## Minds at work: writing, acting, watching, reading *Hamlet*

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What is consciousness? The word was only beginning to come into English at the end of the 16th century—a relatively late arrival for a term that designates such a fundamental part of human existence—but from the outset it encompassed a range of separate meanings. As *The Oxford English Dictionary* puts it:

The word has been used to cover a wide variety of mental phenomena, being applied both to whole organisms and to particular mental states and processes. Accounts differ in two main ways: (i) as to whether consciousness is transitive or intransitive, i.e. whether it is primarily an awareness of something distinct from the conscious subject or primarily a state of the conscious subject; (ii) as to whether it involves self-consciousness, i.e. awareness of one’s own states, even if one is also conscious of things distinct from oneself. An organism’s consciousness may thus range from a simple capacity to sense and respond to surroundings, and this to varying degrees and in different ways, to an awareness of its own awareness.

The English word ‘consciousness’ owes its existence to Latin *conscientia,* which likewise has a range of meanings, including: shared knowledge; consciousness or feeling; and in particular, consciousness of right and wrong, or ‘conscience’.[[1]](#endnote-1) Since awareness of self in early modern Christian minds was likely to be deeply bound up with awareness of inevitable original sin, it should be no surprise that *OED*’s earliest citation for the adjective ‘conscious’—‘A prety practise to finde out a naughty concious Byshop’ (John Foxe, 1573)—illustrates the definition, ‘awareness of one’s own wrongdoing’ (*OED* A.1). Thus, although the contributors to this book have amply demonstrated Shakespeare’s interest in the phenomenon of consciousness as variously understood by later philosophers and scientists, the creator of Hamlet, one of the most famously introspective and reflective characters ever imagined in literature, never uses the term. He used the much older word ‘conscience’ instead.

 Although ‘conscience’ now almost exclusively denotes a person’s sense of right and wrong, the fact that it is usually accompanied by the modifiers ‘good’ or ‘bad’ suggests that it need have no moral injunction or coloring in itself. When Shakespeare was writing, it regularly signified innermost thoughts and feelings, as well as knowledge of ideas and things external to oneself—all concepts that would now go under the term consciousness. In early usage, the two words seem to have been interchangeable. But in the days when editors attempted to supply hard and fast annotations to words, the phrase ‘Thus conscience does make cowards of us all’ (*Hamlet,* 3.1.83[[2]](#endnote-2)) was the subject of debate: did Shakespeare intend conscience in the moral sense, *or* consciousness?

**Consciousness, conscience and the cognitive value of ambiguity**

Confronted by ambiguous visual images such as the duck/rabbit, the Rubin vase, or simple drawings of a cube or staircase, in which the same lines describe two different planes, our perception of what we see flicks from one interpretation to the other. The two images cannot be held simultaneously because the brain is trying to find a single ‘correct’ solution. Except, of course, in these cases there is *no* correct solution. This phenomenon led Semir Zeki to a ‘neurological definition’ of ambiguity: ‘not vagueness or uncertainty, but rather certainty, the certainty of different scenarios, each one of which has equal validity’.[[3]](#endnote-3) Zeki’s sanguinity in the face of irreconcilable certainties, contrasts with the approach to ambiguity often encountered in literary studies, where critics have either disagreed about single meanings, or tried to reconcile the differences in the hope of finding coherence, and where the very process of explication can have the effect of bleeding one meaning into another.[[4]](#endnote-4) Thus, nearly forty years ago, Norman Rabkin explored the duck/rabbit effect in *Henry V*, whose eponymous hero has so divided critics, concluding that it

reveals the conflicts between the private selves with which we are born and the public selves we must become, between our longing that authority figures can be like us and our suspicion that they must have traded away their inwardness for the sake of power.[[5]](#endnote-5)

Rabkin’s thoughtful article shows its origins in his disquiet that the play is capable of generating such opposed meanings. I shall take a slightly different approach to the same phenomenon by triangulating three distinct sources of creativity: the writer’s, the actor/reader’s, and the spectator/reader’s. I shall argue that Shakespeare employs a range of techniques for creating irreconcilable, alternating differences in meaning, from the simple pun to the multiple points of view engendered by the through-lines of different characters, whereby audiences can legitimately understand ‘more than is set down’ (*Hamlet* 3.2.38), and that the conscious and unconscious effects of this invitation to discursiveness constitute part of the fascination and the value in Shakespeare.

 If, therefore, instead of wondering which of the two meanings of conscience Hamlet (or indeed Shakespeare) intends in the line quoted above, we allow his statement to mean both things *alternately*, something rather profound happens—and a further ambiguity. We slip into a quandary that is analogous to but not identical with Hamlet’s own dilemma, and this succession of different thoughts sets up a dialogue in our brains that is capable of questioning what he says.

 In the phrasing of this line, the twin concept conscience/consciousness is juxtaposed with ‘makes cowards’, and connected by repeated ‘k’ sounds. In the wider context of this play, the word ‘cowards’ comes to carry at least two specific, contrasting, connected, and again therefore, alternating connotations: the failure to take decisive action; and the fear of the supernatural, specifically of ghosts. The line as a whole thus ‘makes’ a third concept: that moral conscience is not fixed, but something *constructed* in and through thought and imagination, and subject to external pressure. It seems moral relativism is not a modern invention, and Hamlet himself has already stated: ‘there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so’ (*Hamlet,* 2.2.249).

