Hamlet: A Study in Dramatic Art

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HAMLET: A STUDY IN DRAMATIC ART

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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LIFE

John Francis Keating was born in Detroit, Michigan, on June 2, 1931.

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PREFACE

It is a commonplace saying that literary genius beggars analysis. The recognition of literary excellence is relatively easy, but the attempt to explain the same greatness often issues in frustration.

One interesting and sometimes fruitful form of literary analysis is based on comparison. The literary masterpiece, confronted by a faulty image of itself, at times yields some of its secret. This faulty image may take many forms.

It may be a good translation of a work into a foreign language. For example, the work of C. Day Lewis and W. F. Jackson Knight, modern translators of Virgil's Aeneid, though admirable in itself, indicates the very real limits placed upon a translator, and accentuates certain elements of the Aeneid which are unique and inimitable.

Alexander Pope's Rape of the Lock, as it is known today, was published in 1714. However, there was an earlier edition of the poem, authorized by Pope himself three years earlier. The improvement Pope made upon his own work is startling. And comparative readings of the two texts help the reader to understand what it was that raised mediocrity to excellence. Thus, a second type of useful comparison involves a literary work and an earlier, less
perfect, though authentic text.

Still a third method of comparison is often profitable. A spurious edition of a work may be compared with the authentic version, and in such a comparison the genius of the authentic text may be cast in striking relief. Such is the method adopted in this study of Hamlet.

In this thesis some of the major differences between the spurious Q\textsubscript{1} text and the authentic Q\textsubscript{2} text are noticed and some reflections are made about Shakespeare's dramatic technique, his diction, his character creations. Such a comparative analysis, while noting the failure of Q\textsubscript{1} on whose pages abounds the material for outstanding drama, at the same time affords an insight into the genius which fashioned the same story, the same characters, often the same words into a great play.

These three points of comparison; Dramatic Structure, Diction, Characterization forms three chapters of the thesis.

A preliminary chapter discussing the texts under consideration will be provided.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREFACE</strong></td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE TEXTS AT ISSUE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of critical bibliography—pertinence of critical bibliography to thesis—discovery of $Q_1$—origin of $Q_1$, the pirated text—nature of $Q_2$ text—superiority of $Q_2$ over $F$ text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. DRAMATIC STRUCTURE</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of dramatic structure—comparative analysis of $Q_1$ and $Q_2$ texts—reasons for superiority of $Q_2$—dramatic defects of $Q_1$.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. DICTION</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis showing $Q_1$'s flat, unappealing word choice—comparative excellence of $Q_2$—study of some major soliloquies showing dramatist's genius.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CHARACTERIZATION</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical opinion about the character of Hamlet—view of Hamlet adopted in this thesis—lack of depth and subtlety in $Q_1$'s Hamlet—$Q_1$'s poor portrayal of the King—the skillful characterization of the King in $Q_2$—inconsistencies in the Queen's actions in $Q_2$—Shakespeare's genius for characterization seen more clearly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIBLIOGRAPHY</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX</strong></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE TEXTS AT ISSUE

A brief excursion into the world of critical bibliography provides sufficient proof that even literary studies have their scientific side. Fortunately, the science, at least in this thesis, is handmaiden to the art—the necessary identification and description of texts is an important, necessary prelude to the study to follow. It would obviously be unacceptable to begin comparing two texts and drawing conclusions about the dramatic power of Shakespeare without being reasonably certain that one of the texts is Shakespeare's and without knowing something of the antecedents of the other. Thus, there will be presented, first, a brief and necessarily incomplete resume of the critical conclusions that have been reached through scholars' investigation of the origin of the texts of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Critical bibliography is not concerned primarily or directly with a document as a work of art, but as "so many sheets of paper with so much writing on them, by the aid of which actors had to say their words, and subsequently printers had to reproduce what the authors wrote."¹ The bibliographer wants to know how the

printed page before him got that way. He tries to discover the factors of circumstance, place, time that help to determine a text's authenticity or lack of it. He ultimately seeks, as nearly as it can be found, the actual expression of the author.

The development of critical bibliography has, by degrees, revolutionized the approach of scholars to editing the works of Shakespeare. Until recent years, or to personify the change, until Pollard and J. Dover Wilson appeared on the scene, editors contented themselves with a more or less eclectic method of constructing their text. They based their editions on the best text available, but frequently introduced revisions suggested by other texts. The norm of choice of the best text was the literary taste and discernment of the individual editor. The editions thus compiled are for the most part quite good, at least in the literary sense, since the editors have generally been men of sound judgment. The new approach demands that the editor recognize and use the true Shakespearean text. This selection of text must be based on available evidence, both internal and external, not on personal preference. The text, once chosen, must be followed unless there is some evidence that a particular reading is interpolated, corrupt, omitted, etc. In brief, the editor who takes the eclectic viewpoint, when faced by a textual difficulty, asks himself, "what would Shakespeare say here?" The scientific editor in the same circumstances would pose the question more logically: "what did Shakespeare, as far as can be determined, say in this context?"
In 1603, Nicholas Ling published a play whose title-page reads: "The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke / By William Shakespeare / As it has beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse, ser- / uants in the Citie of London: as also in the two U- / niuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere / At London printed for N. L. and John Trundell. / 1603"

This edition is referred to as the First Quarto or Q1.²

Shakespearean scholarship was, however, untroubled by Q1's existence, until it was brought to light in 1823 by Sir Henry Bunbury. Although all conceded that Shakespeare later vastly improved the play, Q1 was long accepted as an authentic text of the play, written and approved for publication by Shakespeare himself. Indeed, Frank Hubbard, who expended considerable effort on problems connected with the texts of Hamlet, attempted to prove the authenticity of Q1 on the basis of its frequent agreement with the First Folio (F), which he assumed (incorrectly as later scholarship proved) to be the author's own final version.³ Even on his supposition that F is a reproduction of the genuine manuscript, his evi-

²The only play cited in this thesis is Shakespeare's Hamlet. Frank Hubbard's edition of the Q1 text is used, and the J. Dover Wilson edition of Q2 is employed. References will be given in parentheses after each quotation, indicating simply Q1 or Q2 with act, scene, and lines cited.

³Frank G. Hubbard, "The Readings of the First Quarto of Hamlet," PMLA, XXXVIII (1923), 792.
dance is too scanty to demand recognition as proof.

Despite the championing of Hubbard and others, Q₁ is now referred to quite unflatteringly as the "bad quarto." It is an abbreviated version (215 lines) of the original, replete with flat, pointless dialogue and marred by a garbling of the sequence of the play, especially towards the end. The evidence of the text--its loss of detail, misplacements, oversimplifications, many passages almost identical with the original MSS, cases of peculiar errors which can be explained only by the failure to remember the correct reading--all these indications converge on a single conclusion, that Q₁ is, as Bowers puts it, "a memorially reconstructed pirate text."\(^4\) That Q₁ is a pirate text, that is, one procured and printed without the consent of the author, is now generally admitted.

G. I. Duthie, whose work on Q₁ is outstanding,\(^5\) raises a further pertinent difficulty. Granted that Q₁ is a piracy, he asks in effect, can we neglect trying to find out just what text is being pillaged? J. Dover Wilson\(^6\) and Hardin Craig,\(^7\) for instance,


\(^5\)George Ian Duthie, The Bad Quarto of Hamlet (Cambridge, 1941).


\(^7\)Hardin Craig, An Interpretation of Shakespeare (New York, 1948), p. 432.
contend that \( Q_1 \) is a corrupt version of the play as it was then (1601-1602) being acted. They imply, therefore, that it represents a pirate's attempt to reconstruct a Shakespearean text which is no longer extant. Others have rung a slight change on this opinion by holding that \( Q_1 \) is, as it were, the halfway mark between pre-Shakespearean Hamlet and the finished masterpiece. Duthie, however, has now proved to the satisfaction of almost all that \( Q_1 \) is reconstructed on the basis of the text that we now know as \( Q_2 \). The pirates attended the play, probably took notes, and then tried to reproduce the dialogue and correct sequence of the play. The mangled copy that resulted was a piracy by stenography, a theft by ear aided by the art of shorthand and a struggling memory.

Duthie's claim is, then, that \( Q_1 \) is the result of listening to the play enacted according to the \( Q_2 \) version. His evidence for this claim takes the form of a detailed analysis of the likenesses in the \( Q_1 \) and \( Q_2 \) texts. A single example is by no means conclusive, but is sufficient to indicate his method of procedure.

Act IV.iii.39-40 in \( Q_2 \) reads: "Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, / Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve." Of special interest is the use of "tender" as a verb. In Act IV.i.45 of \( Q_1 \), however, "tender" is found used in much the same context, but adjectively: "We, in care of you, but specially / in tender preservation of your health." A large number of such instances point to the fact that someone's memory was snatching eagerly, but none too successfully, at the \( Q_2 \) text. Duthie explains sudden
and seemingly unaccountable bursts of good recollection by postulating a second compositor, who reworked and sometimes improved the copy constructed by his fellow conspirator. 8

In accordance with the conclusions of modern textual scholarship, in this thesis Q2 will be considered as a pirated text reconstructed from Q1.

Some justification must be presented for the choice of Q2 over F as the authentic text, since both of these versions have claimed to be reproductions of the original MSS and have, with unequal success, attempted to support such a claim.

Q2 was published in 1604 and bore the following notation on the title page: "Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect / Coppie." 9 Thus, Q2 purports to be based on "the true and perfect Coppie," and by implication claims a fullness and authenticity not possessed by the pirate edition (Q1) of the previous year.

The Shakespearean First Folio, published in late 1623 by Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, was the first edition of Shakespeare's complete dramatic works. 10 For most of the plays it

8Duthie, p. 176-179.


represents the best text, since few of the plays have a quarto version of any value.

Though the Folio text of Hamlet is much smoother than Q2 and presents fewer textual difficulties, contemporary scholars, such as W. W. Greg, C. J. Sisson, and Hardin Craig ratify the conclusion of Dover Wilson that F is an edited text, and that Q2 represents something closer to Shakespeare's own version. Wilson cites as evidence the fact that there is no attempt in Q2 to disentangle textual difficulties, whereas in F the effort to do so meets with varying success.\(^1\) The instances in which F's revisions make poor drama would seem to indicate that a hand other than Shakespeare's is attempting to clarify the Q2 text. The light punctuation of Q2 is characteristically Shakespearean, and is radically opposed to the much more generously punctuated F. Pollard also remarks that heavy punctuation is a strong indication of the editorial work in F.\(^2\) Wilson believes that the compositor of Q2, since he was, as will presently appear, inexperienced, left the punctuation and spelling as Shakespeare wrote it; or at least as he thought Shakespeare wrote it, since Shakespeare appears to have been a notoriously poor penman. Q2 dispenses with act-scene divisions, which, we know, was Shakespeare's usual practice; F employs

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\(^1\) John Dover Wilson, Manuscripts of Shakespeare's Hamlet (Cambridge, 1934), I, 92.

