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ideas are strongly evident in Shakespeare's plays. However, Hall's work was also employed by Shakespeare's most important source on British history, Raphael HOLINSHED, and it is often difficult to determine which source the playwright was using. Scholars generally feel that Hall was his major source for the history of the wars, while Holinshed was used chiefly for additional details, particularly in the *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III*.

Hall incorporated earlier histories into the *Union*, notably Sir Thomas MORE's *History of Richard III* (published in Richard GRAFTON's chronicles), and Polydore VERGIL's *Historia Anglia* (1534). Hall was in turn incorporated by later writers, including Holinshed and John STOW. Thus, his work is a central element in the 16th century's picture of the 15th. Hall was a lawyer and politician who wrote his history with the specific intention of glorifying the TUDOR dynasty, whose foundation ended the Wars of the Roses. In this, he was part of a well-established tradition of Tudor history writing that was consciously instituted by King Henry VII (see HISTORY PLAYS) as a type of propaganda. Shakespeare, though his own sensibility permeates his work and makes it more interesting and comprehensive, was also a part of this tradition.

Hall (3), Elizabeth (1608–1670) Shakespeare's grand-daughter, child of Susanna SHAKESPEARE (14) and John HALL (4). Elizabeth was eight when Shakespeare died, and the playwright left her most of his silver. After her mother's death she also inherited most of the rest of the Shakespeare estate, including NEW PLACE and the BIRTHPLACE. She married Thomas NASH (2) in 1626 and lived with him at New Place, though probably not until after her father's death in 1635. Nash died in 1647 and she was remarried in 1649 to John Bernard (d. 1674), with whom she moved to Northamptonshire. She had no children by either husband and was Shakespeare's last descendant. She left the Shakespeare birthplace to her cousin George Hart, grandson of Joan SHAKESPEARE (8), and the remainder of her grandfather's estate, including New Place, to Bernard, whose heirs sold it.

Hall (4), John (1575–1635) Shakespeare's son-in-law, the husband of Susanna SHAKESPEARE (14) and father of Elizabeth HALL (3). Hall was a notable doctor who probably treated his father-in-law and was certainly well-regarded by him, for with his wife he was executor of the playwright's will. Hall, the son of a physician from Bedfordshire, studied medicine at Cambridge University and possibly in France, though he never received a formal degree in the subject. He settled in STRATFORD around 1600 and was soon regarded as the region's leading doctor. He was reportedly a very devout Protestant, perhaps with Puritan

leanings, and it has been speculated that he did not approve of his famous father-in-law's profession. During the Civil Wars his widow sold one of his Latin medical notebooks—apparently not realising that he had written it—and it was later published as *Select Observations on English Bodies* (1657). It contains accounts of many of his patients—including his wife and Michael DRAYTON—but unfortunately begins only in 1617 and so does not treat Shakespeare.

Hall (5), Peter (b. 1930) British theatrical director. Hall directed the ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY in STRATFORD from 1960 to 1968 and the National Theatre Company of Britain from 1972 to 1988. Among his most notable Shakespearean productions have been *Henry V* (1960), two stagings of *Coriolanus* (1959 and 1984, starring Laurence OLIVIER and Ian MCKELLEN, respectively), and a rare uncut *Hamlet* (1975).

Hall (6), Susanna Shakespeare Shakespeare's daughter, wife of John HALL (4). See SHAKESPEARE (14).

Hall (7), William (active 1577–1620) English printer, a possible 'Mr W. H.' of the dedication to the first edition (1609) of the SONNETS. Hall was mostly a printer of business papers, and had no known connection with Shakespeare or his works. However, he has been suggested by the scholar Sidney LEE as a possible 'Mr W. H.' on the strength of the coincidence of initials and the fact that the next word in the dedication is 'all'. Lee speculated that Hall acquired for publisher Thomas THORPE the copies of the poems from which the book was published, and was thus called the 'onlie begetter' of the Sonnets. Aside from this supposition there is no evidence to associate Hall with the work.

Halle, Edward See HALL (2).

Halliwell-Phillips, James Orchard (1820–1889) British scholar. A long-time librarian at Jesus College, Cambridge, Halliwell-Phillips was one of the most important 19th-century Shakespeare scholars. He published a *Life of Shakespeare* (1848), an edition of the *Works* (1853–1861), and a collection of documentary materials on the playwright's life, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (1881). The *Outlines* is a trove of material that has been used by all later biographers. He was a founder of the original Shakespeare Society in 1840 and the first editor of the STRATFORD archives.