 *Hamlet* the play is full of ambiguous sights and events, which prompt Hamlet the character to raise a succession of questions: What is the correct interpretation of the spirit he has seen? Can he trust his friends? His beloved? His mother? But again, the meaning of the play in the minds of its spectators can be more than the sum of its parts. Even though Hamlet questions the identity of the ghost, and therefore the validity of the basic information it imparts (that there has been a murder and that Claudius is responsible), nowhere does he question the idea that revenge is a necessary response to murder, *provided* the perpetrator is correctly identified. None of the characters does. Even Horatio, though he does not appear to like it, accepts that ‘Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to’t’ for their part in the attempted assassination of his friend (5.2.56). But the play as a whole presents a succession of unintended catastrophic effects—on Polonius, and Ophelia, as well as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—resulting from Hamlet’s bungled attempts at revenge. It also shows the underhand, unthinking and equally catastrophic vengeful behavior of Laertes, and the brutal revenge killing of aged King Priam by Pyrrhus in the player’s speech. Its structure gives us a range of different terrible revenge scenarios, and therefore plenty of material with which to question the ethics and effectiveness of private revenge taking—should we wish to do so. Not all readers or spectators have taken up that invitation (rather the reverse in fact) but the option is embedded in the play, and would have appealed to James I, who for practical reasons of state security as well as religious precept declared revenge unlawful.[[6]](#endnote-6)

 Shakespeare had used the conscience/coward juxtaposition before, in Richard III’s ‘Conscience is but a word that cowards use, / Devised at first to keep the strong in awe’ (5.3.309-10). Here it alliterates with ‘keep’, and denotes a method for restricting the will of powerful individuals. Richard imagines and tries to create a world where strength is the only arbiter. But he comes up against the collective consciousness of the citizens of London who dumbly refuse to endorse his kingship—‘The citizens are mum, say not a word’ (3.7.3)—before finally meeting armed resistance. The structure of this play does not, ultimately, invite its audience to adopt Richard’s moral outlook, but its humor has allowed us to travel with him fairly far down the road towards an acceptance of tyranny—trying it out for size, as it were—before rejecting it. Part of the delight of that play, of course, lies in being let in to Richard’s conscious adoption of disguise: the wooer; the loving uncle; the inept soldier in ‘rotten armour’; the devout private man, glimpsed between two priests, apparently a man of conscience, but a conscience that can be assumed or discarded at will.

 Shakespeare’s single use of the word ‘conscionable’ (in Iago’s description of Cassio in *Othello*) is therefore also indicative: ‘A knave [. . .] no farther conscionable, than in putting on the mere form of civil and hand-seeming’ (*Othello*, 2.1.239). Normally defined as acting according to one's (good) conscience, Shakespeare here capitalizes on the grammatical form, conscience + able, to suggest that conscience in the moral sense is something which is capable of being deliberately, *consciously*, put on, acted or performed.

 In all these instances, Shakespeare appears to be giving conscience a sense of intention, even ‘intentionality’. Defined in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* as ‘the power of minds to be about, to represent, or to stand for things, properties and states of affairs’, intentionality was introduced as a phenomenological definition of consciousness in the 19th century by Franz Brentano although it had been borrowed from scholasticism’s ontological proof for the existence of God.

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself.**[[7]](#endnote-7)**

In this definition, human consciousness is much more than the animal’s awareness of the present moment. Rather, it is the ability to imagine or conjure up an image or concept of something in the brain that is not currently before us in actuality. It represents our ability to live outside our present time and space: to imagine a future, as well as recall a past; and to think ourselves into others’ shoes—something that has been termed Theory of Mind.[[8]](#endnote-8)

 As a maker of fictions, and an actor, Shakespeare was intensely aware of the paradox that emotional and cognitive reality can be derived from actual inexistence. The mere player, strutting his stuff upon the stage, can become for that time a very Macbeth, contravening morality in the fictional story, and social class in the person of the actor through his assumption of words, accent, gesture, and costume. In impugning the authenticity of Cassio’s conscience, and presenting him, with his finger-kissing Florentine ways, as no more than an actor (2.1.166-76), Iago validates his own assumed identity. Iago’s rough, even lewd, speech, his confessed readiness to ‘yerk’ others under the ribs, and his sterling service ‘At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds’ (1.2.5; 1.1.29), reinforce the notion that he is devoid of circumspection, policy, or deceit. To all the characters in the play, not just Othello, he *is* ‘honest Iago’; the utterly dependable comrade-in-arms; the man you would rely on in a tight spot. He embodies a conception of something he is not.

 Embodying is the key term here. For although consciousness may be manifested by the immanence of inexistent objects in the mind, its development begins (in both the timescales of evolution and the growth of the individual human baby) with the body: the involuntary and preconscious physical responses to external stimuli; the flight/fight mechanism that kicks in involuntarily a split second before we become aware of it; the gradual development of the individual’s sense of their body and its boundary with the rest of the world; and only finally the conscious modification of stance and behavior appropriate to specific situations.[[9]](#endnote-9) Even Iago’s wife is deceived by his assumed persona, despite her less than ideal marriage. It is only the audience who know that the image he presents is a mirage, because only we have heard him soliloquize his thoughts, his ‘conscience’: i.e. both his inner feelings (of resentment and jealousy), and his acutely aware thinking about situations and about what makes other people tick.

**Theatre, Consciousness, and Theory of Mind**

Through its very form, drama engenders thinking about Theory of Mind without us having to put any other label to the theory than the familiar childhood term, ‘play’. Playing can be a way of exploring ideas and states of being that are outside one’s own experience, even outside the confines of one’s own society and culture, or of one’s particular status in that society. I have elsewhere quoted John Davies reflecting on the phenomenon of standing in the gallery of a theatre to watch a tragedy, but it is useful to do so again here since his analysis of audience engagement is so perceptive:

So see I others sorrowes with delight

Though others sorrowes do but make me sad:

But plagues to see, which on our selues might light,

Free from their fall, makes nature, grieving, gladd.[[10]](#endnote-10)

In this poem, the sensation of leaning against one of the posts holding up the wooden frame of the building reminds Davies of his physical presence in the theatre, and therefore of the separation between his own life and those of the characters represented on the stage. Through this awareness of his own body, and his location in the building’s ‘middle room’, he remains actively conscious of his own middling station in life. He maintains a dual perspective, able to revel in the extreme predicaments of the characters, because of his secure sense of self. It is an almost Brechtian understanding of theatre, but with an Aristotelian moral rather than a political gloss, as he reflects on the fall of princes and the dangerous implications of being ‘great’.

