatio replies: 'I my Lord, and of Calues-skinnes to' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M3r). Mocking those who trust such documents Hamlet remarks that 'They are Sheepe and Calues which seeke out assurance in that' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M3r).

If the truth is as elusive as Polonius suggests, he might try looking for it in the theatre. According to Hamlet, the purpose of playing is 'to holde as twere the Mirrour vp to nature, to shew vertue her feature; scorne her own Image, and the very age and body of the time his forme and pressure' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G4r). Thompson and Taylor read the second half of this statement to mean that the theatre can expose the 'essential reality of this moment in time' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 3.2.23-4n). That the truth of human nature and of 'this moment in time' might be found within the theatrical framework of a fiction echoes Polonius's observation that we might 'By indirections find directions out' (Shakespeare 1604-5, E1v). Hamlet's advice to the Players on acting also suggests a relationship between the truth and the arts. Hamlet informs the Players to 'sute the action to the word, the word to the action, with this speciall obseruance, that you ore-steppe not the modestie of nature' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G4r). The implication here is that a performance must have the appearance or nature of sincerity. This association remains today in the acting profession, and is evidenced in the work of many prominent practitioners, such as David Mamet, who writes: 'It is the actor's job to make the performance truthful' (Mamet 1998, 41). The idea of suiting the action to the word is problematic. If a word were to have a suitable action, the word's meaning would need to be deciphered in order to establish its appropriate action. However, as we have seen, words have multiple meanings and meaning itself might not even be found within the word. For Hawkes, the word facilitates meaning in the mind of the reader. What is more, a word such as 'Hamlet', as Vygotsky and Hawkes have observed, carries such semantic weight and complexity that a seemingly simplistic request to match an action to it appears barely possible.

Lewis in *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* suggests that Hamlet's perceptions regarding the capabilities of the theatre are both 'idealized' and 'limited' (Lewis 2017, 200). Lewis finds that Hamlet's 'speculative' (Lewis 2017, 200) mirror metaphor has its origins in the work of Cicero, who was a key influence on the Renaissance humanists. Lewis notes that for Shakespeare and his contemporaries 'mirrors of one sort or another were an emblem of the imagination more on account of their distortions and unreliability than of their ability to reflect things as they really are' (Lewis 2017, 201). From this perspective then we cannot trust in the representations offered by the theatre, which echoes Plato's view, examined above.

Coda

We have seen here how the text of *Hamlet* evidences an array of philosophical perspectives on the relationship between language and truth. Names are represented as being innately related to the nature, occupation and status of their owners, now framed as the Naturalist theory. Some of these etymological relationships are more explicit than others. De Grazia has shown how Shakespeare has used the etymology of names to underpin the theme of humankind's relationship to land throughout the play. Names are also established as being synonymous with reputations, therefore creating a complex relationship between a person's name, their nature, and society's perception of them. This exposes nuanced philosophical issues regarding reputations and behaviour patterns. We have seen how the attribution of false names serves to establish irony and advance the plot. Hamlet's apology to Laertes, with its dualistic imagery, associates his name with an authentic aspect of himself, highlighting the complexities of ethical and legal responsibility, sincerity, reputation and names. As much as we might attempt to establish possible motives and thoughts that lie behind a statement (whether that be of a fictional character or a real one), according to Wittgenstein this is unachievable. Words, truth and meaning remain in a relationship that refuses, so far, to be pinned down to a singular comprehensible state, for the characters of Elsinore, and for us too.

Names and titles also lie at the centre of the *Hamlet* narrative. Q1 *Hamlet* was for most of the twentieth century called the bad quarto, but this name is now largely rejected, and what should replace it remains unclear and problematic. The tension between the philosophical schools of Idealism and Realism, (evident in the play as we have previously seen) is pertinent here. Are the early *Hamlet* texts dependent on our perceptions of them, or are they independent entities, remaining constant, as our beliefs about them fluctuate? To

what extent a particular edition of *Hamlet* should be considered 'Shakespeare's' remains a complex issue, in light of the communal nature of early modern theatre, the suggested flexibility with which the plays were created, and the evolving nature of the English language. Productions of *Hamlet* are attributed to Shakespeare, but also to directors and actors, and they also appear in different genres and under different titles such as Robert Lepage's one man play *Elsinore* (1997), Svend Gade's film *Hamlet the Drama of Vengeance* with its female protagonist, and the anonymous early modern German play *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*. These works imply the simultaneous existence of an ethereal Platonic Form of *Hamlet* alongside inferior ephemeral material versions.

Some words in the play, both spoken and written, are presented as having significant authority and agency, as Plato, Luther and Austin believe is possible. Vows that are acknowledged as containing gravitas are also shown to be weak, insubstantial and even forgettable. Ceremonies that strengthen the bond of a promise are both performed and referred to, but their impact is limited as marriage vows fail and sworn commitments to revenge falter. Religious and secular ceremonies are repeatedly halted, abandoned, abused and undone. Attempts to strengthen the bond between God and humankind repeatedly fail, with prayers often being presented as suitable fronts for corrupt behaviour. We have seen in the play how performatives are unsuccessful when relevant constituents are absent, such as the speaker's belief, props or thoughts. In all its forms, language fails to support the weight placed upon it by speakers even when formalised within rituals. Hawkes's theory that Elsinore demonstrates the tragic consequences of corrupted communication between people is supported by our analysis.

Funerals are incomplete, aborted and undone to the extent that a corpse is described as being vomited out of its interment. This supports Lacan's theory regarding *Hamlet*'s concern with grief. Peaceful union between God and the individual is notable in its absence across the play. Ironically, a play that highlights the frailty of language-based ceremonies has had an immeasurably transformative impact on those who witness it. The theatrical ceremony in which *Hamlet* takes place is parodied in the play, and also mirrors the transformational ritual of church-going. Paradoxically, the epitome of verbal art in the Western tradition achieves its extraordinary effects by dramatizing the failure of its own means of representation. Language's inadequacy is its strength.

Texts are read, remembered, forgotten and deemed incomprehensible. The authority of legal and sealed documents is of significant concern throughout the text. Geographical boundaries and political authorities are defined in formal documents, but these articles are also forgotten, ignored and destroyed. Hamlet ironically reflects on the wisdom of using a dead animal's skin to create a legally binding document. Hamlet's forging of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's death warrants demonstrates the potential power and danger of such authorised documents. The written word is therefore presented as being more vulnerable than the spoken word because it is subject to interference once it leaves the author's reach. However, repeatedly lies are believed and people are warned to doubt a statement that may well be true. The remaining exemplars of Q1 and Q2 *Hamlet* still challenge us with statements of unknown veracity, indeterminacies in the form of press variants, and countless incidents of possible errors and possible un-authorial influence. The warning presented in Elsinore resonates through the history of the play's first printed edition. The tension between the text's linguistic philosophical concerns and the play's own narrative is a point newly highlighted and framed in this study.

The truth is pictured as being elusive, if not completely absent from the world. The theory that a likeness to the truth can be more effective than the truth itself is evidenced throughout the text. Lies are perceived as things that abuse ears, which is a repeated figure of speech throughout the play (1.1.30, 1.5.63-4, 3.4.94). Words are likened to clothes that can both expose and conceal the true nature of a person. This echoes Wittgenstein's theory that a word is like a piece of clothing that disguises the thought behind it. The theatre and poetry are established as having a significant relationship with the truth. It is implied that good acting requires seeming sincerity, and the stage is pictured as being a place where human nature is revealed or exposed in its true light. This reflects the theories of Aristotle, Sidney and Nietzsche. Repeatedly we find here that post-Shakespearean thinkers find echoes of their theories in *Hamlet*, for example Austin, Nietzsche, Freud and Vygotsky.

The association between Luther and Hamlet (and therefore Shakespeare) that is suggested by Greenblatt resonates on many levels. All are men of words, with Hamlet being the most talkative protagonist in all of Shakespeare's canon. All are obsessed with language and its meaning. Luther's internalisation of the religious experience offers a parallel to the sense of interiority achieved by *Hamlet*, whose protagonist might be imagined to have been Luther's student. Bloom suggests that 'The internalization of the self is one of Shakespeare's greatest inventions . . .' (Bloom 1999, 409). The aim of Luther's work is to arrive at a deeper

knowledge of God, whereas Hamlet and *Hamlet*'s aim is more elusive and has inspired an array of contrasting theories, as we have seen. The play contains advanced representations of self-consciousness, from Hamlet and the King amongst others. This supports Ellrodt's argument that Shakespeare was inspired by Montaigne (to be examined in Chapter Five). We have also seen that when characters analyse their inner thoughts, feelings and motives in the form of a soliloquy or aside, they are deemed to be speaking sincerely or truthfully.

Luther's providential world also offers a parallel to that of Shakespeare and *Hamlet*. As Steven Marx points out:

> Playwrights have godlike control in casting and controlling actors who recite lines written for them. But actors also have a divine superiority to the audience because they know the script and can predict what comes next and because they are creating rather than believing in an illusion. (Marx 2000, 11).

Today's approaches to acting however would suggest that belief is invested into an actor's work (see above). The illusion created by the actors is mirrored in the minds of the audience, as R. A. Foakes observes (see above), as those in the auditorium use their imagination to complete the creation of the play, which, like Heraclitus's river, is always changing.

Here we see the Eucharistic subtext that Greenblatt observed in Hamlet's remarks to the King now resonating throughout the *Hamlet* narrative. Thoughts, beliefs, words and things delicately interact and inform each other in Elsinore as they do in the Catholic Mass. We have seen that the nature of *Hamlet* is elusive and its form nebulous. It appears to exist in a range of states, under a range of titles. If we bring 'poetic faith' (Coleridge's phrase) to the recitation of *Hamlet*, then a transformation appears to take place, but what is transformed is not bread and wine, it is us. A key issue of the Eucharist and also significant in *Hamlet* is the subject of representation. The conceptual relationship between bread and Christ is found to be as complex as the one between words and reality as evidenced in Elsinore. We have seen in an earlier chapter how Zachary Lesser finds the current perceived status of Q1, Q2 and F *Hamlet*, as exemplified in Arden's 2006 three-text edition, to be unsatisfactory, and, in Luther's term 'an absurd . . . juggling with words'.

Wordplay makes the issue of associating language with truth more complex, and as Bloom and Mahood note, it is Hamlet's favoured method of communication (or mis-communication). That *Hamlet* is agreed to have advanced our insight into the nature of reality and humanity therefore implies that it is through linguistic indirections that we may

find directions out. If our minds operate metaphorically perhaps this makes the theatre, and *Hamlet* in particular the ideal place to view Lakoff and Johnson's 'imaginative reality' where a cloud can represent a camel without us knowing whether a cloud exists, a man can portray a man representing the act of prayer whilst failing to pray, a protagonist can imitate or represent 'the action of the mind' (Goldman 1985, 32) through the recitation of a soliloquy, and faith in the recitation and hearing of the play's words results in transformation.

Hamlet, a thing made of words, deftly exposes the transient nature of knowledge, truth and language. As it does this, it continues to find itself vulnerable to the philosophical paradoxes that it so wonderfully frames. M. A. Screech suggests that Montaigne shows us how 'Truth cannot be set finally in words' (Montaigne 1987, xli). We might apply the same summary, ironically, to *Hamlet*, as, according to Goldman 'there are more things in *Hamlet* than are dreamt of in any terminology' (Goldman 1985, 22). In the following chapter we shall examine Montaigne and his relationship to *Hamlet* in more detail.

Chapter Five. *Hamlet* and Nature

In 4.7 the Queen describes the circumstances of Ophelia's death in her monologue 'There is a Willow growes ascaunt the Brooke' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1r). The passage is strewn with references to the natural world and establishes a pastoral scene with an abundance of detail regarding trees, flowers and water. The Queen's speech is one of many passages in the play that establish a dark, strange, hostile and supernatural association between humankind and nature. Ophelia's final resting place, the grave, was as Margreta de Grazia points out 'blocked out by the open trap in the middle of the [Globe] stage' (De Grazia 2007, 35). Not only could the stage's trap be taken for a muddy trench, according to De Grazia 'The stage floor itself can stand for earth' (De Grazia 2007, 36), such as in the graveyard scene where ' . . . everything -- props, dialogue, gesture -- combines to convert the floorboards to elemental earth' (De Grazia 2007, 37). The trap also represented the opening 'to the traditional theatrical location of hell' (De Grazia 2007, 191), sitting directly below the painted canopy, or 'heavens', above (Gurr 1980, 121). Andrew Gurr suggests that the Globe stage was strewn with 'green rushes' (Gurr 1980, 121), possibly to soak up any spilt mess during performances. In *Romeo and Juliet* Romeo observes this detail in his order to fetch 'A torch for me. Let wantons light of heart / Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels' (Shakespeare 1992, 1.4.35-6). William Shakespeare's eye for such details concerning the natural world is noted by Caroline Spurgeon, who states in her examination of his imagery, that of all things that inspired his poetry 'nature . . . come[s] first' (Spurgeon 1935, 13), and that 'All through his plays he thinks most easily and readily of human life and action in terms of a gardener' (Spurgeon 1935, 87). Shakespeare's insight into the philosophical complexities of the relationship between humankind and nature have been examined by De Grazia, Tom MacFaul, Rhodri Lewis, Robert Watson and Robert Ellrodt amongst others (De Grazia 2007; MacFaul 2015; Lewis 2017; Watson 2006; Ellrodt 2015).

Ellrodt's book *Montaigne and Shakespeare: The Emergence of Modern Self-Consciousness* highlights the closeness between Shakespeare and his French contemporary. Michel de Montaigne focused much of his philosophy on the subject of nature, and is believed to have directly influenced Shakespeare (Greenblatt 2014). Montaigne's writing is also closely associated with *Hamlet* as Ellrodt's title implies. Ellrodt even suggests:

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'Weighing the evidence, it is probable that Shakespeare had read Montaigne before writing *Hamlet*' (Ellrodt 2015, 94). In his book *Soul of the Age. The Life, Mind and World of William Shakespeare* Jonathan Bate suggests of Hamlet that 'If there is a single book that parallels his journey, that brings us close to the workings of the mind of Hamlet, it is Montaigne's *Essays*' (Bate 2008, 410). Bate goes on to observe that Hamlet's 'mind and Montaigne's worked in such similar ways that Hamlet seems like a reader of Montaigne' (Bate 2008, 410).

Here I shall examine Q2 *Hamlet* with a focus on its references to nature. I will first look at the multiple meanings of the term 'nature', and then examine classical, Christian and early modern perspectives on the natural world. Alongside this I will examine the philosophies of Stoicism, Scepticism and Epicureanism with regard to their framing of the natural world, and their associations with Shakespeare, *Hamlet* and Montaigne. I will also analyse the work of Montaigne with a focus on his observations on nature. I will then make a philosophical reading of the play. In *Hamlet* I will look at the relationship between the natural and the supernatural, the subject of land, Ophelia's association with flowers, and Elsinore's animals. Lastly I will highlight some passages in Montaigne that bear a strikingly close resemblance to excerpts from *Hamlet.* Throughout this chapter I will reference the second Quarto by signature, and citations from the text will be in the original early modern spelling. Act and scene numbers and character names will be from the Arden 2006 edition.