\(^2\) Pollard, p. 94.
imperfect divisions of this type. There are 215 lines skilfully deleted from Q₂ in the F version. These omissions and the obvious editing of the "dumb show" stage directions are further indications of the derivative nature of F.¹³ Greg clinches the argument when he cites the correspondence between Q₂ and F in numerous unusual forms and spellings, and he concludes by remarking that "it must be admitted that the evidence amounts to something not far short of proof."¹⁴

After he establishes as well as possible the authority of Q₂, Wilson offers a probable explanation of how the Shakespeare manuscript came into the printer's hands. The Company supposedly made at least one new prompt book and, therefore, was in a position to relinquish Shakespeare's first draft or "foul papers" to the printers. That this actually happened is accepted as the most probable theory. F is considered to be the result of a mediocre editorial job on the revised prompt book.¹⁵

Although authentic, the Q₂ text is nevertheless fraught with difficulty.¹⁶ It is badly printed and the compositor had more than a little trouble in spelling out the text. There are five

¹³Greg, First Folio, p. 310.
¹⁵Wilson, ed. of Shakespeare, Hamlet, p. xxvii.
¹⁶Greg, First Folio, p. 311.
omissions totalling eighty three lines. At times, the errors extend even to the characters' names. However, the inexperience of the printer can explain many, if not most, of the difficulties.

He was apparently unable to decipher texts with any facility and seems to have been prone to omit lines that he could not readily make out. Bowers points to evidence that during some of his work he used $Q_1$ to help extricate himself from textual difficulties.\footnote{Bowers, p. 41.}

And Wilson, the greatest champion of $Q_2$, allows that in cases where a reading of $Q_2$ is obviously due to the printer's error, the F reading should be employed as the best possible monitor.\footnote{Wilson, ed. of Shakespeare, Hamlet, p. xxviii.}

All problems are not, of course, obviated in this way; but we must rest satisfied for, as Greg notes, "we are faced with a choice between the roughness and inconsequences of the author and the ordered leveling of the book-keeper."\footnote{Walter Wilson Greg, The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare: a Survey of the Foundations of the Text (Oxford, 1951), 2nd ed., p. ix.}

In this thesis, J. Dover Wilson's edition of Hamlet based on $Q_2$ will be used, and any deviation by Wilson from the $Q_2$ text will be noted.
CHAPTER II

DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

Dramatic structure is an accurate, if somewhat misleading and ambiguous, title for the present chapter. The title may seem to imply that a detailed theory of dramatics and dramatic presentation is being presumed as a norm of reference according to which various elements of Q₁ will be judged dramatically superior or inferior to the corresponding sections of Q₂. It seems unwarranted and confusing for present purposes to adopt a theory of Shakespearean drama without adequately describing it. Yet, an excursion into the vast area of speculation and scholarship involved in Shakespearean drama would be more than a thesis in itself. A reasonably satisfactory solution of this difficulty will be found in the procedure that will be followed, namely, an analysis of some features of the texts on the basis of some elements common to all drama. The assignment of certain lines to certain characters, the arrangement of scene sequences, the continuity of dialogue, the pertinence of stage directions, significant changes or omissions—such elements as these will be suitable points for investigating the comparative worth of the two versions.

At the very beginning of the play, Q₁'s penchant for synopsis stands it in bad stead. The change of guards in Q₁ achieves its essential purpose— it readies the scene for the arrival of
Marcellus and Horatio, but dramatically it is not arresting; it is flat, a poor beginning for a play. The First Sentinel (Francisco of Q2) merely halts the Second Sentinel (Bernardo), instantly acknowledges his reply, and receives the message for Horatio and Marcellus. In Q2, however, it is Bernardo who makes the first move. He hails the guard, whom he does not yet recognize:

Who's there? (Ham., I.1.1)

But Francisco does not know him either and immediately returns the challenge. There is a confrontation, quickly resolved and admittedly of little importance, but nevertheless dramatic, attention catching. The play is already alive and moving.

Wilson remarks how the stage direction before ActI.ii in Q2 is especially effective dramatically.1 Hamlet is the last significant person to enter the royal court. He is, from his first appearance, a figure apart from and in conflict with everything in the court life about him. This effect is lessened in the Q1 stage direction, which puts Hamlet in his correct place in the procession, behind the King and Queen.

In Q1 the King turns first to the Norway business and then hears Laertes' request for dismissal from court; but in Q2 he gives what might be expected of him, a coronation speech in which he expresses sorrow for his brother's death and offers some explanation

1Wilson, ed. of Shakespeare, Hamlet, p. 149.
for his quick marriage. Wilson points out the significance of the King's words addressed to the nobles present:

nor have we herein barred
Your better wisdom, which have freely gone
With this affair along—for all, our thanks. (Ham. Q2, I.ii. 11-16)

This remark, Wilson notes, shows clearly the complicity of the nobles in the King's seizure of the throne. The allusion is not, of course, wasted upon Hamlet, who speaks throughout the play as one alone in an enemy camp. Q1 does not make clear the existence of such an unholy alliance in the King's court.

When according to the Q2 version, the King has finished his opening speech and has completed the other business at hand, he turns to the stricken young man who stands nearby—Hamlet, his nephew and prospective heir. But the King has no sooner spoken his first words to Hamlet:

But now my cousin Hamlet, and my son— (Ham. Q2, I.ii.64)

than the Prince interjects a bitter "aside" line:

A little more than kin, and less than kind. (Ham. Q2, I.ii.65)

This line serves not only to bring the strife between the King and Hamlet into immediate focus, but also gives a hint that the difficulty of the play centers around the relationship, the kinship of the royal household.

The parallel passage in Q1 has the prince listening without interruption to a seven line speech of the King who inquires into

\[2\text{Ibid., p. 149.}\]
the cause of his nephew's melancholy and urges him to remain in Denmark. Hamlet offers in reply a meager explanation of his grief. In fact, until the exit of the King and Queen, the dialogue fails to indicate the existence of conflict between the King and Hamlet.

Several references in the Q2 text of this interview between the King and Hamlet call attention to the importance of the fact that Claudius is actually a usurper. In Act I.i.i.108-112 Claudius makes a bid for Hamlet's recognition of his kingship by dangling the bait of right of succession.

Wilson is at pains to show that Claudius' unlawful assumption of the royalty is a grievance which is important in the development of the dramatic conflict. It completes Hamlet's motivation for revenge, since without this theft the villainy of the King would not be complete. But, as it is, he has stolen Hamlet's father by murder, his mother by dishonoring her, his crown by usurpation, and eventually attempts to steal his life by treachery. The omission of any allusion to the fact of usurpation in the early part of Q2 is a notable flaw in its dramatic buildup.

The next section where the structure of the play differs significantly in the two versions is the chain of events leading to the nunnery incident in which Hamlet delivers his great soliloquy and soon afterwards completely shatters the strategy of his ene-
ties by his fierce and stinging abuse of Ophelia. The sequence for this event followed in Q₁ gives rise to many difficulties and inconsistencies which are avoided in the more careful and dramatically effective arrangement found in Q₂. To illustrate clearly the dramatic deficiency of Q₁ and the subtler, more skilfull arrangement of Q₂ it will be helpful to narrate briefly the action as it occurs in both texts, and to indicate where certain important variations occur.

In Q₁ this event occurs in Act II, ii. The scene opens with the reception of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern at court. After they withdraw, Polonius, accompanied by Ophelia, announces the arrival of the ambassador, and hints at love for his daughter as the cause of Hamlet's mad conduct. After Valtemand, the ambassador, leaves, Polonius states his case for the desperate love of Hamlet for Ophelia. Presently Hamlet is noticed approaching, whereupon Ophelia is instructed to hover in the vicinity while the others hide. The soliloquy and the meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia follow immediately. Those incidents occur before the "mad" Hamlet's conversational conquest of Polonius.

In the Q₂ description of the action, Polonius is not attended by Ophelia in his audience with the King. Although there is, then, no occasion for an encounter between Hamlet and Ophelia, the Prince happens upon the scene, notices that he is watched, and is presently accosted by Polonius, who wishes to convince the listening King and Queen that their son is actually crazed with love for
Ophelia. Hamlet assumes the role of a madman, albeit a most sharp-witted and perceptive one, in his colloquy with Polonius; but he gives no satisfaction on the question of whether or not he is unbalanced by love. This conversation is, as was previously mentioned, delayed in the Q\textsubscript{1} text until after the meeting with Ophelia.

In Q\textsubscript{2} Rosencrantz and Guildenstern pay court to Hamlet after the withdrawal of Polonius. The lonely Prince receives them joyfully, but his joy changes to pain and disgust when he presently perceives that they are hirelings rather than friends. This meeting and also Hamlet's preliminary dealings with the players, placed before the "nunnery" incident in Q\textsubscript{2}, are placed after it in Q\textsubscript{1}. In fact the Q\textsubscript{2} text of Act II.ii concludes with Hamlet's "Hecuba" soliloquy, in which he airs his hopes of catching the King by the device of a play reenacting the murder of his father.

Wilson inserts a stage direction at the end of Act II.ii in Q\textsubscript{2}. It reads, "A day passes."\textsuperscript{5} He supports this insertion by referring to Act II.ii.543, where Hamlet tells the players that "tomorrow night" the play will be performed. In Act III.i.21 of Q\textsubscript{2} Rosencrantz, in an interview with the King, Queen, and Polonius, mentions that the play will take place tonight. It is immediately

\textsuperscript{4}Wilson, ed. of Shakespeare, Hamlet, p. 170.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., p. 57.
after this report by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern upon Hamlet's madness, that Q2 presents the scene between Hamlet and Ophelia.

In view of the comparative chronologies narrated above, several dramatic inconsistencies become evident in the sequence followed in Q1. Immediately after Polonius leaves Ophelia, Hamlet appears, delivers his soliloquy, and begins to berate Ophelia. The problem found here is obvious. If Hamlet knew of the presence of the King, Queen and Polonius, he would certainly not have spoken his soliloquy; but if he had not overheard at least part of the instructions to Ophelia, he would have no reason for insinuating that she is stationed here to seduce him, for suspecting that she is a decoy used by his enemies. In Q2, however, Hamlet enters just as the King and Polonius have agreed to attempt the experiment of "loosing" Ophelia. The Queen remarks:

But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading,

to which Polonius rejoins,

Away, I do beseech you both away,
I'll board him presently, O give me leave. (Ham. Q2, II.i.i. 163-170)

Then the conversation between Hamlet and Polonius ensues, in which Hamlet, by his bawdy remarks concerning Ophelia and his reference to Polonius himself as a "fishmonger," makes it clear to the viewers of the play, if not to the hiding royalty, that he has overheard the plot that has just been laid and that he is now aware that Ophelia is being used against him. However, the meeting between him and Ophelia is deferred for a full day. Then he gives
his soliloquy, which he stops rather abruptly when he realizes that he has come into her presence. At first Hamlet, on his guard, treats Ophelia as a distant acquaintance; then, when she becomes insistent in her demands that he receive back the gifts he had given her, he remembers the plot to draw him out, surmises that the King and Polonius are listening, and for their benefit, as Wilson points out, changes his attitude towards Ophelia with the derisive question,

Ha, ha, are you honest? (Ham. Q2, III.1.102-103)

The sequence in Q2, then, at least makes the occurrence of the incident understandable. Hamlet speaks to himself, unaware that he is observed; he is harsh with Ophelia because she calls forth his fury by her betrayal.