 An experienced dramatist will achieve a more consistent effect—one that is not dependent on the accidental physical discomfort of his audience—by writing dislocation into the dialogue. Perhaps the most important aspect of an artist’s job is to make the familiar strange, and Shakespeare’s plays are stuffed with what Brecht called *verfremsdung* (literally for-strangering) effects: elements that surprise, that seem the same and turn out to be different; comic moments in the midst of tragedy; tragic passages in the middle of comedy; comments on the action directly addressed to the audience; spectacle; and unnaturalistic imagery and rhetoric. These are consciousness-raising devices for an audience. They remind us that we are still ourselves in a theatre, and invite us to bring personal perspectives to the action. That personal interest in what *we* would do, which may well be different from what we see enacted, is probably the only reason why we would voluntarily spend time watching a bunch of other people pretending to be fictional people. Something in the experience hits a nerve in us even in less extreme situations than that commented upon by Hamlet when he says:

 I have heard

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul that presently

They have proclaimed their malefactions; (*Hamlet*, 2.2.584-8)

**Creating character**

If the fascination in watching a play is bound up with finding something in it that resonates deep within us, similar personal identification is inevitably part of the creation process for actors, and also for writers, who, whether they are writing drama or fiction, need to think themselves into the various ‘states of mind’ of their characters. Unfortunately, while classical and renaissance handbooks on rhetoric are common, overt descriptions of how early modern writers and actors set about the task of creating characters and making them interact are rather thin on the ground. The fact that Shakespeare puts his most famous description of poetic imagination into the mouth of a mythical ancient Greek soldier might give us pause to ask whether he himself thought it an adequate explanation. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (5.1.1-22), Theseus pronounces on the process of poetic creation in terms that are reminiscent of the Platonic mystical triangulation of divine madness, love, and poetry, and prosaically, as befits a soldier, equates poets with madmen; ‘The lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact.’ (5.1.7-8).[[11]](#endnote-11) To give him his due, the plays to which he has been exposed have been hand-me-down conventional works, performed by people who stammered in front of his greatness. But what both he and Hippolyta really appreciate is something we might term authenticity, whether in writing which gives ‘a local habitation and a name’ to things ‘howsoever strange and admirable’ (5.1.17; 27), or in the integrity of the performer:

 I will hear that play;

For never anything can be amiss

When simpleness and duty tender it. (5.1.81-3)

 Even now, with myriads of books on the writer’s and actor’s craft, the process of character creation tends to be presented as something of a mystery—even by actors such as Alan Bates, often associated with very down-to-earth parts—although it is a mystery that is always combined with personal engagement:

It’s very hard to explain. Acting is inexplicable. [. . .] I cannot really tell you what it’s all about. You’ve got to find your own way, you’ve got to take from what makes sense to you, what’s real to you, what applies to you, what works for you, and apply it to who you are.[[12]](#endnote-12)

It is not just that an actor needs to find a corner of their own personality on which to build a character, and work out from there, but that they often report feelings of total personal exposure even while presenting a character whose actions are so alien to them as to require a great leap of imagination. As the inimitable Eileen Atkins puts it:

You shouldn’t be an actor unless you have a huge imagination: you shouldn’t be an actor unless you’re willing to show everything that’s in you—everything. I’ve been on stage stark naked covered with shit [. . .] so I’m not somebody who’ s holding back, here.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Not ‘holding back’ includes not censoring oneself with too much consciously directed thought, although of course one still has to be sufficiently self aware, and aware of others on the stage, so as not to bump into them physically, or indeed metaphorically, in the sense of stealing their scene. Alan Bates again:

You just have to keep yourself very free, very loose so that something can happen, even if it’s not what happened the night before, even if it’s not what you thought would happen. Something must remain alive and flexible.[[14]](#endnote-14)

In much the same way, novelist Paul Auster describes the process of writing as being in the grip of the story, rather than being in control of it:

I rarely know exactly what I’m doing. I don’t work from a prearranged outline. I have a general sense of the shape of the story, who the characters are, and a sense of the beginning, the middle, and the end.

 And yet once I start to write, things begin to change quite rapidly, and I’ve never written a book that ended up the way I thought it would be when I started. For me, I find the book in the process of writing it. Which makes it a great adventure.[[15]](#endnote-15)

Just as many actors start with a small visual detail like a character’s nervous tick or physical characteristic, so novelist and short story writer Richard Bausch describes the process thus:

I start writing with an image or a voice, but I don’t know anything when I start. The only thing I know is that I’m starting. And I learn it as I go. That’s why it’s so hard, you have to learn all over again, because each one is different [. . .] The real artistry comes with rewriting. And that’s where the real work is. But at no time is it a rational thing that I’m doing. It’s at the level of an animal smelling blood. It’s that kind of knowledge. And if it does not surprise me, I don’t trust it.

 When you’re dreaming it up the first time, you are using the side of you that looks out your eyes when you wake up from a nightmare and for an instant don’t remember what species you are. That’s the part of you you’re dreaming it out of. Then when you’ve dreamed it up, you go through it again and again and again, using more and more the side of you that figures out how to open up the gate when you’ve got two bags of groceries in your arms and you don’t want to put them down. And that’s really all there is to it. It’s simple in the same way that virtue is simple, which means, it’s damned near impossible to do.[[16]](#endnote-16)

In one way, the writer is subject to the internal dynamics of the piece, ‘dreaming it up’ rather than taking some pre-determined path or plan. But equally, in going through it ‘again and again’ he or she has to be consciously aware of structure and technique. Similarly, in his preface to *The Paradox of Acting*, by the 18th-century revolutionary French philosopher, encyclopaedist and art critic Denis Diderot*,* the great 19th-century actor Henry Irving states:

It is necessary to this art that the mind should have, as it were, a double consciousness, in which all the emotions proper to the occasion may have full sway, while the actor is all the time on the alert for every detail of his method.[[17]](#endnote-17)