Passing through nature: Historic perspectives on the Natural World

In his book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams suggests that '"Nature" is perhaps the most complex word in the language' (Williams 1983, 219). Analysing the word's polysemous complexity, Williams suggests that there are three significant senses of the word: '(i) the essential quality and character *of* something; (ii) the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both; (iii) the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings' (Williams 1983, 219). Although these definitions offer relatively clear concepts, some vagueness still remains. Demonstrating the ambiguity of the third sense, Williams explains that there can be an assumption that all things in the material world have something in common, which could either be 'the bare fact of their existence', or a shared 'quality' (Williams 1983, 220). According to Williams, the term 'nature' also carries a host of other nuanced meanings including: a 'primitive condition'

that pre-dated human society, a 'sense of innocence from which there has been a fall', the 'countryside', an antidote to our corrupted and industrialised society, and, when personified and capitalised as 'Nature', a goddess (Williams 1983, 220–4).

The Fall of humankind, as detailed in the book of Genesis, records how humans ruptured their relationship with the natural world and God, and accounts for at least one of the senses mentioned above. As a consequence of Adam and Eve's overt intimacy with the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it was no longer sufficient to 'dress' and 'keep' the garden of Eden (The Bible 1599, Genesis 3.1). Instead, banished from a perfect symbiotic relationship with nature, humans would now experience a natural world that was 'cursed', covered in 'thorns' and 'thistles' and demanding 'sweat' in order to produce food (The Bible 1599, Genesis 3. 17-19). John Barton and John Muddiman acknowledge this story as representing the 'universal corruption of human nature.' (Barton and Muddiman 2001, 45). With their new-found self-consciousness, both now aware of their nakedness and their own mortality, Adam and Eve had become alienated not only from the natural world but also from themselves (The Bible 1599, Genesis 3.2, 3.7).

A narrative concerning the arrogance of humans who upset the divine power and are consequently punished with a form of alienation from the world and from themselves is not unique to the Bible. In Book One of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* is the story 'Creation and the Golden Age'. Here the Gods create man from 'new-made earth' who then live comfortably in a landscape 'untouched by the hoe' (Ovid 1955, 31). As time passes men begin to 'plunder' the earth to the point where the gods become so 'anxious' that the entire race is destroyed by a flood, apart from Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, who eventually re-establish the human race with the support of 'our great mother . . . the earth' (Ovid 1955, 39). So the myth concerning humankind's alienation from both the natural world and divine powers is not exclusive to the Bible and Christian philosophy.

Of particular interest in Ovid's narrative is the term used by the gods to describe mankind's negative impact on the world: a 'cancer' that is 'incurable' (Ovid 1955, 34). Aside from the ecological connotations of the idea that humans are a negative addition to the natural world, we are struck by the concept of a destructive negative entity that could damage nature whilst apparently also being a part of nature (but here being applied by something supernatural). Here, what is natural can be destroyed by something like a cancer, or a lightning bolt or a flood that is also natural. Williams observes that there is such ambiguity in

the term 'nature' that it can be read to mean 'innocent' and 'fruitful' as well as 'destructive' and 'tainted' (Williams 1983, 222). If 'the material world itself' is natural, then this includes plastic and nuclear weapons. If the term 'nature' is reduced however to mean 'flora and fauna', then plastic and nuclear weapons are unnatural. We have seen, previously, how Caroline Spurgeon identified a central theme in *Hamlet* as being the existence of a cancer-like entity in some people that can lead to corruption of the whole (Spurgeon 1935, 133,160).

According to E.M.W. Tillyard the Elizabethans had three predominant conceptual frameworks that described the universe. One of them was the idea of a chain that links the simplest form of phenomena, such as a stone, eventually, to the most superior form, which is God. In this perceived hierarchy humankind exists 'between the angels and the beasts' (Tillyard 1943, 12). Tillyard suggests that Hamlet's observation of a man as being 'the paragon of Annimales' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F2r) is an affirmation of this world picture. This therefore establishes humans as a synthesis of the natural and the supernatural, which will be a significant point in our analysis of the play. Classically, according to Tillyard, the soul or the mind is the aspect of a human being that is perceived as divine, and the passions and the physical body are perceived as earthly or animalistic (Tillyard 1943).

At the opening of his *Metaphysics* Aristotle states that 'All men naturally desire knowledge' (Aristotle 1933, 3). According to M. A. Screech (an editor of Montaigne) this statement 'formed part of a standard chain of argument claiming to prove on Platonico-Christian grounds that the soul is immortal' (Montaigne 1987, xlv). Screech explains the reasoning as follows: ' . . . we naturally desire knowledge, this desire is not satisfied in this life, nature does nothing in vain, therefore there is an afterlife where the immortal soul will be fully satisfied in complete knowledge of the divine' (Montaigne 1987, xlv). This argument also establishes, if not without some uncertainty of detail, a relationship between humans, their potential divinity, their spiritual and epistemological ignorance, and nature. Aristotle's belief in the existence of souls in animals deepens the complexity of the relationship between humankind, the bestial and the divine (Aristotle 1986, 153).

With regard to the dynamics of the relationship between humans, nature and God in early modern society, there existed a multiplicity of views influenced by Christian orthodoxy and the classical philosophies of Renaissance humanism. In his recent book *Shakespeare and the Natural World* Tom MacFaul suggests that 'God's relationship to nature was at least as mysterious and controversial as man's to nature or man's to God' (MacFaul

2015, 35). According to Richard Hooker, the theologian and contemporary of Shakespeare, 'Nature is nothing but the tool of God' (Tillyard 1943, 61). Tillyard suggests that this providential perspective was common in early modern society. Although Stoicism was to some degree compatible with Christian theology (with its providential spine, and the moral Stoic philosophy of Cicero and Seneca the Younger dovetailing well with the teachings of Christ), some aspects stood in contrast to Christianity. Nature being perceived as godlike was one of these elements. In Stoicism, which MacFaul describes as a 'pantheist philosophy' (MacFaul 2015, 6), nature 'could be seen as unfallen' (MacFaul 2015, 26) in contrast to the 'cursed' natural world that was the new environment for Adam and Eve (The Bible 1599, Genesis 3.17). However, Seneca's comment that 'There is no unhappiness for those whom habit has brought back to nature' (Seneca 2007, 13) implies a Stoic acknowledgement of a historic separation between humans and nature.

A biological conceptual framework that served to strengthen the perceived bonds between the individual and the natural world was the hydraulic system of medicine known as the humours. Based on the works of Hippocrates (c.460-370 BCE) and Galen (c.129-216 CE), the system establishes the individual's biological well-being and personality type as being dependent on the balance of four liquids in the body: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. It was believed that from the ratios of these fluids, different medical and emotional states may arise (Sullivan 2016, 26). The humours were perceived to be intimately related with the four elements of earth, water, air and fire -- Tillyard notes that the terms 'element' and 'humour' were interchangeable -- thereby establishing an interplay between the natural world and the individual body (Tillyard 1943, 88). Tillyard states that 'On this rigidly physical theory of character the Elizabethans naturally felt themselves very close to the rest of nature' (Tillyard 1943, 88). Erin Sullivan observes how treatment for imbalanced humours was 'purgation' in the form of emptying of the bowels, bloodletting and vomiting (Sullivan 2016). For Aristotle, the viewing of a theatrical tragedy could also affect the body's internal equilibrium, as the witnessing of 'pity and fear' would result in 'effecting the purgation of these emotions' (Aristotle 1997, 10).

Recently Watson has examined perceptions of the natural world in Renaissance art. For Watson, along with the desire of Protestant Reformers and Renaissance Humanists to look backwards in the hope of 'recovering some original and authentic reality . . .' (Watson 2006, 77), was 'A pastoralist nostalgia which assumes that some regenerative truth resides back out in a natural setting' (Watson 2006, 65). We have seen how this retrospective

tendency has featured in Shakespeare scholarship, especially in the New Bibliography who were optimistic about getting back to Shakespeare's original works. According to MacFaul, Shakespeare's work often implies a belief that through an intimacy with the natural world we might experience God's grace. Consequently, we might infer that nature is not Fallen. According to MacFaul: 'Shakespeare's subtlest point [is that]: if incarnation [a human's earthly lifespan] involves some fundamental fusion between the heavenly and the natural, the latter may be as necessary for redemption as the former, and must therefore have always had something unfallen in it' (MacFaul 2015, 40). For MacFaul, Shakespeare's work suggests something 'potentially redemptive, in the natural world' (MacFaul 2015, 3).

For the early moderns, alongside Christian philosophy sat the schools of Stoicism, Scepticism and Epicureanism, and they all resonate in Shakespeare and Montaigne. They also offer varied perspectives on nature, and the following is an account of them.

Stoicism

The founder of the Stoic school of philosophy was Zeno of Citium (334-262 BCE), who taught in a colonnade or porch ('Stoa') in Athens, after which his philosophy was named. A key tenet of Stoicism is to comply with what is natural, as Diogenes Laertius records: 'Zeno was the first writer who, in his treatise on the Nature of man, said, that the chief good was confessedly to live according to nature' (Laertius 1853, 291). For Stoics, living in accordance with nature equates to living ethically because 'nature leads us to this point' (Laertius 1853, 291). Here therefore we see established an association between nature and virtue, with the implication that humans have an innate essential quality that might, when accessed unhindered, act like a moral compass. This individual inner-nature is connected to a greater universal nature that encompasses the material world (Laertius 1853, 291). The concept of universal laws that exist as a consequence of divine authority and that are embedded in our make-up can also be found in Plato's *Laws*. In his reflections on the nature and origin of our legal, spiritual and ethical frameworks, Plato pictures a '*natural* law' (Plato 1970, 337). Trevor J. Saunders suggests that Plato 'believed in the existence of what we would today call "absolute" moral standards' (Plato 1970, 408). In his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle reflects on the perceived relationship between morality, nature, divinity, and fortune suggesting that:

. . . some thinkers hold that virtue is a gift of nature; others think we become

good by habit, others that we can be taught to be good. Natural endowment is

obviously not under our control; it is bestowed on those who are fortunate, in the

true sense, by some divine dispensation. (Aristotle 1996, 279)

John Davie suggests that for Stoics 'living in agreement with nature refers to both human nature and to nature generally speaking' (Seneca 2007, xiii). Anthony Kenny states that 'it is the Stoics who were responsible for introducing the notion of 'Nature', with a capital 'N', as a single cosmic order exhibited in the structure and activities of things of many kinds' (Kenny 2004, 281). According to Diogenes Laertius, Stoics believe that God 'is the regulator and chief manager of all existing things' (Laertius 1853, 291), so everything follows a natural order that humans should therefore accept as divine providence. The virtues, such as justice, are perceived as existing as part of this natural law, rather than 'because of any definition or principle' (Laertius 1853, 306). Kenny suggests that the 'laws' adhered to in Stoicism may be called 'fate' or 'providence' and that the 'divinely designed system is called "Nature"' (Kenny 2004, 99). Examining the relationship between natural law, virtue, will, reason and happiness, Kenny suggests that for Stoics, 'If the will obeys reason it will live in accordance with Nature. It is this voluntary acceptance of Nature's laws that constitutes virtue, and virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness' (Kenny 2004, 99).

According to Zeno of Citium the faculty of reason, which is shared by all, is divine and therefore all humans are 'godlike; for they have something in them which is as it were a God' (Laertius 1853, 302). According to Michael Grant, the Roman statesman, philosopher and orator Cicero (106-43 BCE) developed his own philosophy based on this concept, which culminated in the belief that all humans are naturally or divinely obliged to respect and support one another 'in a universal Brotherhood of man' (Cicero 1971, 12). Cicero's treatise on ethical philosophy *On Duties*, a central text in Renaissance humanism, expands on this concept in detail. According to Michael Grant, it appeared in 63 editions between 1553 and 1610, which is 'a figure equalled by no other book' (Cicero 1971, 29). It was endorsed by St Augustine of Hippo, Erasmus, Luther and Queen Elizabeth I. Not purely a Stoic however, Cicero, like Montaigne, allowed himself 'to adopt any theory supported by probability' (Cicero 1971, 166). We have examined in a previous chapter Lewis's recent theory that *Hamlet*'s venatorial world of hunter and prey is an explicit rejection by Shakespeare of Ciceronian humanism (Lewis 2017). On the repeated imagery of hunting in

the play Lewis states that 'Shakespeare uses it to suggest an underlying vision of nature untamed by moral order' (Lewis 2017, 50).

A prominent Stoic who directly influenced both Shakespeare and Montaigne was Seneca the Younger, the Spanish and Roman statesman, philosopher and playwright, who was also a contemporary of Christ. As we have seen, in 1589 the English playwright and contemporary of Shakespeare, Thomas Nashe, mocked a now lost early version of *Hamlet* as being the product of a writer who was unable to read Seneca the Younger in its original Latin, suggesting that: 'English Seneca read by candlelight yields maine good sentences . . . and . . . will afford you whole Hamlets . . .' (Nashe 1589, **1r-A3r). Seneca the Younger was one of the most renowned Roman Stoics and his dialogues espoused the benefits of the philosophy. On the submission of the passions to reason, Seneca the Younger stated that: 'one may describe the happy man as someone who is free from desire and fear thanks to the gift of reason' (Seneca 2007, 89). Seneca the Younger, in common with Stoic doctrine, also perceived suicide as an appropriate way of dying, with his own life being ended by a suicide imposed on him by Nero. On his own death he stated that 'whenever my breath of life is demanded back by Nature or released by my own reason, I shall take my leave . . .' (Seneca 2007, 102). Paying tribute to Seneca the Younger and Cicero on matters of death and a common humanity, Montaigne wrote: 'Do I wish to fortify myself against fear of death? Then I do it at Seneca's expense. Do I want to console myself or somebody else? Then I borrow from Cicero' (Montaigne 1987, 155).

Montaigne's Stoicism can be evidenced in his interest in accepting death. Fascinated by our perceptions of dying and our readiness for it, in a Hamlet-like reflection Montaigne demanded:

> . . . let us deprive death of its strangeness; let us frequent it, let us get used to it; let us have nothing more often in the mind than death . . . Whenever a horse stumbles, a tile falls or a pin pricks however slightly, let us at once chew over this thought: "Supposing that was death itself?" With that, let us brace ourselves and make an effort. (Montaigne 1987, 96)

On Shakespeare's philosophical leanings, T. S. Eliot states that 'I propose a Shakespeare under the influence of the stoicism of Seneca. But I do not believe that Shakespeare was under the influence of Seneca' (Eliot 1932a, 129). The solution to this apparent paradox is Eliot's belief that Senecan stoicism was widely popular in early modern

literary culture and hence Shakespeare did not need to get it directly from reading Seneca. In summarizing the philosophical mindset of the Elizabethan, Eliot suggests that ' . . . the Senecan attitude of Pride, the Montaigne attitude of Scepticism, and the Machiavelli attitude of Cynicism, arrived at a kind of fusion in the Elizabethan individualism' (Eliot 1932a, 132). Eliot also suggests that ' . . . you get perhaps more Montaigne in *Hamlet* . . .' (Eliot 1932a, 134). Eliot pinpoints the specific trait that evidences these schools of thinking (particularly Stoicism) in Shakespeare's work as ' . . .a kind of self-consciousness that is new; the self-consciousness and self-dramatization of the Shakespearean hero, of whom Hamlet is only one' (Eliot 1932a, 139). This subject lies at the heart of Ellrodt's book on Shakespeare and Montaigne. Recently Helen Hackett has examined Elizabethan interest in mental faculties, calling the era 'a moment of the mind' (Hackett 2022, 341). Although, as we have seen, Bate suggests a parallel between the minds of Montaigne and Hamlet, he rejects an affinity between Shakespeare and Stoicism, suggesting that 'If there is one thing we may say for sure about Shakespeare's philosophical position, it is that he was an anti-Stoic.' (Bate 2009).