Hamlet Title character of *Hamlet*, the crown prince of DENMARK. Prince Hamlet is required by his murdered father's GHOST (3) to take vengeance on the present KING (5), his uncle, who committed the murder and then married the widow of his victim, Hamlet's mother, the QUEEN (9). Hamlet's troubled re-

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sponse to this situation, his disturbed relations with those around him, and his eventual acceptance of his destiny constitute the play.

Hamlet is almost universally considered one of the most remarkable characters in all of literature. His language, extraordinary even in Shakespeare's oeuvre, sweeps us up in a seemingly endless stream of similes and metaphors of ordinary speech, instead pouring forth fully fleshed images that convey the excitement of his thought. His psychology is stirringly genuine because it is humanly complex; he is filled with passion and contradiction, and his emotional life develops credibly through the course of the play. His personality, his attitudes and ideas, even his subconscious, have intrigued readers and theatre-goers for centuries, and copious commentary on him is still being written. Many writers have supposed that Hamlet's troubled mind reflects a traumatic development in Shakespeare's life, although there is almost no evidence of the playwright's personal life to confirm or refute this theory.

Although Hamlet foreshadows the psychologically realistic characters of modern drama, Shakespeare did not create the prince's emotional life for its own sake but rather as a vehicle for presenting a philosophical attitude. Hamlet's troubled mind demonstrates the development of an acceptance of life despite the existence of human evil, and this is the dominant theme of the play. The critical element in this development is the prince's recognition of evil in himself; in containing both good and evil, he represents the dual nature of humankind. The reconciliation of humanity with its own flawed nature is a central concern of Shakespeare's work, and in Hamlet an evolution of attitudes leading to this conclusion is displayed in a grand and powerful portrait.

Although he can deal in a practical manner with the world of intrigue that surrounds him, Hamlet is more a thinker than a doer, and he directs our attention often to his own concerns, large issues such as suicide, the virtues and defects of humankind, and the possibility of life after death. Above all, his circumstances demand that he consider the nature of evil.

We first encounter the prince as he struggles to deal with his father's death. In 1.2.76-86 he describes his mournful state; dressed in funereal black, conscious that he looks dejected and can be seen to have been weeping, he nevertheless asserts that this appearance cannot convey the depths of his grief. By focussing on the difference between appearance and reality—a difference that here is merely one of degree since his inner state is at least superficially indicated by his dress and demeanor—Hamlet betrays the confused perception that comes with great emotional trauma. In the early stages of grief, the ordinary aspects of

existence seem absurdly thin and weak, inappropriate to the mourner's overwhelming sense of pain and loss.

In this state of mind, Hamlet is strongly offended by his mother's hasty and incestuous remarriage, even before he learns from the Ghost of his father's murder. He sees his father as an ideal man and a great king, an assumption supported by other opinions in the play and by the dignity and grandeur of the Ghost. He is thus appalled by his mother's willingness to accept an inferior man, a libertine and—as is soon revealed—a murderer. Hamlet comes to see his mother as evil and is devastated by the idea. Although he is the son of a godlike father, he is also the son of a mother who readily beds with 'a satyr' (1.2.140). Plunged into despondency, he rejects life, saying, 'How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world! . . . things rank and gross in nature / Possess it merely' (1.2.133-136). This attitude is further expressed in one of literature's most powerful evocations of mental depression, 'I have of late . . . lost all my mirth [and] this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air . . . appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man, . . . and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me—nor woman neither . . .' (2.2.295-309).

He declares that his life is not worth 'a pin's fee' (1.4.65); indeed, he longs for death, as he declares more than once, wishing, for instance, ' . . . that this too sullied flesh would melt' (1.2.129) and declaring death ' . . . a consummation / Devoutly to be wish'd' (3.1.63-64), though in both of these speeches he also rejects suicide, once because of the religious injunction against it and once out of fear of the afterlife.

His disgust with life turns, therefore, to a revulsion against sex, the mechanism of life's continuance. Not only does sex generate life, with its evils, but the attractions of sex have led his mother to adultery and incest. Though some commentators have supposed that Hamlet unconsciously desires his mother sexually, as in the Oedipus complex hypothesised by Freud, such a theory is unnecessary, for the play's world provides the prince with real, not fantasised, parental conflicts: his father is dead, and he is the enemy of his mother's lover. However, the facts of Hamlet's situation, dire as they are, are less important than the interpretation that he puts upon them. Plainly influenced by his disgust with sex, he is obsessed by the image of his mother's 'incestuous sheets' (1.2.157); he virtually ignores the political consequences of his father's murder—the murderer's succession as King—and focusses on the sexual implications, and, most significantly, he transfers his mother's sexual guilt to OPHELIA.

