

a seminar on “Leadership Lessons from Shakespeare’s *Henry V*” that had its high point in a recitation of act 3, scene 1: “flawlessly from memory, with *gusto*.” The idea of exploiting *Henry V* for business purposes was hardly original: for example, we can find it in *Shakespeare on Management* by Paul Corrigan, who says of act 3, scene 1: “At times of conflict between ourselves and a foe, this is the speech that all managers want to make to their staff” (Corrigan 142). Businessmen could have received the same advice from Jack Hulbert at a fraction of the price.

If, as Richard Olivier’s New Globe *Henry V* demonstrated, it is possible to make football relevant to the play, the opposite is also true. The 2010 World Cup did not start well for England. Before the match against Slovenia, the BBC broadcast a short clip in support of the team that featured bits of Brian Blessed’s interpretation of act 3, scene 1. Close-ups of his face as he aims his lines directly at the viewers alternate with exciting footage of some leading players in action on the field. At “Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,” they do exactly that, while getting ready for “Cry ‘God for Fabio’ [Cappello], England and Saint George!” “Over the top” does not begin to describe Blessed’s acting style, and yet the clip works both as tongue-in-cheek advice against taking a game too seriously and as a true, eagerly felt “Battle Cry for England.” The team won against Slovenia, only to lose 4–1

to Germany. Sometimes having Shakespeare on your side is not enough.

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## 152. *HAMLET* 3.1: “TO BE OR NOT TO BE”

Ann Thompson

IF WE LOOK AT ACT 3, scene 1, of *Hamlet* – the “To be or not to be” scene – within the overall structure of the play, we find a number of difficult questions that need to be addressed. There is, for example, the question of whether things that are said in this scene are consistent with things that are said elsewhere in the play, and there is the question of who actually hears what is said. There are questions relating to who is present onstage and who is seen by other characters to be present. There is a particular question about the presence of Ophelia and of Hamlet’s treatment of her. There is a question about whether “To be or not to be” actually belongs in this scene at all, and whether it is really a “soliloquy.” And, for the editor, there are questions arising from the differences between how this scene appears in the three early texts of this play, the “bad” quarto of 1603 (Q1) and the two “good” texts, the 1604/05 quarto (Q2) and the 1623 First Folio.

#### WHAT IS ODD ABOUT THIS SCENE IN THE “GOOD” TEXTS?

This scene begins somewhat informally in the two “good” texts of the play. Despite the stage direction for the entry

of the royal party and their followers (*Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and Lords*), there is no *Flourish* in Q2 to indicate a fanfare of trumpets for the royal entry, as had happened at the beginning of the previous court scenes, act 1, scene 2, and act 2, scene 2. (The First Folio does not provide such a stage direction for any of these three scenes.)

In fact, the characters enter in the midst of a conversation, with the king asking Rosencrantz and Guildenstern about their progress in investigating Hamlet:

And can you by no drift of circumstance  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
With turbulence and dangerous lunacy?

(*Ham.* 3.1.1–4)

(This is from the First Folio text, as edited by Philip Edwards for the New Cambridge Shakespeare. The “good” quarto reads “conference” rather than “circumstance” in the first line.) Their report follows. It is a disingenuous one, with Rosencrantz (often played as rather smug here) claiming that Hamlet received them well and was

"Niggard of question, but of our demands / Most free in his reply" (*Ham.* 3.1.13–14). This seemed such an inaccurate description of the actual encounter staged in the previous scene (*Ham.* 2.2.215–348) that one eighteenth-century editor, William Warburton in 1747, advocated emending it to "Most free of question, but of our demands / Niggard in his reply." In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz* concurred: "Twenty-seven questions he got out in ten minutes, and answered three" (Stoppard 40).

Rosencrantz mentions the arrival of the Players and Hamlet's interest in them, including his invitation to the king and queen to see the play, after which the king dismisses everyone, saying:

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
Affront Ophelia.