Even in cases where the cultural artifacts are stylistically, geographically and historically worlds apart, descriptions of the human process of creation can be uncannily similar. Thus the 13th–century Japanese No actor, Zeami, describes the relationship between the actor’s interiority and his practiced skill:

The essentials of our art lie in the spirit. They represent a true enlightenment established through art. Thus, if an actor knows how to create interest and can perform from an understanding of that spirit he will gain a reputation as a fine actor even if he has not mastered every aspect of his craft. [. . .] mastery seems to depend on the actor’s own state of self-understanding and the sense of style with which he has been blessed. Real discernment of the nature of the differences between external skill and interior understanding forms the basis of true mastery.[[18]](#endnote-18)

 Both Zeami and Diderot are arguing that the actor’s art demands the practice of great skill in the imitation of character, but that while the performer may gain a certain success by immersing himself in the emotion of the character, the purpose in acting is not so much for the *actor* to feel emotion, as for the actor to enable the *audience* to feel it. As Diderot puts it, ‘Because people come not to see tears, but to hear speeches that draw tears; because this truth of nature is out of tune with the truth of convention’.[[19]](#endnote-19) Great actors thus balance their involvement with the character with a conscious awareness both of themselves and their technique, and of the state of mind of the audience.[[20]](#endnote-20) Actor Harriet Walter states:

If the actor enters each moment truthfully, the audience will not be looking for tears. They will see them if they want to even if there are none (and there probably will be by now anyway). Your truthfulness lets the audience in to do the crying for you.[[21]](#endnote-21)

 While the quotations above are subtly different, and undoubtedly talking about very different types of cultural production, there runs through them all a grasping after a single, though uncertain, concept. For Zeami, the business of creation arouses a sense of ‘enlightenment’, for Bates it’s about being free, for Atkins, going beyond herself and remaining open, for Walters and many other actors, it’s about ‘truthfulness’, while Bausch draws an analogy with impossible virtue. There is therefore something here too that links the creation of character, of another state of mind, with one’s own conscience, but paradoxically, doing so unselfconsciously.

 At several points in the play of *Hamlet*, between the line about coward conscience with which I began, and its echo later in the play about ‘thinking too precisely on th' event— / A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom / And ever three parts coward’ (4.4.41-3), Shakespeare indicates that he may perhaps have shared Zeami’s and Diderot’s criticism of the over-emotional actor, the one who ‘out-Herods Herod’ but whose bravura display of emotion leaves his auditor unaffected:

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’s aspect

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!

(*Hamlet* 3.2.14; 2.2.544-50)

Such a show can, nevertheless, often go down well with a general audience seeking spectator sport rather than personal engagement, and throughout the 18th century in England, until well into the 19th, the popular test of a great Hamlet was his ability to match Thomas Betterton’s trick in turning as ‘white as his neckerchief’ on seeing the ghost for the first time—so much so that the Hamlet ‘start’ was pilloried in satire by Thomas Rowlandson and others.[[22]](#endnote-22) Ironically, Shakespeare goes on to make Hamlet here indulge in just that kind of excess, building up some 20 lines later (in the Folio text) to a screaming three syllables, ‘O vengeance’ (2.2.577), that are given an entire line to themselves, before the bathetic and humorous ‘Why, what an ass am I!’

 The great performer’s skill lies in not showing the working. This invisibility of technique is likewise stressed by musicians, where the appearance of unconscious effortlessness is actually the result of years of dedicated, conscious practice. Thus conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt insists that in the moment of performance, months of preparation concerning analysis of the rhetorical structure of the piece and its place in musicological and cultural history is forgotten, and he loses himself in feeling the music. Nevertheless that feeling is entirely grounded in the previous conscious intellectual engagement with the structure and cultural positioning of the composition, and crucially with the painstaking work done in rehearsal, explaining the intellectual basis for his musical choices to his orchestral musicians.

 In his groundwork for interpretation and performance of Beethoven’s 5th symphony, Harnoncourt stresses the importance of identifying the ‘rhetorical’ structure of the music:

I ask what Beethoven wanted to say and how I am to say this to people in the 21st century. [. . .] I ask myself *why* did Beethoven write a symphony in C minor? It’s a tonality associated with death and it’s a difficult key to compose in because the wind instruments at that time couldn’t play minor tonalities.

[. . .] And he uses instruments that were otherwise not used in symphonic music. Trombones, piccolo and contrabassoon hadn’t been used in symphonic music until then. So what’s it all about?[[23]](#endnote-23)

That question about ‘*why’* a creative artist might make surprising even difficult choices is relevant to all artistic creation, and acutely pertinent to Shakespearean structures with their mix of aural, oral, visual, and kinetic elements. The manner in which something is written, its rhetoric, is hugely productive of meanings, over and beyond the overt subject of the piece:

As opposed to univocal speech that would mean the same thing everywhere, rhetoric is always in brackets, whether that means it is a public statement subject to skepticism, a truth claim subject to counterevidence or counterargument, a law subject to contextual interpretation or historical revision, or even a poetic expression or image that “makes a world” and is therefore subject to remaking. Despite being embedded in relatively stable institutions, from the law to visual stereotypes, rhetoric always represents the possibility that things might be otherwise.[[24]](#endnote-24)

The rhetoric of a Shakespeare play comprises the conflicted desires and opinions expressed by juxtaposed characters and scenes; the patterns of language and the writer’s grammatical choices; the visual patterns of the staging, both that which is absolutely required by the words and that which is left to the production; and the gestures and intonation that those words excite in an actor. It cannot but suggest more to those witnessing a performance than is overtly set down. And if the creation of first the play and then the production are the result of a combination of conscious and unconscious ideas, worked over, tested, and revised in the process of rewriting and rehearsal, so the play and/or production will also work on the conscious and unconscious mind of its reader or spectator.

