

# Text, Style, and Author in *Hamlet* Q1

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## *Abstract*

The first quarto of *Hamlet* has traditionally been an embarrassment to attribution studies. Textual and bibliographical studies from the 1980s and beyond have permitted suspect texts to be recovered and performed, but critical appreciation tends to focus on such matters as characterization and performance possibilities rather than the text's rhetorical integrity and aesthetic qualities. More recently, we have seen greater critical attention to Shakespeare's suspect texts, which has increased our appreciation for and expanded our notion of Q1 *Hamlet* as a 'text'. Opinion remains divided, however, on the question of who 'wrote' this play. This essay addresses the authorship debate somewhat indirectly by providing a different view of *Hamlet* Q1 based on a stylistic analysis that is grounded in Renaissance rhetoric. It characterizes the play's style as the rhetoric of speed, with *brachylogia* as its representative rhetorical figure. Through review of theories about the composition of *Hamlet* Q1 and a rhetorical analysis of its style, the essay seeks to examine how *Hamlet*'s first quarto might have a recognizable style and how that style might be related to current concepts of authorship.

*Keywords:* Authorship, 'Bad' Quarto, *Hamlet*, Note-Taking, Rhetoric, Style

## 1. Introduction

When the 'bad quartos' of Shakespeare's plays became available as texts in their own right, critics began to tread, however gingerly, on turf that was once the private domain of textual scholars. But *Hamlet* Q1, the most notorious of these texts for generations of students and scholars who snickered at its rendition of the 'To be or not to be' speech, still awaits complete rehabilitation. Despite reports of successful performances, enthusiastic recommendations from dramaturgs, and the publication of Kathleen O. Trice's edition of *The First Quarto of Hamlet* (1998) for the New Cambridge Shakespeare, an aura of disrepute still hangs over the play.<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet* Q1 has begun to find champions,

<sup>1</sup> For some reports on performances of *Hamlet* Q1 from the 1960s through the early 1990s, see Sjogren 1979; McMillin 1984; Urkowitz 1988 and 1992. A description of past

who defend its interest to actors and directors and the striking quality of certain character portrayals. But while both projects rest on a catalogue of significant variants among texts, there is, to date, no attempt to define a general stylistic ethos for *Hamlet* Q1. Some of this caution comes from the long-standing, although now contested, assumption that *Hamlet*'s first quarto is a 'memorial reconstruction' corrupted by the faulty memories of theatrical 'pirates'. Scholars now challenge the status of *Hamlet* Q1 as either a memorial reconstruction or a 'corrupt' text. Some scholars, furthermore, have argued that *Hamlet* Q1 is not a translation, however marred and incomplete, of theatrical performance, but a 'literary' text destined for a market of readers. Finally, there has been a renewed effort on documentary, literary, and theatrical grounds, to assign Q1 to a young Shakespeare. For all of these reasons, investigating *Hamlet* Q1 as possessing a characteristic style that would condition its reception by auditors and readers and help to define its place in the study of Shakespearean authorship makes sense.

## 2. *How Hamlet Q1 Became a Text*

Once, as Lucas Erne narrates the story, the short quartos were roundly dismissed as 'bad', derivative products not worthy of the term 'text' (Erne 2003).<sup>2</sup> That evolving story carries with it changing notions of who (or what) is the author of Q1, which will prove significant in turn for the understanding of the relation between style and authorship. The linking of suspect quartos with memorial reconstruction, arising jointly from the editorial labours of W.W. Greg and Alfred Pollard, was shaped into a complete narrative for *Hamlet* Q1 by G.I. Duthie (1941). As is well-known, Duthie posited that *Hamlet* Q1 was a pirated text, reconstructed by the minor actor who played Marcellus for performance in the provinces. These further associations with theft and ignorant audiences reinforced, as Randall McLeod notes, the quartos' moral and intellectual inferiority (1982). Under the regime of old-school narratives of memorial reconstruction, the supposedly crude style of *Hamlet* Q1 disqualified it as a text for scholarly study or critical debate without disturbing the notion that the 'real' *Hamlet* had a single author: Shakespeare. In the first quarto of *Hamlet*, we had no text to speak of, but still one glorious, indivisible, and

productions can also be found in Irace 1998, 20-27. The most recent account of Q1 in performance can be found in Bourus 2014.

<sup>2</sup> I am using the term 'text', in opposition to 'work', in Roland Barthes' sense of the term – as being plural, mutable, and always in motion: 'The text is plural. Which is not simply to say that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very *plural* of meaning: an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural. The Text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an over-crossing; thus, it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination' (1977, 159, emphasis in the original).

inviolable author – one who paradoxically was perceptible only by his absence. If style is the man, *Hamlet Q1*'s bad textuality can be traced to the mangling thief Marcellus. The good author Shakespeare is simply replaced by a single, bad, illegitimate author.

In response to and reaction against the premises established by Greg, Pollard, *et al.*, *Hamlet Q1* becomes a 'text' by several routes. One of the strongest efforts to release it from the stigma of being a 'bad' quarto was by Leah S. Marcus (1996), as part of her proposal for Shakespearean 'unediting'. Marcus suggests that *Hamlet Q1* deserves serious attention as a stand-alone text, regardless of its potential familial relations to other versions of the play. Her recuperation depends on a theoretical rejection of chronological priority and authenticity, criteria underlying the New Bibliography's concept of copytext, and the embrace of a 'provisional equality' between alternative texts. Marcus' concept of 'unediting' begins with Roland Barthes' useful distinction between text and work, but insists more on the materialist dimension of text. Marcus returns *Q1* to us as a text, but only offers tantalizing glimpses of a new idea of authorship by linking *Q1* to theatrical practice by way of its markers of orality. Both oral style and theatrical practice envision texts as part of an embodied exchange between speakers, which takes us some distance away from the *Shakespeare in Love* bard experiencing writer's block in his lonely garret.