Scepticism

The philosophy of Scepticism is encapsulated in a question Montaigne asks in 'An Apology for Raymond Sebond': 'What do I know?' (Montaigne 1987, 591). It is significant here that Montaigne's point is made through a question, as opposed to a statement, which latter would imply epistemological certainty. The Sceptic school of philosophy was predominantly established by the Greek philosopher Pyrrho (360-270 BCE) who was a contemporary of Aristotle and Epicurus. Diogenes Laertius writes that Pyrrho had:

> taken a noble line in philosophy, introducing the doctrine of incomprehensibility, and of the necessity of suspending one's judgement . . . there was no such thing as downright truth; but . . . men did everything in consequence of custom and law. (Laertius 1853, 402)

Montaigne also saw a tension between epistemological certainty and custom, observing that: '. . . the principal activity of custom is so to seize us and grip us in her claws (so) that it is hardly in our power to struggle free and to come back into ourselves, where we can reason . . .' (Montaigne 1987, 130). Montaigne, like Hamlet views custom as a 'monster' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4r).

There are two ancient schools of Scepticism, both dating back to classical Greece, known as the Academic and the Pyrrhonian schools. The Academic school emerged from Plato's Academy, and sought to advance Socrates's method of questioning into a 'much more radical scepticism' (Kenny 2004, 173). The Academic sceptics were concerned with the relationship between sensual impressions, beliefs, the cognitive process, and genuine knowledge. Kenny observes that for the Academic sceptics, the holding of beliefs was acceptable 'provided that the person holding them does not claim that those beliefs have the status of knowledge' (Kenny 2004, 174). Pyrrhonian scepticism went further, rejecting all judgements, and even beliefs, holding the view that ' . . . no one should assert or affirm anything . . .' (Kenny 2004, 174). For Pyrrhonians, even the assertion that definite knowledge was beyond our reach could not be stated authoritatively.

Throughout Montaigne's writing we find his sceptical philosophy, with statements such as: 'The senses deceive our intellect; it deceives them in their turn' (Montaigne 1987, 673). In an observation that was soon to be echoed and advanced in Descartes's search for clear and distinct ideas, Montaigne notes that 'the mind must yield to clear evidence' (Montaigne 1987, 200). If, as Screech suggests, Montaigne eventually rejected Scepticism for an Epicurean world-view (Montaigne 1987, xvii), then his doubting gave way to the acceptance of his bodily experiences of the world. According to Bate, Montaigne, like Shakespeare, eventually came to a world-view that acknowledged that 'we have bodies as well as minds' (Bate 2009).

Epicureanism

Epicurus (341-270 BCE), is one of the most influential philosophers of the Hellenistic era. His philosophy is based on the principle of seeking pleasure and simultaneously reducing pain. For Epicurus, the ideal state is reached when 'The body may be rid of pain, and that the mind, divorced from anxiety and fear, may enjoy a feeling of contentment' (Lucretius 2001, 36). Epicurus believed that two of the main impediments to our happiness were anxiety regarding how the gods might be judging us, and the fear of death. For Epicurus, the gods live in a state of divine bliss, leaving them ambivalent to our behaviour. The gods, he suggested, 'are not influenced by worthy conduct nor touched by anger' (Lucretius 2001, 51). Epicurus believed in the theory of Atomism, established by Democritus (460-370 BCE). According to this concept every material thing in the universe is

made of tiny atoms (often translated as 'seeds') which are too small for the eye to perceive. Lucretius states: 'all things are composed of imperishable seeds' (Lucretius 2001, 9). For Epicurus, there is a second entity, the void, which exists alongside the atoms, and these two entities combine to constitute the whole universe: 'the universe in its essential nature is composed of two things, namely matter and the void' (Lucretius 2001, 14). For Epicurus everything that happens and that has ever happened in the universe is caused by ungoverned random movements of these two ingredients: 'all predictable things are either properties or accidents of matter and void' (Lucretius 2001, 15). These atoms are in a continual state of flux, being drawn together to create all things that exist, then being drawn apart as things decay, and so on continuously.

A significant Epicurean belief is that the world was not created by God or gods, and that gods are made of the same substance as everything else that exists, including humans, animals and plants (Lucretius 2001, 94). Epicurus believed that humans have free will, and that this freedom is linked to an unpredictable movement that some atoms make, commonly known as the 'swerve'. Lucretius stated that 'the factor that saves the mind itself from being governed in all its actions . . . is the minute swerve of the atoms' (Lucretius 2001, 42). (Whether the erratic, unaccountable movement of some atoms suitably accounts for the existence of free will is an issue that continues to divide scholars today). According to Epicureanism death should not be feared because it is not consciously or physically experienced, as the atoms that constitute the body will disperse, leaving us without consciousness or sensation. Epicureans also deny the theory of soul/body duality, as they believe that the soul is also made of atoms contained within the physical body. Lucretius asks: 'Then what has death to frighten man / Since souls can die, as well as bodies can?' (Lucretius 1910, 48). Montaigne makes frequent explicit and implicit Epicurean observations, such as how the universe is 'all motion and inconstancy' (Montaigne 1987, 374).

In *On the Nature of Things* the Epicurean Lucretius offers an array of hierarchies that describe the relationship between nature and the divine. In one passage a god (in this case Venus) is described as steering nature: ' . . .you (Venus) and you alone stand at the helm of nature's ship' (Lucretius 2001, 3). In contrast, Lucretius also raises nature's status with the observation that ' . . . the earth . . . has . . . been titled Great Mother of the gods' (Lucretius 2001, 50). Yet another configuration of this relationship is established in the comment that nature furnished the 'gods . . . with a pattern for creation' (Lucretius 2001,

142). For Epicurus, the universe is also viewed as an endless chaotic atomic dance, with everything in the natural world being the result of 'accidents of matter and void' (Lucretius 2001, 15). Aristotle, a contemporary of Epicurus, held an equally broad view on the possible origins of all matter, suggesting that ' . . . things come into being either by art or by nature or by luck or by spontaneity' (Aristotle 1933, 142).

Michel de Montaigne, Shakespeare, and *Hamlet*

Montaigne was born in 1533 in France into a wealthy household at the Chateau de Montaigne estate near Bordeaux. At the age of 38 Montaigne retired from public duties to his library within his tower to lead a life of contemplation. Montaigne was a practising Catholic and visited Pope Gregory XIII (the instigator of the Gregorian calendar). Martin Luther's teachings were referred to by Montaigne as 'novelties' and a 'disease' that were 'shaking our religion' and that would 'soon degenerate into loathsome atheism' (Montaigne 1987, 490). As we shall see however, Montaigne's scepticism about the faculty of reason establishes a close parallel to Luther.

Montaigne's essays cover a vast range of topics with titles including: 'On Thumbs', 'On anger', 'On smells', 'On educating children' and 'On the art of conversation'. In the essay 'On educating children' Montaigne criticises 'Those rash authors of our own century who scatter whole passages from ancient writers throughout their own worthless works, seeking to acquire credit' (Montaigne 1987, 165). This is ironic as his own writing bristles with classical quotations, with frequent mentions of Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, St Augustine of Hippo, Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch, Seneca, Cicero and Lucretius, evidencing a library and mind exceedingly well stocked. The Penguin Classics edition of the complete works amounts to just under 1,300 pages, which includes all 107 essays. One essay is titled 'On the vanity of words' and is glossed by Screech with the ironic observation that Montaigne 'despised words and admired deeds' (Montaigne 1987, 340).

According to Screech, Montaigne's essays are dominated by three philosophical schools. Screech states that 'Montaigne was first, it seems . . . a Stoic, then a Sceptic, then an Epicurean' (Montaigne 1987, xvii). Regarding nature, Montaigne offers an array of diverse philosophical perspectives establishing it as: humankind's ultimate guide; a force that does and does not require our intellect to fully comprehend it; and a state of purity that we (but not

animals) have somehow become distanced from. In his seminal essay 'An Apology for Raymond Sebond', nature is a focal point.

Montaigne's influence on his contemporary, Shakespeare, has been noted by scholars including Bate, Ellrodt and Stephen Greenblatt (Greenblatt 2014). In *Shakespeare's Philosophy*: *Discovering the Meaning Behind the Plays* Colin McGinn suggests that 'Montaigne had a profound influence on Shakespeare's works . . .' that can be evidenced in ' . . . a skeptical thread . . . running through the plays' (McGinn 2006, 6). Eliot was so intrigued and convinced by Montaigne's influence on Shakespeare that he wrote in his essay 'Hamlet' that 'we should like to know whether and when, and after or at the same time as what personal experience, he read Montaigne' (Eliot 1932b, 146). Bate suggests that as Montaigne's essay's progress, his outlook moves towards an Epicurean perspective that establishes 'an acceptance that embraces the needs of the body as well as the disciplines of the mind' (Bate 2008, 413). Bate suggests that Shakespeare also developed this philosophical outlook. According to Bate, Shakespeare, like Montaigne, demonstrated in his work a philosophy that 'refused to pretend that there is no such thing as the body' (Bate 2008, 417).

At the heart of his essays is Montaigne's most influential work 'An Apology for Raymond Sebond'. Here Montaigne defends (ironically according to Bate) the book *Natural Theology* written in the early fifteenth century by Spanish theologian Raymond of Sabunde (Sebond). Montaigne was familiar with the text as he had translated it into French for his father. A central aspect of Sebond's theory was that God could be evidenced through the natural world. Screech states that 'Raymond Sebond believes that God has given Man two Books, a metaphorical one and a real one. The first is the 'Book of all Creatures' or the 'Book of Nature. The second is Holy Scripture.' (Montaigne 1987, xxv). According to Sebond, as a consequence of the Fall humankind has become blinded to the truth of God. This divine truth would otherwise be revealed to us through exposure to the Book of Nature (Montaigne 1987, xxv). This field of discussion is known as 'Natural Theology' and is based on the precept that God can be known through observance of the material world. The Catholic theologian and Aristotelian Thomas Aquinas rejected the possibility of seeing God with our eyes, but did claim that the faculty of reason might bring us closer to God. In his *Summa Theologica* Aquinas states that God 'cannot be seen by the sense or the imagination, but only by the intellect' (Aquinas 2018, 57). As we have seen in an earlier chapter, Martin Luther rejected the pagan teachings of Aristotle, adapted into Christian Theology by Aquinas,

emphatically stating that human reason had no part to play in our communion with God (Martin Luther 2018, 92).

In 'An Apology for Raymond Sebond' Montaigne cites Romans 1:20, which might be read to support Sebond's argument, as it could be deemed to provide scriptural proof that God is evidenced in nature. '"The invisible things of God," says St Paul, "are clearly seen from the creation of the world, his Eternal Wisdom and his Godhead being perceived from the things he has made"' (Montaigne 1987, 499). According to Screech this quotation 'is the foundation of all natural theology in the Renaissance' (Montaigne 1987, xxvii). However, throughout the essay Montaigne develops an argument that challenges the philosophical and theological position that reason is the supreme faculty, as well as the idea that God can be evidenced through our rational and sensual experience of the natural world.

Throughout the essay Montaigne develops his scepticism towards epistemological certainty, with the main focus centring on humankind's relationship to the natural world, and on the intelligence of animals. Montaigne perceives animals as being somehow more in touch with nature than humans, and he repeatedly implies that humans consequently exist in a state of being that is inferior to theirs. Of man's commonly accepted superior status to animals Montaigne asks ' . . . what are the grounds on which he has founded and erected all those advantages which he thinks he has over other creatures . . . ?' (Montaigne 1987, 502). In a passage that offers a parallel to a speech by the Archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry V* (Shakespeare 2005, 1.2.187-204), where bees are described as demonstrating excellent social cohesive functionality, Montaigne proposes that bees provide us with an ideal societal template. Montaigne asks: 'Is there any form of body politic more ordered, more varied in its allocation of tasks and duties or maintained with greater constancy than that of the bees?' (Montaigne 1987, 508). (T. W. Craik suggests that Shakespeare's English sources for the allegory of the bees are likely to be works by Thomas Elyot or John Lyly (Shakespeare 2005, 1.2.187-204n)). Montaigne however uses this observation to imply that bees are rational creatures and that they must therefore be capable of 'reasoned discourse and foresight' (Montaigne 1987, 508).

Montaigne sees art and culture as evidence that we are somehow alienated from nature, and that as a consequence we are vulnerable to forces beyond our control. Negatively contrasting humans with other animals, Montaigne writes: ' . . . we . . . are abandoned by Nature to chance and to Fortune, obliged to seek, by art, all things necessary . . .' (Montaigne

1987, 509). Charles Darwin would later echo Montaigne's thoughts in a comparison between his theories of natural and artificial selection: 'Natural Selection . . . is . . . As immeasurably superior to man's feeble efforts, as the works of Nature are to those of Art' (Darwin 2009, 64). Bate suggests that: 'The "apology" in Montaigne's title is ironically meant: the essay comprehensively refutes Sebond's natural religion and says that what you need instead is blind, irrational faith' (Bate 2008, 389).

Montaigne's concern with nature dominates the essays and evidences many contrasting perspectives. In a comment that resonates with Stoic, Christian and Sceptical thinking Montaigne observes that 'Nature, being equal and common to all, cannot fail to be just. But . . . we have unslaved ourselves from Nature's law and given ourselves over to the vagrant liberty of our mental perceptions' (Montaigne 1987, 61). Here, godlike 'Nature' is a just authority from which we have been distanced due to over-use of our cognitive faculties. How humankind would most suitably fulfil its 'natural' desire to attain knowledge (as Aristotle highlights) without use of 'mental perceptions' Montaigne does not specify here. Although Montaigne, at times, views the ability to think as a flaw, he also perceives it as an asset. Montaigne suggests that 'Intelligence was given to us for our greater good' (Montaigne 1987, 57) and that ' . . .we should, despite the force of Nature, always yield to reason.' (Montaigne 1987, 435). However, paradoxically, Montaigne also warns us about the appropriate use of reason in the rhetorical question: ' . . . shall we use it to bring about our downfall by fighting against the design of Nature . . . ?' (Montaigne 1987, 57).

