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THE ARDEN EDITION OF THE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

HAMLET

Edited by

HAROLD JENKINS

METHUEN
LONDON AND NEW YORK
Press correction
Extant copies of the Folio show press correction on eight pages of Hamlet; but whatever the bibliographical interest of this, it is of scant textual significance. The corrector was evidently less concerned with accuracy than tidiness. He attended to obvious misprints and little typographical faults like turned letters and inked quads; but it is apparent that he neither checked proof with copy nor made any serious attempt to discover or emend errors. Three times wrong or defective punctuation is put right; occasionally spelling is altered, most notably when the mained burial rights more properly become rites (v.i.212). The only genuinely substantive variant is the correction of take to thanke at ii.ii.89. The existence in the uncorrected state of a page set by Compositor E and containing one wrong word-division and one rejected spelling (a sunder, Crocodile) which also occur in Q2 is important as corroborating the use of Q2.1 Full details of the variants are given in Hinman, i.301-4.

4. THE EDITORIAL PROBLEM AND THE PRESENT TEXT

The textual situation discussed above confronts an editor with the following complications. Of three texts, each of the last two, though largely substantive, owes something to its predecessor, while the first, the only wholly independent text, has all the unreliability of a memorial reconstruction. Q2, the one which stands closest to the author, leaves obscure a number of passages which are not represented in the other two at all. These include some, though not all, of the famous cruxes (cf. above, p. 35). On the other hand, F contains passages not in Q2 which are certainly authentic as well as incidental additions almost as certainly spurious. In the matter of variant readings, since F as well as Q2 reflects playhouse deviation from the Shakespearean original, agreement between these two does not authenticate a reading against Q2; and in view of Q2’s partial dependence on Q1, agreement between those two, especially in the first act, does not authenticate a reading against F. Moreover, with F also dependent on Q2, agreement even between the two good texts affords no guarantee, and it is obviously possible for all three texts to be wrong together. The most famous instance of this is the word follax (F Pollax) at i.i.66; but the crux at i.iii.74, ‘of a most select’, may be another.

This edition, like most others since Dover Wilson established

Q2 as the most authoritative text, is based primarily upon it. Earlier editors, who tended to follow F, still of course incorporated from Q2 or its descendents passages which F lacks; and since some at least of these were apparently cut before the foul papers were transcribed (see above, p. 43), it is as well to recognize that the editorial tradition from Rowe on has always included things which, though indubitably of Shakespeare’s composition, were probably never spoken on the stage. In seeking to present the play as Shakespeare wrote it rather than as it was shortened and adapted for performance I do no more than follow tradition. Even those who insist that a play is created only in the theatre would hardly, I think, prefer the contrary procedure; and those who like to imagine that some passages were cut by Shakespeare himself1 will not quarrel with their retention. While following Q2’s fuller version, I naturally include also anything preserved in F which I take to have been lost from Q2; but all words and phrases in F which I judge to be more properly become rites (v.i.212). The only genuinely substantive variant is the correction of take to thanke at ii.ii.89. The existence in the uncorrected state of a page set by Compositor E and containing one wrong word-division and one rejected spelling (a sunder, Crocodile) which also occur in Q2 is important as corroborating the use of Q2.1 Full details of the variants are given in Hinman, i.301-4.

1. Cf. above, p. 66.

Penguin editor’s note:

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1. But see above, p. 43, n.1, pp. 55-6.

2. For fuller justification see SB, xiii, 31-47, esp. 42-3. The demonstration there of theatrical accretions has, I think, been generally accepted. Some recent editors (notably Hoy, but also in part Evans) have already been persuaded to drop them. The sole articulate objectors to their omission — on the ground that what arises in performance becomes an integral part of the play — should in logic welcome with them F’s cuts and cast-reductions (to say nothing of its memorial corruptions). No doubt he will approve the Penguin editor’s inclusion of an added piece of dialogue known only to the reported text Q1, perhaps even share the pleasure of one reviewer in being thus given ‘more Hamlet’ for his money than ever before. The metaphysical question of what Hamlet is is not one to be gone into here. But there may be something to be said for identifying Shakespeare’s Hamlet with what there is evidence to believe that Shakespeare wrote.
as has been shown (pp. 59-60), it does; but its reliability is of course no higher than that of the manuscript it draws upon; and since this was evidently at a greater remove from the autograph, its 'corrections' were in fact often corruptions, while the actual process of correcting (and perhaps transcribing), however carried out, gave opportunity for more. Where variants appear to be indifferent the belief that Q2 rests on the foul papers naturally gives it preference. But the editor must be eclectic; every variant imposes upon him the inescapable responsibility of choice. My judgment will often confirm that of my predecessors but will occasionally go against it, as when I unhesitatingly follow Q2 at ii.ii.553 (her) and F at v.i.78 ('o're Offices). Such decisions will usually be defended in the notes. Upon occasion both variants have to be rejected; for it seems clear that some F readings are attempts at correcting deficiencies in Q2 by not very inspired guesswork. When the editor believes this to have happened, he need accord to F no higher authority than belongs to later Folios and editors: Dover Wilson established the principle that in such cases the editor should proceed not by accepting F but by himself attempting to emend Q2. One instance in which I have done this occurs at v.ii.219. Where both texts are wanting, as at iii.iv.171 and iv.i.40, I have been assisted but not felt bound by previous attempts to fill the gap. Q1 has had its greatest value in suggesting the source of corruption where the two better texts are at variance — in exhibiting, for example, the probable contamination of Q2 through its use of its predecessor or of F through the influence of stage performance. But, though instances are necessarily rare, I have been glad to accept the guidance of Q1 when it confirms that both the other texts are wrong. (See above, p. 96.)

The newly perceived relation of the three texts, with Q2 conceivably taking errors from Q1 and F likewise from Q2, greatly enlarges of course the invitation to emend. I have little hesitation in accepting Theobald's bases for bonds at t.iii.130. The emendation drest at iv.vii.56, though hitherto adopted only by Dover Wilson in a late reprint, is beyond any question. Readings common to Q2 and F which have incurred suspicion include iv.iii.7, smooth and even ('hypermetrical and tautologous'), iv.v.119 browe (F brow), v.ii.274 heaven (F Heauen); but these seem all sufficiently within the range of Shakespeare's carelessness for emendation to be resisted. Conjectures like stings for stings (m.i.58) and sconce for silence (m.iv.4) may receive more consideriation in future than they have always had; but the questioned readings here are certainly defensible and error no more than possible. Some textual scholars busy themselves with calculations of the probable number of errors; but sobering as statistics may be, since they cannot locate the errors they presume, they hardly authorize much loosening of editorial restraint. It remains true that, even though F cannot corroborate Q2 in what it may have derived from it, agreement between them will more often be due to their both being right than to the handing on of a mistake. In some cases, however, as at v.iii.74 (where all three texts 'question if they do not positively defy both sense and metre') what most prevents editorial intervention is the lack of any proposal for a plausible alternative.

In stage-directions I have normally followed Q2 in preference to F; but I have incorporated the additional directions of F and Q1 where they specify action the dialogue implies or provide for its ordinary stage accompaniments (such as properties, noises, or lights). Directions, however, which change what is called for by Q2 I have rejected. These would have their place in a record of the play's stage history rather than in its accepted text; but they are of course given in the collation. Stage-directions added by later editors, i.e. all originating later than F, are placed within square brackets; but brackets are not used for mere verbal variations such as conventionalize the form of directions while leaving the substance unaffected. These are noted in the apparatus when the original wording may be of interest in itself, but otherwise not: e.g. Com altr for 'with Others', but not Exeunt Embassadors (F Exeunt Ambassadors) for 'Exeunt Voltexam and Cornelius'. The names of characters in stage-directions and speech-prefixes are standardized without notice.

In the modernization of spelling the criterion must be that accidents are relinquished while substance is preserved; but it is difficult, as all modernizing editors find, to know where to draw the line. Some early volumes in this series — unwise as we now think — permitted occasional archaisms, such as murder and wilde; but with the present general editors the practice has now changed. If murder and murther are, as one editor insists, 'more than variant spellings', they are no more than accidental variants of the same word. To follow Q2 in murther, its preponderant and so conceivably

1. This is the fallacy that haunts all the current research on compositors.
Shakespearean form, would logically involve printing also hundreth (i.i.237) and tidings (i.iv.77), and even tider (i.iii.125), with a result that could neither be consistent nor a modern text at all. On the other hand, modernization is not extended to grammar and vocabulary. I have not replaced such words as whites and sometime with their modern equivalents, even though this was already done in F. My principle is to preserve archaic forms in the following cases only:

(i) Where they are a matter not of spelling but of grammar, as in Q2, 'hee hath borne me' (F borne, v.i.170). Q2 strooken (iii.ii.265) may become stricken (as in F) but not stricken.

(ii) Where, as in whites and sometime, or in sith for since, the archaic form may reasonably be regarded as a separate word. In this category the OED has been, though not an arbiter, a useful guide.