More sustained study of the short quartos has added further important information, although the results have ambivalent implications for the status of *Hamlet Q1* as a text. Laurie Maguire's extensive study of Shakespearean 'suspect texts' (1996) struck a significant blow to the theory of memorial reconstruction by concluding that many so-called 'bad' texts were not the product of memorial reconstruction at all; most significant for my purposes is her observation that many suspect texts are often longer rather than shorter than usual, which calls into question the assumption that short quartos must necessarily be corrupt products of memory. The partial reclamation of Shakespeare's early quartos resulting from these forays into textual analysis was reinforced by growing interest in authorial revision of plays: if an author can be identified, then we have a text. Grace Ippolo's *Revising Shakespeare* places Shakespearean texts within the tradition of authorial revision and offers specific hypotheses regarding authorial revision in particular plays. She accepts, however, the premise that 'Quarto 1 was a reported text of an acting version' that 'may have been abridged for the performances advertised on its title page' (1991, 134).<sup>3</sup> *Q1*'s reliance on 'paraphrase', according to Ippolo, suggests that it is a reported text, although the absence in both *F1* and *Q1* of

<sup>3</sup> For a sustained scrutiny of what *Hamlet Q1*'s title page suggests about the play and its origins, see Menzer 2008, 111-114.

duplicated phrases that are characteristic of Q2 may suggest that Q1 is the later text. Ioppolo concludes that Q1 may be the reported product of an abridged version of the text deriving from Q2. This exploration of Q1 as involving some type of authorial revision elevates its place within an authorial chain of command, but leaves unresolved the distinction between single authors and others who may be involved in the creation of a text. It neither helps nor hinders the case that *Hamlet* is a text. Steven Urkowitz (1992) makes a stronger claim for *Hamlet*'s first quarto as the descendant of an authorial draft and further rehabilitates Q1 by highlighting its performance potential. Through these arguments, our bad *Hamlet* quarto gains respectability by association with the author Shakespeare, who is characterized as a reviser, and with the theatre. Q1 is starting to have an author and be a text without having to disavow its playhouse origins, although Paul Werstine correctly registers the minority view that performability is not a sufficient condition for declaring a bad text 'good' (Werstine 1999).

Kathleen O. Irace's *Reforming the 'Bad' Quartos* (1994) rounds out this phase of scholarship by considering the 'bad' quartos potentially as performance texts, weighing evenly the merits of memorial reconstruction and the even earlier theory that longer texts are revisions of shorter, more 'drafty'. Although Irace is quite interested in revision, she identifies *Hamlet* Q1, because of its plot arrangement, attribution of lines, and other features, as an adaptation, probably coming into being, in her opinion, as a theatrical abridgement for touring purposes. By establishing a taxonomy of methods and motives behind the 'bad' quartos, Irace loosens further the ties between any one figure and a short quarto; we are coming closer to having a text (and possibly a style) without reference to any particular individual behind that text.

Two recent studies of Shakespearean authorship in *Hamlet* Q1 strengthen even further the case for the play's status as a text. Both do so by arguing that Q1 is the product of a single author, Shakespeare, writing in the 1580s at a quite early stage of his career. In a careful re-examination of the circumstances under which Nicholas Ling published the first quarto, Terri Bourus argues that *Hamlet* Q1 cannot be a 'pirated text' that made its way into print by illicit means:

From the perspective of the English book trade in the years just before the death of Elizabeth I, there is nothing irregular, suspicious, or piratical about Ling's 1603 edition of *Hamlet*. It was a perfectly legitimate book, the product of legal, logical, ethical, well-understood social, business, and political relationships. (Bourus 2014, loc. 844)

She also presents an extended challenge to the theories of an actor-pirate and of actors' interpolations into the text and presents a substantial critique of the idea that the text was produced by note-takers in the audience (discussed

below). What errors exist in Q1, Bourus argues, are local (usually occurring within one line) and can be explained by lapses in Compositor A's short-term memory and mistakes by typesetters in James Roberts' printing shop. Bourus concludes that the 1603 printed *Hamlet*, which was written in the late 1580s, represents the 'original' or anterior text, while the 1604 version is a major authorial revision, a 'revising author' being the simplest, most obvious, and logically elegant solution to the differences between the two texts (2014, loc. 2071). While she rests her claim for Shakespearean authorship on external evidence, Bourus also offers useful insights into Q1's theatrical virtues, based in part on a production of the play that she herself directed.

Margrethe Jolly, whose scholarship takes aim primarily at the theory of memorial reconstruction, concurs with Bourus that the first quarto of *Hamlet* is an early text written by Shakespeare and Q2 a major authorial revision. Drawing primarily on source study, she argues that Q1's more frequent borrowings from and closer relationship to the French source, Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, along with the evolution of some borrowings between Q1 to Q2, demonstrates that Q1 is the 'anterior' text (Jolly 2012, 83). In Jolly's view, the scenes that demonstrate a line of development from the source through the two quartos are, specifically, the location of the 'nunnery' scene, some features of the closet scene, and 'the scenes in which Hamlet's return is announced' (95). As part of her longer argument that Q2 is a revision of Q1, throughout *The First Two Quartos of Hamlet*, Jolly defends Q1 wording and literary/dramatic merit, particularly its characterization of the Queen. She constructs a scenario in which the single author, Shakespeare, is intensely engaged with Belleforest, virtually writing with *Histoires Tragiques* at his elbow in the same way that he seems to have Plutarch ready to hand when penning *Antony and Cleopatra's* barge speech; when conducting wholesale revision for Q2, Jolly posits, Shakespeare selectively consulted his source, but more frequently, deviated from it to heighten drama and suspense and refine characterization, especially the role of the Prince. While Bourus imagined Q1 as the work of practicing dramatist, this Shakespeare reads French and is a rather bookish young man.

The discussion of *Hamlet's* first quarto has produced a complex, tangled history, in which the concepts of text and author engage in an ever-changing dance. Whether or not Q1 is considered to have a proper 'author' depends partly on judgments about the status of a text; however, judgments about whether Q1 is a 'mangled' text, a performable script, or an intentional response to a source tend not to disturb the concept of a unitary author. Before returning to that concept for further consideration, we can review the accumulated judgments about Q1 as a text as a 'way in' to defining textuality without (the necessity of) a (single) author – or, more simply, to describe Q1 as a text apart from offering a specific hypothesis about 'who', if anyone, actually wrote it.