Alongside the faculty of reason, Montaigne also views the habits and customs of humankind as being somehow harmful and unnatural, observing: 'Never could habit conquer Nature: Nature is unconquerable; yet we have corrupted our souls with unrealities, luxuries, leisure, idleness . . . and evil habits.' (Montaigne 1987, 62). Montaigne perceives habitual activity as ' . . . infringing the rules of Nature . . .' (Montaigne 1987, 23), and suggests that 'It is not sensible that artifice should be reverenced more than Nature . . .' (Montaigne 1987, 232). This standpoint can be traced to Plato's *Republic*, as we have seen, where the natural world is perceived as being an imitation of the realm of Forms, resulting in Plato's rejection of art as a copy of a copy. As we have seen, Philip Sidney's *In Praise of Poetry* proposes an opposing view, where the creativity of the artist exceeds the limits of nature. For Sidney, 'the Poet . . . lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, dooth growe in effect into another nature, in making things either better that Nature bringeth forth, or, quite anewe, forms such as never were in Nature . . .' (Sidney 1948, 8). The world established via the imagination of

the poet is 'golden', according to Sidney, compared to the inferior 'brazen' (made of brass) world created by nature (Sidney 1948, 8). For Aristotle, artifice and nature had a much more organic relationship than the one perceived by Montaigne. According to Aristotle, 'the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood' (Aristotle 1997, 5). Examining the perceived tension between nature and culture, Gabriel Egan observes that 'Paradoxically the origin of the word 'culture' lies in cultivation, the tending of what grows naturally, and to this extent culture/nature is not really a polarity at all' (Egan 2006, 7).

Montaigne's belief that 'birds sing the sweeter for their artlessness' (Montaigne 1987, 232) suggests a level of beauty that is achieved without effort, thought or sweat, which exposes a nuanced perspective on animals and intellect. The implication is that the beauty of the bird's song is natural, innate and effortless, and has not required the hard work (physical and mental) that a work of art made by a human would require. By implication, in contrast, a hard-working poet would create works that somehow remain unnatural or lacking a sweetness that comes with creativity through instinct alone. The final products (the birdsong and the poem) might both be beautiful, but the bird's creation is superior because it is instinctive and does not require something like a rational faculty or repeated laborious toil to produce it. Paradoxically Montaigne also uses the skilful or craft-like achievements evidenced throughout the animal world as proof that the faculty of reason (which in this instance is deemed as being highly valued) exists in animals. His observation of the bees, as we have seen, results in the question: 'Can we conceive that an allocation of tasks and activities, so striking for its orderliness, should be conducted without reasoned discourse and foresight?' (Montaigne 1987, 58).

The relationship between nature and art is a feature of the tributes to Shakespeare by Ben Jonson, John Heminge and Henry Condell in the First Folio of 1623. For Heminge and Condell, Shakespeare was a 'happie imitator' and 'expresser' of 'Nature' (Shakespeare 1623, $^{\pi}$A3r). For Jonson, 'Nature her selfe was proud of his designes', which were superior to the works of Aristophanes, Terence and Plautus, who were 'not of Nature's family' (Shakespeare 1623, $^{\pi}$A5+1v). If Shakespeare was 'of Nature's family', however, that still does not account for his brilliance, according to Jonson who continues: 'Yet must I not giue Nature all: Thy Art, / My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part' (Shakespeare 1623, $^{\pi}$A5+1vr). Here, Shakespeare's apparent ability to be one with nature is a significant factor in his excellence. However, it is his 'Art' (by implication a quality that is other than natural) that operates in combination with nature to establish his supreme status.

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We have seen here how Montaigne had a direct influence on Shakespeare and possibly even *Hamlet*. Both writers demonstrate the ability to synthesise and engage with an array of contrasting philosophies and theologies, in particular Stoicism, Epicureanism, Scepticism and Christianity. We have seen how nature is also a central theme for Montaigne and Shakespeare. In summarising his analysis of the philosophies present in Shakespeare's canon McGinn cites John Keats's theory on Shakespeare framed as 'Negative Capability' examined above (McGinn 2006, 16). This could also be attributed to Montaigne whose essays repeatedly offer an array of perspectives on a single topic, where grasping for fact and reason are resisted. It is possible to read Montaigne and Shakespeare, as we have seen, through a variety of philosophical lenses.

For Eliot, Shakespeare's work evidences Stoicism, whereas Bate suggests that Shakespeare rejected Stoicism and that: 'It is time that we attached a philosophical stance to the mind of Shakespeare: Epicureanism' (Bate 2009). MacFaul's examination of Stoicism and nature in Shakespeare establishes the natural world as being as significant to Shakespeare as it is to Montaigne. For MacFaul, Shakespeare portrays nature (in its pastoral sense) as being a place where humans might find God's grace. On Shakespeare's philosophy, McGinn writes: 'If I were to award him a single label, it would be "naturalist" . . . he is a clear-eyed observer and recorder, sensitive to the facts before his eyes, not swayed by dogma or tradition' (McGinn 2006, 15).

Hamlet: Something More than Natural

One of the earliest observations made by one of the sentinels at the opening of the play is that there has been 'Not a mouse stirring' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1r). The guards are apprehensive about the reappearance of the Ghost, so the observation regarding the absence of a rodent establishes and initiates a complex and nuanced relationship between the natural and the supernatural, which resonates throughout the play. Whether the recent lack of mice on the castle platform is a reassuring or a worrying sign is not specified in the text. The Ghost, by definition, is a supernatural entity, but it has a keen interest in the subject of nature and also appears to be still bound by some of its authority. According to the Queen in her comment regarding the recent death of Old Hamlet, humans pass 'through nature' on their way to 'eternitie' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B4v). By implication this makes death or the afterlife a place beyond nature. The Ghost demonstrates some awareness of this fact as he

looks back in regret on the 'foule crimes done in my dayes of nature' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v). The Ghost is here framed as being somehow beyond nature.

The Ghost's appearance belies an emotional disposition that would normally be associated with human nature. Hamlet's request for Horatio to describe the Ghost implies an interest in an inner state as much as an external one, with the question: 'What look't he frowningly?' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2v), which establishes a tension between the ethereal and the natural. Horatio's reply: 'A countenance more in sorrow then in anger.' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C2v) confirms the apparent presence of feelings in the Ghost. That feelings are natural is implied by the King during his lecture to the court on the process of grieving for Old Hamlet. The King states that 'so farre hath discretion fought with nature' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3v), which Thompson and Taylor read as meaning that 'rational judgement (has) competed with natural emotion' (Thompson and Taylor 2006, 1.2.5n). That the Ghost is wearing armour, appearing in 'that faire and warlike forme' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1v), also suggests some level of participation in the natural world.

Further references to nature are found in the Ghost's concern that his murder was 'most vnnaturall', and 'strange and vnnaturall' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v). The concept that murder is unnatural is echoed by Horatio at the play's conclusion when he promises in future to speak of the 'vnnaturall acts' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G2r) he has witnessed, which arguably include some or all of the narrative's main events, its killings. Exactly how or why the murders are deemed unnatural remains unspecified. It might be relating to perspectives on fratricide, or regicide, or be offering a Ciceronian perspective (where our natural state is to love fellow humans), or it may be implying that any murder is unnatural. Whether Cain's murder of his brother Abel (ironically referenced by the King as resulting in 'the first course [corpse]') is, from a Christian perspective, unnatural, would be a complex and nuanced theological point (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1r). If to live is to pass through nature, and by implication be an aspect of it, then murdering could arguably be an aspect of that natural existence, and therefore natural. If, as the Stoics and Christians believe, there is a divine and natural law that banishes murder (such as the Sixth Commandment), then it could be deemed unnatural to break it. The text's implicit reference to the Sixth Commandment in Hamlet's comment about God having 'fixt / His cannon gainst seale [self] slaughter' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1r) establishes murder as being ungodly, if not unnatural. We have seen however that Stoics believed in suicide as an acceptable act. Horatio's statement 'I am more an anticke Romaine then a Dane' (Shakespeare 1604-5, O1r), made as he attempts to drink the

poison, implies his Stoic leanings, as opposed to a Christian outlook. The Ghost encourages Hamlet to 'Reuenge' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v) his own murder with the prompt: 'If thou hast nature in thee beare it not' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D3r). Whether 'nature' in this instance is a propensity for revenge or a commitment to legal justice, or filial love and a sense of duty, remains unspecified. If the Ghost's desire is for Hamlet to kill the King, then the implication is that it will be natural for him to murder. It is ironic here that a reference to whether someone has nature in them is issued by a Ghost and spoken to a human.

The Ghost's first appearance in Act 1 leads Horatio to speculate on the prophetic value of the supernatural visit. Recalling the portents that prefaced the murder of Julius Caesar, Horatio describes a picture of natural and supernatural turmoil:

> As starres with traines of fier, and dewes of blood
>
> Disasters in the sunne; and the moist starre,
>
> Vpon whose influence *Neptunes* Empier stands,
>
> Was sicke almost to doomesday with eclipse.
>
> And euen the like precurse of feare euents
>
> As harbindgers preceading still the fates
>
> And prologue to the *Omen* comming on
>
> Haue heauen and earth together demonstrated
>
> Vnto our Climatures and countrymen
>
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, B2v)

This passage establishes a convoluted synthesis of the natural and the supernatural. Here, the stars are leaving trails of fire (which might possibly be accounted for in natural or astronomical terms, as for example in shooting stars or comets) and dripping blood, which is more certainly a supernatural event. The sun is showing signs of corruption, and the moon, like the bleeding stars, is described with the anthropomorphic trait of being 'sicke' during an eclipse (a rare but natural event). The sea is perceived as being under the sway of the Roman god Neptune. Horatio concludes that the strange astral events were serving as signals for the ominous forthcoming murder of Caesar, and that they were instigated by 'heauen and earth'. We find here, then, the natural (stars) behaving supernaturally, due to an impulse initiated by 'heauen' -- frequently a synonym for 'God', as in Horatio's comment that 'Heauen will direct' the outcome of the current political turmoil (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2r) -- and earth.

Although the Roman god Neptune features in Horatio's narrative, he appears to be lower down the ladder of a supernatural hierarchy, above which sit God and even earth. If the stars are bleeding autonomously then they are essentially supernatural entities, but if they are being made to bleed by God, then they are arguably not. If '*Neptunes* Empier' is partially responsible for the astral mayhem, then it is arguably a natural and/or a supernatural thing. In Ovid's rendition of this series of events, Caesar, after his death, is transformed into a star (Ovid 1955, 357). According to Ben Jonson, Shakespeare experienced the same fate, stating in his tribute to the poet in the First Folio: '*But stay, I see thee in the* Hemisphere / *Aduanc'd, and made a Constellation there* !' (Shakespeare 1623, ᵖA5+1v).

The Ghost's second appearance in the opening scene is halted when a cockerel crows, with Barnardo observing that 'It was about to speake when the cock crewe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r). Marcellus concurs, observing that 'It faded on the crowing of the Cock' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r). Horatio then reflects on rumours concerning the relationship between cockerels, a pagan god and spirits:

> I haue heard,
> The Cock that is the trumpet to the morne,
> Doth with his lofty and shrill sounding throat
> Awake the God of day, and at his warning
> Whether in sea or fire, in earth or ayre
> Th'extrauagant and erring spirit hies
> To his confine
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r)

Marcellus then elaborates on Horatio's theory:

> Some say that euer gainst that season comes
> Wherein our Sauoiurs birth is celebrated
> This bird of dawning singeth all night long,
> And then they say no spirit dare sturre abroad
> The nights are wholsome, then no plannets strike,
> No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charme
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r)

Here we are presented again with a complex interplay of seemingly natural and supernatural forces. Whether we should deem the cockerel as being supernatural, due to its role in the awakening of the pagan god of day, which Thompson and Taylor identify as being 'the sun-god, Phoebus' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 1.1.151n), or whether we should perceive it as being simply natural and ignorant of this matter, remains unclear. If the bird is unknowingly being used by Phoebus to initiate his awakening, then its call is in some way part of a supernatural happening. The fact that the bird spends the whole night singing during the Christmas period implies a certain level of supernatural behaviour or involvement. Horatio's account describes how the bird's cry initiates pagan supernatural events, with the awakening of Phoebus resulting in the 'spirit' being unable to sustain its residence within the four elements that constitute the natural world. Marcellus's account frames the cockerel as being more closely associated with the Christian God, and its lengthier song has a greater impact on an array of negative supernatural forces. Here, spirits are banished, but so are ill-meaning fairies. Witches lose their 'power', planets are unable to exert evil influence, and nights are calm. Evident here, again, is what appears to be a hierarchy of supernatural entities that also engage with natural forces, making those natural forces possibly supernatural. Phoebus's authority or presence is greater than that of a spirit, and the cockerel is coincidentally or supernaturally an aspect of this pagan god's awakening. In Marcellus's account, the bird is working with or being governed by the Christian God, and its role in the matter is extended. If planets can autonomously 'strike' then by implication they are supernatural and have a tendency for cruelty. We are also reminded here of the natural catastrophes that supernatural forces instigated in narratives from the Bible and Ovid.

The hierarchical relationship implied in the above accounts is a challenging one to establish. The Christian God appears to have greatest authority. The pagan gods such as Neptune and Phoebus (and possibly planets) appear to be inferior to the Christian God. (Planets are also framed as gods, such as the Roman god of war, Mars, as mentioned by Hamlet at 3.4.55). Below planets, hierarchically, are ghosts, witches and fairies (although Marcellus places planets on the same stratum as these), who are able to supernaturally affect humans. Horatio's comment 'Ile crosse it though it blast mee' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r), however suggests that a human referencing a Christian symbol becomes more powerful than a supernatural spirit. Where the cockerel stands in this framework remains unclear. Later in the play Hamlet comments on the relationship between birds and divine matters. Dismissing Horatio's advice to withdraw from the duel, Hamlet observes: 'Not a whit, we defie augury,

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there is speciall prouidence in the fall of a Sparrowe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N3v). Here, the pagan practice of foretelling future events through the observation of birds in flight is rejected. What is significant according to Hamlet, however, is the death of a single sparrow, which is deemed to be of value as it evidences God's providential plan. Here, therefore, all natural events are governed by the supernatural, which arguably establishes everything as being supernatural. Hamlet's claim that 'There's a diuinity that shapes our ends' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N1r) makes the same point regarding human affairs. Hamlet's observation about the sparrow comes from Matthew 10.29-31, which itself establishes a hierarchy between the divine, humans, and animals as the speaker concludes with the observation that according to God the listener is 'of more value than many sparrows' (The Bible 1599, Matthew 10.31).

If supernatural entities in the play are represented as having some natural attributes, we also find that the reverse applies. Hamlet's observation regarding his soul as being 'a thing immortall' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2r) suggests that he is partially supernatural (a belief that was established in the classical world and sustained into Christianity). There is also an air of godlike perfection in Old Hamlet, according to his son. Not only are Old Hamlet's attributes like those of Hyperion, Mars and Mercury, according to Hamlet, 'euery God did seem to set his seale' in the creation of his father (Shakespeare 1604-5, I2v). The King reminds Laertes that the monarch is honoured with supernatural powers in the statement that 'There's such diuinitie doth hedge a King' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L1v). Here, 'hedge' carries the horticultural sense of the word, meaning a protective barrier. The King's comment however does not account for the apparent failure of this divine supernatural force-field when he murdered his brother. Ophelia is also pictured as a godlike ideal of a human in Laertes's claim that she 'Stood challenger on mount of all the age' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L3v). The equine master '*Lamord*' is described as having such skills that he is 'demy natur'd' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L4r) with the horse, which in this case appears to raise his status to that of a mythical centaur-like creature. The King and Ophelia are also described as being 'demy natur'd' and supernatural creatures, in the images of a 'satire' [satyr] (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1v) and a 'Marmaide' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v) respectively.