(iii) Where the archaism is one to which modern readers are habituated, so that in its context it is likely to seem less strange than the modern equivalent would. Thus in the context of n.ii.437 yallets will, I judge, be more acceptable than salads. But I see no reason why margin in its ordinary mundane sense (v.ii.152) should disguise itself as margent. 2

(ii) Where the archaic spelling indicates a pronunciation that is required for the verse. Thus I print crownet (Q2 crownet) rather than cornet (F) at v.vii.171 and at t.iv.82 follow F artire (for which Q2 artwire may be a misprint) rather than the artire of Q5 or the contracted artiry of many editors.

(a) Where the form suggests a dialect or colloquial usage. Some forms of course may belong to more than one category: crowner (v.i.4, 92), I take it, would be admissible in the third if not already in the fifth. But, unlike some recent editors, I find no place for heraldly (t.i.90, n.ii.459) or casuary (t.il.433), which, like rowmage (t.i.110), obtrude an antiquarian pedantry. Words which have gone out of use should adapt to modern spelling. F tare (cf. farre) is naturally acclimatized as tar (t.ii.351), and mocke (t.ii.458-9) - though here the tradition which has rhymed it with embossed presents us with a dilemma - is better matched with cobbled (spelt cobbled in F Cor. i.1.194). By contrast the common and in the sense of 'if' is left unchanged: it is the editors' an, neither original nor modern, which here is arbitral.

1. F occasionally modernizes to murder but at least once does the reverse. It permits both forms in the same speech. Vidc, the invariably form in Q2, becomes side in F when the composer is B. A moral seems clear.

2. Cf. note on ribbon, iv. vil. 76.
'I'm too much in the sun'. Where Q2 reads 'you are in the right' (I.v. 132), it might be better to contract 'you are' rather than read, as F does, 'you are i'th' right'. The retention of the uncontracted Q2 phrase at least gives the reader the opportunity of choice. The frequent failure of both Q2 composers to provide for elision in pronoun-verb combinations (I will, he will, he would, etc.) suggests that Shakespeare himself may not have done so, and since the rhythm may often be kept by running syllables together without actual elision, the editor should, I think, be sparing of contractions. Similarly with the unaccented vowels in polysyllabic words. It must be admitted that Q2 here is a very dubious authority: it prints sulphur at I.v.3 but has just had soueraigntie and desperate (I.v. 73, 87) and will go on to adulterate and trayrous (I.v. 42, 43). In these and other cases I have not wished to mark an elision where the original does not.

The problem of elision of course concerns verse only. The contractions that modern spelling permits in prose are limited to those of colloquial speech.

The punctuation of Q2 deserves to be treated with respect both for the signs of intelligent handling and the presumed closeness of the text to Shakespeare. But the idea that it relies almost entirely upon the punctuation of its copy is impossible to endorse.1 The Titus Andronicus reprint shows the composers, though attentive to their copy, ready to depart from it on occasion, and they may well have been the more so when the copy was foul paper (see above, p. 46). I have normally retained their punctuation where it seems compatible with sense and modern practice, but I have not hesitated to vary it as a modernized text requires. The Elizabethans used commas or colons in many cases where modern writers would use full stops, which I have often therefore substituted. I do not subscribe to the view that to follow an Elizabethan quarto in punctuating long speeches almost entirely with commas somehow makes them more dramatic. The dramatic aims of Elizabethan pointing will often be better fulfilled by translating than preserving it.

In the textual apparatus no notice is usually taken of spelling and punctuation (including presumed misprints), except where they affect, or may affect, the sense; of variations in spacing (as in a whole, to day, me thinks, a sander) or, in stage-directions and speech-

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1. MSH, pp. 156-7. The rival hyperboles of Dover Wilson (a thing of sheer beauty) and the recent Penguin (The punctuation is chaotic) may be allowed to cancel one another out.
a context of ideas. It is, moreover, only by means of Longer Notes that one can do justice to the many questions which criticism has by now made inescapable - like the question of Hamlet's age (see v.i. 139-57) or of the King's behaviour at the dumb-show (mt. ii. 133 S.D.). Some famous matters of debate find a focus in Notes on single words, like fishmonger (nt. ii. 174) or nursey (mt. i. 121). Other Notes range beyond word or phrase to engage with a whole speech. To take contrasting examples, Hamlet's soliloquy beginning 'To be or not to be' (mt. i. 56-88) and Ophelia's running commentary on her distribution of flowers (iv. v. 173-83), the one already too much discussed, the other - for this play strangely too little, call in my judgment for fresh interpretation. Such speeches as the recital about Troy and Pyrrhus (nt. ii. 448-54), the Queen's description of Ophelia's death (iv. vii. 165-82), Hamlet's apology to Laertes (v. ii. 222-40) cannot be properly understood if they are merely viewed, as they have too often been, in relation to the motives and reactions of the characters. In the editorial task of explanation, the Longer Notes have not their least important function when what has to be explained is not just the verbal meaning, which may even be plain enough, but the place and purpose of a speech or episode in the play's large design.

In one other respect I am aware of departing from custom. It seems to me a rational procedure when commenting on a modernized text of Shakespeare to give quotations from other authors; save those whose language is that of an older period, in modern spelling too; and except when the original spelling is or may be relevant to the point at issue, this is what I have normally done. The reader will not be surprised therefore if references to a standard edition in old spelling are accompanied by a modern-spelling quotation. Occasionally, for the sake of intelligibility, I have not shrunken from modernizing punctuation also.

5. SOURCES

The Ur-Hamlet

It is reasonably and inevitably supposed that the immediate source of Hamlet was an earlier play on the same subject, which scholars have come to call the Ur-Hamlet. This play is not extant and was apparently never printed, but that it did exist is well known from a number of contemporary references. Its performance in or before 1596 is witnessed to by Thomas Lodge's allusion to what seems to have been a notorious feature, the pale-vizarded 'ghost which cried so miserably at the Theatre, like an oyster-wife, Hamlet, revenge'\(^1\). It is usually assumed that the play thus acted at the Theatre was the same as the Hamlet of which Henslowe's Diary records a single performance at Newington Butts in June 1594, and that this in turn was a revival of the Hamlet play already being satirized by Nashe in a famous passage in his Preface to Greene's Menaphon in 1596:

It is a common practice nowadays amongst a sort of shifting companions, that run through every art and thrive by none, to leave the trade of Noventin, whereunto they were born, and busy themselves with the endeavours of art, that could scarcely Latinize their neck-verse if they should have need; yet English Seneca read by candle-light yields many good sentences, as Blood is a beggar, and so forth; and if you entreat him fair in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls of tragical speeches. But . . . Seneca, let blood line by line and page by page, at length must needs die to our stage; which makes his famished followers to imitate the kid in Aesop, who, enamoured with the fox's newfangled, forsake all hopes of life to leap into a new occupation; and these men, renouncing all possibilities of credit or estimation, to intermeddle with Italian translations . . . (Nashe, iii. 315-16).

This passage not only vouches for the existence of the old Hamlet play as early as 1596 but may be thought to give a clue to the author of it. The fable of the kid, in any case more Spenser's than Aesop's,\(^4\) appears to be brought in less for its aptness than for the pun on a writer's name. Although speaking of 'a common practice', Nashe is focusing on one practitioner. For it cannot be a coincidence that Thomas Kyd had been born the son of a scrivener; not keeping to this 'trade of Noventin', took to literary composition; not having been to a university, could be said to have had a limited classical education; was nevertheless an imitator of Seneca, from whom he culled many sententious sayings in his Spanish Tragedy and elsewhere; but forsok that occupation for a new one when in 1589 he published The Householder's Philosophy 'first written in Italian by . . . Tasso'. To remark with McKerrow that others as well as Kyd meddled with Italian

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1. Wit's Misery, 1596, p. 56. 'Hamlet, revenge' became a byword. See Dekker, Satironomist, iv. i. 121; Rowland, The Night-Raven, 1620, sig. p2.
2. The Shepherd's Calendar, May, 174-305. Spenser's story is a variation on Aesop's fable of the wolf and the kid, substituting a fox for the wolf and an ending in which the kid, instead of staying unharmed, is 'so enamoured with the newell' that he succumbs.
as Danish, this is a notable Anglo-Saxon name, and as such occurs in earlier Elizabethan drama, as in the pseudo-historical A Knack to Know a Knave and the titles of two other plays in Henslowe. It is not apparent why Shakespeare gives it, like Oswald, to one who inspires contempt. Merely 'a Courtier' on entering in Q2, he becomes 'young Outrieker' when a name is required. Q2 later, and F regularly, omits the i. Q1 remembers him only as 'a Bragart Gentleman'.

18. Reynolds] So Q2; Reynolds in F. A variant of Reynard, the name is no doubt apt for the wiles required of the man. Cf. Mother Hubbard's Tale, 917–18, 'a Reynolds . . . That by his shifts his Master furnish can'. The change to Montano in Q1, along with that of Polonius (q.v.) to Coramis, is unexplained.

21. A Priest] At Ophelia's funeral. So F, Q1; but Q2 has only the speech-heading Doct. (twice), which Dover Wilson takes for a costume note and a sign for a Protestant clergyman. See v.i.219 n.


23. Companion] The second 'clown', the straight man of the pair, is not, as commonly supposed, a grave-digger. See v.i S.D. n.

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

ACT I

SCENE I

Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two Sentinels.