Within the scholarly literature, discussion of the first quarto's textual features runs the gamut from a focus on microscopic to macroscopic features. The belief that *Hamlet* Q1 is a memorial reconstruction rested heavily on revealing small-scale blemishes – word choice, uneven meter, mistakes in lineation and speech prefixes, transposition of scenes and lines, and so forth. Critics of Q1's printed text, whether in facsimile or modern transcription, are expected to demonstrate the precision of a Hinman collator in comparing the text to later versions. The 1980s wave of enthusiasm for the first quarto's virtues as a performance text, combined with actual performances, understandably focused on larger dramatic features, such as pacing, characterization, and overall dramatic ethos. The material text, as it appears in printed form, became less important than the oral, embodied delivery of that text. The most recent attributions of *Hamlet* Q1 to a young Shakespeare offer a further range of foci, from word choice in translation from Belleforest's French (Jolly) to playhouse effects (Bourus). What is missing still from the discussion is what I would call a 'middle zoom' on the text, an examination of stylistic features grounded in Renaissance rhetoric. The next section of this essay seeks to describe *Hamlet* Q1's characteristic style, which is based on *brevitas* and the rhetoric of speed, as a basis for defining the play-as-text.

### 3. *Style in Hamlet Q1*

*Hamlet* Q1 (2,150 lines) is shorter than Q2 (3,600 lines) and much shorter than the composite texts of critical editions. To some extent, speediness in Q1 is simply a by-product of length and what Lene Petersen (2010) calls a 'telescoping' of events. The best-known structural difference is Q1's placement of Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' speech and the 'nunnery scene' with Ophelia in act 2 rather than 3. Irace, who thinks of Q1 as the later text, thinks that bridge passages used to ease the transposition from Q2 suggest a deliberate abridgement in the first quarto plot. Moving the episode forward, moreover, not only saves Corambis (or Polonius) the trouble of announcing the plot to spy on Hamlet twice, but also makes Hamlet's break with Ophelia take place earlier and mutes the sense that the prince's philosophical explorations are a product of procrastination or excessive soul-searching.<sup>4</sup> The second major plot difference between Q1 and Q2 involves transmission of the news concerning Hamlet's return to Elsinore. Information conveyed in Q2 through the letter that Hamlet sends to Horatio via the pirates, the letter received by Claudius in the

<sup>4</sup> Jolly (2012 and 2014) explains the move in terms of Q1's strong connection to the source, Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. Tiffany Stern's recent essay on note-taking and the transmission of *Hamlet* Q1's text, however, offers a different explanation for the transposition of these two speeches as part of imperfect memorialization by note-takers (Stern 2013). See below.

company of Laertes, and Hamlet's graveside conversation with Horatio about the stratagem of his escape is, in Q1, condensed into a single speech delivered by Horatio to Gertred. Whatever theory of authorship we embrace, the first quarto gets more information across in a shorter space, simplifies Gertred's (and our) understanding of events, and strengthens the Queen's allegiance with Hamlet.

These macroscopic features of *Hamlet* Q1's plot are reinforced by a predominance of what the ancient rhetorician Hermogenes called the rhetoric of speed. In her study of Hermogenes' influence in Italy and England during the early modern period, Annabel Patterson provides ample evidence that Renaissance rhetoricians were familiar with Hermogenes, whose ideas and texts had been transmitted through Byzantine rhetoric. According to Patterson, Hermogenes was known not only as the author of the *Progymnasmata*, schoolboy exercises that Shakespeare might have practiced at the Stratford Grammar School, but also for his more philosophical labours in defining the seven ideas of style (Clarity, Grandeur, Beauty, Speed, Ethos, Verity and Gravity). The rhetoric of speed is characterized by its thematic connection with time and transience or with heroic action; by its reliance on rhythm to communicate urgency; and by its use of sound patterns to evoke breathlessness and time's quick passage (Patterson 1970, 56-57 and 153-175). Speedy effects have a prominent place in epic; they can be used, for instance, to catalogue the details of large-scale battles in works such as Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars* or Lord Fairfax's translation of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. But Shakespeare, as Brian Vickers, Marion Trousdale, Richard Lanham, Daniel Javitch, Lloyd Davis, and others have shown, is generally more at home with the rhetoric of copiousness.<sup>5</sup> Not until the late romances, such as *Cymbeline*, will Shakespeare return to the rhetoric of speed, and in his later efforts he relies more on ellipsis than on the syntactic and rhythmic devices that characterize the first quarto's style.<sup>6</sup> *Hamlet* Q1's rhetoric of speed therefore stands out within the broader scope of the traditional Shakespearean canon.

*Hamlet's* first quarto achieves its speedy effects through a stylistic concision featuring *brachylogia* as a governing figure or scheme.<sup>7</sup> In 1981,

<sup>5</sup> Vickers 1971; Lanham 1976; Javitch 1978; Trousdale 1982; and Davis 1993. I have also discussed tropes associated with Erasmus' *De Copia* in Shakespeare's plays (Desmet 1992).

<sup>6</sup> On 'speedy style' in the late plays, see Sutherland 1959. Although they do not comment on the specific grounds for this judgment, Wells and Taylor also suggest the ambiguous place of *Hamlet* Q1 within the study of Shakespeare's style: 'In places, it bears every hallmark of Shakespeare's mature manner; other passages could be attributed to Shakespeare at all if they were written earlier than any of his acknowledged work' (1987, 398). I would suggest that *Hamlet's* Q1's rhetoric of speed contributes to this sense of its chronological ambiguity.