We have seen here how indistinct are the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural realms throughout the play. Animals and planets are entwined in supernatural activity, but the extent to which they are supernatural remains unclear. The Ghost is presented as being somehow beyond nature, but it is restricted by forces that involve nature,

such as the call of specific birds, and the rising of the sun. Supernatural entities exist in a hierarchy, but this stratum is not clearly defined in the text. Some sense of order is established however, with the Christian God holding the highest authority and overseeing pagan gods and planets. These, in turn have authority over minor supernatural entities such as ghosts, fairies and witches, who have some power over humans unless the humans make symbolic gestures alluding to the Christian God. Humans are depicted as being partially supernatural, having immortal souls, and some characters are described as having supernatural attributes. MacFaul suggests that 'Shakespeare seems concerned to point up the paradoxes and conflicts involved when something beyond the order of nature enters into the natural world' (MacFaul 2015, 39). However, where the natural world ends and the supernatural begins appears nebulous in Elsinore. The above analysis appears to confirm MacFaul's point. The apparent merging of these two realms echoes the apparent merging of characters (examined in our analysis of the Ghost and kings), of reality and the fictional (as examined in Chapter Three), and of the theatre and the Church (examined in Chapter Four). Our framing of the synthesis of the natural and the supernatural, along with its parallels, exposes the plethora of subtle sub-textual philosophical motifs that Shakespeare is engaging with.

A Little Patch of Ground

According to Williams, one of the predominant senses of the word 'nature' is 'countryside', or 'plants and creatures other than man.' (Williams 1983, 223). It is this sense of the word that I would like to focus on here. I shall examine the text for references to the following categories: land masses; Ophelia and flowers; weeds; pro-creation; and animals.

Land masses are recurrent motifs throughout the play, and according to De Grazia their relationship to the characters amounts to being the play's most essential subject. De Grazia argues that Hamlet's interiority -- which has been perceived as being the play's 'salient feature' since around 1800 (De Grazia 2007, 1) -- has overshadowed the issue of his dispossession of the Danish kingdom at his father's death. Throughout the text land is defended, fought over, retrieved, stolen, desired, discussed, owned, fought in, and dug. The opening act establishes a territorial subtext to the play as our first image is of royal guards defending their castle, king and country. Conversation soon turns to a battle in which '*Fortinbrasse* . . . Did forfait (with his life) all these his lands' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B2v).

The King's opening speech continues this theme as he observes how 'young *Fortenbrasse*' is now demanding 'the surrender of those lands / Lost by his father' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B4r). De Grazia summarises the text's key incidents concerning land and conflict as follows:

> Norway combats Denmark over crown lands, Claudius murders Hamlet I over the kingdom, Gonzago poisons Lucianus [sic, but "Lucianus poisons Gonzago" intended] for "estate", Norway fights Poland over a small non-arable plot, and finally Laertes and Hamlet grapple over the even smaller and more barren plot that Ophelia has become. (De Grazia 2007, 156)

The location of Old Hamlet and Gonzago's murder (the first appearing in narrative, and the second enacted twice) is out amongst the trees and flowers whilst both characters lie asleep (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v, H1v,H3r). According to MacFaul, Shakespeare's characters sometimes come closer to God's grace when closer to nature. For MacFaul, the fact that the lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are 'transformed' whilst asleep on the ground is a significant point (MacFaul 2015, 54). In *Hamlet*, resting in the woods does not result in having one's romantic perceptions altered through the administration of the essence of flowers to one's eyes. In Denmark, sleeping outside on the ground leads to being poisoned to death via the ears. Although the outcomes are different in these instances, there is a parallel here, where a life-altering substance is introduced to the body via a sense organ.

Throughout the play, land is associated with conflict and death and is often pictured as either being infertile or abandoned to wild growth and disorder. These latter two can be found in Hamlet's descriptions of the world as 'an vnweeded garden / That growes to seede' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1r), and a 'sterill promontorie' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F2r). Thompson and Taylor point out that the neglected garden was a commonly used metaphor for social disorder (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 1.2.135-7n). In Hamlet's image the garden suffers an over-abundance of uncontrolled fertility and is now also passed its prime. Hamlet's comment to his mother that 'at your age / The heyday in the blood is tame' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3r) is an implication that her fertility or libido has passed its prime. For Hamlet, as De Grazia observes, the Queen's 'fallow womb has gone to seed' (De Grazia 2007, 102). Although Horatio refers to 'the wombe of earth' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B3r), in *Hamlet* the earth or nature is an entity that mostly breeds 'things rancke and grose' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1r) or nothing at all. The barren 'patch of ground' that the Captain

'would not farme' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K3r) offers a parallel to the desolate 'Moore' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3r) that is the King. In contrast, Old Hamlet was a 'faire mountaine' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I3r), which is not explicitly described as being more fertile, but the implication might be read into the comparison. Mountains also appear in the graveyard scene, though here they are mythical and are part of a competition to imagine the greatest tumulus. In wishing to be buried alive with his sister, Laertes asks to be covered with soil that would 'o'ertop old *Pelion*, or the skyesh head / Of blew *Olympus*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4v). Not wishing to be outdone, Hamlet imagines a mound that would make Greece's mount Ossa appear no greater than a growth on someone's skin: 'let them throw / Millions of Acres on vs, till our ground / Sindging his pate against the burning Zone / Make Ossa like a wart' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4v-N1r).

In *Hamlet* the earth is a tomb not a womb, as evidenced in the play's singular use of the word 'field' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G2r), which here refers to a piece of land that holds corpses, a battlefield, rather than a fertile farmed plot. However, the tomb in Denmark is not an accepting one that offers the dead an opportunity to rest in peace. Instead, dead bodies are repeatedly uprooted, spat out or interred with some disruption. Old Hamlet's 'canoniz'd bones' have been 'cast . . . vp againe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1v), the skeletons in the graveyard are dug up and 'knockt about . . . with a Sextens spade' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M2v), and Polonius's burial is done in haste, or 'hugger mugger' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K4v). Ophelia's burial is the most traumatised. After being uprooted from her 'muddy death[bed]' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v) in the brook, she is re-interred with 'maimed rites' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r) in sanctified ground (against the priest's wishes) only to have her grave become the location of a brawl between Hamlet and Laertes. MacFaul suggests that 'Shakespeare's most famous moment of a character being absorbed into nature is the death of Ophelia in *Hamlet*, as described by Gertrude' (MacFaul 2015, 60), examined below.

It is ironic that absorption into nature, and by implication complete knowledge of nature, is portrayed to take place when we are no longer conscious. As we have seen, Genesis associates humankind's interest in knowledge with the knowledge of mortality. On this matter Watson observes that, in much Renaissance art 'What death teaches is that conscious knowledge and complete symbiosis with nature are mutually exclusive.' (Watson 2006, 79). In *Hamlet*, attempts to control, divide, own or even become more physically familiar with land result in a fatal union with it. Hamlet's pun on the imagined location of the dead lawyer's legal documents that established his ownership of land epitomises this.

Hamlet observes that 'The very conueyances of his Lands will scarcely lye in this box' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M2v). Whether 'box' represents the lawyer's coffin or skull here, the point remains the same. As De Grazia observes: 'In the end all that is left of his land is the dust in his cranium' (De Grazia 2007, 146). We might also suggest that Hamlet's resentment of Osric is partially due to the latter's ownership of something that Hamlet lacks. Reducing him three times to a beast, with the titles of 'water fly' and 'Lapwing' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N2r, N3r), and 'Lord of beasts', Hamlet suggests that Osric 'hath much land' and is 'spacious in the possession of durt' (Shakespeare 1604-5, N2r).

Regarding the relationship between nature and self-consciousness, we find that, as MacFaul suggests, 'The fit between reason and the natural world had become slippery' (MacFaul 2015, 27). As we have seen, for Luther, God and self-knowledge might be experienced through inner contemplation. MacFaul (see above) highlights Shakespeare's framing of the natural world as being a place where individuals might experience God's grace. Yet for Watson (see above) for the early moderns conscious knowledge and symbiosis with nature are mutually exclusive. As examined, the early moderns believed in a symbiotic relationship between the elements out in nature and the humours that establish ones physical and mental equilibrium. The complexities of the dynamics of this relationship are exposed when we reflect on *Hamlet*'s framing of the littoral as being a place that potentially corrupts the mind. De Grazia's observation on the dust in the dead lawyer's cranium frames the tension between human consciousness and nature well: where thoughts once resided, now sits the earth.

Rose of May: Ophelia and flowers

Of all the characters in the play Ophelia is most closely associated with nature, and in particular flowers. Within a few lines of her first speech Laertes likens Hamlet's affection for her to 'A Violet in the youth of primy nature' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3r). Here Laertes is using the image of a violet to establish the idea of something that is young and fragile. Later the image of this flower returns to haunt his sister, firstly in Ophelia's comment that the 'Violets . . . withered all when my Father dyed' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L2r), and secondly in the shocking image of 'Violets [that] spring . . . [from her] vnpolluted flesh' after her death (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r). Regarding this first image Andy Mousley observes

that 'Ophelia's folklore is . . . an anthropomorphicisation of nature' as the violet '"feels" what human beings feel' and this according to Mousley conflates the natural world with the human world' (Mousley 2015, 22). We have seen, above, how the natural and supernatural worlds also conflate in the play. De Grazia notes how the image of Ophelia's florinated body is one that might have been established before her death in early productions of the play. An illustration of the character from 1772 shows how 'sprigs of flowers are fastened to her gown' (De Grazia 2007, 122). This image suggests the ironic view of Ophelia as Flora, goddess of flowers and fertility. Laertes had previously warned her against allowing her 'chast treasure' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3v) to be 'open' (to not become de-flowered). But like the 'canker [that] gaules the infants of the spring' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3v), Ophelia's flower-like life is destroyed in its prime.

Ophelia's association with flowers even extends to her being perceived as one. Laertes describes her as 'Rose of May' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L2r), and the Queen offers 'Sweets to the sweet' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M4r) as she covers Ophelia's dead body with flowers. As De Grazia observes, Ophelia's unravelling mind is mirrored by the dismantling of her bouquet that she recently gathered (In Q1 she states 'I a bin gathering of floures' (Shakespeare 1603, H1v)). To the court she offers 'Rosemary', 'Pancies', 'Fennill', 'Colembines', 'Rewe', a 'Dasie' and 'Violets' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L2r). In performance, the naming of these flowers often serves to amplify Ophelia's insanity. In Gregory Doran's 2012 production at the Royal Shakespeare Company, and in Grigori Kozintsev's film of the play (1964), Mariah Gale and Anastasiya Vertinskaya who play Ophelia hand out a bunch of weeds and twigs respectively as the above flowers are named (Doran 2009, Kozintsev 1964). That her words and songs may be interpreted as nonsense (as Laertes suggests at 4.5.172) is ironic here, as according to De Grazia 'literary or rhetorical passages were often called flowers' and a '*posy*' could be 'a gathering of either horticultural or literary flowers' (De Grazia 2007, 116). Just as Hamlet's poetic posy, gifted to Ophelia, is picked apart and dismantled by Polonius -- '*that's an ill phrase, a vile phrase*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, E4r), -- Ophelia's bunch of flowers, her songs, her mind, and her life also end up being disintegrated.

Ophelia's death happens as a consequence of her fascination with flowers, and her attempt to literally get close to nature. The narrative that depicts it is deemed one of the most beautiful passages in Shakespeare, itself strewn with floral images. Attempting to make garlands Ophelia climbs a willow to weave her 'Crowflowers', 'Nettles', 'Daises' and 'long Purples' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1r). As De Grazia notes, her garlands 'are made up not of

cultivated flowers like roses but of wild flowers and weeds' (De Grazia 2007, 119). As the Ghost has already established with his reference to 'the fat weede / That rootes it selfe in ease on *Lethe* wharffe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v), the weeds in Elsinore serve to drain people of their energy, and ultimately of their lives. During her attempt to give her posy to the willow, mirroring her attempt to return her authored posies to Hamlet (3.1.92-101), the tree spitefully rejects her: the 'enuious sliuer broke' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v). According to Thompson and Taylor the willow's 'envy' is to be read in the sense of 'malicious' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 4.7.171n). This therefore further mirrors Hamlet's vitriolic attack on Ophelia in the Nunnery scene, and also frames nature, again, as being sinister. Temporarily, in the water, Ophelia experiences a peaceful union with the natural world and 'like a creature natiue' in the 'weeping Brooke' she is fleetingly 'As one incapable of her owne distresse' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v). Her sense of conscious peace is short lived however, and she is soon 'absorbed into nature' in a 'muddy death' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v). Ophelia's figurative pathway is a 'flower strewn road' (Thompson and Taylor 2006a, 1.3.49n), but emotionally, psychologically and physically she is forced to tread 'the step [meaning 'steep'] and thorny way' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3v).

The Queen points out that the 'long Purples' that so attract Ophelia are also known as 'dead mens fingers' by 'our cull-cold maydes' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1r). This echoes Ophelia's observation on the flexible nature of names attributed to flora, when she remarks that 'Rewe' [Rue] may also be called 'herbe of Grace a Sondaies' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L2r). Keith Thomas notes that regarding Elizabethan flora many 'vernacular names were hopelessly volatile' and that 'over twenty' different species of plant were known as 'dead man's fingers' (K. Thomas 1983, 83). Here, Plato's naturalist and conventionalist theories of naming things appear evident in the text. Presumably these names were attributed to this range of species as their form (or nature) demonstrated a likeness to lifeless fingers. That the same name was attributed to different species demonstrates the whims of convention.

Here we have a synthesis of the three philosophical themes we are examining: the problem of universals; the authority of language; and humankind's relationship to nature. These themes also closely relate to Hamlet's concern for the tension between a thing's essence and its outward appearance. Different species of plants appear to resemble dead men's fingers. Their apparent sameness has resulted in the attribution of a common name, although their biological natures are different. They all seem to be similar, due to their

appearance, or what they show, and their shared name serves to confirm this sameness. However, their inner or biological nature reveals significant differences from each other, and therefore, arguably, the inappropriateness of a shared single name. A further layer of complexity arises when we acknowledge the ontological distance between the hand of a male corpse and a range of plants in the countryside. What is exposed are the philosophical complexities involved in matters such as: the relationship between a thing's name and its nature; the subjective nature of language, thoughts and concepts; how the issue of likeness dominates our experience of the world; and the role custom plays in our lives.