**Who’s there?**

Famously described as a man who ‘thinks too much’ or who ‘cannot make up his mind’, Hamlet also proverbially denotes the hole that appears whenever the main point of something is missing: ‘like *Hamlet* without the prince’. This concept arises because Hamlet is an outstanding example of a fictional character who really does appear to have a mind. People identify with him. There are probably more books on *Hamlet* than on any other Shakespeare play. Playing Hamlet is the pinnacle of aspiration for many actors, female as well as male,[[25]](#endnote-25) while in much of eastern Europe, before, during, and after the fall of communism, the character variously embodied a sense of the individual’s impotence in the face of overwhelming political power, and a search for individual and national identity.[[26]](#endnote-26)

 Shakespeare’s vivid simulation of a mind at work arises not just from what the character himself does and says, but from the writing of the entire play: our sense of Hamlet the character cannot exist without *Hamlet* the play. But even if we know the play well, we may not be fully aware of the way it sets out to create (from the moment it begins) an immanent Hamlet-ness in the minds of spectators. Because of this structure, Hamlet’s most famous line, ‘To be or not to be that is the question’ (3.1.56) need not be interpreted simply as contemplation of suicide, but rather as just one in an entire series of questions about the nature of existence, and about human capacity for reason, for action, and for change. If the soul is immortal as it is in Aristotelian as well as Christian thought, it is not capable of not being, and suicide is, logically, not so much ‘wrong’ as pointless.[[27]](#endnote-27) This is anticipated in the very first scene where characters are brought face to face with a manifestation from beyond the grave. They start by questioning whether what has been seen can exist, and end by debating what its presence means for existence in Denmark.

 Audience perceptions are jolted in the first phrase. We might assume that the soldier who questions ‘Who’s there?’ is the sentry, but in the next line we realize that it has been the relieving officer, Barnardo, who has challenged first. We might thereby sense that something is wrong or, again to anticipate Hamlet’s line in a later scene, ‘out of joint’. Our mental journey towards the acceptance of the probability of what we might deem to be impossible is carefully charted. We soon learn that Barnardo and Marcellus are expecting to see a ‘thing’ that should not be there. The entrance of Horatio re-injects some normality: he expects to see nothing at all. But we are made to experience his uncomfortable physical state. He is cold; he says so, and in all probability the actor will be performing the physical manifestations of coldness—stamping his feet, hugging his arms and drawing his coat closer to him. Although we cannot be consciously aware of it, the invention of the fMRI scanner has shown that the act of watching action (even imagining it) triggers the neurons that would be activated were we to be actually performing that action. The actor’s physical performance of being cold will therefore be played out in our brains as well as on the stage.[[28]](#endnote-28) Depending on the production, this unconscious physical response to his shivers is overlaid on what could have been—for the audience too—a consciously felt reaction of surprise at Barnardo’s opening line. There is a difference though: Horatio may wish to be elsewhere, but we have paid for our seat or our standing place—we want our money’s worth—and are also beginning to be hooked in by a desire to know what will happen next.

 Marcellus reports, ‘Horatio says ’tis but our fantasy, / And will not let belief take hold of him / Touching this dreaded sight’ (1.1.23-5). Shakespeare’s choice of the phrase ‘take hold’ is interesting. The word ‘conceive’ has the Latin root *con* + *capere*, to take. But the conception of a supernatural ‘thing’ is not something to be idly taken or admitted into the mind (*OED* II.6). On the contrary, it carries the danger of entirely taking hold *of* the mind. He refuses to admit such a dangerous thought. But within moments the ghost has appeared, and calm, sensible, educated Horatio is trembling, ‘Before my god I might not this believe / Without the sensible and true avouch / Of mine own eyes’ (1.1.56-8).

Whether we believe in ghosts or not, stage convention means that we accept that the actor playing ‘Ghost’ is on the same plain of reality as the actors playing all the other characters in the scene. We have seen it, and seen the reactions it has generated. This is simply how things are in this play world. The dramatist’s craft, as Aristotle tells us in what is perhaps his most important but most neglected contribution to the theory of drama, is to make the impossible seem probable: ‘a probable impossibility is to be preferred before an improbable possibility’.[[29]](#endnote-29) In this case, Shakespeare has helped us find it probable (for the purposes of the drama) because someone who has been set up for us as a ghost-skeptic now believes it too. Indeed there is so much doubt expressed in the rest of the scene about what is really going on in the earthly world they inhabit, that the simple presence of the spirit (though not yet its identity) is the one thing about which we can have certainty!

All the earthly characters in this scene are pretty hazy about the operation of their own society. Marcellus and Barnardo, two relatively ordinary soldiers, may be *aware* of preparations for war, but they do not know why these preparations are being made. In response to their question, ‘Who is’t that can inform me?’, Horatio confidently attempts to explain, ‘That can I’, but he too has no first-hand information and immediately resorts to rumor, ‘At least, the whisper goes so’, before stating Denmark’s common knowledge, ‘as you know’, that King Hamlet had been challenged to mortal combat by King Fortinbras of Norway. He puts a moral slant on that story heavily in favor of the Danes through reference to Fortinbras’s ‘emulate pride’ before stressing at considerable length that the wager (by which the loser would forfeit all his lands to the other) was fully legal and binding on both sides, ‘Well ratified by law and heraldry’ (1.1.79-87). That insistence on the legality of an extraordinary and disastrous challenge is essential because now ‘it doth well *appear’* (my emphasis) that young Fortinbras wants restitution—unreasonably, from the Danish point of view. He has, Horatio evocatively claims, ‘sharked up’ an army of ‘landless’ (F) and therefore perhaps ‘lawless’ (Q2) ‘resolutes’ and is seeking to invade Denmark:

and this *I take it*,

Is the main source of this our watch, and the chief head

Of this post-haste and rummage in the land. (1.1.98-107,my emphasis)