Bar. Who's there?
Fran. Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.
Bar. Long live the King!
Fran. Barnardo?
Bar. He.
Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.
Bar. 'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.
Fran. For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.
Bar. Have you had quiet guard?
Fran. Not a mouse stirring.
Bar. Well, good night.

Title. Tragicall Historie Q1.

ACT I

Scene 1

ACT I SCENE I] F (Actus Primus. Scena Prima.); not in Q2. S.D.] Q2,F; Enter two Sentinels. Q1; Francisco upon his Post; Enter, to him, Barnardo. Capell. 12–14] As Q2; prose F.

S.D. Sentinels] The scene is the platform of the battlemented castle. Cf. 1.ii.219.
2. me] Emphatic. It is the sentry on guard who has the right to challenge.
3. Long live the King!] Whether or not this is the formal password, as often supposed, Barnardo identifies himself as one on lawful business. Cf. Marcellus at 1.16. But the speech 'is dramatically ironical in view of all that follows' (Dover Wilson).
6. upon your hour] on the stroke of your appointed time.
8. much thanks] 'Thanks' was often used as singular. Cf. n.ii.25; Ant. n.v.47 ('a liberal thanks').
9. sick at heart] Francisco's melancholy, for which no reason is given, contributes to the impression that all is not well. It 'foreshadows Hamlet' (Dover Wilson).
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Fran. I think I hear them.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell honest soldier, who hath reliev'd you?


Bar. Say, what, is Horatio there?

Hor. A piece of him.

Bar. Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

Hor. What has this thing appear'd again tonight?

Bar. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him,

HAMLET

Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Bar. Sit down awhile,

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we have two nights seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down.

And let us hear Barnardo speak of this.

Bar. Last night of all,

When yond same star that's westward from the pole,

Had made his course 'tillume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

29-30. along With us]. along, With vs Q2; along With vs, F. 36. have two nights] Q2, Q1; two Nights have F.

29.] An explanation for the benefit of the audience rather than Barnard, who was expecting Horatio to come (I. 21).

30. With us] The Q2 punctuation as well as the metre connects this primarily with 'to watch' rather than with 'along'; but the word order permits us to take it with both. 32. approve] confirm the trustworthiness of.

33. Sit down] This may seem incongruous for a sentry. W. J. Lawrence (as in t. i. 42 S.D. Ix.) argues that 'The seated attitude was adopted to concentrate attention on the spectre', which would emerge 'in front of them through a trap'. But cf. t. i. 42 S.D. Ix.

36. What] Object of the verb of saying implied in assail your ears (= attempt to get you to listen to). 38. of all] Emphatic; cf. last of all. 39. yond same star] Though there need be no reference to an identifiable star, Shakespeare had presumably seen the brilliant star Capella, which would appear in the winter sky 'westward from the pole' (= pole-star), as the star of the Great Bear, which have also been suggested, would not (NB & Q, comma, 412-13).

40. his] his. His was the ordinary form of the neuter, as well as masculine, possessive. The Elizabethan alternative was it, as at t. i. 216, v. i. 214. It occurs in some late Shakespearean quartos (including Ham. Q4) and rarely in the Folio, where it is presumably an editor's or printer's modernization. Cf. Abbott 228.

[llume] Apparently a Shakespearean coinage.
Hamlet

Enter Ghost.

Bar. In the same figure like the King that’s dead.
Mar. Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.
Bar. Looks a not like the King? Mark it, Horatio.
Hor. Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.
Bar. It would be spoke to.
Mar. Question it, Horatio.
Hor. What art thou that usurp’st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee speak.
Mar. It is offended.
Bar. See, it stalks away.

42. [S.D.] Q7, Q1: after off F. 44. [figure] Q3, Q1; figure, F.
46. a] Q2; it, F, Q1. 47. harrow] F; harrowes Q2; horrors Q1.
48. [Question] F, Q1; Speake to Q6. 52. the] Q2, Q1, Q; rise, Rouse.

42. [beating] striking, though the suggestion is rather of rhythmic repetition than of a single stroke. Cf. to beat a drum, and Q1 toiling.
42. S.D. Enter Ghost.] L.
44. [the same] i.e. the same as on previous occasions. like the King] Note the refraining from accepting that it is in fact the King. Cf. below, II. 46-7, 50-2, 84, 112-13; I. i. 199, 244. Doubt as to the Ghost’s identity is frequent in modern texts. It is frequent in Q2 (Dover Wilson counted 37 instances), but is retained in F only at v. i. 173. Though Q1 and F regularize here to it, both retain the masculine pronoun in L. 69. In later scenes, he and it alternate, partly according as the Ghost is thought of in its character of apparition or as the spirit of Hamlet’s father (see e.g. m.iv. 156-8); but it would be wrong to look for any consistent distinction. 47. harrow] lacerates (OED 4). Cf. t.v. 16. Q1 shows an interesting confusion, but the Q2 harrow finds a precedent in A Remedy for Sedition (1536), ‘They ... horrowe with spades’ (54).
48. [It would be spoke to.] Cf. L. 32 L.
49. sordid] Horatio challenges the Ghost’s right to invade the night and its right to assume the form of the dead King.
52. sometimes] formerly.
53. It is offended.] Not (as Proser, pp. 98-9) because it is invoked ‘by heaven’ but because this inter-locutor is not the one it seeks. See next note.
55. will not answer] Ghosts, even when questioned, will speak only to those for whom they have a message. Cf. i. i. 176.
58. on] For on which we use of, see Abbott 181. Cf. L. 93(F).
59. might] was still commonly used in its original sense of ‘could’. Cf. i. ii. 141.
60. the sensible ... avouch] the assurance given by the evidence of the senses. avouch, testimony. Cf. ‘vouch’, Meas. n.iv. 156. The conversion of the sceptic (cf. ll. 46-7) will persuade the audience to accept the objective reality of the Ghost. But it will only enhance uncertainty as to its nature and purpose. Cf. ll. 79-2, 131-4; t.iv. 40-57; n.ii. 594-9.
63. the very armour] There is perhaps an inconsistency in allowing Horatio to know this detail of what the play will later say happened thirty years before. Dowden remarks that the armour would be remembered and long pointed out; but the truth, I think, is that although it later suits Shakespeare to date the victory over Fortinbras on the day of Prince Hamlet’s birth, he does not at this stage attach any precise date to it. Cf. v. i. 139-57 and 139; n. ii. 300, and n. 01. 62. Norw.] ‘Norw.] the King of Norway, the elder Fortinbras. This emblem is described L. 83ff.
65. frown’d] As befitted a martial hero. Cf. i. ii. 290 and n. part] party, encounter (and perhaps not limited to words). See I. 66 L.
66. sleds] Poles borne in those. L.
66. jump] exactly. Cf. v. iii. 380, and Oth. n.iii. 374, ‘bring him jump where he may Cassio find.’
67. dead] has ominous connotations of ‘the dead of night’ (cf. Tit. ii.iii. 99), the time of stillness and darkness, when the normal activities of life...
And with no less nobility of love 110
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire,
And we beseech you bend you to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.
I pray thee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof
No joyous health that Denmark drinks today 125

112. toward] Q2; towards F. you] F; you Q2. pray thee] Q2; prythee F.
110. nobility] Though variously glossed, this word should give no difficulty. Shakespeare often describes as 'noble' feelings or attributes of mind that are held up for admiration, and no less refers to quality not quantity. Paternal love is regarded as a noble passion, and Claudius says that his love for Hamlet is not inferior in kind to that of an actual father for his son.
112. import] deal liberally. Such intransitive use does not occur elsewhere. It may be that by the time he had reached the verb Shakespeare regarded nobility as its object, forgetting that he had begun with with.

But Kittredge compares Potter, Two Angry Women of Abington (MSR, l. 258), 'With all the parts of neighbour love, I impart myself to Master Goursey'; and it is possible that Shakespeare used import for 'impair myself'. So Johnson interpreted it.
113. Wittenberg] LN.
114. retrograde] lit. going backwards; hence contrary. Chapman, May Day, m.iii.135, 'Come, be not retrograde to our desires', is probably an echo.

116. eye] A frequent metonymy for the royal presence, as in Mac. iv.iii.185, 'Your [Malcolm's] eye in Scotland would create soldiers'.

117. cousin . . . son] As observed by Kittredge, the King repeats the words which gave offence before (l. 64), and the Queen for the second time intervenes.

120. in all my best] to the best of my ability.

124. to] 'Sits at my heart' would be normal, but the preposition is influenced by 'smiling', grace thanksgiving. The French sense (L. gratia) was formerly common.

125. Denmark] the King of Denmark. Cf. t.ii.51.

But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruise again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.

Ham. O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His cannon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God! God!

drinks] 'The King's impenetrance is very strongly impressed; everything that happens to him gives him occasion to drink' (Johnson). Cf. t.ii.175, t.iv.8-22, t.ii.11, m.ii.8, l.m.iii.80, v.ii.261ff., and, for an appropriate necromancy, 329-40.

126. the great cannon . . . shall tell] They do so as at t.iv.6. Cf. the King's similar directions at v.ii.267-75. Such celebrations were a Danish custom. Shakespeare, like the references to Wittenberg, they show Shakespeare taking some care with local colour. See t.iv.12-13 and LN.