(*Ham.* 3.1.29–31)

When Hamlet actually arrives, however, at line 55, he gives no verbal indication that he is responding to a message from the king, though some performers (especially those who have followed John Dover Wilson's stage direction for Hamlet to make an early entry at line 157 of act 2, scene 2, so that he overhears the king and Polonius plotting against him) make a show of looking carefully around for someone else at this point (Wilson lvi–lvii).

Hamlet's entry is preceded by the brief conversation between the queen and Ophelia in which Gertrude expresses the wish that Ophelia's virtues may restore Hamlet to "his wonted way again," apparently having none of the objections to a match between the two of them that Polonius and Laertes assumed there would be in their advice to Ophelia in act 1, scene 3. Next, the king makes his first direct confession of guilt, but only to the audience and only in very general terms, as he responds to Polonius's comment on the hypocrisy of setting Ophelia up with a prayer book:

How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!  
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word.

(*Ham.* 3.1.50–53)

This confession has been frequently omitted in performance since at least 1676, presumably on the grounds that it is better for the audience to continue to share Hamlet's uncertainty. The First Folio text has an *Exeunt* after Polonius's "I hear him coming: Let's withdraw, my lord" (*Ham.* 3.1.55), and both Q2 and the First Folio have a reentry (*Enter King and Polonius*) later at line 155, but these directions are misleading since it is clear that the two characters remain present, within earshot of Hamlet but, initially at least, unseen by him. Having overheard "To be or not to be" and Hamlet's dialogue with Ophelia, the king rejects love as a motive for his behavior and resolves

to send the prince to England, while Polonius suggests an opportunity for further eavesdropping if the queen will invite Hamlet to see her after the play.

Ophelia's very presence is another rather awkward element in the scene. She is obviously onstage and has been specifically set up to encounter Hamlet, but usually he does not see her until line 88 ("Soft you now, / The fair Ophelia!") and he delivers his famous speech, "To be or not to be," as if he is alone. A few twentieth-century performers of the role (for example, Derek Jacobi, directed by Toby Robertson at London's Old Vic in 1977, and Jonathan Pryce, directed by Richard Eyre at London's Royal Court in 1980) aroused controversy by addressing the speech directly to Ophelia, but this is uncommon.

There is also a problem about what Ophelia hears and what she knows. Actresses (and their directors) have often been concerned with excusing her from complicity in the plot against Hamlet, but this goes against the lines spoken directly to her by both Gertrude and Polonius in the first part of the scene. The confrontation with Hamlet in this scene is their first actual encounter onstage in the play, unless she has been a silent presence in act 1, scene 2, as perhaps is indicated by the First Folio stage direction, which includes her in the general entry of the court at the beginning of that scene. Even though she has no lines in the scene, she is often included in productions and films that invent some business to establish her relationship with Hamlet.

In act 3, scene 1, she is given an *Exit* in some copies of Q2 (but not in other copies and not in the First Folio) when the king and Polonius re-enter at line 155, but this is probably a mistake because Polonius addresses her directly soon after, saying, "How now, Ophelia? / You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said, / We heard it all" (*Ham.* 3.1.172–74). It is not clear why she should need to be told this, since she was clearly aware that they would be eavesdropping. In performance, Polonius's speech can be made to express kindness (he spares Ophelia the pain of having to repeat her experience) or cruelty (he dismisses her and her pain without further thought). In stage tradition (since at least 1676), she has frequently left the scene at line 155, with the subsequent lines addressed to her being cut; the alternative (from 1723) was for her to leave at line 155 and then return as if summoned at line 172. If she remains onstage, she is often out of earshot of the king's speech at lines 156–69, in which he rejects love as the explanation for Hamlet's behavior and determines to send him to England, and Polonius's reply, in which he proposes further eavesdropping in the queen's closet after the play (she "goes up the stage" in Oxberry's 1827 acting edition). Or sometimes she is just too distressed to listen to these speeches.