 Horatio’s story about ghostly premonitions before the death of Julius Caesar is missing from the F text, which nevertheless conveys the insidious fear that this specific wandering spirit, for which, significantly, they still do not have a positive identification, ‘bodes some strange eruption to our state’ (1.1.69). It is not just that Shakespeare is bringing the audience ‘up to speed’ with what is happening in the story—as we were probably all told at school. The function of the scene is to present us with a spirit about whose existence there is no doubt, although his identity is unknown, who both exhibits, and causes a range of emotions and sensations, expressed as physical, sometimes violent action. Horatio agrees they should ‘strike at it’, but their swords make no impression. Marcellus considers that they are doing it ‘wrong, being so majestical’, Barnardo states it was ‘about to speak, when the cock crew’, and Horatio describes it starting ‘like a guilty thing’ (1.1.140-8); three subtly different perceptions of what we too might, or might not, have seen. He then tells how he has ‘heard’ that the cock will send erring spirits back to their ‘confine’ and suggests that they have just witnessed proof of that: ‘the truth herein /This present object made probation’. Ironically, probation in this case is made firmer through a continued resort to common superstition: Marcellus adds ‘Some say’ the cock will customarily crow all night to herald the Christmas season, thereby divesting fairies and witches of their power to hurt. Horatio has heard this too but is doubtful: ‘So have I heard and do in part believe it’ (1.1.149-65). Carefully constructed holes in knowledge combine with contradictory impressions to give both characters and audience a complex phenomenological experience. We have seen and heard tangible human beings tell a variety of truths, stories, and myths. We have heard and seen them feel cold, and *not* feel the penetration of steel through spirit. The playing out of the scene has given us spectators a series of physical experiences of which we are mostly unconscious. But consciously, in any half decent production, we will be in the deliciously bifurcated state of inhabiting two worlds: the play world in which we may be experiencing feelings of human interest, sympathy, perhaps mild alarm; and our own world in which the usual moderate discomfort of being in a theatre mingles with whatever personal memories we have brought with us, and with private thoughts evoked by the language and the action.

We must assume that the thinking aloud that has gone on between the characters in this scene has given us accurate access to their supposed minds. We have no reason to doubt that they are telling the truth as they see it (or half believe it) when they talk about ghosts and cockerels. They have no reason to deceive each other and the fact that they disagree about the significance of cock crowing, without attempting to prove that the other is deliberately lying, enables us to entertain the idea that unusual beliefs about cocks (and ghosts) *can* be held in Elsinorean society, but not necessarily to the same extent by everyone. Nevertheless, whatever our beliefs before we entered the theatre, we know that for the purposes of the play, we have seen a spirit. We as 21st- century spectators and critics do not have to resort to some blanket (and misleading) postulation about the beliefs of Elizabethans. The range of beliefs, and more significantly the doubts and contradictions expressed by the characters (seemingly without always being aware that they are expressing contradictions) sets up the moral and cognitive dynamic of the play.

In this scene, Shakespeare’s love of the pun not only complicates what we hear, but what an actor might choose to do, and therefore what we see. Horatio announces his intent to accost the ghost and ‘cross it though it blast me’ (1.1.127). Does he cross its path, or make the sign of the cross in front of it, and therefore risk making it cross? Or perhaps both? If so, does he make this sign with his sword hilt, or perhaps more evocatively by raising his arms in front of the ghost, the archetypal image of human vulnerability and courage in the face of overwhelming odds? The line is further complicated in Q2 by a problematic stage direction: ‘*It spreads his armes*’ (B3r). What does the ghost do? Does it spread his, Horatio’s, arms (difficult for an incorporeal body, and therefore not a sensible choice for an actor’s stage business) or does it spread *its* own (a perfectly acceptable piece of Elizabethan grammar)? In that case, is it a shrug? Or does it make the sign of the cross back at him? Either would be ironic, and the latter rather unsettling, since it would challenge received wisdom that a cross should cause evil spirits to disappear in a puff of smoke.[[30]](#endnote-30)

The contrast with the following scene in the audience room of the castle could not be clearer. Here the public relations problem of a marriage following closely upon a funeral may be expressed in the contradiction of ‘an auspicious and a dropping eye’ (1.2.11), but this acknowledged ambiguity is something that all the characters in the room are supposed to countenance simultaneously and with equanimity. Claudius’s use of ‘we’ similarly adds up to something rather more than the royal ‘we’; ‘nor have we herein barred / Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone / With this affair along’ (1.2.14-16). The intended unitary, but also ambiguous, meanings are unmistakable: the joyful marriage is an equal expression of the grief and discretion of all the assembled throng; ‘we’, Claudius, have not had to persuade you to that opinion; we could not prevent you, and you have freely, and wisely, gone along with it. And now we, all of us, must pull together against possible threats from outside. And therefore, those of you with reasonable requests will be readily accommodated: ‘You cannot speak of reason to the Dane / And lose your voice’. (1.2.44-5).

Self interest demands conformity. Dissent is not allowed; it is ‘obstinate’, ‘incorrect’, ‘a fault to heaven’, a mark of ‘unschooled’ or undisciplined ‘ignorance’, ‘peevish’ unreason. Those words are all there in Claudius’s subsequent threatening speech to Hamlet (1.1.93-103), but the tactic and the language are familiar from countless 20th- and 21st- century dictatorships. So the still (depressingly) common academic question ‘Is Hamlet mad?’ is barking up the wrong tree. Anyone who stands out against the crowd in such a society is of course ‘mad’ and ‘suicidal’ because he runs the risk of imprisonment and death. It is far wiser, in the worldly sense, to keep your head down—which is what most people do, most of the time.[[31]](#endnote-31)

**Reading Shakespeare**

Although there have been great efforts of late to try to persuade us that Shakespeare wrote longer plays specifically for publication in print, the fact remains that reading plays is a difficult and specialized task. Inexperienced silent reading of Shakespeare is a homogenizing experience; characters tend to sound alike—like the inner voice of the reader. It can also be difficult to register consistently and accurately who is speaking to whom, or to recognize that the dialogue is stuffed full with intrinsic stage directions. Perhaps most difficult of all is to register non-speaking characters; we lose track of their presence when we’re not reminded of it by a speech prefix. None of these problems affects the understanding of spectators of any reasonably competent production. And far from being forgotten or marginalized, a silent body on stage can often become the focus of audience attention as a site of ambiguous information.