127. rouse] 'Prob. an epithetic form of causation due to the phrase to drink carouse having been apprehended as to drink a rouse' (OED). Either a bumper drunk as a toast, as here, or a drinking session. Cf. t.iv.8, n.ii.58. The Danish word was rus and Dekker (Gall's Hornbook) refers to 'the Danish rowan'; but the suggestion that Shakespeare uses rouse to give a Danish colouring is countered by its occurrence in Faustus, iv.iii.19, Oth. i.iii.160, and indeed Ham. i.ii.98.

132. canon 'gainst self-slaughter] Again referred to in Cyn. t.iv.74-5. Commentators have puzzled unnecessarily over this; for while a 'divine' prohibition may be easier to accept than to demonstrate, what is easily demonstrated is that the Church regularly regarded 'self-slaughter' as forbidden by the sixth commandment.
HAMLET

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work I know not,
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon
And foreign mart for implements of war,
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.

What might be toward that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day,
Who is't that can inform me?

Hor. That can I.

At least the whisper goes so: our last King,

71. [s]ubject (collective), as in i.i.93. Cf. Mar. i.iv.27, 'The general subject to a well-wish'd king Quit their own part'.
76. subject] subjects.

71. the gross and scope] the general drift, as contrasted with the 'particular thought' (l. 70).
72. This bodes . . . Compelled by his 'own eyes' (l. 61) to abandon the theory of 'fantasy' (l. 26), Horatio adopts an orthodox alternative. Cf. Lavater, ii.xvii: 'If they be not vain persuasions, or natural things, then are they forewarnings of God.'
74. eruption] violent outbreak. Cf. Cast. i.iii.78, 'strange eruptions'.

are suspended. Cf. i.ii.190. Applied to midnight, as often (Most. iv.v.59, Rq v.iii.180), it concentrates these suggestions upon an exact point of time, and so here, though the hour is one not twelve (l. 42), it has the additional effect of reinforcing jump.

70. in toil (is) to let my mind be occupied (with).
71. the gross and scope] the general drift, as contrasted with the 'particular thought' (l. 70).
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76. why] F.Q.1; with Q.2. cast] F; cost Q.s.Q.2.

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74. eruption] violent outbreak. Cf. Cast. i.iii.78, 'strange eruptions'.
76. why] F.Q.1; with Q.2. cast] F; cost Q.s.Q.2.
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes
For food and diet to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't, which is no other,
As it doth well appear unto our state,
But to recover of us by strong hand
And terms compulsory those foresaid lands
So by his father lost. And this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this post-haste and rummage in the land.

Bar. I think it be no other but c'en so.
Well may it sort that this portentous figure

101. lawless] Q2; Q1; Lalande F.
106. compulsory] Q2; Compulsatius F.
110. rummage] Q2; (Romadge), F (Romage). 111-128] Q2; not in F, Q1.

unrebuked, unencumbered.
unaided. parts.
101. Shark'd up] got together by
snatching up indiscriminately, as a
shark does its food. OED presents
'shark' as a variant of 'shirk', to trick
and hence to prey on others, in which
this sense is strengthened by the
predatory connotations of the noun.
The suggestion of the shark's savage
rapacity anticipates lawless. Cf. Sir
Thomas More (MSR, Addn ii. 207-6),
ruffians as their fancies wrought
would shark on you', and Dover
Wilson, NCS, pp. xxxv-xlviii.
list] lit. a catalogue of soldiers' names, and so a troop.

lawless resolutes] desperadoes. When
we see Fortinbras's men in iv. iv they
are a well-disciplined army. Shake­
speare probably changed his design in
course of composition, while ful­
filling an original idea of introducing
a revenging son with an unrumble
of followers by transferring these
to Laertes (iv. v). See Intro., pp. 100,
142, and Bate U. Studi, lx, 100-3.
102. For] denoting purpose. The
sense is not, as sometimes supposed,
that the resolutes are hired for (no
pay but their) food. Rather they are
to serve as 'food ... to some enter­
prise'. Cf. next note.

103. a stomach] The enterprise
is personified by its possession of a
stomach, or a spirit of daring, the
stomach being traditionally the seat
of courage. Cf. Cass. v.i. 66, "If you
dare fight today, come to the field;
If not, when you have stomacha.'
There is a play on the literal sense,
the stomach of the enterprise being
supplied with 'food' in the shape of
the 'lawless resolutes'.

105. head) fountain-head, origin,
as at ii. 65.
110. post-haste] furious activity.

104. As] Q2; And F.
106. Compulsatius] Q2; Compulsatius F.
110. rummage] Q2; (Romadge), F (Romage).

101, 106. lawless, compulsory.
110. rummage] not in F, Q1.

112. state] in the territorial and political
sense, as at i. 72. Christopher North
(Blackwood's, i. xvii, 252-4) insists
that it implies 'at once Place and
indwelling Power'. The high and
palmy state of Rome thus corre­
sponds to Virgil's 'rerum ... pul­
cherrima Roma' (Georgics, ii. 534).
117-23] For the prodigies preceding
Caesar's death, see:
119. speck] Ghosts traditionally
spoke in a thin shrill voice. In the
Odyssey the souls of Penelope's suitors
squeak like bats (xxiv. 5). Cf.
Carm. vi. 492-3, 'vocem exiguum';
Lucan, m.vi. 19, 'shrinking notes';
v. vi. 1 below.
120. As] The awkward connection
suggests possible omission, L.N.
121. Disasters] signs of ill omens. A
'disaster' (cf. L. astrum) is etymolo­
gically 'an unfavourable aspect of a
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'disaster' (cf. L. astrum) is etymolo­
gically 'an unfavourable aspect of a
star or planet' (OED).
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse. And even the like precise of fear'd events, As harbingers preceding still the fates And prologue to the omen coming on, Have heaven and earth together demonstrated Unto our climatrices and countrymen.

Enter Ghost.

But soft, behold. Lo, where it comes again. I'll cross it though it blast me. Ghost spreads its arms.

Stay, illusion: 130

If thou hast any sound or use of voice, Speak to me.

Almost to doomsday] "almost to the point of complete darkness, alluding to the biblical prophecy that at the second coming of Christ "the moon shall not give her light" (Matthew xxiv. 29)" (Herford).

fear'd] No view of (1) the sense and (2) the confusion of d and e in the Elizabethan use. Although there can be little doubt that this is the correct emendation instead of the fuse which most editors have taken over from Q3. Cf. F's error at ii.i.112.

Still] Also an actual Elizabethan use. Cf. t.iii.104, u.ii.42, iv.vi.115, etc.

fates] Though 'fate' often means no more than pre-ordained end, it often retains also, esp. in the plural, a quasi-personal significance. Cf. 3.i.66 iv.iii.58, 'What fates impose, that men must needs abide'. The suggestion here is not only of calamities to come, but of powers ordering and working them.

o'ers] strictly, that which foreshadows an event, but here the event foreshadowed. Cf. Heywood, Life of Merlin (1641, frontispiece), 'Merlin . . . His country's omen did long since foreshadow'.

174

SC. 1

HAMLET

175

If there be any good thing to be done That may to thee do ease, and grace to me, Speak to me;

If thou art privy to thy country's fate, Which, happily, foreseeing may avoid, O speak;

Or if thou hast upbraided in thy life Extorted treasure in the womb of earth, For which they say your spirits oft walk in death, Speak of it, stay and speak.

The cock crows.

Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

Hor. Do if it will not stand.

Bar. 'Tis here.

Hor. 'Tis here.

Mar. 'Tis gone.

We do it wrong, being so majestical,

To offer it the show of violence,

Stop it, Marcellus.

Exit Ghost.

If . . . If . . . Or if . . . stay and speak.] In

hitherto silent, at length prepares to speak, only to be interrupted.

143-46. If . . . If . . . Or if . . . stay and speak.] In

143. partisan] 'a long-handled spear, the blade having one or more lateral cutting projections' (OED). It was borne by officers of the guard. See Shakespeare's Eng., i.137–8, and cf. Congreve, berubus, 'leading-staff'.

146 S.D. Exit McManaway suppose the Ghost disappears through one trap and rises again through another (P.B.A., xlvii, 315); W. J. Lawrence (Pre-Restoration Stage Studies, pp. 107–8), following Calverly (An Actor's Hamlet), that the illusion of the Ghost's being in two places was effected by having two ghosts (a practice still sometimes followed).

But I suspect that the actors could manage the business, then as now, without such expedients.

149 S.D.] Cf. Lavater, i.tn. xi, 'Some others, when spirits appear unto
For it is as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

**Bar.** It was about to speak when the cock crew.

**Hor.** And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Both with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day, and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
Th'extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine; and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

**Mar.** It faded on the crowing of the cock.

---

155. morn] Q2; day F; morning Qr.

them, will by and by set on them,
and drive them away with naked swords . . . not considering . . . that spirits are nothing hurt with weapons'

150. as the air] The orthodox view. Cf. Le Loyer, iii, 8, 'Si elles [les Ames] apparaissent à nous . . . ce n’est qu’un fantôme d’air qu’elles ont vécu seulement'; Tailleped, ch. 16, 'Les corps des esprits, quand ils se veulent appareiller, sont de l’air'.