Throughout *Hamlet* the four elements are presented as being destructive and combative forces. The opening scene of the play establishes the air as 'bitter cold' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1r). Later this image is embellished, attributing vicious teeth to the element with the comments that 'The ayre bites shroudly', and 'It is nipping, and an eager ayre' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D1r). Water is both metaphorically and literally a hazard (to both living and dead bodies). Hamlet's world is a 'sea of troubles' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G2r), and according to the gravedigger 'water is a sore decayer of your whorson dead body' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M3v). The brook might be 'weeping' for Ophelia (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v), but it still takes her life. As Laertes laments, 'Too much of water hast thou poore *Opehlia*' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1v). Laertes's threat to the King is deemed to be greater than the power of the sea to reclaim land in the Messenger's warning that 'The Ocean ouer-peering of his list / Eates not the flats with more impitious hast / Then young *Laertes* in a riotous head' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L1r). Again, here we have the image-cluster of the land and the water merging and psychological disturbance.

A further example of this association can be found in Horatio's pleading with Hamlet to refrain from following the Ghost. The flooded land and the cliff that offers views of the sea, which is the location for Hamlet's conversation with the Ghost, is mysteriously powerful enough according to Horatio to drive one to insanity or suicidal tendencies: 'the flood . . . Or . . . the cleefe / That bettles ore his base into the sea' is in itself so dangerous that 'The very place puts toyes of desperation / Without more motiue, into euery braine' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2r). Here, a particular geographical configuration, which is completely natural, has a power that is possibly supernatural or corrupting. As we have seen, Ophelia's death also takes place where land and water merge, and again psychological instability is a key component. The play's location, a castle where the land meets the sea, mirrors this motif and acts a suitable crucible in which all events take place. Previous

criticism of the play has paid scant attention to the play's depiction of the littoral as a threatening environment that generates much of its action.

Throughout the play, the weeds and the poisons and thorns make their mark on events with much more authority than the more delicate and beautiful blossoms that must presumably be thriving somewhere nearby for Ophelia to gather. The metaphorical weeds that spoil Hamlet's untended garden are mirrored by the mythical one that 'rootes it selfe in ease on *Lethe* wharffe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D2v). The lethargy that results from contact with this weed appears to have infected Hamlet, who soon bemoans how 'I haue of late . . . lost all my mirth, [and] forgon all custome of exercises' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F2r). It is significant that the weed grows in a wharf (a manmade meeting point), where land and water merge, and the weed's impact on people is one of psychological disturbance. Poison distilled from weeds are described by both Lucianus and Laertes. Lucianus's concoction used in the inner play synthesises the natural, the supernatural and evil:

> Thou mixture ranck, of midnight weedes collected,
> With *Hecats* ban thrice blasted, thrice inuected,
> Thy naturall magicke, and dire property,
> On wholesome life vsurps immediately
> (Shakespeare 1604-5, H3r)

Here, a variety of natural weeds have been transformed into something supernatural and deadly due to the time of night they were harvested, and the witches' curse that was recited over them. That their newfound harmful property is described as being 'naturall' is here therefore somewhat paradoxical. Laertes's poison was purchased ready made, as he explains to the King: 'I bought an vnction of a Mounutbanck / So mortall, that but dippe a knife in it, Where it drawes blood, no Cataplasme so rare, / Collected from all simples that haue vertue / Vnder the Moone, can saue the thing from death' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M1r). Laertes's 'vnction', and the 'cursed Hebona' (Shakespeare 1604-5, D3r) that instantly transformed Old Hamlet into something like a dead tree come from an unspecified location, a biological and chemical hinterland where the natural, the supernatural and the deathly are merged. The virtuous healing properties of all existent earthly flora are not powerful or transformative enough to cope with the highly destructive and mysterious rank mixtures that come from a place that is more than natural.

In his book *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* Thomas observes a shift in the nation's perception of weeds. According to Thomas, for the early modern agriculturalist 'a weed was an obscenity' that needed to be 'ruthlessly exterminated', and for Elizabethans in general weeds had neither 'beauty or utility' (K. Thomas 1983, 270). We have also seen Tillyard's examination of the Elizabethan world picture, which establishes 'the chain of being' as a paradigm for the structure of the universe, with God at the summit, and 'the meanest of inanimate objects' at the bottom (Tillyard 1943, 38). In this ladder-like hierarchy (established in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*), each step of existence contains its own micro-hierarchy, with weeds being the lowest form of flora. Tillyard notes that in the realm of vegetation ' . . . the oak is nobler than the bramble' (Tillyard 1943, 40). The low status of weeds is evident in Hamlet's likening of a despised world to an 'vnweeded garden' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C1r). However, as Thomas observes, the Romantic poets would later encourage a shift in the perception of weeds, shunning the preference for cultivated flowers in formal gardens. As Thomas observes, weeds became appreciated for their lack of cultivation and began to be perceived as deserving equal authority with flowers. Alfred, Lord Tennyson even showed a preference for them, writing an ode to 'the meanest weed / That blows upon its mountain' (Tennyson in Thomas 1983, 273). This shift of horticultural perspectives is analogous to the narrative of Q1 *Hamlet*, and in particular to the views of the New Textualists. Once perceived as simply 'bad', like how a gardener views weeds, the 1603 text now demands a status on a par with Q2 and F. Hamlet's reflection on the subjective nature of our experience, that 'there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so' (Shakespeare 1623c, OO3v), resonates with both nettles and suspect texts.

As Williams notes, the root of the word 'nature' comes from the Latin word *nasci* meaning 'to be born' (Williams 1983, 219). Throughout *Hamlet* the most fertile entities are ones that destroy bodies, and are found in both literal and metaphorical figures of speech. Hamlet is particularly interested in the subject. He informs Polonius that the 'sunne breede maggots in a dead dogge' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F1r), and later informs the King that Polonius resides 'Not where he eats, but where a is eaten' and that 'a certaine conuacation of politique wormes are een at him' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K2r). The King will also eventually succumb to the same ending, as will we all, as Hamlet notes: 'wee fat our selues for maggots' (Shakespeare 1604-5, K2r). As we have seen, murderous plots are 'hatched', whilst procreation amongst people is frowned upon. In Shakespeare's early sonnets, the creation of

new life is encouraged and beautified with statements such as 'Now is the time that face should form another' (Wells 1985, 17). In Denmark, procreation amongst humans is despised or impossible. The Queen's womb is a metaphorical wasteland, and Ophelia is encouraged to withdraw to a 'Nunry', so as to avoid being a 'breeder of sinners' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G3r). Hamlet would rather have 'no mo marriage' (Shakespeare 1604-5, G3r) and Ophelia's premature death ends that possibility for the couple and contributes to his own early end. It is death and decay that thrive in Elsinore, epitomised in Fortinbras's image of personified death eating people for the rest of infinity: 'o prou'd death / What feast is toward in thine eternall cell' (Shakespeare 1604-5, O1v).

Animals in Elsinore are in pain, associated with death or killed for their utility. Hamlet's excitement at the inner play leads to a host of animal-based imagery in which suffering is the central motif. Inspired by the prospect of exposing the King's guilty conscience, Hamlet pictures a saddle-sore horse in the exclamation: 'let the gauled Iade winch [wince]' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H2v). When he believes he has caught the King's conscience he cries 'let the strooken Deere goe weepe' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H3r). Before the inner play commences, Hamlet pictures himself wearing 'a sute of sables' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H1r), which would require slaughtering many of a relatively small animal, whose skin was often used as a singular decorative piece. The King's image of his 'limed soule' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I1v) pictures a bird stuck and trapped on a branch, and the 'croking Rauen' (Shakespeare 1604-5, H3r) is a metaphor for Lucianus's murderer and for death.

Verminous and seemingly undesirable creatures populate the landscape. When the conspicuously absent mouse does appear, it is in the form of the King, and will be trapped (Shakespeare 1604-5, H2v). Polonius is 'a Rat' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I2r) and immediately exterminated. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are snakes whom Hamlet 'will trust as I will Adders fang'd' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4v). Hamlet also has negative snake-like attributes. Lamord's account of Laertes's skill with the sword, did Hamlet 'so enuenom with his enuy, / That he could do nothing' (Shakespeare 1604-5, L4v). The 'kind life-rendring Pelican' is imagined pecking out its own heart so as to be eaten by its young (Shakespeare 1604-5, L1v), and the 'Parchment made of sheepe-skinnes' (Shakespeare 1604-5, M2v) pictures a document that confirms the ownership of a piece of land, made with the hide of an animal that lived and fed on it. Elsinore is a place of cruelty and discordance between humans and animals, where the law of nature is a bitter, cruel and mad one. Montaigne's world of intelligent bees, charming cats and artful birds lies at some considerable distance from Elsinore.

Hamlet and Montaigne

If we pursue Greenblatt's theory regarding the possibility that Shakespeare read Montaigne before the completion of the script underlying the Second Quarto, we find some striking similarities between Hamlet's and Montaigne's characters as well as between certain passages (Greenblatt 2014). Montaigne's observation that 'There is a plague on Man: his opinion that he knows something . . .' (Montaigne 1987, 543), and his question ' . . .is not Man a wretched creature?' (Montaigne 1987, 225) offer two of a proliferation of utterances that sound like Hamlet. Some figures of speech suggest an even more direct link between the two figures. Montaigne observes that 'the gentle easy slope up which are guided the measured steps of a good natural disposition is not the path of real virtue. Virtue demands a rough and thorny road' (Montaigne 1987, 474). This closely mirrors Ophelia's advice to her brother regarding the 'step and thorny way to heauen' (Shakespeare 1604-5, C3v). Montaigne's statement that 'the principal activity of custom is so to seize us and grip us in her claws' (Montaigne 1987, 130), is a parallel to Hamlet's image of 'monster custome' (Shakespeare 1604-5, I4r). Montaigne's comment that ' . . . it seems to me that according to our deserts, we can never be despised enough . . .' (Montaigne 1987, 339) has a parallel in Hamlet's observation: 'vse euery man after his dessert, & who shall scape whipping' (Shakespeare 1604-5, F4r). A passage from Montaigne's essay 'On Prayer' offers close likenesses to the King's speech regarding his inability to pray (3.3.35-72):

> And what about those men whose life reposes on the fruits and profits of what they know to be a mortal sin? . . . How did he defend such reasoning in his mind? When men address God's Justice on such matters, what do they say? Since their repentance requires a visible and tangible reparation, they forfeit all means of pleading it before God or men. Do they go so far as to dare to beg forgiveness without making satisfaction, without repentance? (Montaigne 1987, 358)

Even if these similarities are mere coincidences, they strengthen the ties between Shakespeare, Montaigne and *Hamlet* in that they indicate shared philosophico-religious concerns. But whereas Montaigne presented these as reflections arising from prolonged self-examination, Shakespeare constructed a fictional world in which they arise from the unfolding of an accelerating series of events occurring to and among the characters.

Coda

We have seen here how images of nature within the text are entirely associated with suffering, cruelty death and mental imbalance. Land is characterised as a commodity, which is fought over, often leading to death. The futility of land ownership is implied especially in the graveyard scene, where humans become soil. Time spent in or on the land often leads to death, except for the gravedigger whose adult life has been spent digging it for the dead. After death, following corrupted funerals, the land often rejects the interred body. Poisonous weeds, sometimes taken from the earth, sometimes from a less explicit source, eventually bring death to a high percentage of the major characters. Procreation is either not possible or despised amongst humans. Animals are portrayed as suffering and in pain, being trapped, skinned, manipulated, sore, caged, eaten, killed and dead. The wisdom of the bees is not celebrated in Elsinore, and the lessons that Montaigne believed we could learn from observing animals are conspicuous in their absence. The characters do not yearn for an idealised pastoral past, and the natural world is far from paradise.

We have seen how it might be appropriate to attribute Keats's concept of 'Negative Capability' to Montaigne, and to some degree Hamlet. The Prince arguably engages with some 'irritable reaching after fact and reason' (Keats 1899, 277), but he eventually relinquishes this search, having arrived at a place that resembles providential acceptance (in word if not in deed). A sparrow's fall might be divinely programmed, but a King's fall needs some assistance. Bate's suggestion that Montaigne brings us close to the workings of the mind of Hamlet is confirmed in the way in which both characters demonstrate an ability to voice incisive and contradictory insights into a plethora of philosophical subjects. However, Montaigne's Stoicism, especially his adoration of nature is notable for its absence in the play. In Elsinore, 'nature' in multiple senses of the word, is a harsh and combative entity, associated with suffering and death.

In Elsinore, the natural and the supernatural have no distinct boundary between them. Ghosts are governed by the sound of birds, express emotions and show a preference for comfortable clothing: in the First Quarto the Ghost enters his mother's chamber '*in his night gowne*' (Shakespeare 1603, G2v). Conversely, mortals are frequently attributed supernatural qualities, such as immortal souls and divine protective force-fields, both of which are accepted by Shakespeare's audience as existing in the real as well as the fictional

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world. The Christian God, pagan gods, nature, the earth, planets, witches, spirits, poisonous weeds and religious gestures are all presented as having supernatural qualities or authority. This makes it virtually impossible to assess the realms of the natural and the supernatural as discrete entities.

The association made between Ophelia and flowers is a substantial motif, exposing the frailty of life and mind. Her narrative highlights the impossibility of consciously becoming one with nature. After being lectured by her brother on the vulnerability of a delicate flower, Ophelia's short life mirrors one. Her attempt to get close to nature results in her premature exit from it. MacFaul suggests that often in Shakespeare those who seemingly give themselves to nature come closer to grace. In *Hamlet* it appears not so. We have also seen how the three philosophical issues we are examining (the problem of universals, the authority of words, and humankind's relationship with nature) here converge in the issue of naming flowers. This issue also closely relates to Hamlet's interest in what seems to be.

Ophelia's insanity and her death in the muddy stream evidences a repeated motif throughout the play. In Elsinore, where two elements collide, sanity becomes vulnerable. The situation of the castle, the cliff overlooking the sea and the weeds in Lethe wharf suggest that the place where the land meets the water is a dangerous one. That the littoral is a lethal place is a subtle yet significant textual detail that serves to further blur the boundaries between the natural the supernatural and the sinister, and is newly observed in this study. In Elsinore the destructive power of poisonous weeds (whether natural or supernatural) is greater than the healing power to be found amongst the world's flora. Mother Earth consumes us and spits us out.

In *Hamlet* nature is not a thing to be trusted, adored or worshipped as it is for Montaigne. If the book that Hamlet is reading as he enters the stage is Montaigne (Shakespeare 1604-5, F1r), the prince would have responded cynically to 'An Apology for Raymond Sebond'. However he might well have recognised some passages that bear a striking resemblance to those uttered in Elsinore. Hamlet and Montaigne might have much in common, but their views on nature are not shared. The text's treatment of nature cannot be considered a Stoic one. In Elsinore, the natural world is closer to hell than paradise. If the characters do have an innate moral compass, it, like all things in Elsinore, is highly

vulnerable to corruption. The evidence here reinforces both Bate and Lewis: the world of *Hamlet* (if not the world of Shakespeare too) is not a Stoic one.