 Until relatively recently, professional readers of dramatic texts, that is actors, were never called on to read from complete play scripts; most plays were never printed, and hand copying is too time consuming and expensive for cash-strapped theatre companies.[[32]](#endnote-32) Actors may never have held a complete text of any play in their hands in the course of their line of work. Instead, they had their parts—just their own lines, with two or three words of cue before each speech.[[33]](#endnote-33)

 There are two huge advantages to that way of reading. Firstly the actor learns the through-line of his character without being distracted by every other character’s thoughts and utterances. It is therefore much easier for him to register changes in that character’s emotional state. Secondly, it forces the actor to listen intently, waiting for the cue. This in turn affects the way spectators absorb information. Actors who are actively listening are interesting to watch; they make subtle shifts in balance, physical stance or facial expression; they direct audience attention through the direction of their gaze, and they become a focus for our listening. Experienced writers can play with these effects, embedding stage directions into the way they write dialogue.

 In the following passage Hamlet grills Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as to the reasons for their visit:

Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal justly with me. Come, come; nay speak. (2.2.272-5)

The two actors playing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are both waiting for the cues for their respective next lines, which still do not come, despite a succession of questions or commands—perhaps six or seven separate injunctions in these two lines—all of which demand a response. Each actor might think the other has the answering line; given the minimal company rehearsal time in the Elizabethan theatre, they might even think that the other has missed his cue. The speech will generate rising tension both within the fiction and in the two listening actors’ reality, until Guildenstern’s cue words ‘nay speak’ cause him to blurt out rather lamely ‘What should we say, my lord?’ The company’s lead actor, playing Hamlet, can exploit this: he knows exactly how much he has to say, and knows that they do *not* know—although he too may not know which of them will actually answer him. The resulting frisson will, in actors’ parlance, ‘work’. And the actor’s training, combined with the desire to take refuge in some place of familiarity in the exposed space that is the stage, will encourage them to preserve the process, and its effect, in performance. In a modern rehearsal situation, that valuable *lack* of knowledge as to what comes next has to be painstakingly reconstructed from the full text of the play.

 Critical reading of Shakespeare therefore needs to be more cognoscent of the way in which his first readers (his actors) read. Rather than thinking about the play as a book (or even a prompt-book), it is more productive to think about it as a set of interweaving parts, paying attention to what an actor would have gleaned from reading his character’s part, and then registering how what he heard while waiting for his cue would have surprised him. For example, in Ophelia’s interview with her father, the boy playing Ophelia has just 6 short utterances (1.3.87-136). The first is slightly reticent or shy: ‘something touching the lord Hamlet’. The second a statement of fact: Hamlet has ‘made many tenders / Of his affection to me’. The third comes in response to Polonius’s derisive dismissal of that idea and is a defensive ‘I do not know, my lord, what I should think’. The fourth and fifth are impassioned reiterations of Hamlet’s love to her. I say ‘impassioned’ advisedly since the cue to the fifth is likely to have been the two words ‘go to’ which would have encouraged the boy to break in before the end of Polonius’s intervening speech, which ends with the repeated ‘go to, go to’. But there is an apparent gulf between these statements and her final utterance, ‘I shall obey, my lord’, which comes after being harangued by her father for some twenty lines. Again the more senior actor playing Polonius can aid the boy’s performance through his timing of her final cue. His last line ‘Look to’t, I charge you. Come your ways.’ contains a major caesura in a stressed position. The longer he holds that pause, the more rebellious and sullen Ophelia’s eventual reply will appear, in which case, the metrical incompleteness of her six-syllable response, which is also both characters’ exit line, signals her reluctance to go with him as he demands. The conflicted emotions of the two characters are thus expressed as much in the formatting of their lines as in the words they say.

 At the end of his play, the dying Hamlet prevents Horatio from committing suicide by enjoining him to 'report me and my cause aright / To the unsatisfied' (5.2.331-2).  Though he is his friend, Horatio is no yes man. Hamlet can be sure that he will tell it warts and all, but also with understanding and empathy.  By articulating the through line of each character in a scene, we too can get closer to telling the story of the play aright, partly because it encourages us to register more of the detail of the scene, and partly because attention to the characters’ conflicted emotions reinforces our sense of ourselves. Thus conscientious attention to the conflicted desires of a range of opposed characters makes not cowards but more tolerant socialized beings of us all, not because Shakespeare has a predetermined message to give, but because the characters’ dilemmas, desires, joys, and disasters are thrown back to feed our conscious wonderment at what *we* would do.

1. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879, reprinted 1951). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. All references to Shakespeare are taken from Peter Alexander, ed., *William Shakespeare:* *The Complete Works* (Glasgow: Collins, 1951, subsequently reprinted), but with ‘’d’ endings expanded to ‘ed’. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Semir Zeki, *Splendors and Miseries of the Brain: Love, Creativity and the Quest for Human Happiness* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 88. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. William Empson in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930, reprinted 1961) 234-6, and in line with other early 20th-century critics, is at pains to demonstrate how ambiguity, properly managed, contributes to ‘unity’. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Norman Rabkin, ‘Rabbits, Ducks, and Henry V’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 28. 3 (1977), 279-296, esp. 296. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Of course, private revenge taking is common in all cultures though violence in general is claimed to be currently in decline, see Stephen Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence has Declined* (London: Penguin, 2012). It is still a feature of gang and tribal cultures, but national governments have long found it disruptive and subversive. Thus, in accordance with the biblical injunction against revenge (Romans 12.19) James VI and I writes in *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (London: T[homas ]C[reede], 1603, ‘according to the copie printed at Edinburgh’, Waldegrave, 1598), ‘And if it be not lawfull to a priuate man to reuenge his priuate iniurie vpon his priuate aduersarie (since God hath onely giuen the sword to the magistrate) howe much lesse is it lawfull to the people, or any part of them (who all are but private men, the authoritie being alwayes with the Magistrate, as I haue already proued) to take vppon them the vse of the sword, whom to it belongs not, against the publike Magistrate, whom to onely it belongeth. (D5v-6). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, edited by Linda L. McAlister (London: Routledge, 1995), 88, cited in <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/brentano/#Intentionality> (accessed 20.04.2014). Perhaps confusingly, intentionality in the philosophical sense does not imply the conscious (deliberate) intention to do something. The *OED* cites R. Hayman, Kafka (1983) iv. 35, ‘The assumption that all consciousness must be consciousness of something is the simple basis for Brentano's doctrine of intentionality as defining the essence of consciousness.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Robin I.M. Dunbar, ‘The Social Brain Hypothesis,’ *Evolutionary Anthropology: Issues, News, and Reviews* 6, no. 5 (1998), 178-90. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Sean Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); Antonio Damassio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, (London: Vintage, 2000). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. John Davies, *Wittes Pilgrimage* (London: John Brown, 1605), Tvr. Cf. Ros King, ‘Plays, Playing and Make-Believe’ in Laurie Johnson, John Sutton and Evelyn Tribble (eds), *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare’s Theatre* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 37. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Ekbert Faas, *Shakespeare’s Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 135-42. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Actor Alan Bates in Carole Zucker, *In the Company of Actors: Reflections on the Craft of Acting* (London: A&C Black, 1999), 20. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Eileen Atkins in Zucker (1999), 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Bates in Zucker (1999), 17. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Paul Auster in Carole Burns (ed.), *Off the Page: Writers talk about Beginnings, Endings, and everything in between* (New York and London: W.W.Norton, 2008), 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Interview with Richard Bausch in Burns (2008), 28. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. *The Paradox of Acting: translated with annotations from Diderot’s ‘Paradoxe sur le Comédien'* tr. Walter Herries Pollock (London: Chatto and Windus, 1883), Preface xv-xvi. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. J. Thomas Rimer and Yamazaki Masakazu, (eds, and tr.) *On the Art of the No Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 90-1. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. *The Paradox of Acting*, 100-102. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. *On the Art of the No Drama*, 18-19. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Harriet Walter, *Other People’s Shoes: Thoughts on Acting* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1999), 216. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Drawings by Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), ‘David Garrick rehearsing’, and ‘The Ghost Scene in Hamlet’; Theodore Lane, ‘The Author’s Retreat’, illustration for Pierce Egan, *The Life of an Actor* (London, 1825). [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Nikolaus Harnoncourt in conversation with Olaf Wilhelmer, 29/10/2011

<http://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/interviews>; cf. also his Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra master class, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVFRjIfnzeY>, accessed 25.04.2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle’s Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Kindle Edition, location 161. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. #  American actor Edwin Booth, having read Edward P. Vining’s book *The Mystery of Hamlet* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1881), was convinced of the feminine consciousness of the character of Hamlet; cf. Daniel J. Watermeier (ed.) *Between Actor and Critic: Selected Letters of Edwin Booth and William Winter* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Most famously, the role of the Bulandra Theatre Company’s production starring Ion Caramitrou (Bucharest, 1989) in the revolution that overthrew the Ceausescu regime. The Vilnius Theatre Company production (dir. Oskaras Korsunovas, 2011) was preoccupied with the play’s opening question ‘Who’s there’, expressed in repeated stage business of actors making up. [NB Korsunovas needs the diacritic ~ over the first s] [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Cf. Aristotle *Metaphysics* Book IX, particularly part 8: ‘for eternal things are prior in substance to perishable things, and no eternal thing exists potentially. The reason is this. Every potency is at one and the same time a potency of the opposite; for, while that which is not capable of being present in a subject cannot be present, everything that is capable of being may possibly not be actual. That, then, which is capable of being may either be or not be; the same thing, then, is capable both of being, and of not being. And that which is capable of not being may possibly not be; and that which may possibly not be is perishable, either in the full sense, or in the precise sense in which it is said that it possibly may not be’ (tr. W.D.Ross. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.9.ix.html>, accessed 26.04.2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Giacomo Rizzolatti, Luciano Fadiga, Vittorio Gallese, and Leonardo Fogassi,

“Premotor Cortex and the Recognition of Motor Actions,” *Cognitive Brain*

*Research 3* (1996): 131–141; Giacomo Rizzolatti, Maddalena Fabbri-Destro,

and Luigi Cattaneo, “Mirror Neurons and their Clinical Relevance,” *Nature*

*Clinical Practice Neurology* 5 (2009): 24–34; Cecilia Heyes, “Where Do Mirror Neurons Come From?” *Neuroscience and* *Biobehavioural Reviews* 34.4 (2010): 575–583. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 25. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Edward Alleyn reputedly performed Dr Faustus wearing a costume bearing a large red cross, supposedly to protect him from the additional evil spirits, which might be summoned by the conjuring scenes in the play. Whether this was his real superstition or clever marketing or maybe a combination of the two, we cannot know, see *The Knave of Clubbes* (London: W. Ferebrand, 1609), D3. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. The theme of unworldly foolishness, even madness, of course runs through many of Shakespeare’s plays and finds philosophical expression in the period in Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. The Mss released for printing, usually 2-3 years after first production, when the play was enjoying a revival – see Peter W.M. Blayney ‘The Publication of Playbooks’, in John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds), *A New History of Early English Drama* (Columbia University Press, 1997) – cannot have been those inscribed with the license for performance, since such papers would have been too valuable to the company. Only versions of the play that had been superseded such as (probably) the Ms. behind Q *Titus Andronicus* and Q2 *Hamlet*, or in rarer cases, Mss especially produced for sale to a printer, such as Q1 *Hamlet*, would have been risked in the destructive environment of the print shop. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: OUP, 2007). [↑](#endnote-ref-33)