In addition to the above mentioned reasons, Q2's placement of Hamlet's interview with Polonius before the encounter with Ophelia is fitting also as the first full-length portrayal of Hamlet's antic disposition. With the preparation afforded by this conversation, the audience is prepared for Hamlet's more violent performance when he meets Ophelia.

But in Q1 Act II.11.226-230 Polonius remarks in an aside that Hamlet is speaking like one suffering from love sickness:

How pregnant his replies are, and full of wit; yet at first he took me for a fishmonger. All this comes by love, the vehemency of love; and when

---

6Ibid., p. 193.
I was young I was very idle, and suffered much ecstasy in love; very near this. (Ham. Q1, II.ii.226-230)

These remarks are particularly inept, since Polonius has just heard and witnessed Hamlet's upbraiding of Ophelia. Such an extreme blunder as this is a strong indication that the difference in sequence from Q2 is largely accounted for by the uncritical and defective memory of the pirates.

The dramatic buildup of the King's suspicions of Hamlet and fear of his intentions is well done in Q2. After witnessing the Hamlet-Ophelia spectacle, the King remarks:

Love! his affections do not that way tend,  
Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,  
Was not like madness--there's something in his soul,  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,  
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose  
Will be some danger. . . . (Ham. Q2, III.i.165-170)

Thus, the two opponents, Hamlet and the King, begin to recognize each other more clearly, and to maneuver for position in the death struggle. In Q1 the King merely says that Hamlet's difficulty lies in something deeper than love. He remains quite unaware of the true situation until Hamlet forces his attention in the play staged for the entertainment of the court. Much of the tension is lost in Q1, where the King is a much less clever and formidable foe for the Prince.

In Act III.ii of Q2 Polonius enters with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern after Hamlet has concluded his instructions to the players. Hamlet, obviously without any relish for the company of his friends, dispatches them from his presence immediately and
calls to Horatio. He then offers to Horatio words of thanks and appreciation for his true friendship. In Q1 Rosencrantz and Guildenstern do not appear before Horatio speaks with Hamlet. This omission causes the loss of some of Q2's effective dramatic contrast between the false friends who have just been dismissed and the true Horatio to whom Hamlet turns for relief.

At the beginning of Act III.iv Polonius speaks a few words of encouragement to the Queen before the arrival of Hamlet. He instructs her:

Pray you be round with him, to which she replies,

I'll war'nt you, Fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming. (Ham. Q2, III.iv. 5-7)

This bit of dialogue helps to point up more sharply the complete failure of the plans of the Queen and Polonius, since Hamlet is throughout the meeting the master of the situation. But in Q1 Polonius has no words for the Queen other than:

Madam, I hear young Hamlet coming; I'll shroud Myself behind the arras. (Ham. Q1, III.iv.1-2)

In Q2 Act III.iv.202-211 Hamlet shows that he knows that he, attended by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, is banished to England. These school-fellows of his he trusts "as adders fanged," and is determined to himself outplot them. This section is omitted in Q1 and hence another opportunity is lost of bringing a further aspect of Hamlet's many-sided conflict into focus.
Act IV.ii of Q₂ compasses the first three scenes of Act IV in Q₂. The action is substantially the same with the one exception that a scene between Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern in Q₂ (Act IV.ii) is omitted in Q₁. Some references, notably Hamlet's labeling Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as "sponges, soak-up the King's countenance," are contained in this scene, whereas in Q₁ parallel dialogue is found in Act III.ii.210-220.

After finding and retrieving Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, according to Q₁, come along with him into the King's presence. Guildenstern immediately addresses the King:

My lord, we can by no means know of him where the body is. (Ham. Q₁, IV.i.22-23)

In Q₂, however, there is a stage-direction before Act IV.iii.11 which states, "Enter Rosencrantz and all the rest." ⁷ Rosencrantz then tells the King that Hamlet will not reveal the hiding place. Another stage-direction before line fifteen reads, "They 'enter." thereupon the King asks Hamlet,

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius? (Ham. Q₂, IV.iii.15)

It seems, then, as Wilson deduces, that the "they" refers to Hamlet, who enters guarded. ⁸ Thus, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern tell of their failure before Hamlet appears. The Q₁ rendition is much less apropos, since, by such a blatant reference in Hamlet's

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⁷ Wilson, Manuscripts, II, 364.

⁸ Wilson, ed. of Shakespeare, Hamlet, p. 220.
presence to their efforts to sound him, even the illusion of friendship which they wished to maintain would be destroyed. The stage directions in Q2 give a basis for the avoidance of such tactical blunders by the plotters.

Act IV.ii in Q1 corresponds to Act IV.iv in Q2. The subject is Fortinbras' appeal for permission to pass through Denmark on route to battle. The Q1 version contains only five lines, and merely records Fortinbras' request for safe conduct. In Q2 the scene has added importance in as much as Hamlet is introduced and another occasion is offered him to feed upon thoughts of vengeance. Even in Q1, however, the scene, brief though it is, has some significance, since it is necessary to have Fortinbras in Denmark at the end of the play, when he restores order to the scene of carnage.

Ophelia's sad plight and eventual death are recorded in both texts—in Q1, Act IV.iii and in Q2, Act IV.v. In Q1 the King and Queen are together from the very beginning of the scene. The King buoys up the Queen's hopes for Hamlet's safety in England by the ironic remark:

Hamlet is ship't for England; fare him well;  
I hope to hear good news from thonce ere long.  
If every thing fall out to our content,  
As I do make no doubt but so it shall.  
(Ham. Q1, IV.iii.1-4)

This is shockingly unnatural and unrealistic, since the King has always acted most lovingly towards the Queen. He would naturally be reticent on the subject of Hamlet's death, especially with his
consort whom he has betrayed. Again in Q₁, Act IV.iii.16-20, the
King, in the presence of the Queen, alludes quite baldly to the
fate in store for Hamlet, whereas in Q₂, Act IV.v.200-219, he re­
spects her feelings by calming the wrath of Laertes by assuring
him that his complaint will be heard and justice done. Clearly
the King's barbed words to the Queen in Q₁, Act IV.iii introduce
a strange and troublesome inconsistency of attitude into the play.

In Q₂, Act IV.v as the scene opens the Queen is present with
her attendants, Horatio, and a gentleman who is informing her
that Ophelia is importunate in her demands for an audience. The
gentleman describes in some detail the pitiable state of Ophelia:

The speaks much of her father, says she hears
There's tricks i'th'world, and hems, and beats her heart,
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt
That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection—they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts,
Which as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily. (Ham. Q₂, IV.v.
5-13)

His speech helps as a fairly good introduction to and preparation
for the uncontrolled speech and behavior of the afflicted Ophelia.

In Q₁ the gentleman's role is eliminated; and the only introduc­
tion to Ophelia is the Queen's remark:

But this mischance of old Corambis' death
Hath pierced so the young Ofelia's heart,
That she, poor maid, is quite bereft her wits. (Ham. Q₁, IV.
III.6-8)
This brief speech in Q₁, while not misleading, is hardly sufficient dramatic prologue to Ophelia's violent madness and death.

The madness of Ophelia is rather crudely portrayed in Q₁ where she sings two of her senseless songs and engages in one very brief verbal exchange with the King. In Q₂ the King and Queen, by their attempts to draw her out and humor her, emphasize the extent to which her mind is removed from reality. The bawdy lyrics which she sings in Q₂ indicate that frustration in her love for Hamlet may be as much a factor in her madness as her grief for her murdered father.

The arrival of Laertes in Q₂ is quite forceful and dramatic. The shouts of the rabble championing Laertes confirm the King's worst fears about his own unpopularity with the masses. Laertes bursts into the King's presence in the company of his eager adherents, and contemptuously asks,

Where is this king? (Ham. Q₂, IV.v.112)

In Q₁ there is no drama at all. The King merely concludes his conversation with the Queen by asking,

How now? What noise is that? (Ham. Q₁, IV.iii.47)

Without further ado, Laertes enters.

Act IV.vi of Q₂ contains dialogue between Horatio and a sailor who serves as a messenger bearing letters from Hamlet. The letter to Horatio tells of Hamlet's return to Denmark, and hints at some of his recent adventures. Another letter is delivered to the King, who is thereby informed that Hamlet will soon return;
and that thus another plot must be contrived with the help of Laertes. The two letters afford a good contrast between the forthright, rational way in which Hamlet treats his friend, Horatio, and the assumed madness which characterize his dealings with the King. In Q₁, Act IV.iv, the news of Hamlet's arrival is divulged in an interview in which Horatio tells the Queen of the letter which he has received. The Queen is represented in this scene as finally and definitely promising herself to the cause of Hamlet. It is baffling, then, that she does not offer some objection to Hamlet's subsequent duel with Laertes, since the possibility of a death trap for Hamlet is quite obvious to one who is fully acquainted with the state of the conflict between the King and Hamlet.

Hamlet's mention in his letter to the King that he has arrived home "naked" and "alone," are subtle but sure indications to the King that his plans have gone completely awry, since Hamlet has in some way rid himself of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. In Q₁ the King has, at the beginning of Act IV.v, already been informed by the Queen of Hamlet's return; there is no personal letter to the King. Thus that powerful dramatic moment in Q₂, when the King reads for himself the ironic letter of his would-be victim, is missed entirely in Q₁.

The King's wooing of Laertes into partnership in the next plot to eliminate Hamlet is poorly presented in Q₁, Act IV.v.6-36. The King, by a recital of his scheme to undo Hamlet in the course
of a duel, merely capitalizes on the wrath and bravado of Laertes. In Q₂ the King is something of a psychologist, as he sounds the depths of Laertes’ determination for revenge, flatters him to engage his mind and fancy to the plot, wins over the cold calculation as well as the hot blood of this precipitous young man.