151. malicious mockery] 'a mere semblance of malice' (Schmidt), 'malice' here being not ill-will but 'power to harm' (**OED** 2). The Ghost being 'invulnerable', the power of the blows to harm is illusory. Cf. John ii.i.251-2, 'Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent Against th’in-vulnerable clouds'. See H. Hume, *ES*, XLVII, 190-2.

152. The cock] L.n.

**trumpet**] trumpet, as often (e.g. **3H6** v.i.16; **Trol.** xv.v.6). The image was not new: cf. Drayton, *Endimion and Phoebe* (1595), I. 307, 'the cock, the morning’s trumpeter'.

156. lofty] Suggesting both the cock’s upstretched throat and the trumpeter’s proud, majestic sound.

158. Whether in sea . . . air] qualifying *confine* (L. 160). It was held that there were four different orders of spirits according to which of the four elements they inhabited. Cf. II. Penelope, 93-6.

159. extravagant] straying beyond its proper bounds. Both this and *erroneous* (wandering) have the strict Latin sense. Cf. Oth. i.i.157, 'an extravagant and wheeling stranger Of here and everywhere'; Chapman’s *Odyssey*, ix, 'Erring Grecians we, From Troy returning homewards'. There is no suggestion (as Proser, p. 122) that an 'erroneous spirit' is an evil one.

160. *confine*] place of confinement. Cf. ii.ii.245; **Tp.** iv.i.121. For his, see above, I. 40 n.

161. object] A word often applied to a spectacle which excites a strong emotional reaction (of horror, dread, admiration, etc.). See **OED** 3 b. Cf. Oth. ii.i.357, 'The object poisons sight'; Till. iii.i.64, 'This object kills me'; Cym. i.i.101, 'This object, which Takes prisoner the wild motion of mine eye'; Per. i.i.43; Mer. V. i.i.20; Lr v.iii.208. *probation* proof.
SCENE II

Flourish. Enter Claudius King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, Council, including Voltæmdem, Cornelius, Polonius and his son Laëtes, Hamlet [dressed in black], with Others.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
That we with wisest sorrow think on him

Scene II

S.D.] Florish. Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, Council; as Polonius, and his Son Laertes, Hamlet, Cum Aliis. Q 2; Enter Claudius King of Denmark, Gertrude the Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, and his Sister Ophelia, Lords Attendanls. F; Enter King, Queen, Hamlet, Laertes, Cornelian, and the Two Ambassadors, with Attendants. Q 1.

180. convenient] For adjectival forms in adverbial use, see Abbott 1.

Scene II

S.D.] LN.

1–39.] On the style of this speech.

1. Hamlet our dear brother] On the succession, LN.

2. that] 'Used (like Fr. que) as a substitute instead of repeating a previous conjunction' (OED that conj. 8).

3. Referring to all present, as is indicated by 'our hearts' (I. 3). By the artful mingling of the plural with the royal use (our 'brother', our 'kingdom', etc.) Claudius effects an identification of his audience with himself.

4. contracted in one brow] Combines the suggestions of being knit together in one united feeling and of the expression of this feeling by the knitting of the brow. For the idiom, see Palgrave's Acrostics (EETS, pp. 64–5), 'Contrahere frontem, to draw the forehead dye', signifies to Lowe or bend the brows: which custom we make, when we be discontented or angry'. Cf. Wm. Burton's trans. of Clithiton and Leucippe, 1597 (ed. Gasecke and Brett-Smith, p. 109), 'grief and sorrow contracteth her brows'.

Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Th'imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as twere with a defeated joy,
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows that you know young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleged with this dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting,
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras—
Who, impotent and bedrid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose—to suppress
His further gait herein, in that the levies,
The lists, and full proportions are all made
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch

21. Colleged [F]; colleged Q.2; col·leagued Copell. this] Q.2; the F. advantage.] advantage Q.2; Advantage. F. 24. bonds [F; bands Q.2. 25. him.] Q.2; him. 1 Enter Voltcland and Cornelius. F. 31. herein,] Q.2; herein. F. 33. subject] Q.2; subjects Q.5.

20. disjoint and out of frame] Cf. ironically t. v. 136, t. i. 72, t. iv. 90, etc. frame, systematic order, often referring to the created universe. Cf. m. i. 296; H. 4 m. i. 16; Mac. m. ii. 16 ('Let the frame of things disjoint').

21. Colleged allied. The assumption that it must qualify the subject, Fortinbras (l. 17), led Warburton and others to explain that Fortinbras had only his own dream for an ally. Dowden and Dover Wilson, with better sense if not syntax, take it with 'supposal'. But I think it is to be taken as applying to the general idea of l. 16-20. In Fortinbras's motives his notion of Denmark's weakness is linked with his dream concerning himself.

22. message] Possibly plural, as 'pster' would suggest. On the suppression of the inflexion after -se see Abbott 471.


24. with all bonds of law] Cf. t. i. 89-98.

25. So much for him.] Not of course that Fortinbras is now disposed of. But 'so much' for what he has done and 'now' for my reaction to it.

26. for] the reason for.

28. Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras] Fortinbras's uncle has succeeded to his father's throne. This adds to the parallel between the situations of Hamlet and Fortinbras, which Shakespeare may have initially designed to be more important than it subsequently becomes. It should also refute suggestions that Claudius is in some way a usurper.


32. lists] Cf. t. i. 101. proportions] numbers, especially in military contexts: forces. Cf. H5 i. ii. 304. 'Let our proportions for these wars be soon collected'.

33. subject] Collective, as in t. i. 75.
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

_Laer._ My dread lord,  
Your leave and favour to return to France,  
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark  
To show my duty in your coronation,  
Yet now I must confess, that duty done,  
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

_King._ Have you your father’s leave? What says Polonius?

_Pol._ He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
By laboursome petition, and at last  
Upon his will I seal’d my hard consent.  
I do beseech you give him leave to go.

_King._ Take thy fair hour, Laertes, time be thine,  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—

50. My dread lord; Q2; Drear my F; My gracious Q.  
55. toward] Q2; towards F.  
58. He] F, Q2; not in Q2; A Parnell-Craig.  
65. cousin] any kinman more dist.

Suggestions, p. 31, and cf. _Cor. I. I. 113-14._ "The king’s lighted head ... The counsellor heart; native, closely joined in nature. Cf. _All’s W. I. i. 209,_ ‘kiss like native things’. In the next line the king as the hand is the provider for his subjects,  
49. the throne ... father] From this acknowledgement of Polonius’s service there is no justification for inferring that he has helped Claudius to the throne. It is the throne itself, not its present occupant, that is indebted to him. Note that the first reference to Polonius is to him as the father of Laertes, stressing what is to be a determining factor of the plot.  
56. leave and pardon] Kittredge compares _More, Richard III_ (ed. Lumby, p. 76), ‘When the duke had this leave and pardon to speak’. pardun, indulgence, as at _iv. vii. 44._  
60. seal’d] _The metaphor is that of affixing a seal to a document (with a play on self) to give it authority._  
62. Take thy fair hour] Enjoy the favourable season of your life; roughly equivalent to _corps d’arm._  
63. graces] attractive qualities; endowments and accomplishments. Cf. _Mer. V. ii. 33._ ‘I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes, In graces, and in arms, as much as the true breeding’. _Stat. ii. ii. 194._  
64. cousin] any kinman more dis-

65.] Aside _Theobald_. 67. 10", F; so much Q2.  
68. _in the sun] Q2; Q2; _nightly_.  
69. _common_] common; _Theobald; common Q2; common_.  
70. _nighted] Q2; _nightly_.  
71. _forc’d] forcibly expelled._
HAMLET

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passes show,
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father,
But you must know your father lost a father,
That father lost, lost his—and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term

82. moods] Q2,F; modes Q.1635.
83. denote] Q.2; denote Q2.
84. pass] Q2; panath F.

81. haviour] demeanour, expression.

 Cf. Gym. iii.6.9.

A 'mood' is 'a frame of mind or state of feelings' (OED mood sh.1) but may come to mean the outward expression of this. Schmidt glosses 'external appearance, countenance expressive of disposition', citing Somn. xcm, 'In many's looks the false heart's history Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange'. Cf. Compl. 201, 'the crimson'd mood' (of rubies as emblems of passion). The frequent interpretation 'mode' is unauthenticated. For though there was some meaning of mood (O.E. mid) and mode (L. modus), the use of the latter in its modern non-technical sense was a 17th-century development, which was no doubt responsible for the reading modes in Q2;65 as well as for mode in F3 of 2H4 ii.200.

shapes] This 'correction' of the Q2 shapes is supported by Shakespeare's frequent use of shape in the sense of appearance, sometimes in conjunction with form, often denoting illusory appearance, and sometimes in reference to grief. See Ado v.i.14, 'such a grief . . . In every lineament, branch, shape, and form'; LLL v.ii.751; R2 ii.ii.22. F shapes is more likely to have had its source in the shape of L. 85 than, as Furness and Dowden held, to have been deliberately repeated in it; shape does not repeat one item but sums up the whole of II. 77-82.

85.] It was a commonplace that the greatest griefs were inexpressible. Cf. Seneca, Hippolytus, 607, 'Curae leves loquentur, ingentes stupent.'

87. commendable] The stress on the first syllable was normal usage.