<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this essay, I will use the term rhetorical 'figure' in a general sense, defined by Richard A. Lanham in *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* as 'any device or pattern of language in which meaning is changed or enhanced' (1991, 178). I also observe

George Wright analysed brilliantly the rhetorical ethos of what we now regard as *Hamlet's* 'conflated text', essentially a compilation of Q2 and F1. He saw the play text as being governed by *hendiadys*, a rhetorical figure that joins together two substantives by a connective such as 'and' or 'or'. The two nouns on either side of the copulative can have a relatively simple grammatical relation. According to Wright, Virgil's best known example from the *Georgics*, 'we drank from cups and gold', translates logically as 'we drank from gold cups' or 'from cups of gold'. One term in the *hendiadys* modifies the other. In many instances, however, such a simple translation is not possible, so that the transformation of a dependent relation into an independent relation between the two nouns changes the logic of the phrase, establishing a disturbing equity between items in a world that should be more orderly and hierarchical. Furthermore, *hendiadys* is susceptible to irony; in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, for instance, Belinda suffers from stains to either her honour or her silk brocade, and tragedy strikes 'When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last' (Canto III, 158). Based on the unusual density of this figure within the play and reinforced by exhaustive analysis, Wright's essay offers *hendiadys* as a master figure for *Hamlet*, one that governs what Maynard Mack (1952) has characterized as the play's 'questionable' ethos. *Hendiadys*, 'far from explaining mysteries, establishes them'. In effect, *Hamlet* 'calls into question – and *hendiadys* helps it to do so – all relationships, familial, political, cosmic, and even artistic' (Wright 1981, 179).<sup>8</sup>

*Hendiadys* promotes copiousness. Paratactic, or additive, and reliant on loose connectives such as 'and', the rhetorical figure encourages doublings at all syntactic levels. *Brachylogia*, by contrast, is a syntactic scheme that works by the 'omission of conjunctions between single words' (Lanham 1991, 30). An expanded sense of the term would include strings of phrases and clauses, without intervening conjunctions. George Puttenham, always the most colourful among English Renaissance rhetoricians, Englishes the Latin term *brachylogia* as the 'cutted comma', a sequence of 'single words, without any closing or coupling, saving that a little pause or comma is given [sic] to every word'. He offers the following example: '*Envy, malice, flattery, disdain, / Avarice, deceit, falshed, filthy gain*' (Puttenham 1936, 213). In Puttenham, the cutted comma tends to produce lists, intoned with vehemence. Henry Peacham defines *brachylogia* (or its Latin equivalent *articulus*) in terms of a

the distinction between a *trope* as 'use of a word to mean something other than its ordinary meaning' (see Lanham's succinct but complete discussion of this term and its complexities, 154-157) and *scheme* as 'a figure in which words preserve their literal meaning, but are placed in a significant arrangement of some kind' (136). Lanham defines the term 'figure' in greater detail on 78-80.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Kermode echoes Wright's conclusion that *hendiadys* is *Hamlet's* dominant rhetorical figure, governing its pervasive doublings, in *Shakespeare's Language* (2000, 100-102).

sequence of words, but his examples also include sequences of clauses, as in this case: 'I will make them desolate, waste, despysed, hissed at, accursed, pryde slayeth love, provoketh disdain, kindleth malice, contemneth humility, woundeth wysedom, confoundeth justice, and defaceth fortitude' (from Jeremiah 5; Peacham 1971, I, 4v). When words and clauses are strung together in this manner, language rolls not trippingly, but tumblingly from the tongue.

Under the right circumstances, *brachylogia* can contribute to copiousness, as the self-generating strings of words or phrases pile up. A luxuriant *brachylogia* becomes an epic catalogue. Within the context of shorter speeches and faster action, however, *brachylogia* gives, through its lack of either connection or subordination, an impression of haste and chaos. Peter Guinness, who played the first quarto Hamlet in a production at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, recognizes the rhetoric of speed in *Hamlet* Q1. Describing the first quarto production as '*Hamlet* with the brakes off', he notes as well the effect of staccato speech that is associated with *brachylogia*, describing a script full of 'non sequiturs', 'curious jumps in thinking', and 'rather stumbling language' (Loughrey 1992, 128, 124).

The Appendix to this essay collects examples of *brachylogia* culled from *Hamlet's* first and second quartos. The most striking examples occur at moments of high tension: for instance, the spirit of Hamlet's father, recounting his murder, lists the things he lost through an untimely death: 'Thus was I sleeping by a brothers hand / *Of Crowne, of Queene, of life, of dignitie* / At once deprived' (Q1 534-536, emphasis added).<sup>9</sup> Hamlet, in the nunnery scene, catalogues for Ophelia his own character flaws: 'I am very *prowde, ambitious, disdainefull*, / With more sinnes at my becke, then I have thoughts / To put them in' (Q1 888-890, emphasis added). Ophelia's eulogy to Hamlet's 'madness' immediately after the nunnery scene laments how the Prince's identity disintegrates before her eyes: 'The *Courtier, Scholler, Souldier*, all in him, / All dasht and splinterd thence' (Q1 921-922, emphasis added). In his fit of feigned passion describing the horrors of Troy's fall, the Player depicts Pyrrhus, 'horridely tricked / *With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sonnes* / Back'd and imparched in calagulate gore' (Q1 1077-1079, emphasis added). And Hamlet, confronting another murderer closer to home, curses Claudius as a '*damned villaine, / Treacherous, bawdy, murderous villaine*' (Q1 1150-1151, emphasis added). Finally, we can hear the rhythms of *brachylogia*, through reiterated clauses rather than single words, in a very unlikely place – Hamlet's extended deliberation on the necessity of enduring the pains inflicted by outrageous fortune:

<sup>9</sup> Because I make comparisons between the Q1 and Q2 texts of *Hamlet*, all references are to *The Three-Text 'Hamlet'* (Shakespeare 1991).

To be, or not to be, I there's the point,  
*To Die, to sleepe*, is that all? I all:  
 No, *to sleepe, to dreame*, I mary there it goes,

....