The Queen’s announcement of the drowning of Ophelia is in Q₁, Act IV.v.40-49. The account there is a masterpiece of artificiality. The Queen makes a pretty little speech telling how Ophelia went for a float on the brook. At the end of it she mentions, almost parenthetically, that Ophelia drowned. Much more effective is the Q₂, Act IV.vii.162-189 presentation, in which the Queen rushes upon the scene and immediately says,

One woe tread upon another’s heel
So fast they follow; your sister’s drowned, Laertes.  

(Shakespeare. Q₂, IV.vii.162-163)

And then Laertes sorrowfully asks,

Drowned! O, where? (Shakespeare. Q₂, IV.vii.164)

Just before he jumps into the open grave to embrace once more the body of Ophelia, Laertes thunders this imprecation upon Hamlet,

O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Doprived thee of. (Shakespeare. Q₂, V.i.240-243)

Such a curse obviously provides strong provocation for the attack that Hamlet makes after a few further bombastic remarks by Laertes. The absence of the curse in Q₁ makes Hamlet’s assault on
Laertes appear at least partially deficient in motivation. It is also strange that in Q₁ neither the King, Queen, nor Horatio makes any attempt to subdue Hamlet. They merely watch the fight, at the completion of which the King says,

Forbear Laertes;
Now is he mad as is the sea,
Anon as mild and gentle as a dove;
Therefore a while give his wild humor scope. (Ham. Q₁, V.i. 161-164)

Once again the later quarto is much more vivid. As soon as Hamlet begins grappling with Laertes, there are four very natural cries:

King. Pluck them asunder.
Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!
Horatio. Good my lord, be quiet. (Ham. Q₁, V.i. 258-259)

The intensity of Hamlet's struggle with the King is increased in Q₂ when, in reply to Horatio's remarks that the destruction of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will soon be reported, Hamlet observes:

It will be short, the interim is mine,
And a man's life's no more than to say 'One'... (Ham. Q₂, V.ii.73-74)

Wilson conjectures that 'One' refers to one thrust of the rapier. Such an interpretation is exquisitely ironic, since it is by one thrust of an unbated blade that the King hopes to see Hamlet laid

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7Ibid., p. 243.
low. There is no parallel reference in Q₁.

The First Ambassador from England in the Q₂ text brings the news that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been executed. This outcome was hardly unexpected; but it does add a certain completeness to the tragedy, which thus engulfs all of Hamlet's enemies in a common fate—death.

When, in Q₂, Horatio offers to recount to Fortinbras the sad tale of Hamlet's downfall, Fortinbras says with genuine concern:

Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune. (Ham. Q₂, V.ii. 384-386)

According to Q₁ Fortinbras fails even to acknowledge Horatio's proposal to tell the story. Instead, he merely claims for himself the kingless crown of Denmark.

The material presented in this chapter has indicated three main types of dramatic deficiency in the Q₁ text of Hamlet.

First, several instances have been cited to show the relative lack of dramatic tension in Q₁. The struggle between the embattled Hamlet and his enemies lacks the tautness that is found in Q₂. Second, Q₁ sometimes fails to make sufficiently clear the explanation or motivation for certain remarks and actions. Third, the sequence of events, especially in the "mournery" scene, tends to make the action of Q₂ confused and sometimes almost unintelligible. Granted that the Q₂ version of the action is exceedingly complex, disturbing major inconsistencies of the type frequently found in
are avoided.
CHAPTER III

DICTION

The differences between the Q₁ and Q₂ texts are nowhere more evident than in their diction. The Q₂ version is a remarkably eloquent creation that is the object of universal admiration. Q₁, though colored by the purple patches, the unforgettable phrases which the piratical memory retained, is generally a flat, prosy rendition of the genuine drama. The linguistic deficiencies of Q₁ are especially glaring in its inept handling of images, metaphor, and passages that are highly rhetorical or actually poetic. In this section of the thesis an effort will be made to indicate by a selection of representative passages the contrast between the two texts on the basis of diction.

Hamlet's first soliloquy is quite representative of two dictional differences which show up especially in the reporting of major speeches. Referring to the world in Q₂, Hamlet exclaims:

Fie on't, 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. (Ham. Q₂, I.ii.135-137)

The omission of these lines and these images in Q₁, though seemingly of little importance, is nevertheless significant as one of many omissions which cumulatively weaken the word power of Q₁.

W. H. Cleman, following the lead of Caroline Spurgeon, has
developed and defended the notion that *Hamlet* is dominated by imagery of corruption and disintegration, that the whole play, considered from the viewpoint of diction, is unified by this theme. He writes:

As Miss Spurgeon has shown, the idea of an ulcer dominates the imagery, infecting and fatally eating away the whole body; on every occasion repulsive images of sickness make their appearance. . . . It is certain that this imagery is derived from that [the first appearance of the ghost to Hamlet] one real event. Hamlet's father describes in that passage how the poison invades the body during sleep and how the healthy organism is destroyed from within, not having a chance to defend itself against attack. But now this becomes the *leitmotif* of the imagery: the individual occurrence is expanded into a symbol for the central problem of the play. The corruption of land and people throughout Denmark is understood as an imperceptible and irresistible process of poisoning. And, furthermore, this poisoning reappears as a *leitmotif* in the action as well as a poisoning in the "dumb show," and finally, as the poisoning of all the major characters in the last act. Thus imagery and action continually play into each other's hands and we see how the term "dramatic imagery" gains a very new significance.¹

That *Q₂* is replete with such imagery and references, and that they help to substantiate the contentions of Clemem seems undeniable. *Q₁*, however, omits much, if not most, of this significant imagery and, as a consequence, loses much of the tone and nuance of the play. The failure to report the image of the unweeded garden is minor, but sufficient to point to the problem. Several other such omissions of *leitmotif* imagery in *Q₁* will be noted.

In the soliloquy under consideration, Q₁ retains many of the dramatically fine images of Q₂. For instance, in both texts may be read the lines,

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes.

(Ham. Q₁, I.11.62-63; Q₂, I.11.154-155)

Also an identical wording of the "Niobe" image may be found in both texts. Still the Q₁ reading of the soliloquy lacks the impact that Q₂ provides. For almost at the beginning of the speech in Q₁, Hamlet blurts out that it is his mother's marriage that preys upon his mind. In Q₂, however, he is always on the point of naming the crime, but yet, shrinking from the thought of it, unable to say it. His words are writhing, almost incoherent until he forces out the truth.

This consideration leads to a general fault that should be imputed to Q₁, namely, its inability to make good use of good words. Q₁ often does no more than shuffle a few lines in the Q₂ text, but not infrequently these slight mutations and substitution of words suffice to thoroughly shuffle the power and poetry out of the lines. The difference between the texts, as shown in the passage just considered, is the gulf between mediocrity and genius.

The total impression of inferiority made by Q₁ arises partly from the multiplication of small failures like the failure to carry out a metaphor to the full, as, for example, in these lines:

From the tables of my memory wipe away
All saws of books, all trivial fond conceits,
That ever youth or else observance noted,  
And thy remembrance all alone shall sit.  
(Ham. Q1, I.v. 75-78)

With this adequate, but rather pedestrian text, may be contrasted 
the skillful, tasteful completion of the figure in Q2:

Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past  
That youth and observation copied there,  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmixed with baser matter.  
(Ham. Q2, I.v.98-104)

Hamlet's love-letter which Polonius reads to the King establishes the Prince as one of the classic composers of that particular genre of literature. The Q1 version is certainly striking:

Doubt that in earth is fire;  
Doubt that the stars do move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But do not doubt I love.  
To the beautiful Ophelia,  
Thine ever, the most unhappy Prince Hamlet.  
(Ham. Q1, II.11. 71-76)

But even in this gentle art Q2 must be granted precedence. The verse is much alike in both versions (cf. Q2, II.11.116-119), but the accompanying letter in Q2 has a few interesting differences from the message contained in Q1, II.11.75-76 quoted above. The message in Q2 reads:

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers, I have not art to reckon my groans, but I love thee best, 0 most best, believe it. Adieu.  
Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst  
this machine is to him, HAMLET.  
(Ham. Q2, II.11.120-124)
The word "machine" could, given the situation, hardly be improved on. The informal signature, "Hamlet," is certainly more fitting in a letter of this type than the more formal "Prince Hamlet."

The contrast between the two versions of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy reveals most clearly the superiority of Q₂. In Q₁ Hamlet begins his musings with a simple undramatic statement. The "point" or, as Q₂ puts it, the "question" is left undefined in Q₁, but Q₂ adds these illuminating lines:

> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer<br>The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,<br>Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,<br>And by opposing, end them. <sup>(Ham. Q₂, III.i.57-60)</sup>

These verses not only clarify the "question" of the opening line, but also suggest, in images proper to Hamlet's personality and background, the hard struggle involved in the attempt to answer it.

After the preliminary statement of the problem, Q₁ continues:

> To die,—to sleep,—is that all? Ay, all. No;<br>To sleep,—to dream;—ay, marry, there it goes. <sup>(Ham. Q₁, II.i.116-117)</sup>

The parallel passage in Q₂ reads:

> To die, to sleep--<br>No more, and by a sleep to say we end<br>The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks<br>That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation<br>Devoutly to be wished to die to sleep!<br>To sleep, perchance to dream, ay there's the rub,<br>For in the sleep of death what dreams may come<br>When we have shuffled off this mortal coil<br>Must give us pause--there's the respect<br>That makes calamity of so long life. <sup>(Ham. Q₂, III.i.60-69)</sup>
In Q₂ Shakespeare takes pains to convey the implications that sleep hold for Hamlet. First of all, sleep means the sur-

cess of pain and suffering. The Prince, slowly and carefully

according to his meditative nature, reflects upon this boon of the

sleep of death. "To die," he thinks, "to sleep,--to sleep"; but

then the one dire consequence of death, the one aspect he had not

yet considered flashes into his mind with the words "perchance to

dream." A penetrating picture, this, of a man who very cautiously

weighs his fate, while the corresponding section of Q₁, quoted

above, is mere surface statement and, indeed, not too clear at all.

A backward glance at these same lines reveals, against the al-

most prosy background of Q₁, the fullness of Shakespeare's poetic-
dramatic powers in Q₂. His artistry can be noted in his very re-

markable interweaving of the ideas of death and sleep. The image,

"shuffled off this mortal coil" aptly applies to the great death-
sleep, and yet keeps in focus the idea of ordinary sleep which is

a momentary shuffling off of the coils and cares of life. The

dramatist's skill is also displayed in his artistic use of run-on

lines which help to hold and heighten the suspense of the passage.