89-90. your father . . . lost his] Here and in ii.103-6 cf. Seneca on death: 'Hoc patri tuo accidit . . . hoc omnibus ante te, hoc omnibus post te' (Epistulae, 72). See above, l. 72 n.

90. the survivor bound] Gramnar and Kittredge suggest 'that father' bound the survivor', sense 'the survivor (was) bound'.

91. some term] Cf. l. 70, 'Do not for ever'. Such advice is again traditional. See esp. Ecclesiastical xxxvi. 17, 'Weep bitterly, and make great moan . . . and that a day or two . . . and then comfort thyself'; Seneca (Lodge, p. 706), 'Let our sighs be drawn from the bottom of our hearts; yet let them have an end'. Plutarch similarly deprecates 'making no end of sorrow' (tr. Holland, 1609, p.510). Cf. All's, W. i.1.48-9.

92. [ACT I]

To do obsequious sorrow. But to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief,
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd;
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense—
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried
From the first corse till he that died today,
'This must be so'. We pray you throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father; for let the world take note
You are the most immediate to our throne,

96. a] F; or Q2.

92. obsequious] appropriate to obequies (funeral rites). Cf. Tit. v.iii.152;

93. persee] With stress on the second syllable, the regular form down to the mid-17th century.

93. condolement] griefing.

95. incorrect] uncorrected, undis­

ciplined; hence not submissive, re­
calculant.

97. simple] untutored, ignorant.

99. any . . . to sense] that which is most familiar to common observation of anything there is. Cf. Abbott 419a and, for 'any' with superlative, Gym. i.v.57, 'any the rarest of our ladies'.

100. terrors] foolishly perverse.

102. fault to nature] offence against the natural order of things.

103-4. whose . . . web'] The antecedent seems to be nature rather than

reason' (Kittredge). For the use of who to refer to personified abstractions, see Abbott 264.

104. still] always. Cf. i.i.125,
i.ii.90-95, iv.iii.119.

105. the first corse] Abel's. An unhappy instance on Claudius's part, with the irony of an analogy which goes beyond what the speaker intends. Cf. iv.iii.97.

106. throw to earth] The phrasing suggests that he should bury it (along with his father).

107. unprevailing] unwavering. Cf. OED prevail v. 4; Rom. iii.60.

109. immediate] next in succession. Cf. 2H4 i.ii.91, 'th' immediate heir of England' (Prince Hal). The King's statement need not be inconsistent with an elective monarchy (see i.i.1.14). Indeed in a hereditary monarchy there would be no occasion for it.
HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

1.i.1-25.] These first 25 lines are an excellent example of Shakespeare's technique in incorporating short colloquial exchanges in what is essentially a blank-verse scene. (Cf. 1.ii.224-43 and n.) While speeches of as much as five feet scan easily as blank verse (ll. 2, 6-8, etc.), shorter speeches often do not, and cannot be expected to, add up to regular metrical units. See McKerrow, Prolegomena, pp. 45-6. I have not here followed the usual editorial practice of wrenching into a typographical simulation of the blank-verse pattern what is clearly not meant to conform to it. Coleridge (i.18, 38-9) notes in this opening the familiar language of common life, which leads gradually and naturally to that state in which the highest poetry will appear.

1.i.26. fantasy] This reflects a contemporary opinion concerning the nature of ghosts. While most authorities affirmed them to exist, it was generally acknowledged, even by those who believed in them most firmly, that they could in some cases be the product of the subjective mind. See e.g. Taillepyed, chs. 3-5. Cf. Caes. iv.iii.274-5, Mac. iii.iv.61ff. Le Loyer (Des Spectres, 1586), with a terminological nicety not usual, distinguishes between a phantom and a spectre. Hence Horatio's scepticism need not imply that he denies ghosts altogether. Yet that 'many good and godly men' held all apparitions to be hallucinations was conceded by Lavater (i.ii). Cf. Burton on spirits (Anat. of Melancholy, i.ii.1 (2)), 'Many will not believe they can be seen.' This view, called 'damnable' by James I, had been maintained in Reginald Scott's Discovery of Witchcraft (with appendix on 'Devils and Spirits'), 1584. On the dramatic use Shakespeare makes of conflicting contemporary attitudes to ghosts, see Dover Wilson, WHH, pp. 59ff.

1.i.32. speak to it] They assume that the Ghost wishes to communicate but is unable to. For, in popular belief, 'A ghost has not the power to speak till it has been first spoken to; so that, notwithstanding the urgency of the business on which it may come, everything must stand till the person visited can find sufficient courage to speak to it' (Grose, A Provincial Glossary; Brand, Popular Antiquities, ed. Hazlitt). Cf. Tom Jones, xi, ch. 2, 'The other who, like a ghost only wanted to be spoke to, readily answered ... '; Boswell's Johnson, 'Tom Tyers ... said ... , You are like a ghost; you never speak till you are spoken to'. Nor does the Hamlet ghost, either in 1.iv-v or in 1.iii. Yet for all the importance of addressing it (see below, l. 48, 1.ii.214, 245), to do so in other than due form would be to risk offence and consequent danger to oneself. Hence the necessity for having present a man of superior learning (cf. l. 45).

1.i.42 S.D. Enter Ghost.] Possibly via a trap-door (cf. l. 35n.), like the spirits in Greene's Alphonus, Chapman's Bussy d'Ambois, Jonson's Catiline, and other plays, as is held by Lawrence (Pre-Restoration Stage Studies, pp. 104ff.) and Sprague (Shakespeare and the Actors, p. 128). This, though not perhaps in conflict with, is not supported by, the dialogue, which suggests movement across the stage (ll. 43, 129-30). On departing the first time the Ghost 'stalks away' (l. 53). The second time it 'faded' (l. 162), but this word, like 'appears' and 'vanish'd' (i.ii.201, 220), is used not during but after the event. But cf. i.v.91 S.D. n. What the Ghost looks like is described at ii. 50, 63, 65 and i.ii.200-2, 226-33. Its being in armour is repeatedly stressed (cf. i.iv.52).

1.i.66. sledded Polacks] This much-disputed phrase is usually taken, and I think rightly, to refer to inhabitants of Poland riding in sleds. It is true that the spelling sleded polaxis, deriving from Q1, suggests that the early actors and printers did not so understand it. They must have thought the second word was pole-axe, or, as F4 prints it, poleaxe, of which polaxis was a regular 16th-century spelling. But this spelling may have arisen in Q1 through an actor's misunderstanding of what he heard and said. (Cf. Intro., p. 23.) Polack, spelt in Q2 Pollacks, Q1 Pollacke, F Polack, is normal Elizabethan for 'Pol', as in i.ii.65, 75 and (in Q2) iv.iv.23. Despite some assertions to the contrary, the plural 'Polacks' (or 'Polakes') also occurs, as in R. Johnson, Kingdoms and Commonweals (The World, 1601), pp. 127, 128; Morison, Itinerary, 1907-8 edn., iii. 98. Scholars who accept pole-axe (for a recent defence of which see D. Haley, SQ, xxxix, 407-13) either assume a battle-axe with a sled, or sledge, i.e. hammer, to it (so Schmider), despite the lack of authority for sled in this sense, or take sleded as a corruption of 'leded' or (by analogy with FO v.xii.14) of 'studded' (V&Q, cxx, 509). In any event they see King Hamlet striking a weapon on the ice. This interpretation, since it avoids actual fighting, may be thought to be supported by parle (but see below). The objection to it, apart altogether from the difficulty of sleded, is the pointlessness of the incident it leaves us with; if no Polanders and no sledges, why ice? A pole-axe connects with nothing else in
the play, as is still true if you take it to refer to the man who bears the weapon (and have to invent a soldier on a sledge or hurdle of disgrace, *N&Q*, ccxxix, 128–30). An attempt to attach an incident with a pole-axe to the combat against Fortinbras seems refuted by the adverb *once*, which implies a separate occasion. Clearly allusion is being made to a second exploit which will parallel the combat against Fortinbras as an illustration of King Hamlet’s martial prowess. And what, along with the natural sense of *sledded*, gives the preference overwhelmingly to Poles in sleds as the object of his smiting is their power to stir the imagination, which a pole-axe so signally lacks. It is true that the Polish exploit is not subsequently elaborated as the combat against Norway is and that no source for one has been found; but we cannot doubt its potentiality for elaboration and it may well have been in the dramatist’s mind at this stage to make more of the Polish matter than he subsequently did. Was it this that led him to call the minister Hamlet kills by the remarkable name of Polonius? (Was there an idea for an avenging Polack son alongside the son of Norway? See Rice U. Studs., lx, 104–5.) But the Poles are not dependent on such speculation for their relevance. They belong to the play’s background wars in which Norway is balanced by Poland and which are already being prepared for, with the sleds giving a northern local colour. Shakespeare seems to have thought of these two countries as both bordering Denmark (see *p. ii. 74–8, iv. iv. 3–4 and LN*; also Keith Brown, ‘Hamlet’s Place on the Map’, *Sh. Studs.* iv, 160–82). For Poles in sleds he would hardly need particular authority. Ortelsius’s *Epitome of the Theatre of the World* tells how in the frozen lens of Lithuania, then ‘under the crown of Poland’, men ‘pass over the ice with sleds drawn by horses’ (*Eng. trans.* 1603, f. 93*); and Samuel Lefkowitz’s *Discourse of Foreign Cities* (1600) similarly describes how the Tartars around Vilna travel in sleds over snow ‘not unlike the ocean’. Cf. Cawley, *The Voyagers and Elizan Drama*, p. 247 n., on the regular association of sleds with the people of this region. Still more to the present purpose the pictorial *Carta Marina* of the Swede Olaus Magnus (1559) shows armed men riding on the Baltic, which others cross in horse-drawn sledges. Even if he had no particular incident to draw on, Shakespeare would not be offending plausibility in imagining an encounter with sledded opponents on a frozen lake or sea.