The encounter between Hamlet and Ophelia is a painful one. Editors as well as directors have struggled to motivate Hamlet's cruel treatment of her, usually by indicating that he is aware of her complicity in the plot against him. If he is not aware of it from the beginning of their dialogue,

he sometimes seems to see or hear the spies at line 126, whereupon he asks Ophelia, "Where's your father?" He is either lying or confused when he says "I never gave you aught" (*Ham.* 3.1.96), perhaps because he is hurt by her refusal to see him and her attempt to return his gifts. His attack on her honesty and on women in general for, among other things, their use of makeup, is a conventional piece of early modern misogyny. But his command to "Get thee to a nunnery" (repeated five times in Q2 and the First Folio, eight times in Q1) seems intended to protect her and prevent her from breeding more sinners (though some editors still note the apparently irrelevant slang sense of "nunnery" as "brothel"). Her responses "O help him, you sweet heavens!" (*Ham.* 3.1.130) and "O heavenly powers restore him" (*Ham.* 3.1.136) indicate that she assumes he has genuinely gone mad, as does her lament beginning "O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!" (*Ham.* 3.1.144–55). In general, she evinces sympathy and generosity toward him, making his behavior all the more puzzling and, audiences may find, disagreeable, even if it is presented as an agonized response to what he sees as her treachery.

#### WHAT ABOUT THIS SCENE IN Q1?

In the first text of *Hamlet* to be published, the "bad" quarto of 1603, this scene (scene 8 in the New Cambridge text, edited by Kathleen O. Irace) runs to just 40 lines, compared with around 180 lines in Q2 and the First Folio. It contains merely the first element of act 3, scene 1, in the other texts, the report of Gilderstone and Rossencraft (as they are called in Q1), and the last element, the proposal of Corambis (as Polonius is called in this text) for further eavesdropping. This is not because Hamlet's soliloquy and his confrontation with Ophelia (spelled "Ofelia" here) have been omitted from this text but because they have appeared at an earlier point, in fact in the previous scene (scene 7 in Q1, the equivalent of act 2, scene 2, in Q2 and the First Folio), immediately after Polonius/Corambis has suggested the first eavesdropping. He puts it to the king thus in Q2 and the First Folio:

You know he sometimes walks four hours together  
Here in the lobby. . . .  
At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.  
Be you and I behind an arras then.  
(*Ham.* 2.2.158–61)

This corresponds in Q1 to:

The prince's walk is here in the gallery.  
There let Ofelia walk until he comes.  
Yourself and I will stand close in the study.  
(*Ham.* 7.103–05)

In all three texts, Hamlet enters reading at this point: "Look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading," as the queen puts it in Q2/First Folio (*Ham.* 2.2.166) and "See where he comes poring upon a book," as the king puts

it in Q1 (*Ham.* 7.109). What is different is that in Q1 the king and Polonius immediately put their plan into effect, dismissing the queen and setting Ofelia up with *her* book.

The king's brief confession of guilt does not appear in Q1, but "To be or not to be" and Hamlet's encounter with Ofelia duly follow. Thus Q1 further complicates the question of Ophelia's presence. She has in fact been present from earlier in this scene in Q1, as one might have expected from her father's response to her revelations about Hamlet's visit to her closet at the end of the previous scene in all three texts (scene 6 or act 2, scene 1), in which Corambis says in Q1, "Let's to the king" (*Ham.* 6.65), and Polonius says twice in Q2/First Folio, "Come, go with me: I will go seek the King" and "Come, go we to the King" (*Ham.* 2.1.99 and *Ham.* 2.1.115, respectively). It seems natural in Q1 that she should enter with her father when he announces the return of the ambassadors in the next scene (*Ham.* 7.18 stage direction), and for her to be present (albeit silent) while he speaks of Hamlet's love for her, but Polonius enters alone in Q2 and the First Folio. Some productions and films have (probably unknowingly) followed Q1 here and had Ophelia onstage, even going further by having her read out Hamlet's letter herself; she did this in Kenneth Branagh's film in 1996 and in Michael Almereyda's film in 2000.