Hamlet denies his love for Ophelia in 3.1.117-119,

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Hamlet's rage and hi to the play, both literally and figuratively, for his

though only after affirming it two lines earlier, and Shakespeare plainly intended us to take Hamlet's courtship of Ophelia before the play begins as having been sincere. Ophelia's shy description in 1.3.110–114, along with her regretful one in 3.1.97–99, make this clear. Moreover, Hamlet's intensity and confusion as he parts from Ophelia—in the strange behaviour she recounts in 2.1.77–100 and in his famous insistence that she enter a nunnery in 3.1.121–151—indicate his great emotional involvement. However, although he apparently loved her earlier, Hamlet does not actually respond to Ophelia as a person in the course of the play. Theirs is not a love story but rather a dramatisation of Hamlet's rejection of life, and of love, marriage, and sex. 'Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?' he cries in 3.1.121–122, and he immediately goes on to identify himself with the world's evil-doers. Hamlet cannot avoid his sexual desire for Ophelia, as his obscene jesting in 3.2.108–119 demonstrates, but this episode is also a plain indication of the disgust he now feels for sex. His attitude symbolises his condemnation of life, a viewpoint that he overcomes by the end of the play.

Hamlet's delay in seeking revenge may similarly be seen as a psychological trait emphasised to make a philosophical point. The prince's procrastination is not immediately obvious, for not much time seems to pass and only one plain opportunity for revenge presents itself (in the 'prayer scene', 3.3), but Hamlet insists upon its importance, berating himself as 'a rogue and peasant slave . . . / A dull and muddy-mettled rascal' (2.2.544, 562); his assumption of guilt is clearly excessive. Though committed to the idea that revenge is his duty, Hamlet senses the evil in the obligation, sent from 'heaven and hell' (2.2.580), and he resists.

Once the King's guilt is firmly established by his response to the performance of *THE MURDER OF GONZAGO*, Hamlet falls victim to a pathological rage. This is first shown in his chilling resolution, 'Tis now the very witching time of night, / . . . Now could I drink hot blood . . .' (3.2.379–381). This state of mind persists as he demands eternal damnation for the King, not merely murderous revenge, and therefore avoids killing him at prayer in 3.3. Then in 3.4 he vents his hysterical rage at his mother and kills *POLONIUS* with a furious gesture in the process. This crime lacks even the justification of revenge. Whatever his faults, *Polonius* was innocent of Hamlet's father's murder, and, moreover, his death leads to the insanity and subsequent death of Ophelia, whose blamelessness is absolute. Hamlet's avoidance of one evil has thus involved him in another, greater one.

Hamlet's rage and his descent into evil are central to the play, both literally, occurring near its mid-point, and figuratively, for his deeds trigger its climactic de-

velopment. *Polonius*' son, *LAERTES*, seeks revenge and eventually kills Hamlet, and more immediately, *Polonius*' death results in Hamlet's exile, during which he finds his salvation.

In Act 5 we find that Hamlet has changed. He meditates on death in the graveyard in 5.1, but now death is neither welcoming nor fearful; it is merely the normal human destiny and the prince's remarks are satirical thrusts at the living. His memories of *YORICK* are pleasurable appreciations of the past, as well as occasions for sardonic humour. Ophelia's funeral triggers a last explosion of emotion as Hamlet assaults *Laertes*, but although this resembles his fury of Act 3, here Hamlet restrains himself and departs. His outburst has been cathartic, producing two significant declarations. As he challenges *Laertes*, Hamlet proclaims himself 'Hamlet the Dane' (5.1.251), at last accepting his role as his father's heir—Denmark, once his 'prison' (2.2.243) is now his kingdom—and at the same time implicitly challenging the King. Perhaps given courage or awareness by this pronouncement he goes on to assert the feelings he had suppressed in his anger and depression, stating 'I lov'd Ophelia' (5.1.264). The prince is no longer in the grip of his grief.