The reading *Polack* (sing.), meaning the King of Poland, would correspond with *p. ii. 69, 75 and iv. iv. 23* and provide an attractive parallel with *Norway* (I. 64); but it fails to explain *pollax* (i.e. the hypothesis that *pollax* is an actor-reporter’s homonym demands the plural *Pollacks*). There is obviously no substance in the argument that only the Polack himself would be ‘sledded’, and to object that one man could not ‘smite’ the Polish army shows a neglect of common idiom (cf. Judges iii.13, ‘he . . . went and smote Israel’).

The difficulty of reconciling the *parle* of I. 65 with smiting foes has I think been much exaggerated. Adams improbably suggests that King Hamlet may have struck the Polish king ‘with his glove or hand’. Others remark that *frown’d*, implying the vizor up, is more compatible with parley than with fighting, but the reverse is surely true of *on the ice*. And the frown itself, traditional of Mars (cf. *t. ii. 230 n.*), is as much emblematic as realistic. It does not merely describes the warlike mien, but suggests the warlike action: as the ‘armour’ when he ‘combated’ (II. 63–4), so the frown when he ‘smote’. Kettredge explains, ‘The parley broke up in a battle, in which the King smote (routed) the Polanders’. But I suspect that *parle* itself may imply a more than verbal encounter. For although I can cite no parallel for such a use of *parle*, Shakespeare more than once uses the verb *speak*, in similar understatement, to mean ‘engage in combat’. In *Coriolanus* the reply to ‘Has our general met the enemy?’ is ‘They lie in view, but have not spoke as yet’ (I. iv. 4); and Antony, in defiance of Pompey’s navy, says ‘We’ll speak with thee at sea’ (*Ant. ii. vi. 25*). Was it not this kind of speaking that took place in the *parle* on the ice?

1.1.91. *Did forfeit . . . all*] All those his lands, if strictly interpreted, should include Fortinbras’s Norwegian dominions; but it is not likely to trouble us that by one of Shakespeare’s little inconsistencies Norway continues as an apparently independent kingdom (I. ii; ii. ii). *All* may derive from Belleforest, who, however, applies it to the treasure (*toutes les richesses*) in the defeated warrior’s ships. (See Intro., p. 93.) The difficulty, if it is one, arises from transferring the forfeit to lands; it can hardly be resolved by supposing (with Honigmann, *Stratford-upon-Avon Studies*, 5, p. 134) that ‘lands which he stood seiz’d of’ could mean merely ‘lands . . . seized . . . in war’; nor (with M. Coyle, *N&Q*, ccxiv, 118–19) that ‘all’ may refer only to lands ‘against the which’ Hamlet gaged an equivalent portion of his. The text, conveniently or not, is specific: all the lands he possessed.

1.1.96. *the same coun’nant*] Some editors adopt the Q2 comart, which Malone explained as a ‘joint bargain’. Though it is hard to
succession in some ambiguity, it is clear that he became king with public consent. The play does not question the legality of his title, even though it also regards the Prince of Denmark as the future king. See i.iii.20-4, iii.154. At i.ii.109 the King publicly nominates Hamlet as his successor; but this is not necessarily incompatible with the principle of election, in which the Prince’s hereditary status and ‘the voice of the King’ (iii.ii.32–3) would be important. Jas. Howell in 1632 refers to the eldest son of the Danish king as ‘King elect of Denmark’, explaining that ‘though that Crown be purely elective, yet for these three last Kings, they wrought so with the people, that they got their eldest sons chosen, and declared before their death!’ (Familiar Letters, ed. Jacobs, p. 294). From the reference to the Queen as jointress (l.9) Dover Wilson infers that Gertrude had a life-interest in the crown, and it may be that Shakespeare had in mind how in earlier versions of the story Hamlet’s father acquired the throne by marriage; but the rights he accords Gertrude as dowager he is content not to define. What is clear is that Claudius became king before taking his wife ‘to wife’ but consolidated his position by a prudent marriage.

1.i.11. With an auspicious and a dropping eye] It was proverbially said of the false man that he looks up with one eye and down with the other (e.g. Ferguson’s Scottish Proverbs, ed. Beveridge, Scot. Text Soc., p. 56). This was a variant of the ancient proverb, To laugh with one eye and weep with the other (Tilley E 248), which was traditionally applied to Fortune (as in Chaucer, Book of the Duchess, II.633–4) in indication of her fickleness. See B. White, ‘Claudius and Fortune’, Anglia, lxxvii, 204–7. But though this may give the phrase, from Claudius’s lips, an ironic undertone, it is a mistake to suppose that in itself it proclaims him hypocrite. In Elyot’s Governour (ii. ch. 12) a woman yields her maidenhead ‘with an eye half laughing half mourning’ while affirming constancy; and Paulina ‘had one eye declined for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled’ (Wint. v.ii.72–3). The idea of Fortune has suggested ‘auspicious’ for the happy eye and the ‘scale’ of l.13; for the king as Fortune’s surrogate, cf. esp. iii.iii.17–22. For dropping, downcast, cf. Ferguson and Wint. above.

1.i.65. more than kin, and less than kind] Most commentators, not unreasonably, take these words to apply, like cousin and son, to Hamlet himself. But some, justly stressing the unnaturalness as well as the hostility denoted by less than kind, apply them to Claudius. The difference is perhaps not greatly material; for what Hamlet seizes on in the words cousin and son is the relationship they signify. His rejoinder is therefore best applied, I think, to both himself and Claudius, or rather to the relation in which they stand to one another. A ‘cousin’ is ‘kin’ but a ‘son’ is ‘more’; and Hamlet’s resentment at being made Claudius’s son as well as nephew glances at the incestuous marriage which has created this ‘more than’ natural relationship. Kind is often used as a near-synonym for kin, as in Gorbovus, i.ii.18, ‘In kind a father, not in kindliness’. But the distinction there between kind and kindliness approximates to the one Shakespeare makes between kin and kind. Both words refer to the members of one family, but whereas kin has regard only to the fact of relationship, kind has regard also to its manifestation in a community and mutuality of feeling. Cf. kindless, ii.ii.577, void of natural feeling; Bastard, Epigrams, 1598, iii.29, ‘Never so many cousins; so few kind’. The human paradox that kin are not always kind is often expressed in Elizabethan literature (cf. Tilley K 98), and the different meanings of kind are a favourite source of word-play. Instances are given by Kittredge and others. The adjective kind, in its Elizabethan use, included the modern sense (‘benevolent’), but often retained the strong primary meaning of ‘natural’, and especially ‘showing feelings natural among blood relations’ (cf. Lear’s ‘unkind’ daughters). Even so, the usual interpretation of the present passage, which takes kind as an adjective, instead of a noun in antithesis with kin, necessarily weakens its force.

1.i.67. in the sun] (1) Although to Schmidt sunshine suggests ‘careless idleness’ (‘I am more careless and idle than I ought to be’), the obvious meaning of the metaphor is that Hamlet, with the melancholic’s characteristic preference for the shade, objects to the brightness into which he is brought, whether it be the glare of public notice (cf. Caldecott, ‘I am torn prematurely from my sorrows, and thrown into the broad glare of the sun’), the gaiety of the Court, or, more poetically, the sunshine of the King’s favour. (2) Reinforcing this, is an unmistakable glancing at the sun as a royal emblem (cf. H4 i.ii.150ff.): Hamlet hints that he is too much in the King’s presence. Cf. the similar word-play at ii.ii.184: ‘walk i’th sun’, come into the prince’s presence. (3) There is an obvious pun on son (l.64), supported, as Dover Wilson notes, by the Q2 spelling. Cf. R3 i.1.2, ‘this sun of York’ (Q1 sonne, F Son). Hamlet finds this relationship ‘too much’ for him and Claudius is making ‘too much’ of it (making him more
his 'son' than he really is). 'Hamlet bitterly refuses the title which the King has emphasized' (Kittredge), and the King's further persuasions (II. i. 13-15) are rejected in advance. An echo of the proverb 'Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun!' (cf. Lr ii. ii. 156-7), first heard by Johnson, is surely somewhat faint. For the use and interpretation of the proverb see Tilley, *Elinz Proverb Lore* (no. 287); P. L. Carver, *MLR*, xxv, 478-81. From its implication of passing from good to worse a host of commentators have exerted a reference to Hamlet's present degradation, and in particular to his having been turned out from the place Heaven gave him and deprived of the throne. But Hamlet's wit is less recondite than theirs. The curious may consult the 43 meanings extracted from the phrase in E. Le Comte, *Poets' Riddles*, ch. 1.