#### IS "TO BE OR NOT TO BE" IN THE WRONG PLACE?

Several scholars have commented on what they see as the awkwardness of having two characters reading books onstage at the same time and have used this as part of their argument that Q1 has mistakenly "displaced" this sequence, but there is a strong theatrical tradition of preferring the Q1 ordering of events. British examples in the second half of the twentieth century include Michael Benthall directing John Neville at London's Old Vic in 1957, Tony Richardson directing Nicol Williamson at London's Roundhouse in 1969, Ron Daniels directing Mark Rylance for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon, in 1989, and Matthew Warchus directing Alex Jennings for the RSC in 1997. Further examples in the present century include Trevor Nunn directing Ben Whishaw at London's Old Vic and Michael Boyd directing Toby Stephens for the RSC, both in 2004, and Gregory Doran directing David Tennant for the RSC in 2008. Indeed, when I reviewed the production directed by Michael Grandage and starring Jude Law at the Donmar West End season at London's Wyndham's Theatre in 2009, I felt obliged to note that "To be or not to be" was given in its Q2/First Folio position, so frequently has it been relocated (Thompson).

Why does this happen, given that Q1 has never been accorded much textual authority, being generally regarded as a "memorial" or "reported" text, put together from memory by actors or audience members without access to a written script? Fortunately, recent directors are quite

likely to explain choices of this kind. In a program essay called "Director's Cut" for the 2004 Old Vic production, the author, Elaine Peake, writes that Trevor Nunn "even goes to the notorious Bad Quarto for alternatives which he feels will work." After giving a single example of a substitution of an easier phrase ("more than other people" for "more than their even-Christen" at line 24 of act 5, scene 1), she continues:

He [Nunn] is also very conscious of the fact that, in this production, he is contributing to an ongoing debate as to where the most famous speech in the English language should come in the play. Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be or not to be..." traditionally appears in a place which is difficult to justify in terms of either the character or the narrative itself. Throughout the play, Shakespeare seems to be providing his tragic hero with soliloquies at regular and measured intervals, but this speech comes only a few lines after the previous soliloquy, "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I" [*Ham.* 2.2.501–58]. At the end of this, Hamlet has a positive plan of campaign: "The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King." He is patently intent on action here. Then, only 50 or so lines later, he is discussing whether or not he should take his own life. This is an uncomfortable development.

This essay also worries about the presence of other characters:

There is also the fact that, on all other occasions when Hamlet is speaking his thoughts directly to the audience, Shakespeare has taken great pains to ensure he is alone and frequently indicates this in the text. In the case of "To be or not to be" in its usual printed position, not only is Ophelia on stage where she has been instructed to stay and be discovered by Hamlet, we are also told very clearly that both Polonius and Claudius are overhearing what is going on. It is almost impossible for a director to communicate to an audience that Hamlet is speaking his thoughts out loud and that the three other people on stage cannot hear him, so Nunn has taken the controversial decision to move the soliloquy. (Peake)

It is not quite explicit in the way it is expressed here that Nunn's "controversial decision" is inspired by Q<sub>1</sub>, perhaps because, although the earlier placing of the speech comes from that text, the problem of onstage auditors exists in it as well as in Q<sub>2</sub> and the First Folio. Gregory Doran was more explicit in one of his notes headed "A Rehearsal Scrapbook" in the program to his 2008 RSC production:

Working through Act Three we reach the most famous soliloquy of all: "To be or not to be." Why is it here? Why, after Hamlet has found such inspiration in the Player's tears at Hecuba, when he has decided to catch the conscience of the King with The Mousetrap, has he

descended into this slough of despondency and fatalism? A solution presents itself. In the First Quarto, the speech appears in Act Two, and is the first time we see Hamlet following the encounter with his father's spirit and since Ophelia's description of the distracted prince's appearance in her closet. We try adopting this structure. (Doran)

Neither director indicates that this decision had ever been made before.