In 5.2 Hamlet confides to *HORATIO* the cause of the change in his sense of himself: by impulsively rewriting his death warrant to save himself, he has realised that his hesitations and ponderings had been beside the point. He sees that 'Our indiscretion sometime serves us well / When our deep plots do pall. . . . There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will . . .' (5.2.8–11). He acknowledges that he cannot carry out the revenge called for by the Ghost without committing murder, the very crime he must avenge. He accepts that he must be evil in order to counter evil. He senses a basic truth: the capacity for evil exists in him because he is human.

In accepting his destiny, Hamlet also prepares for his own death. He senses his end approaching, as the King's plot takes form, but he remains composed, saying, 'There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows aught, what is't to leave betimes? Let be' (5.2.215–220). This final remark—since we know so little of the world, it is no great matter to leave it early—reflects the prince's awareness of the futility of his earlier philosophical inquiries. It is more important to live and then to die, coming to terms with one's fate.

Hamlet's salvation—his awareness of his human failings—comes only with his death. However, *Horatio*'s prayer for him, '[May] flights of angels sing thee to thy rest' (5.2.365), offers the hope of an eternal release from the stresses the prince has undergone.

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The playwright leaves us assured that his tragic hero has finally found peace.

Hamlet

SYNOPSIS

Act 1, Scene 1

On the castle wall in *EL SINORE*, a sentry, *BARNARDO*, replaces *FRANCISCO* (1) on guard and is joined by *HORATIO* and *MARCELLUS*. *Barnardo* and *Marcellus* tell of a supernatural being they have seen. The *GHOST* (3) of the late King of *DENMARK* silently appears and withdraws. The three agree that this visitation seems especially ominous in view of an impending war with Norway. The Ghost re-enters but disappears again when a cock crows. *Horatio* decides that they should tell Prince *HAMLET* of the appearance of his father's spirit.

Act 1, Scene 2

Claudius, the King (5) of Denmark, speaks of the recent death of the late king, his brother, and of his marriage to *QUEEN* (9) *Gertrude*, his brother's widow and *Hamlet's* mother. He also tells of an invasion threat from young Prince *FORTINBRAS* of Norway, who is acting without the knowledge of his uncle, the Norwegian king. The King therefore sends *CORNELIUS* (1) and *VOLTEMAND* with a letter to the King of Norway advocating restraint. *LAERTES*, the son of the King's adviser *POLONIUS*, requests permission to return to his studies in France, which the King grants. The King and Queen urge *Hamlet* to cease mourning his father's death. The King denies *Hamlet* permission to return to his own studies at *Wittenberg*; the Queen adds her wish that he stay in Denmark, and *Hamlet* agrees to do so. The monarchs and their retinue depart. *Hamlet* remains and muses mournfully on his mother's hasty and incestuous marriage. *Horatio*, *Marcellus*, and *Barnardo* appear and tell *Hamlet* about the Ghost. With great excitement, he arranges to meet them on the castle wall that night.

Act 1, Scene 3

Laertes, leaving for France, warns his sister, *OPHELIA*, about *Hamlet's* affection for her, which he says cannot be permanent in view of the prince's royal status. *Polonius* arrives and gives *Laertes* moralising advice on his conduct abroad. *Laertes* departs with a last word to *Ophelia* about *Hamlet*; this triggers a diatribe from *Polonius* about the suspect morals of young men, and he forbids *Ophelia* to see the prince.

Act 1, Scene 4

The Ghost appears to *Hamlet*, *Horatio*, and *Marcellus*, and *Hamlet* speaks to it. It beckons, and *Hamlet* follows.

Act 1, Scene 5

The Ghost confirms that it is the spirit of *Hamlet's* father. It declares that the prince must avenge his

murder: the King had poured poison in his ear. The Ghost departs, and *Hamlet* vows to carry out its wishes. *Horatio* and *Marcellus* appear, and *Hamlet* swears them to secrecy—about the Ghost and about his own intention to feign madness—as the Ghost's disembodied voice demands their oaths.

Act 2, Scene 1

Polonius sends his servant *REYNALDO* (1) to spy on *Laertes* in Paris. *Ophelia* reports that *Hamlet* has come to her and behaved as if he were insane. *Polonius* concludes that his separation of *Ophelia* and *Hamlet* has driven the prince mad, and he decides to inform the King of this.