Scepticism is more prominent throughout the play and Epicureanism is suggested in a more nuanced way. Montaigne's question 'What do I know' serves as a subtext for a work that Watson describes as being 'the most epistemologically skeptical play of all . . .' (Watson 2006, 78). Not only do characters distrust various forms of knowledge, they distrust one another. Barnardo might not know who is there, but Hamlet's problem is that he does not trust who is there. He distrusts his friends to keep the Ghost's secret, he trusts Rosencrantz and Guildenstern no more than he would snakes, he questions the Ghost's sincerity and his mother's choice of partner, and he is suspicious of the King. When he eventually trusts God, it is without complete adherence to his laws, as he soon breaks the Sixth Commandment and dies. Hamlet's scepticism is partially targeted at a world and afterlife that he cannot accept, but it is also aimed at people who he cannot trust. Hamlet's Epicurean tendencies are subtle if present at all. He does acknowledge the pleasure of friendship (3.2.51-2), but explicit ties to its key tenets of seeking happiness are elusive in the text.

McGinn sees Shakespeare as, philosophically, a 'naturalist' and states that he is a 'clear-eyed observer and recorder, sensitive to the facts before his eyes' (McGinn 2006, 15). For Friedrich Nietzsche, Hamlet's ability to observe allows him to see beyond the world of seeming, into the truth of things, but this is also his tragic flaw. Nietzsche suggests that Hamlet has sensed 'the true nature of things', which leaves him paralysed because he knows that his 'action cannot change the eternal nature of things' (Nietzsche 1995, 23). Our framing of how *Hamlet* engages with the concept of 'nature' and how this stands in relation to perspectives in Western philosophy, and Montaigne, offers us new insight into the play's nature.

Conclusion

We have seen in this thesis how *Hamlet* engages with a range of philosophical issues that have dominated Western thinking for over two millennia. The particular philosophical issues that we have engaged with in our analysis of the play have previously not been assessed in this configuration. The themes serve to enrich both the intellectual and poetic nature of the work and are framed in such a way as to expose contrasting perspectives on a range of problems. In light of this, John Keats's theory of Shakespeare's 'Negative Capability' is brought to mind, where philosophical 'uncertainties, mysteries and doubts' are dealt with in detail, dominate Elsinore, and yet remain as elusive as the Ghost (Keats 1899, 277).

Our model of the Globe theatre, offering a microcosmic universe, has enabled us to focus our attention on three significant areas of philosophical interest: the heavenly Platonic realm of Forms beyond (and in some senses above) earthly matters; the world of words that give human beings their distinctness and are also the essence of the play; and the natural world under our feet whose boundaries the play examines. The play's engagement with these themes is as subtle and nuanced as the themes themselves, and the philosophical complexities engaged with are woven into the fabric of the narrative so as to seamlessly blend the ingredients of plot, philosophical insight, character, theatricality and poetry. Our textual analysis focusing on these major Western philosophical conundrums has afforded us a new outlook on and understanding of the play.

There has been a narrative centred on a Hamlet-like character for over eight hundred years. The content and form of the story has gone through significant changes: a 'pseudo-history', a myth, an oral tradition, a hand-written text, a printed narrative, a play text, stage performances and film versions. From its origins in Icelandic and Danish it was translated into Latin, French and English and since then into multiple languages. Our examination of the antecedent texts explored the nebulous nature of a narrative, as it traverses forms, cultures and languages. This textual fluidity has been a central aspect of our examination of Shakespeare's version of the tale, the publication of which has been dominated by the theme of authenticity and evolution. It also highlights the issue of epistemological uncertainty that lies at the heart of the play, which itself exposes how the

boundaries of seemingly different entities might not be as clearly defined as we might think. We have seen the way in which the nature, name and form of a thing relate to its perceived identity is a feature both within the play and surrounding it. Q1's nature has not changed since it was discovered in 1823, yet our knowledge and beliefs about it have drastically changed and continue to do so. As we have seen, for Zachary Lesser we have not yet arrived at a satisfactory consensus regarding the framing and naming of the earliest edition of *Hamlet*.

Our examination of the three early *Hamlet* texts gives us an insight into early modern theatre and printing practices, where multiple and contrasting editions of the play are made, textual authenticity is a valued aspect regarding marketing, and underhand publishing activities are explicitly acknowledged in the preliminaries of the Folio. The mystery regarding the veracity of the title page of Q1, whether the book contains a version by Shakespeare and whether it was performed in that form in the provinces, hints at the linguistic paradoxes that surround the text, and that also lie at the heart of the play itself. The relationship between language and truth (including the establishing of concepts) is also a key aspect of the play's bibliographical history and subject matter, a parallel previously unobserved.

The custodianship of Shakespeare's works took a significant step forward during the 18th and early 19th centuries. The publication of editions of the Complete Works led by advanced Shakespeare scholars established levels of editorship and biography previously unseen. Our examination of the ways in which *Hamlet* was framed and edited exposes the challenging issues facing editors. Varying degrees of scepticism about the authenticity of the early editions, alongside the desire to establish a single authorial *Hamlet*, steered each editor to respond differently to textual cruxes. The tendency to conflate multiple previous editions led to different versions of a single *Hamlet,* with each one attempting to recall a single and supposedly ideal earliest version. Ironically, as Terri Bourus points out, these conflated versions are not likely to have accurately represented any single early modern version of the play (Bourus 2014, 3). However, if the play was intended to be flexible in its form and nature, as some recent scholars have suggested, then the ongoing fluid nature of the text(s) arguably does represent the work in its earliest form. The discovery of Q1, as Zachary Lesser has highlighted, not only impacted on the perception and understanding of Shakespeare's play, it also significantly influenced Shakespeare scholarship. Shakespeare's biography became embedded in *Hamlet* analysis, and perceptions of Shakespeare's genius and working

practices began to be viewed in a new light. The issue of the nature of the now-lost early *Hamlet* play that pre-dates the publication of Q1 still haunts Shakespeare scholarship.

Just as all hope of establishing what Shakespeare intended appeared lost due to mounting late-Victorian scepticism about all early extant texts, the emergence of the New Bibliography salvaged some optimism. With a new reading of the Folio's preliminaries the New Bibliography established Q1 *Hamlet* as a corrupt non-authorial edition of the play. Q1's reputation became synonymous with the epithet 'bad', and the theory of memorial reconstruction became an accepted orthodoxy. Again the issue of reputation, names, and natures surfaces in the *Hamlet* narrative, whilst being echoed within the play itself. A Platonic ideal *Hamlet,* as originally created by Shakespeare, was believed to be both reachable and desirable, existing a couple of steps removed from the texts that lay at hand. This author-centric approach of the New Bibliography dominated scholarship until the 1970s when scepticism about their ideas emerged.

The New Textualists established a paradigm shift in Shakespeare study, and in the framing of *Hamlet*. An author-centric approach was replaced with a focus that valued and acknowledged the social nature of theatre practices. As a consequence the concept of 'bad' texts was rejected, along with the theory of Memorial Reconstruction. Also, long-held beliefs about early modern manuscripts changed. The desire to discover what lay behind the extant texts, and a scepticism about them, began to be replaced by an acceptance of them, with each being attributed its own discrete value. The idea that Shakespeare revised his work (an initial reaction to the discovery of Q1 *Hamlet* in 1823) re-emerged. Bourus's analysis of Q1 has served to transform and rebuild its reputation as an early draft of the play by Shakespeare. Harold Bloom also sees Q1 as being evidence of Shakespeare's early work on the narrative, and Gary Taylor's recent conversion to a similar belief serves to bolster a new-found status for it.

The idea of the conflated text has now lost its potency, and a process of un-editing has been embraced. The culmination of which is evidenced in Arden's 2006 multiple text edition of *Hamlet*. Here all three editions are offered in their entirety with the issue of authenticity and their relationship to each other being thoroughly examined yet remaining unresolved. For Lesser and Bourus this is an unsatisfactory position. For Bourus the edition did not go far enough in establishing Q1 as authorial. For Lesser, the edition leaves us with a Shakespeare who unsatisfyingly hovers around the early *Hamlet* texts, failing to be anchored

to any of them. The theories of R. A. Foakes and Roland Barthes are brought to mind here, as we picture Saxo Grammaticus and Francois de Belleforest hovering over *Hamlet* alongside Shakespeare, as well as the readers/watchers who share in the work's creativity.

Our reading of the play through the lens of 'the problem of universals' exposes Elsinore as a world of seeming, likenesses and copies, and affords us a specific philosophical window on the play previously unexamined. Closely tied to these concerns is the wider question about epistemological certainty. We know what the Ghost is like, but not what it is, and all attempts to expose its true nature fall short. The opening question of the play 'whose there?' and its negative reply 'Nay answere me' (Shakespeare 1604-5, B1r) establish an unfulfilled search for meaning and understanding that dominates the text. Hamlet's soliloquies advance this issue, whilst representing the workings of the mind and self-consciousness in a way unparalleled before or since.

Plato's theory of Forms is implicitly evoked through descriptions of an idealised father and an implied reference to the theory of the king's two bodies. The issue of distinguishing between a close likeness and an authentic original also exposes the complex interplay between language and epistemology, and between the philosophical schools of Empiricism and Rationalism. That the Ghost remains beyond the linguistic and ontological framework established by Aristotle in his *Categories* is newly noted here, and provokes intriguing questions about the exact nature of Shakespeare's library. If the cognitive process also requires us to establish mental copies of things, whether that be in processing reality, remembering something, imagining a fantasy, or in the act of witnessing a *Hamlet* performance, then representation is a central aspect in the arts and the perceiving of the world around us.

The play challenges us to engage with philosophical issues such as: what does it mean for things to be alike and how might we quantify whether they are different or the same; what is the relationship between a thing's resemblance and its true nature and how might we establish this; what role does language play in the establishing of a thing's nature; and how are the arts able to engage with these questions? That the text is itself a work of art deepens the complexity of these conundrums. A further theme arising here is the implied blurring of boundaries between entities. We have seen how these themes are repeatedly echoed in the bibliographical history of the text. Regarding the problem of Q1, whether it is a close enough likeness to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to be considered such a thing remains a

point of contention. Is a production of *Hamlet* that features only a single actor something we should perceive as being Shakespeare's play?

We have seen how Darwin's theory of evolution has been a useful semantic and linguistic aid hitherto unexamined in previous studies of the play. His work offers a close parallel to Shakespeare bibliography, where a tension exists between the retrospective search for the author's original concept, and the issue of establishing a new edition for today's reader/performer. Like our species, language has evolved, further complicating the job of creating a modern version of *Hamlet*. As Gary Taylor observed, someone needs to '*decide* what Shakespeare wrote' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 1), but such decisions are based on continuously evolving ideas, theories, linguistic advancements and bibliographical discoveries, leading to a fluid text that is shaped by the time and place of its publication as much as Shakespeare's supposed intentions. The bibliographical history of *Hamlet* evidences Natural and Artificial Selection, as the English language has evolved without our conscious involvement, and details such as the 'dram of eale' crux have been consciously edited. Richard Dawkins's theory of the meme also assists our understanding of the evolving nature of the play, including how textual errors (analogous to mutations) spread because they are more easily remembered and repeated than a true reading (Dawkins 1976, 323-4). The propensity for Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' monologue to be placed early in performances of the narrative, as in Q1, appears to demonstrate an evolutionary variant that has taken hold in our psyche, and in productions otherwise based on Q2/F. For some reason, for now, it appears to benefit the reproduction of *Hamlet*, and serves to aid its longevity, establishing itself in the minds of directors, actors and audiences.

In our examination of the relationship between truth and language we saw how this issue has engaged critical thinkers from Plato to modern times. Analysing the play through this particular linguistic and philosophical lens allows us new insight. According to Plato, words can have a deeply embedded association with the things they denote, and they can also be mere ephemeral conventions applied somewhat randomly. Such views are evidenced in the play, where humour and insanity are established through the inappropriate attribution of names. Names are closely associated with reputations in Elsinore, and the tension between the two is a feature of note. That both can be manipulated, evidenced by Hamlet's faux madness and the King's supposed innocence, for example, makes us consider the tendency to take either at face value. This subject also resonates throughout the bibliographical history of the play, where the suitable attribution of a name for Q1 has been a

central issue. Q1's recently altered status highlights the flux-like nature of titles, reputations and knowledge. It also highlights the complex relationship between thoughts, words and things. Q1 is good or bad or neither because perceptions and titles make it so, and they remain inconstant. Exposed is the tension between the philosophical schools of Realism and Idealism that is notable within and surrounding the play. Q1 exists in its two slightly different material embodiments -- the exemplars in London and Los Angeles -- independent of our thoughts on it. It also experiences an occasional metamorphosis, shifting between being a rejected pile of nonsense and the valued work of a genius. The protagonist too appears to be a thing of change, both in the text and throughout its many incarnations in production. Hamlet is a Sceptic and a devout Christian, to isolate two evident and contradictory philosophical positions. He is also an eighty-two year old man and a forty year old Danish woman to cite just two performances of the role, by Ian McKellen (2020 directed by Sean Mathias) and Asta Nielsen (1921 directed by Sven Gade).

We have seen how the Christian perspective establishes divine connotations for language, as God is perceived to be synonymous with the first words, the creator of the material world through the act of speech, and historically present on earth in the body of Christ in the form of the divine word made flesh. The agency of speech was a concern of Martin Luther and more recently J. L. Austin, who proposes an active or transformational aspect to the process of speaking and listening. Both believe certain conditions need to be met for the speaker to effectively fulfil this possibility, including an apparent synthesis of thought, belief and speech, by both speaker and listener. This establishes a parallel between the church and the theatre. According to *Hamlet* it is the theatre that enables us to see the world more clearly, which was Aristotle's perception of the arts.

Ceremonies that depend upon the speaking of words with agency are framed by *Hamlet* as being vulnerable to corruption. Marriages, funerals, prayers and plays are all prone to disruption, either during the ceremony or following it, through the undoing of their proposed aims. The written word is presented as being equally vulnerable to attack or corruption as contracts are disregarded, official documents are tampered with and love letters are criticised and returned. Ceremonial speech fails to cement our relationships with lovers, God, the dead and audiences. If, as M. M. Mahood suggests, Shakespeare's tragic protagonists lose their faith in words, in Elsinore the words also lose their potency. However *Hamlet* is never straightforward, and the exception to the above pattern is the play itself. The paragon of Western literature, whose substance is words, successfully exposes the frailty of

its own essential nature through a work that has established itself as being unmatched in its skill, artistry, effectiveness, flexibility, longevity and insight. This thesis newly frames this irony.

We have seen that Hawkes understands *Hamlet* as being concerned with what happens when communication breaks down (Hawkes 1973). He also suggests that we make meaning by engaging with the play, as opposed to discover innate meaning implanted by Shakespeare. The implication here is that so far reaching is the text that it is able to reflect back to the reader/viewer a particular aspect that they bring to it. This observation has been made by Nuttall, as observed above. Perhaps it is this aspect of the play's power that led William Hazlitt to suggest, with a hint of Aristotle, that 'It is WE who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history' (Hazlitt 2013, 114). Bloom advanced Hazlitt's theory, suggesting that actually 'we are Horatio, Hamlet's perpetual audience' (Bloom 2003, 14).