It is perhaps disconcerting to find that this, "the most famous soliloquy of all," "the most famous speech in the English language," (a) is not, strictly speaking, a soliloquy at all in any of the three texts and (b) is portable or detachable, easily moved to one scene (some 500 lines) earlier if the director finds its traditional position in the two "good" texts "uncomfortable." Most people in most audiences would probably not notice any difference. In the days when *Hamlet* was performed with two (or even more) intervals, a break between act 2 and act 3 could lessen the apparent abruptness of Hamlet's change of mood, simply by suggesting that more time has passed, but in current practice the single interval usually comes later than this.

#### HOW DO EDITORS TACKLE THIS FAMOUS SPEECH?

Unlike directors, editors of modern scholarly editions cannot move speeches around. Throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and most of the twentieth centuries, editorial tradition was to combine or "conflate" the two "good" texts of *Hamlet* and to provide the longest possible text by including all the passages that are found only in Q<sub>2</sub> as well as all the passages that are found only in the First Folio. Since the 1980s, some editors who believe that the First Folio text derives from an authorial revision of the play have accordingly based their texts on it and printed Q<sub>2</sub>-only passages in square brackets (Edwards) or relegated them to an appendix (Wells et al.; Hibbard). No one, apart from those specifically editing Q<sub>1</sub>, has adopted the earlier placement of "To be or not to be." My co-editor, Neil Taylor, and I were fortunate in being able to edit all three texts for the Arden series; we actually began by editing Q<sub>1</sub> as if it were the only text of the play to survive, partly as a way of defamiliarizing ourselves with what we already thought we knew about *Hamlet*.

As this speech is the most famous line in the play, its first line is Q<sub>1</sub>'s most famous variant from the other texts, reading as it does, "To be or not to be; ay, there's the point" (*Ham.* 7.114). It seems extraordinary, from a later perspective, that if Q<sub>1</sub> is some kind of memorial reconstruction, this line should be misremembered, though Shakespeare does use the phrase "Ay, there's the point" in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (*Wiv.* 1.1.178) and in *Othello* (*Oth.* 3.3.230), and he uses "there's the point" in *Henry IV, Part 2* (2*H4* 1.3.18) and in *Antony and Cleopatra* (*Ant.* 2.6.31), so the

expression itself is not un-Shakespearean, as some critics imply. In general, Q1's version of this speech is, like the rest of the text, a sort of rough and somewhat abbreviated version of what we find in Q2 and the First Folio, though with two notable differences. The first is in Hamlet's representation of the afterlife, which is in Q1

The undiscovered country at whose sight  
The happy smile and the accursed damned –  
But for this, the joyful hope of this,  
Who'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world,  
(*Ham.* 7.120–23)

(The sense requires us to understand “the accursed are damned” in line 121.) The words “happy smile” and “joyful hope” are not present in Q2 and the First Folio, where the speech is darker. The second difference occurs as Hamlet goes on:

Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poor,  
The widow being oppressed, the orphan wronged,  
The taste of hunger or a tyrant's reign,  
And thousand more calamities besides –  
(*Ham.* 7.124–27)

The list is a commonplace one, but the mention of “the widow” and “the orphan” gives the speech a more specific and material social context – perhaps one more relevant to the actors and their audience than to the privileged prince. Actually, translators and performers, without reference to Q1 (but perhaps with the same instinct), sometimes substitute their own topical references at this point in the speech, as in Boris Pasternak's early version, which included complaints about “red tape,” “foul-mouthed petty officials, and the kicks of the worthless kicking the worthy” (Stribrny 98).

Turning to the more familiar versions of the speech in Q2 and the First Folio, it may come as a surprise that, after so much debate, editors and critics still disagree as to whether “the question” for Hamlet is (a) whether life in general is worth living, (b) whether he should take his own life, or (c) whether he should kill the king. One reason for this is that the speech is cast in very general terms: Hamlet's use of “we” is not the personal, royal “we” standing for “I” but the generalizing “we” standing for “we human beings”; he does not discuss the specific nature of his own problems at this point in the narrative at all. In one of the most remarkable examples of how portable or detachable this speech is, in one modern production, directed by Peter Brook at the Bouffes du Nord in Paris in 2000 (and subsequently on tour in London and New York in 2001), Adrian Lester spoke it not in its Q1 position in act 2 or its Q2/First Folio position in act 3 but toward the end of act 4, where it replaced Hamlet's last soliloquy, “How all occasions do inform against me.” This speech (which is absent from both Q1 and the First Folio) comes after Hamlet has killed Polonius and is being escorted into exile, so it is his lowest point and thus the appropriate place for “to be or not to be,” according to Brook (Lavender 233).