I. i. 113. *Wittenberg*] This German university, founded in 1502, had become famous through its association with Luther, Melanchthon, and the reformed religion. But to note with Dover Wilson that Hamlet's university was Protestant is less important than to learn from Brandes that it was the favourite university of Danes studying abroad. (Cf. i. ii. 126 n.) In the decade 1586-95 it had two students named Rosenkrantz and one Gyldenstjerne (Dollerup, p. 128). Its name was well known to the Elizabethans and had been familiarized in the theatre by Dr Faustus. Samuel Lewkenor (*A Discourse of Foreign Cities*) described it in 1600 as a 'learned seminary of the arts' in which 'many worthy writers have ... received their education'.

I. i. 129. *sullied*] The most debated reading in the play in recent years. Earlier editors, with their preference for *F*, naturally adopted *solid*, though Furnivall defended the *Q* *sullied* in the sense of 'assailed' and Furness rendered the conjecture *sullied*, which also occurred to Tennyson (*SQ*, xi, 490) and which Dowden thought might 'be right'. Dover Wilson's establishment of Q2 as the more authoritative text brought *sullied* into favour (see *MSH*, pp. 307-15; Greg, *Principles of Emendation*, p. 25; Bowers, *SS*, 9, 44-8). Seven other Shakespearean instances of the word include two with the *a* spelling: *Ham.* i. i. 40, *sallies* (*Q2*); *LLL* v. ii. 352, 'pure as the unsullied lily' (*Q*, *F* 1). Cf. also Dekker, etc., *Patient Grissill*, t. i. 12, 'sally not the morning with foul looks'. So whereas Dover Wilson took *sallied* as a misreading of 'sullied', it is reasonably regarded, Kökeritz notwithstanding (*Studia Neophilologica*, xxx, 3-10), as an alternative form (*Crow*, *Essays and Studies*, n.s. viii, 8-9; Bowers, loc. cit.). *Solid* has obvious (too obvious?) apt-

ness in the context and it too has the support of Shakespearean usage: 2H4 iii. i. 48, 'that one might ... see ... the continent, *Weary of solid firmness, melt itself Into the sea*'; *Troil.* i. iii. 113. S. Weiss found it consistent with Shakespearean patterns of associated imagery (*SQ*, x, 219-27), and S. Warhaft related it to the essential characteristic of the melancholy humour (*ELH*, xxviii, 21-30). Briefly, melancholy is the cold dry humour, and 'of this coldness and dryness riseth hardness whereof the flesh of melancholy persons is' (*Bright*, p. 128). In *Shr.* (Ind. ii. 129) melancholy is associated with the concealing of the blood; and 'of the concealing of the blood' the flesh, according to Burton, is composed (i. i. 2(3)). Melancholy among the humours thus corresponds to earth among the elements, and its remedy is for the excess of earth to *melt* into water, which in turn may *resolve* into vapour. But see ii. 199-200, *resolve*; and while all this may illuminate the passage, its support for *solid* would be stronger if the word actually occurred in Warhaft's illustrative quotations. The significance he attaches to *solid* is already implicit in *flesh*. And, just to show how one may argue either way, the alchemical transmutation of the baser element (*flesh*) into the purer (*dw!*) has been held to support *sullied* (*ES*, lxx, 508-9). Though 'too solid flesh' escapes tautology, *sullied* enlarges the meaning as *solid* does not. With the thought cf. (from the poem in Tottel's *Miscellany* beginning 'The life is long, that loathsomely doth last') 'Wherefore with Paul let all men wish, and pray *To be dissolv'd of this foul fleshy mass*' (II. 37-8). The suggestion of contamination and self-disgust begins an important dramatic motif (cf. *MSH*, pp. 313-15). The textual evidence for *sullied*, moreover, cannot be dismissed. For *sallied* is less likely to be a corruption of *solid* than the other way about, and though *Q2* may have derived it from *Q1*, this suggests that *solid* did not occur in *Q2*'s manuscript authority, while *Q1* is against its having been familiar in performance (though if Chapman, *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, v. iv. 7-9 is an echo, it must presently have become so). Further, the fact that *Q2* *sallied* here and *sallies* at n. i. 40 occur in the work of different composers argues for a manuscript origin. It is sometimes contended that Shakespeare would not use *too too* with a participle; but *OED* shows it often used with verbs, and *Q1*, 'too much grieu'd and sullied', shows that a participle was in the reporter's recollection. The possibility of an intended play on both words cannot be ruled out; but what happens perhaps is that by a natural mental process the word (*sullied*) which gives at once the clue to the emotion which the soliloquy will express, brings to
mind its near-homonym (solid), which helps to promote the imagery of melt, thaw, resolve, dew. Those who accept some F variants as authentic Shakespearean alternatives (cf. Honigmann, The Stability of Shakespeare's Text, pp. 70, 134-6) are likely to find an example here. (But see Intro., p. 43n.)

1. i.140. Hyperion to a satyr] The contrast between the two brothers is repeatedly stressed by Belleforest along with the fact that the Queen has allied herself with the worse who has killed the better. See Intro., pp. 91-2. This becomes immensely more significant in Shakespeare: the antithesis here between the sun-god, with his majestic beauty, and a creature half man half beast epitomizes in the two brothers the complex nature of man—like a god and like a beast—which will be a theme of Hamlet's later reflections (cf. ii.ii.303-8; iv.iv.33-9; and l. 150 l.rn below). The imagery enables the basic situation of the play to appear as one in which the beast in man has destroyed the god and now reigns in his kingdom. See Intro., pp. 129-32. Even in this first soliloquy the contrast between the two brother-kings (cf. l. 152) is not less important, though less often emphasized, than the revelation of Hamlet's state of mind and his attitude to his mother. Structurally the soliloquy effects a link between the presentation of one king in the preceding part of the scene and the description of the other in the dialogue which follows. The godlike attributes which Hamlet sees in his father are elaborated at iii.iv.55-62, when the contrast is resumed. The idea of man as partaking of both god and beast which thus underlies the play is very much the Renaissance concept. No single illustration can suffice, but cf. Pico della Mirandola, De hominis dignitate, and especially the opening pages: 'Neither heavenly nor earthly thou canst grow downward into the lower natures which are brute. Thou canst again grow upward from thy soul's reason into the higher natures which are divine.' 'If you see anyone ... delivered over to the sensus, it is a brute not a man that you see. If you come upon a philosopher winnowing out all things by right reason, he is a heavenly not an earthly animal.' 'We are made similar to brutes and mindless beasts of burden. But ... as Asaph the prophet says, 'Ye are all gods, and sons of the most high' ' (trans. C. G. Wallis, 1940, pp. 5-7).

1. ii.150. wants discourse of reason] The faculty of reason was traditionally recognized as the crucial difference between man and the beasts, for the classical statement of which see Cicero, De Officiis, t.iv.11. This lends further significance to the Hyperion-satyre comparison above (l. 140). It was through his reason that man could perceive the relation of cause and effect and thus connect past with future, whereas the beast, precisely because it lacks reason, must live largely in the present moment. Hence the axiom that its mourning would be brief. Cf. iv.iv.33-9; and for Gertrude's failure to be guided by reason, iii. iv.88.

Discourse of reason was a regular term, occurring also in Troil, ii.ii.116, as well as in, e.g., Bright's Treatise of Melancholy (dedication), Holland's Plutarch (Moral Virtue), Florio's Montaigne, the translation of La Primaudaye's The French Academy (pp. 266, 278). For other instances, see Boswell, and OED discourse sb. 2b. While sometimes apparently used as a cliché for 'reason', it properly denotes the faculty or process of reasoning from premises to conclusions. Discourse alone is also used in the same sense (see iv.iv.36). The 'discursive process' which was a property of man was distinguished from the higher 'intuitive reason' of angelic beings. In Par. Last (v.469ff.) Raphael tells Adam that 'Reason is [the Soul's] being, Discursive or intuitive: discourse is oftest yours, the latter most is ours.' But the difference, as Milton says, is of degree rather than kind.

1. ii.187. all in all] Often taken to mean, as in modern use, 'all things considered', 'on the whole'. But when Shakespeare uses all in all adverbially, it implies not qualification but intensification (= 'entirely'), as in H5 1.1.42; Oth. iv.i.68, 262. The sense here is not that of weighing one thing against another but of accumulating them all. In iii.iv.55-62 it is the accumulation of perfections that assures 'a man'. Hamlet's father, then, may be taken as a man complete in every particular, and so as the sum and pattern of excellence. Cf. Mabbe, Celestina (perhaps an echo), where a list of perfections is brought to a climax in 'Take him all together, and for all in all, you shall not find such another'. This sense of completeness or perfection is borne out by other Elizabethan instances: e.g. Stubbes, Anatomy of Abuses (New Shakspere Soc., i. 29) 'he is all in all; yea, so perfect ...'; R. Carew, The Excellency of the English Tongue (Smith, Eliz. Critical Essays, ii.293), 'Will you have all in all for prose and verse? take the miracle of our age Sir Philip Sidney'. See, for an illuminating discussion, D. Barrett in Neophilologische Mitteilungen, lxii, 164-8. Cf. Tilley A133, 'All in all and all in every part', a proverb which T. W. Baldwin (Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Poems, pp. 157ff.) shows to derive from the neo-Platonic doctrine of the soul.