But for this, the ioyfull hope of this,  
 Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world,  
*Scornd by the rich, the rich curssed of the poore?*  
*The widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd,*  
*The taste of hunger, or a tirants raigne,*  
 And thousand more calamities besides,  
 To grunt and sweate under this weary life,  
 When that he may his full *Quietus* make,  
 With a bare bodkin, who would this indure,  
 But for a hope of something after death? (Q1, 836-853, emphasis added)

The rhetoric of speed in *Hamlet* Q1 dovetails nicely with the play's thematic focus on time's rapid passage. The elder Hamlet has been dead two hours, a month, two months, or twice two months. Hamlet himself appears to be a young scholar, yet the gravedigger says that he is thirty years old (only in Q2, however).<sup>10</sup> Gertred, Hamlet implies in the closet scene, is not acting her age. The rhetoric of speed, on the other hand, creates an ethos that is at odds with Hamlet's infamous hesitation and *Hamlet's* equally well-known dilation of its action. What James Calderwood says of the play – that it 'tends toward the discontinuous, digressive, and parenthetical' (1983, 176) – might be true of the second quarto but certainly not of the first, which is ruthlessly teleological. In Q1, brevity (which creates stark alternatives) and *brachylogia*, (which suggests restless action) fabricate rhetorically a world in which events happen quickly, but without obvious reason. The style of *Hamlet's* first quarto reinforces the kind of a-logical existence that the play, as Robert Weimann argues, characterizes as bestial (1985, 284).

Stylistic analysis can reveal a predominant rhetorical ethos – in the case of *Hamlet* Q1, a sense of speed that the Renaissance associated with action, war, chaos, confusion, and a relentless forward movement.

Dealing with style across *Hamlet's* multiple texts, however, militates against a confident assignment of meaning, whether in terms of philosophy or character, to any particular style.<sup>11</sup> Close analysis of *brachylogia*, for instance,

<sup>10</sup> Jolly suggests that the differences between Hamlet's age in Q1 and Q2 may be attributed to Q1's closer relation to Belleforest's *Les Histoires Tragiques* (see Jolly 2012, 83-95 and *The First Two Quartos of 'Hamlet'* [2014]). Bourus 2014 links the age difference between the young Hamlet of Q1 and the thirty-year-old Hamlet of Q2 to the difference in actor Richard Burbage's age when he played the two versions of the Prince, first in the 1580s and then in the early 1600s.

<sup>11</sup> For a more schematic analysis of character and style in the conflated *Hamlet*, see Maurice Charney's *Style in 'Hamlet'* (1969). Charney notes some of the same 'speedy effects'

reveals instances of the scheme in the second quarto that do not appear in the first, including Horatio's powerful summation of the play's action:

And let me speake, to yet unknowing world  
 How these things came about; so shall you heare  
*Of carnall, bloody and unnaturall acts,*  
*Of accidentall iudgements, casuall slaughters,*  
*Of deaths put on by cunning,* and for no cause  
 And in this *upshot*, purposes mistooke,  
 Falne on th'inventers heads: all this can I  
 Truly deliver. (Q2 3874-3881, emphasis added)

Other examples, such as Polonius' over-the-top list of dramatic genres or Hamlet's satiric catalogue of old men's body parts, might have a wholly different tone. (These are 1h and 1i in the Appendix.) Stylistic analysis across a single text, rather than microscopic differentiations between variant texts, highlights the fact that in *Hamlet* 'style' is an approximation, not an essence, and that the factors contributing to a perception of style are various. In the case of *Hamlet*'s first quarto, the rhetoric of speed emerges from not just accumulated instances of *brachylogia*, but also the play's compressed action, some simplification of character,<sup>12</sup> and the absence of those more philosophical sentiments in Q2 that a greater degree of copia encourages.

#### 4. *Who Wrote Hamlet Q1?*

The next section revisits the question of who wrote *Hamlet* Q1 through a further question: to what extent can style depend on textual effects rather than authorship? In other words, can there be a style without an author? This is a particularly important question for *Hamlet* Q1 as a play, whose right to serious critical consideration and connection to Shakespeare are always under review.

Writing in 1990, Paul Werstine noted that:

that I do, but goes further to assign different styles to particular characters. While such attributions are possible and might be experienced in terms of characterization within a performance of the play, the concern here is with an overall rhythm and ethos and its implications for the concepts of text and author.

<sup>12</sup> The character who is most streamlined is the Queen, which does not necessarily mean that she is less powerful or interesting as a character. Critics such as Jolly 2012, Shand 1998, and Kehler 1995 have argued that the Queen in Q1 is an intriguing, complex, figure. G.B. Shand admits that Gertrud is at risk of dwindling into a cipher, but thinks that her firm allegiance with Hamlet shows that she is faithful to the first person who shows any solicitude at all toward her; in the first quarto, this person is Hamlet, who seems as much concerned to tell his mother the truth as to save her soul by condemning her sexuality.

just as twentieth-century study of the “good” quartos has concentrated on reducing their putative origin to the activity of a single person (Shakespeare), so study of the “bad” quartos has often proceeded toward (if never quite to) the goal of identifying the single agents who can be blamed for their existence. (1990, 82)

Whether Shakespeare or the actor who played Marcellus is responsible for *Hamlet*'s first quarto, in critical history the text has been traceable to a single person or, at least, to one or more individuals. Studies of Shakespearean authorship that take individual writers as their point of reference continue to flourish. Brian Vickers's *Shakespeare, Co-Author* (2002), through linguistic and stylometric methods, pursues the author as a discernible reality whose identity can be decisively affirmed. While Vickers dismantles the text into its authorial components, he reifies anew the equation between style and man by arguing that authors had individually recognizable styles.<sup>13</sup> But because he does not consider *Hamlet* to be a coauthored play, the book has limited application to this essay. Emerging ‘big data’ studies of early modern drama are challenging Vickers's authorial identifications, but often belong to the larger project of attributing texts to singular persons: Shakespeare wrote this, Chettle or Wilkins that part. This is a worthy project, and several contributions to this issue take it on with admirable results. But for understanding *Hamlet* Q1, we need a different paradigm. Relevant to the particular case of *Hamlet* Q1 are developments in textual studies, considerations of dramatic collaboration, and publication history.