An attempt to compare the texts of Q₁ and Q₂ in the next

section of the great speech will be facilitated by reproducing

the two versions for ready reference. Q₁ puts these words upon

Hamlet's lips:

But for this, the joyful hope of this,

Who'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world,--

Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poor,
The widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd,--
The taste of hunger, or the tyrant's reign,
And thousand more calamities besides,
To grunt and sweat under this weary life,
When that he may his full quietus make
With a bare bodkin? (Ham. Q1, II.11.123-131)

In Q2 the Prince expresses similar thoughts in this way:

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? (Ham. Q2, III.1.70-76)

The keynote of Q2's vastly superior diction in this section
is sounded at the outset by the substitution of the highly sug­
gestive image "whips and scorns of time" for Q1's rather stereo­
typed "scorns and flattery of the world." The narrowness of the
phrases "the widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd," is evi­
dent when they are contrasted with the far-reaching statement,
"the oppressor's wrong," a statement not necessarily stronger than
the other, but much more fitting in this speech where Hamlet is
viewing life in its widest scope.

The line,

The taste of hunger, or a tyrant's reign, (Ham. Q1, II.11.
127)
evinces little creative power, but in Q2 Shakespeare, instead of
merely selecting such instances of human misery, names one general
term after another--proud man, disprized love, law, office, pa-
tient merit--and associates them with their attendant faults or 
misfortunes--contumely, delays, pangs, innocence. By each of 
these combinations he has constructed a sweeping concept which is 
capable of suggesting a wide range of images and emotions.

Hamlet is, in this part of the soliloquy, man groping into 
the darkest depths of his nature. Rather, he is mankind itself 
when it faces "the whips and scorns of time." And so, a phrase 
like "Tyrant's reign" forms just a little corner of the picture 
of cruelty and selfishness which Hamlet beholds. It is a phrase 
inadequate to express the thoughts of the Prince who is now 
glimpsing more than the wicked King who plagues his life, more 
than all the sceptered tyrants in the world; who is, in fact, see-
ing the oneness of the noble despot with every petty magistrate, 
unreasonable employer, irate pastor of souls, and many others. 
He draws them all into his word-portrait by the all-embracing 
phrase "insolence of office."

The remainder of the soliloquy is rather tame in Q₁ which, 
for instance, has Hamlet asking,

Who would this endure? (Ham. Q₁, II.ii.131)

Q₂ makes the same question wonderfully powerful and personal by 
posing it,

Who would fardels bear? (Ham. Q₂, III.1.76)

A final observation to be made is the absence in Q₁ of this theme 
image found in Q₂: "sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought
Granville-Barker points out that in the Q₁ version of Hamlet's verbal abuse of Ophelia, he repeats the phrase "to a nunnery, go" no less than eight times.² This successive repetition makes the formula almost a jingle. In Q₂ Hamlet directs Ophelia to a nunnery but four times, and on each occasion he varies the wording of the command:

- go thy ways to a nunnery. . . . (Ham. Q₂, III.i.130)
- get thee to a nunnery, go, farewell. . . . (Ham. Q₂, III.i.139-140)
- to a nunnery, go, and quickly too, farewell. (Ham. Q₂, III.i.142-143)
- to a nunnery, go. (Ham. Q₂, III.i.152)

A particular barbarous line from the grammatical point of view is found in the Q₁ text of the altercation between Hamlet and Ophelia. The line reads,

Hamlet. I never gave you nothing. (Ham. Q₁, II.ii.5)

The corresponding statement in Q₂ is more orthodox,

No, not I, I never gave you aught. (Ham. Q₂, III.i.95-96)

The speeches in Q₁ read at times like crude outlines of the pilfered original. The denotation, the gist, is maintained; but

but the striking language is suppressed, the connotations removed, the heart of the speech often cut away. One good example of this pillaging of poetry is Ophelia's sad commentary on Hamlet after he leaves her crushed:

Great God of heaven, what a quick change is this!
The courtier, scholar, soldier, all in him;
All dash and splinter'd thence. O, woe is me,
To 'a seen what I have seen, see what I see!

(Ham. Q₁, II.11.198-201)

The sentence beginning "O, woe is me" is practically identically the conclusion of the speech in Q₂. The first line quoted above parallels in a more abstract, less natural phrase Q₂'s opening line,

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown. (Ham. Q₂, III.1.153)

There are also references in Q₂ (Act III.1.154) to the courtier, scholar, soldier. But in the Q₂ text the former excellences of Hamlet are further recalled in touching phrases:

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mold of form,
Th'observed of all observers, quite quite down.

(Ham. Q₂, III.1.154-157)

While this last sentence in both versions is, as was remarked, alike, in Q₂ it is skillfully prepared for by Ophelia's lament over her misfortune at witnessing the disintegration of such a noble personality:

And I of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason.
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstasy! (Ham. Q2, III.1, 158-163)

To say that the two versions of this speech can be reduced to the same statement is true only superficially. The fact that they differ in their ability to communicate emotion is the deeper, more significant fact. The only satisfactory explanation of this qualitative difference lies in perceptive, sensitive reading of the two texts. Such textual contrast can point only to the mystery at the heart of poetical language, the mystery in the power of great literature to reflect human experience.

Both texts place Hamlet's "Hecuba" soliloquy in Act II.11. The first line in the Q1 version reads,

Why, what a dunghill idiot slave am I! (Ham. Q1, II.11, 404)

Reasonably adequate though it is, it can hardly compare with Q2's,

0, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! (Ham. Q2, II.11, 553)

The difference to be noted is in the epithets that Hamlet applies to himself. He is a Prince failing in his duty, thus he acts the part of a rogue as opposed to a man of honor, of a peasant as opposed to a noble. The expression "dunghill idiot slave" is less felicitous. Dunghill adds nothing but bombast to idiot slave, and even the word idiot is not well chosen, since Hamlet does not consider himself a madman.

The Q1 soliloquy continues with the following lines:

Why, these players here draw water from eyes
For Hecuba.
Why, what is Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?
What would he do, and if he had my loss? (Ham. Q1, II.ii. 405-408)

These lines are very poorly constructed. The phrase "draw water from eyes," trivial though it is, presents the ambiguity of deciding whose eyes are going to give forth the water, whether it will flow from the eyes of the player or from those of his audience. There is, in addition, the obvious grammatical inconsistency in the numerical disagreement between "these players" and "Hecuba to him." In the four lines quoted Hamlet's only device for expressing wonder, amazement, and astonishment is the double repetition of the meaningless interjection, "why." In place of such flat expression, Q2 dramatizes the situation in these powerful lines:

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wanned,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit; and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? (Ham. Q2, II.ii.554-563)

Q2 brings out what Q1 hardly hints at, namely, the reason why Hamlet is so moved by the performance of the player. It is precisely because the player is only a player "in a fiction, a dream of passion," that Hamlet is stricken with remorse for his own failure to act decisively. In Q2 the prosaic "draw water from eyes" is transformed into a graphic portrayal of the player's feigned emotion: the wan visage, the tears, distracted mien, bro-
ken voice--"and all for nothing."

In Q1 one of the most electrifying and pitiful cries in Hamlet is omitted. It is the cry "O vengeance" (Ham. Q2, II.11.585), that is torn from Hamlet's heart after he has compared his true cause for grief with the make-believe sorrow of the actor, after he has gazed shamefully at his own impotency, after he has contemplated the great evil that is present. The cry "O vengeance" in this context is a compact summary of the great struggle in Hamlet's soul. "Vengeance" is a cry of despair, a cry for the thing he must, yet may not have because of the paralyzing, description-defying power that numbs his struggling will. The forlorn cry is uttered by Hamlet that he may relieve some of the unbearable tension. But still, it is the very emptiness of this, his most powerful word, that brings the hero back to earth, to a realization of what his feeble inactivity has made him. He voices his self-contempt in the words, "What an ass I am" (Ham. Q2, II.11.586). This exclamation, which, like that of "O vengeance," is omitted from Q1 which makes use of the word "ass" in a prior line (Ham. Q1, II.11.415), gives voice to Hamlet's full realization of, and implicitly his repudiation of, his crime of inactivity. Q1's problem in bridging Hamlet's attitudes of self contempt and resolution is not, however, an especially troublesome one. The one slight difficulty is in realizing exactly where in Q1 Hamlet's mood shifts from uncertainty to resolution.
It cannot be overlooked that Q1 in its passion for brevity omits all but the conclusion of Hamlet's justly famous instruction to the players, in which he admonishes them that the purpose of playing is,

[to hold as 'twer the
mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature,
scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the
time his form and pressure. . . . (Ham. Q2, III.11.21-24)

In the course of his speech eulogizing Horatio's faithful friendship, Hamlet says in Q2,

It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy. (Ham. Q2, III.11.80-82)

This concrete reference to his own poisoned mind is a noteworthy addition, omitted in Q1, to the theme imagery which was discussed on a previous page.

Hamlet, when he dismisses Horatio and the others soon after the "play scene," is for the first time alone with the full conviction of his uncle's guilt. The moment calls for power, cries out for Hamlet's expression of the deadly thought and plans that seethe within his brain. But in Q1 Hamlet makes no allusion to his state of mind at this time when conviction and emotion have raised him up from wavering uncertainty. After Horatio's departure, Hamlet in Q1 merely turns his attention to the business of visiting his mother, and reminds himself that he will be cruel but not unnatural.

In Q2, however, the lines about the Queen are preceded by a
short, vivid expression of Hamlet's teeming thoughts. The Prince, having gained privacy, begins:

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world; now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on; soft, now to my mother.  

(Ham. Q2, III.i.391-395)

Every word, every image, every desire, is of a soul thirsting for violence. Rarely has a moment of time been so stigmatized as this "witching time." The heavens are blotted out and Hamlet knows the meaning of the darkness of this night. He can see only yawning churchyard and hell and contagion. The night reflects the foul truth within his soul, and his purpose finds a name: "Now could I drink hot blood." No mere bombast, this, but a marvelous phrase for expressing the thought of a man who hates and longs for vengeance with all the strength within him. Hamlet knows that he must do the deed now, in the night. His will to act is given a final inducement by the fear that the light of day, unable to bear the sight of his fury, may pluck out the heart of his resolution.

The King's prayer begins in Q1 with the exclamation,  

O, that this wet that falls upon my face  
Would wash the crime clear from my conscience!  

(Ham. Q1, III.iii.1-2)

"Wet" is a poor expression for tears, and the alliteration in "crime clear from my conscience" is disturbing. Besides these flaws and the general weakness of the outcry, there is lacking the excellent corruption imagery of the Q2 lines:
0, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven,
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder! (Ham. Q2, III.iii.36-38)

The main point of the speech is the King's revelation of the struggle in his heart between the desire to be rid of his guilt and his strong attachment to the spoils of his sin. This trial is given a merely academic airing in Q1:

0, these sins that are unpardonable!
Why, say thy sins are blacker than is jet,
Yet may contrition make them as white as snow.
Ay, but still to persever in a sin;
It is an act 'gainst the universal power.