The Bible and Ovid present mythical representations of mortals who displease the Gods and consequently experience a traumatised relationship with the natural world around them. This tension appears to have seeped into the Western consciousness, having been keenly informed by the Christian conceptual framework that has dominated our understanding of reality. As Watson has observed, the early moderns were inclined to look back to an historic place and time of pastoral bliss, where humans and nature co-existed with ease and grace. Recently, however, Raymond Williams has noted how each new generation (including ours) tends to mourn the loss of 'a vanishing rural order' that is believed to have existed almost within touching distance of our own lives (Williams 1973, 13). Tom MacFaul's theory that Shakespeare's characters sometimes come close to God's grace in nature is found not to be the case in *Hamlet*, where intimacy with it results in suffering, not enlightenment.

The Elizabethan conceptual framework of an existential chain-of-being, as examined by E. M. W. Tillyard, is evident in the play, as Hamlet bemoans his place trapped between the angels and the beasts. However, in Elsinore, the boundaries between the animals, the humans and the supernatural forces are elusive and difficult to define. Planets, fortune, classical pagan gods and the Christian God vie for supremacy in shaping human affairs. Whether Christianity is awarded the highest status is debatable. There are references to Christ's birthday, the Commandments and Christian burials and Hamlet also appears to

develop faith in divine providence. However, pagan gods are also frequently referenced and revered, and planets can seemingly play havoc by their own accord. The ostensibly Christian Hamlet murders and arranges the death of others, showing little remorse for his victims or reverence for God's judgement when he does so.

We have seen how the eclectic and far-reaching nature of Michel de Montaigne's insights offer a close parallel to the play's themes and Hamlet's intellect. The cognitive dexterity of the protagonist so closely matches Montaigne that T. S. Eliot, Jonathan Bate, Stephen Greenblatt and Colin McGinn, amongst others, insist on a direct influence between the Frenchman and the Dane. We find the influence of the philosophies of Stoicism, Scepticism, Epicureanism and Christianity visible in Montaigne and *Hamlet*. We also find observations on the human condition that cover the broadest of spectrums from both writers, and some specific figures of speech in the play that appear to be directly influenced by Montaigne. Both writers also frequently shift between philosophies, establishing worlds of paradox and contradiction that refused to be reduced to a single conceptual framework. As Robert Ellrodt has observed, Montaigne's essays and *Hamlet* also both demonstrate a significant advancement in the presentation of self-consciousness.

A significant difference between *Hamlet* and Montaigne's essays is the framing of the natural world. For Montaigne, the arrogant humans would benefit from re-thinking their supposed supremacy over the flora and fauna around them. The natural world of Elsinore is not a metaphorical book gifted to us from God through which we might experience his holiness. Instead it is an extension of our own worst traits, where the hunted quarry is equally likely to be a deer, a rat, a king or his conscience. Nature is even presented as actively despising us and being able to corrupt our sanity. Our detailed comparative analysis of Montaigne and Hamlet, focusing on perspectives on nature and on a key area of disagreement between the two, establishes fresh insight into the play.

The play presents a world where the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural are indistinct. Pagan gods are frequently attributed supernatural authority and natural things like stars, planets and cockerels also appear to have supernatural attributes. An explicitly supernatural creature, the Ghost is presented as having human attributes such as a skin tone that denotes a particular biological/emotional state. In further contrast, the natural, mortal Hamlet speaks of possessing an immortal soul. The reflection we see in the mirror that is *Hamlet* is an image of humankind that engages with multiple and contrasting

conceptual frameworks that have nudged their way into our consciousness over time, fusing themselves together, with boundaries blurred.

Land masses are fought over, stolen, slept on, dug, used to house the dead, bought, sold, and seemingly controlled through the creation of official documents. For Hamlet, Eden is long gone, and the Earth is more closely associated with death and conflict than with life and the cultivation of it. When the Earth does finally receive us it spits us out again, only for our remains to be exposed to more trauma (psychological for the Ghost, physical for the bones in the Sexton's care). Where the land meets the water is repeatedly framed in Elsinore as being a psychologically corrupting place. The willow and the water take Ophelia's body, and the littoral threatens to take minds. This magnifies the tension that exists between humans and the natural world. In his examination of early modern art Watson suggests that 'What death teaches is that conscious knowledge and complete symbiosis with nature are mutually exclusive' (Watson 2006, 79). If 'complete symbiosis with nature' implies a peaceful deathly absorption back into nature, then such a thing appears to be wanting in Elsinore.

Ophelia's association with flowers and weeds is a macabre poetic motif that follows her from first entrance to the grave. Other characters speak to her of flowers, perceive her as one, throw them on her corpse, and imagine them growing out of it. Ophelia obsessively collects and names flowers, and attempts to decorate people and trees with them. However her love for flora is not reciprocated and a malicious willow sends her to her death, rejecting her floral posy, just as Hamlet had earlier returned her figurative one. The Queen's description of Ophelia's death is a study of flora and the naming of species. It also synthesises the three philosophical topics that our analysis is centred on. Some plants that look similar, but are genetically different, share a common name due to their mutual resemblance to 'dead mens fingers'. This dramatises both of Plato's theories of naming known as the Naturalist perspective and Conventionalism. The form or nature of the plants is suggested in the attributed name, but the genetic differences between the individual species calls into question the appropriateness of a single title for them all. The textual and philosophical analysis of this passage, triangulating these conundrums, highlights the philosophical sophistication of the work.

Our analysis of the text supports George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's theory regarding our thinking being metaphorical. A thing is frequently pictured, understood, titled

and remembered in light of another, different thing/things. For Thomas Aquinas it is only through metaphor that we can know God. For Lakoff and Johnson our understanding of all things is metaphorical. *Hamlet* resonates here, being a world (linguistically and epistemologically) of indirections and 'some distant knowledge' (Shakespeare 1604-5, E1r).

Our philosophical and bibliographical examination of the play exposes how the value of a thing can change, due to shifts in culture, custom and beliefs, without the object's nature changing, and this establishes some connection between *Hamlet* and Montaigne. Hamlet and the Elizabethans held weeds in low regard. However, the Romantic poets, such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson, saw them as things to be valued in their own right. According to Montaigne and Hamlet we need to be sceptical of falling under the sway of custom. However, exactly how we navigate its negative influence remains elusive. We have also seen how some passages in *Hamlet*, concerning perceptions of humankind, virtue, custom and prayer so closely resemble Montaigne that a direct influence is arguable. Shared philosophico-religious issues and parallel forms of language substantially bolster the tie between the Dane and the Frenchman.

Through the philosophical frameworks of the problem of universals, the relationship between language and truth, and the tension between humans and the natural world, we have gained new insight into *Hamlet*, where the themes of representation, and ontological indeterminacy are established as dominant motifs, as evidenced through a range of newly observed points. Further insight is established when we examine the parallels between these philosophical matters both within and surrounding the work.

If we look at the philosophies associated with Shakespeare and *Hamlet*, arising from our study, we find a varied landscape. Eliot sees a Shakespeare who was influenced by Seneca's Stoicism, but also a dramatist whose culture engaged with 'a kind of fusion' of Scepticism and Cynicism too (Eliot 1932a, 132). Hackett suggests that Hamlet 'expresses a Neoplatonic or Neostoic contempt for the body as he withdraws into the mind' (Hackett 2022, 329). We might presume that Eliot and all scholars see the philosophical influence of Christianity as highly influential too. Bate, Ellrodt and M. A. Screech note the influence of Stoicism, Scepticism and Epicureanism on Montaigne, and also Montaigne's influence on Shakespeare and *Hamlet*. For Bate however, Shakespeare is 'anti-Stoic', and should be considered, like Montaigne, as ultimately an Epicurean (Bate 2009). Colin McGinn agrees with Keats's view of Shakespeare, seeing the poet as one who can observe and engage with

the widest spectrum of philosophical views without the desire or tendency to 'explain things away' (McGinn 2006, 16). McGinn's suggested philosophical title for Shakespeare, the most 'clear eyed observer', is a 'naturalist' (McGinn 2006, 15). Bevington suggests something similar, asking: 'Is Shakespeare gently laughing at himself when he has Touchstone describe Corin as a "natural philosopher"?' (Bevington 2008, 2). David Bevington suggests that 'Hamlet is obsessed with the fallen state of humanity' (Bevington 2008, 219). Regarding Elsinore, he suggests that 'The problem then is not with the world itself but with those who have corrupted it and themselves' (Bevington 2008, 147). For Hamlet then, as for Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Hell *is* – other people!' (Sartre 1955, 47). A. D. Nuttall agrees, observing that 'Shakespeare has probably read Seneca and has certainly not read Sartre. But Hamlet is more like Sartre's man than he is like Seneca's' (Nuttall 2007, 199). Tzachi Zamir has recently suggested that 'Philosophy is both addressed and undermined by this play' (Zamir 2018, 6).

We have seen in our examination of the play features of all the above philosophies. The Ghost's condition strongly resembles the suffering of purgatory and references to the Christian God abound. The King's enjoyment in drinking and Hamlet's appreciation of friendship offer a nod towards Epicureanism, as do Hamlet's reflections on our atom/dust-like nature. Hamlet admires Horatio's Stoic ability to suffer all and suffer nothing, and eventually states his own preparedness for death, whatever time it should arise. The King offers a template for what Eliot described as the 'Machiavelli attitude of Cynicism' (Eliot 1932a, 132). Hamlet is the personification of Scepticism, as we have seen, unable to trust God, his mother, Horatio's philosophy, himself and other people. Whether Plato was on Shakespeare's bookshelf or not, we have seen that *Hamlet* engages with a significant range of conundrums that captivated the Greek, as well as Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno, Pyrrho, Lucretius, Christ, Plotinus, Porphyry, St Augustine of Hippo, Boethius, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, John Wycliffe, Niccolo Machiavelli, Martin Luther and Montaigne. Post-Shakespearean thinkers such as Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Nietzsche, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Richard Dawkins and Daniel C. Dennett have continued to examine these conundrums, often using the assistance of *Hamlet* to do so. The present study considers the philosophers whose works Shakespeare could have known, and it would take several more such studies to begin to explore how subsequent philosophers respond to his ideas.

Regarding Shakespeare's intellectual influences Bevington suggests that 'Shakespeare does not discuss philosophers very often, and may not have read widely in them' (Bevington 2008, 1), observing that Aristotle is only mentioned twice, and Plato never. Ironically we do find a mention of Plato in a play attributed to Shakespeare, which is the earliest edition of *Hamlet*. Corambis's elaboration on the playing range of the visiting actors informs us that '*Seneca* cannot be too heauy, nor *Plato* too light:' (Shakespeare 1603, E3v). For some this is an error and Q2/F's 'Plautus' is preferred, but Kathleen Irace views it as authorial as it 'emphasises Corambis' foolishness' (Irace in Thompson and Taylor 2006b, 7.298n). It is a delightful irony that this most challenging and philosophical of works contains a reference to the father of philosophy, yet we cannot decide whether it is a mistake or the insightful humour of a genius. If the mention was authorial it would be fitting, in light of Plato's seminal work *The Republic*, as according to Julie Sanders the revenge drama 'is at its heart an extended rumination on justice' (Sanders 2014, 64).

A central theme that arises in our study is the issue of representation, which serves to underpin the epistemological uncertainty that abounds in Elsinore. Here the term 'representation' carries a range of senses. Things stand in for other things, things look like other things, things imply other things, and things become other things. A word might denote an object, like the term 'recorder', but it also represents the concept of a recorder, whilst triggering the image of one in one's mind. Here the linguistic the pictorial and the conceptual aspect of representation come together, with a single word triggering multiple representations. The isolation and examination of this dominant subtextual motif is a feature newly framed in this thesis.

The idea of a Eucharistic subtext also resonates throughout our examination. For Catholics the bread and wine do more than represent the body and blood of Christ, they become them without physically representing either of them. Similarly an actor represents a role/character, and arguably also becomes it. Whether an actor is representing or actually being the character is difficult to say. For both the Mass and the play a sense of belief needs to be invested by speaker and audience for the ceremony to be most effective. That Hamlet likens his persona to a character that an actor might play increases the layers of complexity and irony, as does his decision to put on an assumed disposition of madness, and his comment that he possesses an inner nature that 'passes show'. Hamlet's essence cannot be represented, just as Plotinus believed his could not. Ironically, attempting to represent the

essence of Hamlet has become the benchmark for actors over the last four hundred years. That the nature of Q1 changes as beliefs about it do establishes a neat irony here.

In *Hamlet* the arts are used to expose deep and hidden truths, such as the beauty and virtue of Old Hamlet as revealed in his portrait, and the nature of society and the King's conscience, as discovered through the performance of a play. For Hamlet and Aristotle and Philip Sidney representations within the arts not only reflect a particular subject, they somehow reveal previously unseen depths and insights, affording us increased knowledge of the thing represented. Here the representation process results in a transformation, which is rather more like the Protestant understanding of the Eucharist. A peripheral aspect of this conundrum, also repeatedly found in the play, is the issue of how much we can rely on a thing's appearance to truthfully represent its inner nature. If one can smile and smile and still be a villain, and a death warrant can be convincingly forged, and an actor can be so convincing in their artifice that they move a viewer to tears, how do we begin to measure authenticity, trust what we see, or establish 'who's there'?

A significant theme observed here is the nebulous nature of boundaries between seemingly different entities. The play, its bibliographical history and our philosophical analysis repeatedly demonstrate this concept. The Ghost merges with Hamlet, God and actors, and multiple kings are imagined. The natural and the supernatural also overlap. Hackett fittingly views 'Elizabethan dramatic soliloquies as also possessing an ambiguous status between speech and thought' (Hackett 2022, 333). We have seen how things and mental images of those things seem inseparable, as thoughts, words and things merge. According to Nuttall we see the meshing of language and the extra-linguistic (Nuttall 2007, 91). For T. S. Eliot different schools of philosophy existed in a state of 'fusion' in the minds of Elizabethans (Eliot 1932a, 132). From a bibliographic perspective Q1, Q2 and F have been conceptually and literally meshed together in our minds, texts and theatres for centuries.

The dilemma of ascertaining a thing's nature and attributing an appropriate name for it is an issue repeatedly raised in the text and also remains relevant regarding the bibliographical history of the text, as we remain unsure about the origins of Q1 and how an edition of the play should be framed. To what extent Q1 represents Q2/F or a version that a younger Shakespeare might have written remains a point of contention. We have also seen that our memory and our cognitive process are dependent on internal images, and that these images are vulnerable to distortion. That Hamlet struggles to remember the lines of a speech

he wishes to recall echoes the theory of imperfect memorial reconstruction that was long believed to account for Q1's major differences from Q2/F.

When we see the play presented (or represented) on stage, we actively take part in the creation of that performance, as our mind becomes a micro-theatre processing the spectacle before us. We might not know 'who's there?' but we are constructing the world in which the question is asked. Reflecting on the seminal work by Bloom, McGinn suggests that 'Shakespeare invented a new way of *representing* the human' (McGinn 2006, 203). Each time we witness *Hamlet* we establish a new Elsinore and also a new us, as we shed new light on ourselves through the process of seeing/reading it. Through the creation of *Hamlet* Shakespeare has invented a way for us to continuously experience new representations of ourselves. The play teaches us to be sceptical about the ethereal, the linguistic and the natural, about all things bar one, and that exception is *Hamlet*.

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