We did not, as editors of the Arden edition, feel it was our job to decide what “the question” is or to tell our readers how to interpret this speech (or indeed the play more generally). We felt instead that we should give them the information they needed (a) to make up their own minds about the speech and (b) to understand why editors and critics continue to disagree about it, as they do about so many other aspects of the play. In our textual notes, we indicated variant readings and editorial emendations, and in our commentary notes we referred readers to other parts of our edition where some aspects of the speech were discussed in more detail.

It was a requirement of the Arden series for which we were working that we began by modernizing the spelling and punctuation of the speech. We also followed standard practice in glossing obsolete or unfamiliar words (“contumely” at line 71, “fardels” at line 76, “bourn” at line 79), noting proverbial phrases (“a sea of troubles” at line 59), explaining metaphors (“rub” from bowls at line 65, “quietus” from finance at line 75), and occasionally clarifying syntax (as when we paraphrased “the spurns / That patient merit of th'unworthy takes” as “the rejections of setbacks that a patient and deserving person receives from worthless or despicable people”). We commented on staging options: what might happen onstage or what has happened in specific productions. We also addressed some of the queries that readers (including actors) might have about the speech: Why does Hamlet claim that “no traveller returns” (line 80) from death, given that he has recently met his father's ghost? What does he mean by his use of “conscience” in line 83?

#### SOME EXAMPLES OF VARIANT READINGS

If we had been editing a single text, we might have been tempted to be eclectic, taking readings from both Q2 and the First Folio, but since we were editing each text separately, we decided to retain readings in cases where they seemed to us to make sense without too much strain. Another way of putting it would be to say that we did not emend the text if we would not have done so had only one text of the play survived. Because there are in fact two “good” texts, editors whose work is ostensibly based on one text are often tempted to take a reading they personally prefer from the other text, even when it is not strictly necessary to do so. You would think, from the average number of emendations in texts of *Hamlet* based on either Q2 or the First Folio, that both these texts were liberally sprinkled with scribal or compositorial errors, as compared with single-text plays such as *Macbeth* or *Antony and Cleopatra*, but this is not the case.

To give some examples from this speech, in our text of the First Folio, we retained its reading “the poor man's contumely” at line 71 where some editors who consider the First Folio to be an authorial revision (Wells et al.; Edwards; Hibbard) nevertheless emend it

(without comment) to Q2's reading, "the proud man's contumely." It seemed to us that the First Folio's reading could either indicate that Hamlet, as a prince, might have been irritated by the insolence of his social inferiors or that the phrase might refer to "the insolent treatment suffered by the poor man." Conversely, in the next line in our text of Q2, we retained its phrase "the pangs of despised love" where some editors who are generally faithful to Q2 (Jenkins) emend it to the First Folio's "the pangs of disprized love." Both readings seemed to us to make acceptable sense. Later in the speech, Hamlet in Q2 talks of how "enterprises of great pitch and moment / With this regard their currents turn awry" (lines 86–87), whereas in the First Folio he says "enterprises of great pith and moment / With this regard their currents turn away." Both pitch/pith and awry/away make sense as they stand, though again some editors choose to emend it, usually preferring Q2's "pitch" and "awry" as the more unusual words, likely to be replaced with more common ones by a careless scribe or compositor. There was in fact only one instance in this speech where we emended the Q2 text with a word from the First Folio, namely at lines 84–85, where Hamlet says in the First Folio that "the native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." This seemed to us to make sense, whereas Q2's "sickled o'er" did not, and we could find no other instance to enable us to claim that "sickled" could simply be a variant spelling of "sicklied." This is arguably an emendation we might have made even if the First Folio had not existed. We did not emend its version of this speech at all, though earlier in the scene we emended its reading of Polonius's expression "surge o'er" (line 48) to "sugar o'er," which is the Q2 reading, but again this is a correction one might have made had Q2 not existed.