(Ham. Q1, III.iii.7-11)

The King in Q2 after his initial cry remarks his inability to sue for forgiveness:

Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will. (Ham. Q2, III.iii.38-39)

He then muses over the possibility of forgiveness, asking himself whether the mercy of heaven was not devised to meet such heinous crimes. But when he attempts to formulate his petition, he meets the force of contradiction in his soul:

My fault is past, but O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder;
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen;
May one be pardoned and retain th'offense?

(Ham. Q2, III.iii.51-56)

There is obviously in this Q2 passage a vividly worded, dramatically superior specification of Q1's abstract statement that it is wrong to retain the effects of sin. The whole problem in Q2 is
stated coherently and worded eloquently—all in marked contrast to the rather insipid version of Q1.

In Q2, Act III.iv there are three contributions to the theme imagery which Q1 fails to include. Hamlet charges that his mother's sin,

takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there. (Ham. Q2, III.iv.42-44)

He depicts his mother's soul as,

the ulcerous place,
While rank corruption mining all within
Infests unseen. (Ham. Q2, III.iv.147-149)

He then proceeds to exhort her:

And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker. (Ham. Q2, III.iv.151-152)

Hamlet's principal diatribe against the folly of his mother begins in Q2 with a description in which his father's likeness is recalled in terms of the magnificence of the gods:

Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars to threaten and command,
A station like the herald Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.

(Ham. Q2, III.iv.56-59)

In Q1 substantially the same qualities are enumerated, but with only one reference to the gods, a somewhat indefinite comparison with Mars:

See here a face, to outface Mars himself.

(Ham. Q1, III.iv.29)

The description in Q2 is imaginative, suggestive of true dignity and regal splendor. Q1 again tends towards the vague and general
in its attempt at paraphrase.

The main purpose of this outburst by Hamlet is, of course, to overwhelm the Queen with a realization of her crime, to shower upon her all the contempt that words can convey. In Q₁ some attempt is made to paint the King as a monstrous villain:

Look you now; here is your husband;
With a face like Vulcan,
A look fit for a murder and a rape,
A dull dead hanging look, and a hell-bred eye,
To affright children and amaze the world.

(Ham. Q₁, III.iv.36-40)

And in an exchange of dialogue after the main speech, he asks,

Who'll chide hot blood within a virgin's heart,
When lust shall dwell within a matron's breast?

(Ham. Q₁, III.iv.56-57)

Hamlet's speech as recorded in Q₂ is a most withering and devastating verbal onslaught. The attack is focused upon the point mentioned in the above quoted passage from Q₁, namely, that not the passion of youth, but the perversion of mature judgment is accountable for the Queen's crimes against nature. A brief quotation from Hamlet's speech in Q₂ will suffice to show its trend and startling effectiveness:

O shame, where is thy blush?
Rebellious hell,
If thou cast matine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will. (Ham. Q₂, III.iv.81-83)

There are at least two further elements of the corruption theme presented in Q₂ that are not contained in Q₁: the King's re-
mark that in being the guardian of Hamlet he is thus "the owner of a foul disease" (Ham. Q2, IV.1.21), and his allusion to slander which "transports his poisoned shot" (Ham. Q2, IV.1.43) upon good names.

Hamlet, acting his madman role, replies thus in Q1 to the King's demand to be told the whereabouts of Polonius' body:

if you chance to miss him there [in heaven], father, you had best look for him in the other parts below, and if you cannot find him there, you may chance to nose him as you go up to the lobby. (Ham. Q1, IV.1.36-39)

In Q2 a clever change in the retort indicates much more pointedly the close affinity that Hamlet feels to exist between the King and the lower regions:

In heaven--send thither to see, if your messenger find him not there, seek him i'th'other place yourself. (Ham. Q2, IV.111.32-34)

The King's fear of Hamlet as a threat to his crown and his eagerness for the Prince's demise are worded rather imperfectly at the end of Act IV.1 in Q1:

There's more in him than shallow eyes can see; He once being dead, why, then our state is free. (Ham. Q1, IV.1.62-63)

In Q2 the "state" is personified in the King whose anxiety is very real and urgent:

Do it, England, For like the hectic in my blood he rages, And thou must cure me; till I know 'tis done, Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. (Ham. Q2, IV.111.64-67)

Once again the idea of disease is skillfully woven into the text
in the form of a figurative fever ravaging the body of the King. The note of deep personal involvement and concern is sounded in the King's striking apostrophe to England to remove the menace which shadows him.

In both texts Laertes is a gentleman with a flare for bombastic speech. But his ranting in Q₁ is actually tame when compared with the histrionics of Q₂. In Q₁, after he has, in the course of demanding vengeance for his murdered father, leveled several threats at the King, he notices the distracted Ophelia enter:

Who's this? Ofelia? O, my dear sister! Is't possible a young maid's life Should be as mortal as an old man's saw? O heav'n's themselves—How now, Ofelia? (Ham. Q₁, IV.iii.69-72)

He is, however, much less inhibited in Q₂:

O heat, dry up my brains, tears seven times salt, Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye! By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight, Till our scale turn the beam, O rose of May, Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia! O heavens, is't possible a young maid's wits Should be as mortal as an old man's life? (Ham. Q₂, IV.v.154-160)

The elements of this speech--random invocations of nature, multiplied epithets, numerical exaggerations, fierce warnings--are typical of the ranter in general and Laertes in particular.

Another interesting set of parallel readings on Laertes is that concerned with his reaction to the King's announcement that Hamlet has returned to Denmark. Laertes' response in Q₁ is:
O, he is welcome; by my soul, he is.
At it my jocund heart doth leap for joy;
That I shall live to tell him thus he dies.

(Ham. Q₁, IV.v.3-5)

The corresponding remark in Q₂ is:

I am lost in it, my lord, but let him come!
It warms the very sickness in my heart
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth
'Thus diddest thou.' (Ham. Q₂, IV.vii.54-57)

The word "thus" in Q₁ implies that a threatening gesture probably accompanies Laertes' words. The direct quotation in Q₂, 'Thus diddest thou,' also poses a second possible interpretation. Laertes may in both texts be using "thus" as a reference to death by the sword. If so, the expression in Q₂ would suggest the picture of Laertes standing over the wounded Hamlet and completing his revenge by reminding Hamlet that thus he killed Polonius. The satisfaction felt by Laertes at Hamlet's prospective return is expressed in Q₂ in terms of the sickness language found so profusely in the play and which, at this somber moment, is more fitting than the bubbling joy of a "jocund heart."

There is in Q₁ a very poorly constructed passage in the dialogue between the King and Laertes as they plan Hamlet's death. The King, after laying plans for the unbated foil, continues:

And lest that all should miss,
I'll have a potion that shall stand,
In all his heat when that he calls for drink,
Shall be his period and our happiness.

(Ham. Q₁, IV.v.33-36)

The only sense that is possible demands that the relative pronoun "which" be understood after the word "stand." Such an omission
is a glaring failure to control the meter, rather than any sort of linguistic subtlety. The position of the phrase "in all his heat" outside the clause wherein the word it modifies is found is another gratuitous barbarism. The corresponding passage in Q₂ is, if nothing else, grammatical and coherent.

The scene between Horatio and the Queen, which was added to the play in Q₁ (Act IV.iv) is remarkable for its abysmally poor, often incomprehensible dialogue. An analysis of this scene would quickly degenerate into the pointless and impossible task of attempting to reconstruct the grammar and word order. But a few samples of the text will serve to illustrate the talents of the pirate when memory completely deserted him. The Queen's reply to Horatio after he tells her of Hamlet's escape is a classic example of confusion of pronouns:

Then I perceive there's treason in his looks,
That seem'd to sugar o'er his villainy;
But I will soothe and please him for a time,
For murderous minds are always jealous,
But know not you, Horatio, where he is?

(Ham. Q₁, IV.iv.10-14)

Horatio's speech (Act IV.iv.28-31) is marred by a clumsy absolute construction and by an inadmissible telescoping of language in order to cram it into the meter.

After Hamlet has listened in hiding to Laertes' exhibition at the grave of Ophelia, he leaps forward and, according to the Q₁ text, speaks thus:

What's he that conjures so? Behold, 'tis I,
Hamlet the Dane. (Ham. Q₁, V.i.147-148)
In the Q2 version the words are somewhat expanded:

What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane. (Ham. Q2, V.1.248-252)

The phrase "whose grief bears such an emphasis" presents clearly the reason why Hamlet is so irked with Laertes. Laertes makes a scene, an exhibition of his bereavement and sorrow, while Hamlet, in the throes of most bitter grief, is crippled rather than spurred to action by it. Hamlet, therefore, expresses his contemptuous disregard for Laertes' wild threats and uncontrolled outbursts of emotion. At the same time, as Hamlet himself afterwards admits, he feels shamed at being outfaced at essaying what he cannot--translate passion into action. The word "conjure" is inserted in the following sentence in Q2, where Hamlet mocks Laertes most cleverly and bests him at his own game of rhetorical exaggeration by exquisitely portraying the stars as "wonder-wounded hearers."

Surely the two brief lines of the pirate (Act V.1.147-148) fail to do justice to the power and suggestion of Shakespeare's carefully chosen words.

Almost immediately after Hamlet has made his dramatic entrance as just described, he overpowers Laertes with a torrent of blustering challenges. The last of these appears in this way in Q1:

And where thou talk'st of burying thee alive,
Here let us stand, and let them throw on us
Whole hills of earth, till with the height thereof
Make Ossa as a wart! (Ham. Q₁, V.i.158-161)

There is a marked contrast between this version and the extremely imaginative parallel in Q₂:

Be buried quick with her, and so will I.
And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart; nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou. (Ham. Q₂, V.i.273-278)

An especially felicitous substitution is the phrase "millions of acres" for the less arresting, almost trite "whole hills of earth." Finally, whereas Q₁ refers to the "hills of earth" merely in terms of the height thereof, Q₂ vividly describes that height in the manner quoted in the text.

Just before he forces the poisoned drink through the lips of the King, Hamlet gives in Q₂ a brief, succinct summation of his regal career:

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother. (Ham. Q₂, V.ii.323-325)

This epilogue to the King's life is a much more fitting farewell to him than the bald comment of Q₁:

Then venom to thy venom! die damn'd villain!
Come, drink! here lies thy union, here! (Ham. Q₁, V.ii.92-93)

Horatio's requiescat over the body of Hamlet covers only two lines of the Q₂ version, but their omission in Q₁ is no little impoverishment of that already ragged text. Horatio says:
Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

(Ham. Q2, V.i.357-358)

It would be difficult to find a more sensitive use of the word "night" as a symbol of death than in Horatio's famous farewell.
CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERIZATION

Who is Hamlet? What is the key to his character? Considerable professional concern of countless critics, litterateurs, dramatists, professors, and actors has been expended through recent centuries in an attempt to reach some satisfactory solutions for these problems. Hamlet, however, has displayed a remarkable resistance to his analyzers.