Jeffrey Masten's *Textual Intercourse* proves to be foundational, offering as it does a model for collaboration – ‘textual intercourse’ – that goes beyond simply doubling or tripling individual authors. Defining this expansive notion of collaboration ‘as an erasure of individual difference’ (1997, 17) opens up the possibility of a relatively cohesive style for a text whose author is fragmented. In a less direct way, studies of Shakespeare as a ‘literary’ dramatist and *Hamlet*'s first quarto as a literary text also prove useful. Lukas Erne's influential study of *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (2003) posited a difference between plays as traces of theatrical production and plays as literary documents destined for a reading audience. Erne identified *Hamlet*'s second quarto as a reading text and the first as abridged for performance and therefore more

<sup>13</sup> John Jowett outlines some of the difficulties of assigning authorship of a play's parts by stylometric analysis in *Shakespeare and Text* (2007), although the book obviously does not address the most recent developments in that field. Jowett, however, makes the important point that collaboratively written plays were not always distributed to authors by scene; sometimes they could be assigned according to plot, act, or character, and sometimes ‘individual scenes’ could be ‘split between more than one writer, and one writer might revise the work or another, or eventually copy out the entire play, superimposing his preferences as he did so’ (21). Writers might also accommodate their style to that of another contributor, as Shakespeare may have done for the late collaboration with his successor as playwright for the King's Men, John Fletcher.

saturated with markers of orality than the highly literate Q2 text. Thus, in Erne's view we wind up not with a copytext and a bastard but simply two different kinds of text: 'The communal, theatrical versions prepared by the company and performed on stage and the authorial, dramatic versions written (and occasionally revised) by William Shakespeare in the expectation of a readership must have been significantly different texts' (2003, 191).<sup>14</sup> Erne also helps to broaden the notion of textual agency beyond a unitary author by gesturing toward the role played by scribes, transcribers, compositors, printers, booksellers, and even modern editors. This expanded view of textual production and dissemination is fleshed out more fully in Erne's most recent book, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (2013), where he explores more minutely the transition from Shakespearean theatrical text to printed book, foregrounding the agency of not only printers but also publishers and booksellers in the trajectory of Shakespeare's printed quartos.

While Erne expands the network of agents in text and book production, he does not, however, relinquish altogether the idea of Shakespeare as an author with motives, ambitions, and actions.<sup>15</sup> Tiffany Stern's 2013 study of *Hamlet* Q1, by contrast, abandons the author altogether in favour of a theory of textual reconstruction through note-takers. Following up on the argument of her earlier book, *Documents of Performance* (2009), Stern regards *Hamlet*'s first quarto as an extreme example of the drama's status as discontinuous 'patch-work'.<sup>16</sup> She speculates that the brevity and 'speediness' of the Q1 text might be attributed to the rhetorical tendencies of note-taking, which aims for sense over sound and resorts frequently to synonyms and elisions. A note-taker, for instance, may leave the second line of a rhyming couplet unarticulated, depending on phonic memory to supply the missing words, however imperfectly, and in moments of desperation, may substitute summary for transcription. In the case of sermons, which is Stern's point of reference, notes were written out in full and perfected at home, after the event. But for plays, as for sermons, the final product can vary in quality, completeness, and accuracy. Stern suggests that, in the case of *Hamlet* Q1, there must be at least two note-takers:

If *Hamlet* Q1 is a text combined from the notes of two or more people, then the reason for its 'good' earlier section, and poor later sections is explained: they bespeak two or

<sup>14</sup> For a strong critique of Erne's identification of *Hamlet* Q1 as a 'theatrical' text and Q2 as a 'literary' text, see Bourus 2014, Chapter 3, *passim*.

<sup>15</sup> For a study of publication practices that does question the persistence of the author in textual and bibliographical criticism, see Lesser 2004, Chapter 1, 1-25, *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> Ioppolo offers a similar view of revision as patchwork in her later essay on 'Revision' (2012), noting that Henslowe's *Diary* makes technical distinctions between 'additions', 'amendments', and 'alterations'.

more separate noters, the early ‘good’ one being more given to verbatim methods of copying, and perhaps using good longhand or phonetic shorthand, the later, less good one (or more) tending towards contraction and epitome, and perhaps reliant on less good longhand or pictorial shorthand. The sudden good speeches later would then be traceable either to actors who spoke more clearly, or to a noter supplying freestanding verbatim ‘passages’ to be combined with someone else’s ‘whole’ text later. (2013, 17)

At another point, she postulates the existence of multiple note-takers, perhaps a master with a cadre of students. This, according to Stern, resembles the practice of transcribing parliamentary speeches by several reporters, who compensate for one another’s deficiencies in an effort to reconstruct the speech.<sup>17</sup> The printed text is now a collective patchwork and the scribes many in number, although Stern’s model eventually does replace the author with a single scribal surrogate: ‘Combined texts naturally required an “amender” to massage the various scripts together. The printers of one 1623 sermon, for instance, are amenders: having received a text “miserably written”, they did what they could to make sense of it’ (Stern 2013, 19). But the presence of a single amender is not necessary to a theory of collective authorship, as Graham Holderness’ comments on the translation of the *King James Bible* point out. In this case, the *Epistle of Isaiah*, as manuscript evidence shows, had a single translator, but that then was read aloud and amended on the fly by the collective body of translators (Holderness 2014, 61-74). In a slightly different way, the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* shows Shakespeare as a single amender coming in to alter a text that was already the product of different hands. The view that *Hamlet* Q1 is the work of collective note-taking is complemented, from a different perspective, by Paul Menzer’s (2008) view that the printed play has no direct connection to performance or performers because its cues (the main subject of his analysis) make it incapable of being acted. The printed text records, instead, a collection of memories – ‘the memory of a performer with access – as audience, as actor, as reader in part – to a *Hamlet* at various times, at various places, and at and on various stages’ (39). Menzer offers the hypothesis that ‘Anonymous’, as Q1’s author, is a collective of different persons, both actors and audience members, who together produce this printed ‘record of a greedy, appropriative, palimpsestic memory, the record of a *Hamlet* fabricated from both textual material (an actor’s tangible, physical parts in Shakespeare’s play) as well as someone’s memory and experience as both player in and audience of early English drama’ (115).