Act 2, Scene 2

The King and Queen welcome *ROSENCRANTZ* and *GUILDENSTERN*, fellow students of *Hamlet*, who have been summoned in the hope that the prince will confide in them. They agree to spy on their friend. *Voltemand* and *Cornelius* arrive to report that the King of Norway has agreed to redirect *Fortinbras's* invasion to Poland. *Polonius* then declares—with comical tediousness—that *Hamlet* is lovesick, producing a love letter from the prince that he has confiscated from *Ophelia*. He offers to arrange for the King to eavesdrop on an encounter between *Ophelia* and *Hamlet*. *Hamlet* appears; *Polonius* advises the King and Queen to leave, and he approaches the prince alone. *Hamlet* answers him with nonsensical remarks and absurd insults. *Polonius* interprets these as symptoms of madness and departs, as *Rosencrantz* and *Guildestern* enter. *Hamlet* greets them with more wild talk, and he badgers them into admitting that they have been sent to observe him. *PLAYERS* (2) from the city arrive, and *Hamlet* welcomes them enthusiastically, asking the *FIRST PLAYER* (2) to recite a dramatic monologue describing an episode of revenge from the *TROJAN WAR*. *Hamlet* requests that the *Players* perform *THE MURDER OF GONZAGO* before the court that night, inserting lines that he will compose. He dismisses the actors and the courtiers and soliloquises on his delay in avenging the Ghost. He suspects that the spirit may have lied; he will have the *Players* enact a killing similar to his father's murder, and if *Claudius* responds guiltily, he will know that the Ghost has spoken the truth.

Act 3, Scene 1

Polonius instructs *Ophelia* to meet *Hamlet* while he and the King eavesdrop. The two men hide themselves as *Hamlet* approaches, meditating on the value of life, and *Ophelia* greets him. He passionately rejects her with a wild diatribe against women. He leaves her grieving for his apparent madness. The King tells *Polonius* that he has decided to send *Hamlet* on a mission to England, accompanied by *Rosencrantz* and *Guildestern*. *Polonius* suggests further surveillance in the meantime, proposing that his mother summon

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Act 3, Scene 2

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Act 3, Scene 4

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Hamlet after the performance by the Players; he, Polonius, will spy on their conversation.

Act 3, Scene 2

Hamlet lectures the Players on acting, saying that overacting and improvisation are distractions from a play's purposes. The court assembles, and the Players perform an introductory DUMB SHOW, in which a murderer kills a king by pouring poison in his ear as he sleeps. He then takes the king's crown and exits with the king's wife. The PLAYER KING and PLAYER QUEEN then speak; she asserts that she will never remarry if he dies, but he insists that she will. He then rests, falling asleep. Another Player, in the part of LUCIANUS, speaks darkly of the evil powers of poison and pours a potion in the ear of the PLAYER KING. The real King, distressed, rises and leaves in anger. Hamlet exults in the success of his plan. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and then Polonius, deliver the Queen's summons to Hamlet, and he agrees to go to her, but not before ridiculing them. He prepares himself to meet his mother, feeling great anger but reminding himself not to use violence against her.

Act 3, Scene 3

Polonius tells the King that Hamlet is on his way to the Queen's chamber, where he, Polonius, will spy on their meeting. He goes, and the King soliloquises about his murder of his brother. He says that he has been unable to pray for forgiveness because he is conscious that he is still enjoying the fruits of his crime—his brother's kingdom and his widow. He tries again to pray; Hamlet enters, sees the King on his knees, and contemplates killing him on the spot. He reflects, however, that, if the King dies while at prayer, he will probably go to heaven and the revenge will be incomplete. He decides instead to wait until he finds the King engaged in some sin, however petty, and then kill him, ensuring that his soul will go to hell.

Act 3, Scene 4

Polonius hides behind a curtain in the Queen's chamber. Hamlet arrives; he attempts to make his mother sit down, and she cries for help. Polonius cries out also, and Hamlet stabs him through the drapery, killing him. After expressing regret that his victim was not the King, Hamlet condemns his mother's behaviour. He compares the virtues of his father to the vices of his uncle; the distraught Queen's cries for mercy only enrage him more. The Ghost appears. The Queen, unaware of its presence, thinks Hamlet is mad as he speaks with the spirit. The Ghost reminds Hamlet of the vengeance he must exact, urges pity on the Queen, and departs. Less violently than before, Hamlet urges his mother to confess her sins and refuse to have sex with the King. He leaves, dragging the body of Polonius with him.

Act 4, Scene 1

The Queen tells the King that Hamlet has killed Polonius. The King sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to recover the body.

Act 4, Scene 2

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern confront Hamlet. He mocks them, refusing to tell them where the body is, but he goes with them to the King.