Some commentaries on Hamlet's personality must be regarded as insufficiently grounded or inherently absurd. Horatio was not Hamlet's secret lover in the guise of a man. Hamlet's determination to kill Claudius was not primarily motivated by ambition to ascend to the royal throne. At the present time the theory that all of Hamlet's actions after the commencement of Act III were those of a madman is almost universally rejected.

More coherent attempts to solve the human puzzle of Hamlet are legion. One critic believes that his delay was motivated for the most part by religious considerations.¹ That "Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible because it

¹Isidore J. Semper, Hamlet Without Tears (Dubuque, 1946), p. 11.
is in excess of the facts as they appear," is the opinion of a famous literary figure.² A noted scholar says that Hamlet's melancholy is the "centre of the tragedy."³ An actor-critic feels that "Hamlet's is a continued tale of disillusion about others and about himself."⁴

Each of these opinions undoubtedly represents at least a partial solution to the riddle of Hamlet's character. None of them can or should be disregarded. It would be useless, however, to attempt to compress all of these varied views into some magic formula which would necessarily prove meaningless and contradictory.

What course, then, is to be followed in this thesis? By what standard can the merits of Q₁ and Q₂ be compared with regard to the personality of the central figure of the play?

Most critics agree on the fact that Hamlet's personality does not lend itself to ready solutions and formulas. Hamlet is a great character of literature precisely because he is intensely individual, because he eludes vague adjectives and thumb-nail sketches. He is not this type or that sort of man. He is Hamlet. He does not act for one or other mathematically clear reason. His

decisions are not the conclusions of cleanly chiseled syllogisms. His thought and motives are often muddled, unclear to himself and others.

A very general theory of the character of Hamlet as drawn by Shakespeare in his finished work will be employed in this thesis. It is a theory that embraces most of the generally accepted notions about Hamlet, and which is not so controversial as to be in direct contradiction to that of any serious scholar. This analysis, that of Sir Edmund K. Chambers, includes most of what can be said of Hamlet's character taken as a whole, and avoids areas of obscurity and controversy. Chambers writes:

Hamlet is presented to us as a man of sensitive temperament and high intellectual gifts. He is no ordinary prince; his spirit has been touched to finer issues; his wit is keen-edged and dipped in irony; his delicacy of moral insight is unusual among the ruder Danes. He is no longer in his first youth when the play opens, but up to that moment his life has been serene and undisturbed. . . . His tastes are those of the scholar; he loves to read for hours together; and, like most literary men, he takes great delight in the stage, with whose theory and practice he is familiar. . . . He is the darling of the Court and beloved by the people. But his real interest is in speculation, in the play of mind around a subject, in the contemplation of it from all sides and from every point of view. Such a training has not fitted him to act a kingly part in stirring times; the intellectual element in him has come to outweigh the practical; . . . so that he has lost the power of deliberate purposeful action and, by a strange paradox, if this thoughtful man acts at all, it must be from impulse.\(^5\)

It is true that the pirate did a far better job of preserving

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the character of Hamlet in Q1 than he did in keeping intact the personalities of the King, Queen, and some others. Hamlet in Q1 is essentially the same man that is portrayed in Q2, despite the often ineffectual dialogue, diction, and staging which are his media of expression. The lines of his personality, however, are traced with much less firmness and clarity in the defective edition. Furthermore, Duthie remarks that in Q2 Hamlet is "much less individually philosophical, much more theologically orthodox, much simpler and less complex generally." 6

Hamlet's helpless grappling with the gigantic problem of whether to kill his uncle or to accept the stigma of "a father killed, a mother stained" is adequately depicted in Q1, but still lacks much of the revealing insight that the Q2 text displays. An important omission in Q1 is the absence of the entire soliloquy beginning with the line:

How all occasions do inform against me. (Ham. Q2, IV.iV.32)

Act IV.iV of Q1 occupies only five lines in which Fortinbras tells his Captain to obtain permission from the King to conduct troops through Denmark. In Q2, however, Hamlet chances to meet the Captain and learns from him that Fortinbras and his army march against the forces of Poland to settle a boundary dispute involving no more than a few acres. Hamlet is deeply impressed

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6 Duthie, The Bad Quarto, p. 52.
and cries:

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw!

(Ham. Q2, IV.iv.25-26)

Then after the Captain leaves, Hamlet upbraids himself for his unaccountable delay in avenging himself and his parents.

It is in this soliloquy that Hamlet most nearly confronts himself, most adroitly probes his tragic weakness that all but nullifies his intellectual, moral, and physical magnificence. He asks himself what is a man whose life is centered around food and rest. The reply comes back accusingly that such a person is

a beast, no more;
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To rust in us unused. (Ham. Q2, IV.iv.35-39)

He realizes that he himself has misused that power of reflection by "thinking too precisely on th'event" (Ham. Q2, IV.iv.41)--the classical expression of the impasse between the activity and the inertia of his will. Still he takes courage: "Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do' " (Ham. Q2, IV.iv.44). The remainder of the soliloquy is somewhat the same in structure and content to the "Hecuba" soliloquy. Once again Hamlet is contrasting his laxity in a great cause with the dexterity of others whose motivation is comparatively trivial. It is this and other masterful soliloquies that go far towards making Hamlet the tragic figure he is. Q1's omission of such an important soliloquy is, then, a major flaw in the characterization of the hero.
Although Hamlet does not act vigorously to avenge himself and his father, he is sometimes prone to impulsive, even rash action when faced with a problem demanding an instant decision. One of the best instances revealing this aspect of Hamlet's personality is missing in Q₁ altogether, another is presented less forcefully.

After Hamlet had obtained and read the papers decreeing his death upon arrival in England, he immediately set about remedying the situation by changing the fatal papers into a death warrant for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the King's confederates. Later in Q₂ he describes to Horatio his frame of mind as he took this decisive action:

Or I could make a prologue to my brains
They had begun the play. (Ham. Q₂, V.ii.30-31)

There are no lines in Q₁ corresponding to this revealing remark.

Immediately before Hamlet's fencing bout with Laertes, Horatio, filled with a premonition of danger, implores Hamlet to withdraw. In both texts Hamlet refuses to heed Horatio's counsel. Although Hamlet's sporting blood is stirred, he indulges in only a mild reply to Horatio's pleading in Q₁:

No, Horatio, not I; if danger be now, why, then it is not to come; there's a predestinate providence in the fall of a sparrow. (Ham. Q₁, V.ii.43-45)

In Q₂, however, he displays a defiance and a blithe self-confidence that stands in bold relief against the tortured reasoning which infects his diseased soul when he meets the life-death issue that
is destroying him:

Not a whit, we defy augury. There is special
providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis
not to come--if it be not to come, it will be now--if it be
not now, yet it will come--the readiness is all. Since no
man, of aught he leaves, knows what is't to leave
betimes, let be. (Ham. Q2, V.ii.217-222)

Hamlet's life and death are the tragedy of a man who saw too
much to be able to command himself, "Do this." For him the world
and Denmark are prisons, though for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
they are goodly places, for, as Hamlet remarks,

there is
nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.  
(Ham. Q2, II.ii.252-253)

This instance of Hamlet's reflectiveness is omitted in Q1.

In Q2, even after Hamlet has recognized and repulsed the
King's murderous designs, he still feels need to rehearse again
his litany of grievances and ask again whether he has sufficient
justification for an act of violence against his antagonist. The
following words of Hamlet, expressive of his state of indecision
even as he goes to fence with Laertes, are unhappily omitted in
Q1:

Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon--
He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother,
Popped in between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage--is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damned,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil? (Ham. Q2, V.ii.63-70)

His thoroughly wretched condition induces in Hamlet an atti-
tude of complete lack of interest in his own life. An outstanding
indication of this depression of spirit is found in his rejoinder to Polonius' remark that he is about to take his leave of Hamlet.

Hamlet comments:

You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life. (Ham. Q2, II.11.218-220)

Q1 omits the three words which express the thought uppermost in Hamlet's mind: "except my life."

Some of the refinements and complexities of Hamlet's suicide debate are not drawn in the Q1 text. For instance, Q2 opens Hamlet's first soliloquy with these lines:

O, that this too too sullied flesh would melt, Thaw and resolve itself into a dew, Or that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. (Ham. Q2, I.11.129-132)

The corresponding passage of Q1 reads:

O that this too much griev'd and sullied flesh Would melt to nothing, or that the universal Globe of heaven would turn all to chaos! (Ham. Q1, I.11.55-57)

The Q1 version fails to introduce the suicide theme at this opportune moment, and thus does not provide a suitable preparation for the third soliloquy ("To be or not to be"), which is apparently the offspring of lengthy consideration of the possibility of self-destruction.

In the "To be or not to be" soliloquy Q1 states that the "joyful hope" (Ham. Q1, II.11.123) of something in the life after death stays Hamlet's suicidal tendencies. The use of this expres-
sion pointlessly confuses Hamlet's motivation even in the light of the remainder of the Q1 text of the soliloquy where anxiety, not "joyful hope" seems to be the restraining influence. Q2 avoids confusion since Hamlet says that it is the "dread of something after death" (Ham. Q2, III.1.78) that gives him pause.

Although Hamlet's personal ambition for the crown is not the principal reason for his hatred of Claudius, still it receives some attention in Q2 both from the Prince and his antagonists. The King asks Hamlet,

How fares our cousin Hamlet? (Ham. Q2, III.11.90)

Hamlet, who has assumed his "antic disposition," makes the following reply:

Excellent i'faith, of the chameleon's dish, I eat the air, promise-crammed--you cannot feed capons so.

(Ham. Q2, III.11.91-92)

The word "air," Wilson notes, is a pun on "heir," and the promise referred to is the pledge the King has made to Hamlet that he shall succeed to the throne. 7

This intended subtlety is not conveyed in Q1's version:

King: How now, son Hamlet, how fare you? Shall we have a play?

Hamlet: I'faith the chameleon's dish; not capon-crammed;
fed a'the air. Ay, father. My lord, you play'd in the university? (Ham. Q1, III.11.65-69)

In Q2 Rosencrantz remarks to Hamlet, who has just stated that

7Wilson, ed. of Shakespeare, Hamlet, p. 198.
Denmark is a prison for him:

Why, then your ambition makes it one;
'tis too narrow for your mind. (Ham. Q₂, II.i.255-256)

It must be remembered that Rosencrantz' words are merely echoing the sentiments of his mentor, the King, who is quite aware that Hamlet is not innocent of all worldly ambitions. This reference is not found in Q₁.