Stern’s specific hypothesis about *Hamlet* Q1’s origins is still under debate and exists, at this point, in counterpoint with other theories, such as that of authorial revision. Her model for textual production, however, does push us imaginatively

<sup>17</sup> Bourus 2014 notes, however, that parliamentary note-taking was a later phenomenon in England, dating from the 1620s (loc. 1787).

closer to a view of textuality that can operate without the ‘authority’ of a single designated author. Collectively, work by such scholars as Erne, Bourus, and Stern suggests a world of performance, writing, and publication in which many agents could assume multiple roles. Erne, for instance, shows us how printers and booksellers such as Richard Field and Nicholas Ling played an active role in shaping Shakespeare’s plays in quarto. Although most of its argument is outside the main concerns of this essay, Zachary Lesser’s *‘Hamlet’ After Q1* (2015) reminds us that arguments for Shakespearean authorship of Q1, like memorial reconstruction itself, have a history. The view that Q1 is either an early draft or an early Shakespearean revision of other dramatists’ material emerges in the debate between John Payne Collier and Charles Knight in the nineteenth century. As Lesser points out, these opposed views are simply two variants on the Romantic master-narrative of Shakespeare’s poetic genius (41–49, *passim*). Bourus links Collier, as well, to the concept that the text originated from scribal shorthand.<sup>18</sup> Thus, *Hamlet*’s early history is necessarily conditioned by its reception history in succeeding centuries, expanding further the temporal extent of the network that produced *Hamlet* Q1.

With this kind of flexible, fluid, historically extended network in play, the model of ‘distributed cognition’, which Evelyn Tribble (2005) has offered to explain how performance at the Globe might have operated, may also prove useful for mapping out the textual trajectory of *Hamlet*’s first quarto. Tribble evokes Edwin Hutchins’ (1995) study of large-ship navigation as a model for the way in which all parts of a theatrical company, human and material/technological, cohered to deliver a play. In a system of distributed cognition, the cognitive and mnemonic burden is spread over a complex network of people and machines, accomplishing a task (steering a large ship, putting on a play) that no one agent could achieve alone.<sup>19</sup> Tribble’s notion of distributed cognition in early modern theatre complements Stern’s

<sup>18</sup> Bourus 2014, loc. 1566 ff.

<sup>19</sup> The analogy between steering a large ship and putting on a play is not perfect. As Stern notes (particularly in *Rehearsal*, 2000), despite the fact that we over-emphasize rivalry between playwrights and downplay early modern theatre’s collaborative and collective aspects, actors could be unresponsive to the characters with whom they interacted, following their own kind of role, which had been honed over a series of plays and performances. There is as well an improvisatory aspect to the interactions, exacerbated by the paucity of rehearsal time and structuring of performance through separate parts and cues. Clowns had a particular license for extempore performance. And there is in drama always the potential for a complete meltdown (as in ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’). If Petersen’s analogy between early modern drama and ballad-construction and performance has validity, change is a natural feature of the genre. Although the ‘performance’ of steering a ship alters individual ‘parts’ as crew members with different levels of experience and varying strengths and weakness rotate throughout the group by an apprenticeship system, this was a more precise self-correcting system than on-stage performance in early modern London.

analysis of the conditions governing early modern theatrical text production in *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (2000): chronological disruption (e.g., distribution and even revision of parts before the drama is finished and while the actors are rehearsing) and spatial fragmentation of texts (into plot, parts, promptbook, etc.). It also helps with some of the contradictions in existing concepts of the dramatic text's transmission: for instance, the tension between a verbatim method of part 'study' in play preparation and evidence that delivery often relied on a memory for things rather than words; or the tension between note-taking as a word-perfect transcription and approximation of an oral text's 'gist'.

The current state of scholarship on *Hamlet Q1* has troubled and complicated the notion of Shakespearean authorship in productive ways, making memorial reconstruction no longer the default position and therefore opening up the text to further consideration as text. A palimpsest it may be, but not necessarily a mangled mess. Rhetorical analysis of *Hamlet Q1*'s style, and particularly its rhetoric of speed, suggests as well a characteristic ethos to this text, one suggestive – both graphically and aurally – of haste, chaos, and thoughtless action. Rhetorical analysis, while certainly not able to decide the authorship question, not only 'rescues' *Hamlet Q1* from the author vs. pirate/scribe binary, but also highlights an important feature of this particular text that remains in the background of the ongoing discussion of the play's genesis. This feature is its paradoxical combination of oral markers and traces of print culture.

As a rhetorical scheme, *brachylogia* is a syntactic rather than semantically based figure of speech. Like most figures of syntactic repetition, it is conducive to debate, conversation, and rapid narrative or dialogic exchange. The game of 'questions' that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern play in Tom Stoppard's parody of *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967), mimics this rhythm of rapid, patterned question-and-response. Some time ago, Walter Ong (1965) posited that Renaissance prose style, which was generally structured by repetitive patterns, bore traces of oral exchange.<sup>20</sup> Lene B. Petersen, exploring relationships generally between Shakespeare's short quartos and oral performance, notes as well that repetition, omission, and transposition are fundamental structuring devices for oral genres (2010, 55), all of which features have been remarked on by critics of *Hamlet*.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Since Ong was speaking specifically of Tudor prose style, his remarks would be particularly applicable if *Hamlet Q1* were indeed written by Shakespeare in the 1580s, as Jolly and Bourus suggest.

<sup>21</sup> Petersen's work is also promising for understanding the nature of *Hamlet Q1*, but in her study, as in others, a central figure behind the text is finally identified: in this case, it is 'tradition' that stands in for the absent author. On the other hand, Petersen also sees the actor's oral compositional methods as standing closely behind the *Hamlet Q1* text as we have it and so would fit with Tribble's idea of the Globe as a scene of 'distributed cognition'.