#### HAMLET'S MYSTERY

There is nothing straightforward about *Hamlet*. This is perhaps part of the fascination it has held for over 400 years. It may be that editors and directors are wrong to try to tidy up what they find "uncomfortable" about act 3, scene 1, by "correcting" apparent contradictions, moving parts of the text around, and introducing stage business and stage directions (or commentary notes) to explain the motivation and behavior of the characters.

Hamlet himself might scold us for attempting to "pluck out the heart of my mystery," as he scolds Guildenstern (*Ham.* 3.2.331). One of his mysteries is his attitude toward his own death, a matter that preoccupies him from his first soliloquy, in which he certainly contemplates "self-slaughter" (*Ham.* 1.2.129–59), to his philosophical acceptance that "The readiness is all" before his final duel with Laertes (*Ham.* 5.2.194–95). Another is his attitude toward women, specifically Gertrude and Ophelia, and the extent to which his behavior is motivated by this.

Both of these mysteries are crucially important in this scene, and the manner in which they are interpreted here will build on what has gone before and point forward to what follows. The presence of spies or eavesdroppers, problematic as it is here, characterizes the play and has led to whole productions and films (especially in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe under communist rule) being dominated by the idea, voiced explicitly by Hamlet only in the First Folio text, that "Denmark's a prison" (*Ham.* 2.2.234). And the scene has more mundane work to do in forwarding the plot by reminding us of what Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been commissioned to do, confirming the forthcoming performance of "The Murder of Gonzago" and revealing the king's guilt and his plan to send Hamlet to England. It ends with Polonius's fatal proposal to hide in the queen's closet, as he does in act 3, scene 4. In short, it could be said to epitomize the play as a whole, and the questions it raises pervade the entire text.

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### 153. *MACBETH* 1.3: "KING HEREAFTER!"

Stephen Orgel

JOHANN HEINRICH FUSELI'S painting *Macbeth and Banquo meeting the witches*, done for John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, is a testimony to the power of the play and to the artist's fascination with it, but it also records a striking change of focus in Fuseli's thinking about the play and indeed in the way the play was being imagined at the end of the eighteenth century. From the time Fuseli came to London in 1763, he had been addicted to the theater, and particularly to David Garrick's productions. He studied Garrick's acting as a model for the expression of the emotions, and his sketch of Garrick and his Lady Macbeth, Hannah Pritchard (Figure 201), in 1766 is one of the primary documents of eighteenth-century theater history.

After the murder of Duncan, Macbeth appears, disheveled and tense; Lady Macbeth warns him to be silent, her finger to her lips, and reaches out her hand.

The drawing is inscribed with the moment of dialogue at his entrance: "My husband ... I've done the deed" (*Mac.* 2.2.14). Macbeth here brandishes the daggers, which he has mistakenly brought with him from the king's bedroom. This is apparently the way Garrick played the scene. In modern productions, the daggers are unseen until Lady Macbeth's "Go get some water / And wash this filthy witness from your hand" (*Mac.* 2.2.43–44). It is only then that she sees them, and, startled and shocked, asks, "Why did you bring these daggers from the place?" But according to Garrick's eighteenth-century biographer Arthur Murphy, "Garrick re-entered the scene with the bloody dagger[s] in his hand" – the daggers were in plain view throughout, and Lady Macbeth only realized well into the scene what a dangerous mistake he has made (Murphy 82). Fuseli's drawing in fact conflates two separate moments: Macbeth has just entered, but Lady Macbeth is much further along



201. Johann Heinrich Fuseli, *Garrick and Mrs Pritchard as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of King Duncan* (1766). By permission of Kunsthaus Zürich.