THE KING

G. I. Duthie makes this observation concerning the delineation of the King in the various texts of Hamlet: "G. H. Herford points out that in the second Quarto and Folio versions of Hamlet the king is a much more complex character than in the first Quarto, where his guilt is portrayed crudely and directly, unmixed with the subtleties of characterization found in the authentic texts. . . . It is quite possible that a memorial reconstructor should be unable to appreciate or reproduce the subtle complexities of the Shakespearean characterization, and should simplify the character, thus producing the crude villainy of the king in the first Quarto."³

The present study of the King's character will be directed towards substantiation of Duthie's analysis on the basis of some

³Duthie, pp. 51-52.
textual comparisons.

The King's prayer as recorded in Q₂ reveals a thoughtfulness, a feeling of personal conflict that is reminiscent of the struggle of Hamlet himself. In Q₂ the King fully grasps the most foul nature of his crime:

O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven, 
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't, 
A brother's murder! (Ham. Q₂, III.iii.36-38)

He then racks himself with eight torturing questions (all omitted in Q₁, III.iii.1-13), which drive him to the realization of his predicament as a sinner torn between repentence and his sin. The King is well aware of why his problem does not admit of a pat solution:

'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder;
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen;
May one be pardoned and retain th'offence? (Ham. Q₂, III.iii.52-56)

Q₁ portrays the King admitting,

O, these sins are unpardonable! (Ham. Q₁, III.iii.7)

It does not, however, record him as delving into the reasons for this belief.

In Q₁ Claudius' prayer is merely a surface statement of admission of guilt and plea for repentance. Most of the self-perception that the King shows in Q₂ is missing. The Q₂ text represents piercingly the contrast between the King and Hamlet. Claudius is a thoughtful person who knows the good, but cannot
bring himself to it. He finally resolves his dilemma by decisive
action—the plot to remove Hamlet. Hamlet, however, is a man of
too great sensitivity, a man who sees what must be done but can-
not shake free from the clutching obsessions that prevent him from
accomplishing it. Q1, as has been indicated, fails to breathe
into either the Prince or the King a unique personality. And to
that extent the faulty text does not capture the significance of
the tragedy.

Another indication of the King's acumen and peculiar brand of
worldly wisdom is in evidence in the words he speaks to his wife
(Q2, IV.v.74-95) after the pathetic, insane Ophelia has departed
from court. He is impressed by the multiple trials his kingdom
undergoes:

O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not in single spies,
But in batallions. (Ham. Q2, IV.v.76-78)

Then, in the same breath he reassures Gertrude that Hamlet's de-
parture is inevitable:

first her father slain,
Next your son gone. (Ham. Q2, IV.v.78-79)

He understands the precise nature of Ophelia's tragedy:

poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,
Without the which we are pictures or mere beasts. (Ham. Q2, IV.v.83-85)

In Q1 in the corresponding situation the King recites a four
line jingle that fits the circumstances neither in matter nor in
tone:
A pretty wretch! This is a change, indeed!
O time, how swiftly runs our joys away!
Content on earth was never certain bred;
To-day we laugh and live, to-morrow dead.

(Ham. Q1, IV.iii.43-46)

Nowhere is the greater subtlety of the Q2 text in the presentation of the King's character more obvious than in the scene in which Claudius induces Laertes to be his tool for the destruction of Hamlet. This episode occurs in Q2, Act IV.vii; in Q1, Act IV.v.

In Q1 the King wastes no time in assuring Laertes of his opportunity for revenge:

Laertes, content yourself; be rul'd by me,
And you shall have no let for your revenge.

(Ham. Q1, IV.v.6-7)

Claudius then proceeds to outline his plan to treat an unbated point with poison and thus to accomplish Hamlet's death.

The King in Q2 is much more cagey in his approach. He tells Laertes how Hamlet envies him his skill; he flatters him that his renown as a swordsman is widespread. He maneuvers the youth into a most pliable mood. But before Claudius actually introduces his plan, he suddenly asks:

Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart? (Ham. Q2, IV.vii.106-108)

By this and subsequent questions and answers the King, goading Laertes by seeming to impugn his sincerity, fires him with such determination to kill Hamlet that when the plot is revealed (Ham.
Q2, IV.vii.133-138), Laertes instantly agrees,

I will do't. (Ham. Q2, IV.vii.138)

All of the King's clever psychology is overlooked in Q1 where his seduction of Laertes is brutally blunt.

In Q2 the King shows little confidence in Laertes' ability to collar his wrath:

No place indeed should murder sanctuarize,
Revenge should have no bounds; but, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.

(Ham, Q2, IV.vii.126-128)

And after Laertes leaves, the King confides to Gertrude:

Let's follow, Gertrude,
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again,
Therefore let's follow. (Ham, Q2, IV.vii.190-193)

In Q1 Claudius gives no indication of such an enlightened appreciation of Laertes' weakness as a co-conspirator.

It is noteworthy in passing that in Q2 Laertes is more actively identified with the King's plot, since there it is Laertes who is inspired to anoint the unbated foil with poison. The criminal initiative of Laertes in Q2 somewhat lessens the guilt of the King, at least to the extent that he is not the sole moral agent responsible for Hamlet's downfall.

What are the King's feelings towards Hamlet? In Q1 the conflict between the two is not skillfully drawn. It is apparent that Hamlet's very existence has become intolerable to the King; but there is not much indication that the King has more than a
surface understanding of the person with whom he is locked in a death struggle.

There are, however, a few brief but telling words in Q2 (omitted in Q1) in which the King shows himself quite aware of the vulnerable spots in Hamlet's character. When the King is plotting with Laertes, he says:

he being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils. (Ham. Q2, IV.vii.133-135)

Shortly before in Q2 (Act IV.iii.1-11) the King showed himself most sensitive to the overwhelming popularity of Hamlet with the common people.

In both Q1 and Q2 the King is allowed to explain to himself his motivation for killing his nephew. In Q1 he justifies the murder on the grounds that,

He once being dead, why, then our state is free.  
(Ham. Q1, IV.1.63)

But in the corresponding passage of Q2 the King likens Hamlet to a disease that infects him and must be cured. He pleads with England to aid him:

Do it, England,
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me; till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.  
(Ham. Q2, IV.iii.64-67)

The motive cited in Q1 is a rather ambiguous expression of patriotism which fails to represent the deeply personal emotions of anxiety and fear that drive the King to murder.
Shakespeare seems, according to the Q2 text, to make the role of the Queen a subject of continual doubt. He leaves unsolved the major problem concerning her personality: to what, if any, extent was she implicated in the death of her first husband and the conspiracy against Hamlet? The evidence for solution is slight and inconclusive. She appears to care for both her present husband and her son. She never clearly commits herself by word or action. She is admittedly sensual, unfaithful to her first husband, an uninspiring parent—but nonetheless an enigma.

Q1, however, provides a solution that is definite, though it creates more problems than it solves. In Q1 Hamlet, during his bedroom interview with his mother, clearly discloses something that he hints at only vaguely in Q2—the murder of his father. He concludes his description of his father by saying:

Whose [King Hamlet's] heart went hand in hand even with that vow
He made to you in marriage; and he is dead;
Murd'red, damnably murd'red. (Ham. Q1, III.iv.33-35)

The Queen swears that she knows nothing of the murder:

But, as I have a soul, I swear by heaven,
I never knew of this most horrid deed. (Ham. Q1, III.iv.91-92)

A few minutes later she agrees to aid Hamlet in his plan for vengeance:
Hamlet, I vow by that majesty
That knows our thoughts and looks into our hearts,
I will conceal, consent, and do my best,
What stratagem soe'er thou shalt devise.

(Ham. Q1, III.iv.103-106)

However, it is unclear at this point whether the Queen is sincere in her alliance with Hamlet or whether, taking Hamlet's words and actions during the apparition of his father as signs of madness, she is merely trying to soothe him. The following lines could refer either to the apparition or to Hamlet's belief that his father was murdered:

But, Hamlet, this is only fantasy,
And for my love forget these idle fits.

(Ham. Q1, III.iv.93-95)

The Queen does express her loyalty to Hamlet in clearest terms when Horatio informs her that Hamlet has escaped the toils of the King and will soon return. The scene in which this communication is made, Q1, Act IV.iv, has no counterpart in Q2. Regarding the King's treachery Gertrude says:

Then I perceive there's treason in his looks,
That seem'd to sugar o'er his villainy;
But I will soothe and please him for a time,
For murderous minds are always jealous.

(Ham. Q1, IV.iv.10-14)

And she displays her solicitude for the success of Hamlet's plans:

Bid him a while be wary of his presence,
Lest that he fail in that he goes about.

(Ham. Q1, IV.iv.19-20)

The problem raised by Q1 in the averred good will of the Queen for Hamlet's cause is that she does nothing. She makes no
discernible attempt to learn what the King plans to counteract the effects of Hamlet's return; she finds no way in which she can warn Hamlet of even the suspicion of disaster. Perhaps the pirate in Q1 wished to stress the stupidity or lassitude of Gertrude, since it seems that no other reason could be assigned to the failure of one as interested as she professes to be to catch some breath of the winds of intrigue which raged about her.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, the pirate or group of pirates who compiled Q1 did a better job of preserving Shakespeare's characters than they did in salvaging his drama and his diction. Hamlet, the King, the Queen—all are reasonable facsimiles of the people that are found in Q2. But they are not the same people—and the changes are not for the better.

Prince Hamlet's character in Q1 is, as this chapter has indicated, much closer to the surface of human experience than its Q2 counterpart. There is less exploration into the murky depths of a troubled soul. The Q1 Hamlet is not constantly reflective, self-examining, proof-seeking. Tempting thoughts of suicide do not occur to him as strongly or as often as they do to Hamlet in Q2, nor is he terribly bothered by the robbery of his right to the Danish crown. The Hamlet of Q1 is a fairly good characterization, but is not the personality of Shakespeare's own creation, the per-
sonality which has fascinated and mystified people for over three hundred years.

In Q2 the murderer-King is a rogue, but a many sided one. He is clever, considerate to his beloved Queen, a master of human relations, a man who understands well the nature and consequences of his choice of sin over repentance. The Q1 King, however, has been shown to be a blunt, insensitive person—a regal thug. He has some idea of his sin, but does not reflect upon his guilt to any extent.

The Queen, a riddle in both texts, acts in an inexplicable manner when in Q1 she fails to warn Hamlet of his immediate danger in the last scene. In Q2 there is no such glaring deficiency in characterization.

The comparison of the texts, thus, emphasizes some qualities of Shakespeare's characterization. His characters are seen to have a depth, a versatility, a consistency that helps to make them dramatic immortals.
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B. ARTICLES


APPENDIX

In many cases the spelling of proper names used in the two texts differ, sometimes radically. The listing below may lessen possible confusion.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
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<td>Corambis</td>
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The thesis submitted by John Francis Keating, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

August 3, 1957

[Signature of Adviser]