Other critics, focusing on *Hamlet* Q1 as a print artefact, have begun to see the play as a product of literate habits of mind that is destined for readers. Erne has made the strongest case for Shakespeare as a 'literary' dramatist who cared about the dissemination of his texts to readers (2003 and 2013). Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass (2008) have specifically identified *Hamlet* Q1 as Shakespeare's first literary play based on the presence of commonplacings (using inverted commas to mark out specific passages), a feature of literate culture and evidence of readerly activity in the formation of Q1. Finally, although he does not think highly of Q1 as a text, Menzer's study of cues in *Hamlet*'s first quarto, which he suggests makes the text un-actable, show that the book was put together for a reading audience. While Stern's view of *Hamlet* as the product of note-takers tends to disintegrate the text by focusing on 'errors' and moments of local incoherence, the techniques that might have been employed by these hypothetical note-takers themselves marry oral and scribal habits. Adele Davidson's work on early modern shorthand as a writing technology and method for disseminating both sermons and play texts, which Stern draws upon in her essay, suggests a range of ways in which a text taken down by shorthand might come into existence: recorded in real time by auditors; stolen outright and recopied; rehearsed after performance by the actors, with or without the author's blessing; recounted for a presentation copy; and copied down by individuals for private use. As Davidson puts it, 'the individual writer in effect has limitless opportunities to customize stenographic scripts' (2009, 61), and if Stern is correct, there may be multiple individuals involved.<sup>22</sup> With such a flexible method and such a plenitude of ways and means by which an oral performance or written text might make its way into handwritten copies and print, we can move away from the idea that a single person – whether author, scribe, or amender – is the origin of a text.<sup>23</sup>

##### 5. Conclusion: Style without Authors

Within a model of distributed cognition, the answer to the question 'Who wrote *Hamlet* Q1?' may be at once 'Shakespeare' and 'many people'. What

<sup>22</sup> Further information about shorthand and rhetorical method as a form of knowledge-making rather than simply transcription can be found in an excellent article by Lori Anne Ferrell (2007).

<sup>23</sup> Finally, although Jolly and Bourus conclude that *Hamlet* Q1 has a singular author, the young Shakespeare, Bourus emphasizes the centrality of networks, albeit networks of individuals, to understanding the story behind *Hamlet* Q1. In the end, there is no barrier to seeing a revising author as a major part of that network and as a participant in the constellation of forces that produced the general stylistic coherence I perceive within the *Hamlet*'s first quarto. Jolly is more of an outlier here, but in pushing against the notion that the play is a memorial reconstruction, she does see Shakespeare as engaging in a textual network with his source.

remains unanswered is how, without a singular author, such a text could present a discernible style. One answer might be, of course, that there is no coherent style. Stern (2013) certainly thinks of *Hamlet* Q1 as a very uneven piece of patchwork. Masten offers Rafe from *Knight of the Burning Pestle* – ‘collaborator, improviser, collator of allusions’ (1997, 25) – as a model for the author dispersed into social discourse during textual intercourse. This agent is nothing more than a snapper-up of unconsidered textual trifles. The hybrid oral/literate style that Lynne Magnusson identifies as the general condition of early modern discourse (2012), however, suggests a more embodied and interpersonal relationship between authors and appropriators, so that the transfer from one person’s mouth to another’s pen can be fraught. Such transactions can ‘perfect’ texts, but can also ‘mangle’ them (see Davidson 2009, 103-129, *passim*). Such relationships can be cooperative, as when William Crashawe, as William Perkins’s literary executor publishing the preacher’s private notes of sermons, describes himself as producing the ‘first fruits of my labours, in another mans vineyard’ (cited by Davidson 2009, 108). But printed texts can also be surreptitiously ‘stolen’, as the First Folio may imply about previously published Shakespeare quartos. The early moderns were unsure about who possesses the word.

Between the opposed models of *Hamlet* Q1 as a collation of fragments and as a unified, if contested, property of ‘Shakespeare’, we can locate style in a middle realm of approximation, probability, and general effects. Bibliographical and textual studies of *Hamlet* Q1, particularly when authorial attribution is at stake, have tended to operate at a microscopic level, comparing texts in terms of word choice, syntax, and small poetic units (such as the couplet). Recent computer analyses of drama as ‘big data’, although operating on a vast textual canvas, also tend to draw conclusions based on small lexical details, such as function words (see, for instance, Craig and Kinney 2009). The study of style in *Hamlet*’s bad quarto, of the kind I offer here, employs neither ‘distant reading’ (to use Franco Moretti’s [2013] term for large-scale computer analysis of texts) nor close scrutiny of minute textual differentiations. It employs, instead, what might be called a ‘middle zoom’ on the text, focusing on how rhetorical structures organize thought – ranging, perhaps from tropes to what Madeleine Doran (1954) identified as larger, embedded rhetorical structures (e.g., *ekphrasis*, encomium).<sup>24</sup> Rhetorical style creates ‘structures of attention’ (in Richard Lanham’s phrase, Lanham 2007), organizing knowledge when there is too much to know (as the title of Ann Blair’s 2010 book goes) and functioning as a flexible memory machine.

<sup>24</sup> To this list, we might add William Davis’ 2006 analysis of ‘complex chiasmus’, a figure that can be found in biblical texts, as a structuring device in *Hamlet* Q1.

Over the past fifteen years, we have seen a sustained interest in *Hamlet*'s writing technologies, from handwriting (Goldberg 1988) to the erasable 'tables' that the prince employs to wipe clean his living memory and inscribe there the ghost's command (Stallybrass *et al.* 2004). Stenography and note-taking are now also seen as technologies memorializing *Hamlet* Q1 for both theatre audiences and readers of printed text. Behind the technologies, as Magnusson's analysis of Shakespearean language (2012) and Lina Perkins Wilder's survey of the multiple, sometimes conflicting memory systems at work in *Hamlet* (2010) both indicate, is a messy, hybrid network of social verbal activity engaging varied agents with varying success. To analyse style in *Hamlet* Q1 is thus to study the ways in which the resources of Renaissance rhetoric – both oral and literate, professional and everyday – engage writers, actors, and audiences in a dialectic between remembering and forgetting that allows text to be produced in the process of being reproduced.

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