Act 4, Scene 3

The King tells his LORDS (5) that Hamlet is dangerous, yet, because of the prince's popularity, his exile to England must seem routine. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern return with Hamlet under guard. Hamlet expounds humorously on corpses before revealing where he has put Polonius' body. The King tells Hamlet that he is being sent to England immediately for his own safety. The King's entourage escorts Hamlet to the boat, leaving the King alone to muse on his plot: he is sending letters to the English that threaten war unless they kill Hamlet immediately.

Act 4, Scene 4

Hamlet, accompanied by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, encounters a CAPTAIN (6) from Fortinbras' army, on its way to Poland. The Captain speaks of Fortinbras' war as a fight over a small, insignificant piece of territory. Hamlet compares himself, unable to avenge his father's death, with the 20,000 men who will fight and die for an inconsequential goal. He vows that in the future, he will value only bloody thoughts.

Act 4, Scene 5

A GENTLEMAN (3) tells the Queen that Ophelia is insane, rambling wildly in senseless speeches that yet seem to convey some unhappy truth. Ophelia enters, singing a song about a dead lover. The King arrives, and Ophelia sings of seduction and betrayal. She leaves, speaking distractedly about a burial. A MESSENGER (16) appears with the news that Laertes has raised a rebellion and is approaching the castle. Laertes and several FOLLOWERS break down the door and enter. He demands vengeance for his father's death, and the King promises that he shall have it. Ophelia returns, singing about a funeral, and distributes flowers to the King, the Queen, and Laertes. She sings again, about an old man's death, and departs. The King takes Laertes away to plot revenge on Hamlet.

Act 4, Scene 6

A SAILOR (1) brings Horatio a letter from Hamlet. It tells of his capture by pirates who have agreed to release him; Rosencrantz and Guildenstern continue to sail to England. Horatio goes with the sailor to meet Hamlet.

Act 4, Scene 7

The King tells Laertes that he cannot act directly against Hamlet, out of consideration for the Queen

and because of the prince's popularity. The King proposes a plot: they shall arrange a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes, in which Hamlet will use a blunted sword intended for sport while Laertes shall secretly have a sharp sword. Laertes agrees and adds that he has a powerful poison that he will apply to his sword point. The King further suggests a poisoned glass of wine to be given Hamlet when the sport has made him thirsty. The Queen appears with the news that Ophelia has drowned, and Laertes collapses in tears.

Act 5, Scene 1

A GRAVE-DIGGER who is a CLOWN (1) speaks with his friend, the OTHER clown, about Ophelia, who has been granted Christian burial although possibly a suicide. He comically misconstrues the law on suicide and jokes about grave-digging. Hamlet and Horatio arrive, and Hamlet meditates on death's levelling of the wealthy and ambitious. He talks with the Grave-digger, who displays a skull that had belonged to YORICK, a court jester whom Hamlet had known. The prince reflects on the inevitability of death. Ophelia's funeral procession arrives, accompanied by Laertes and the King and Queen; the PRIEST (3) declares her death a suicide. When Hamlet realises whose funeral he is witnessing, he rushes forth and tries to fight Laertes, challenging his position as chief mourner. Restrained, he departs in a rage. The King assures Laertes that he will get his revenge.

Act 5, Scene 2

Hamlet tells Horatio how he rewrote the King's letter arranging his death, substituting Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's names for his own. He assumes that the two courtiers were killed, but he feels no remorse, since they were schemers. OSRIC, an obsequious and mannered courtier, arrives with the King's request that Hamlet fence with Laertes; the King has wagered that Hamlet can win. Hamlet mocks Osric before sending word that he will fight. He tells Horatio that the proposed match makes him uneasy but says that he is prepared to die. The King and Queen, a group of courtiers, and Laertes arrive for the match. The King pours wine to toast Hamlet's first successful round, and he places a pearl—a congratulatory token, he says—in Hamlet's cup. Hamlet and Laertes fence, but after his first victory Hamlet postpones refreshment and resumes the match. The Queen drinks from his cup, although the King tries to stop her. Laertes wounds Hamlet with the poisoned sword, the two fighters scuffle and accidentally exchange swords, and Hamlet wounds Laertes. The Queen falls, exclaims that she is poisoned, and dies. Laertes, himself poisoned by the exchanged sword, reveals the King's plot. Hamlet wounds the King with the sword and then forces him to drink the poisoned wine. Hamlet

and Laertes forgive each other, and Laertes dies. Horatio starts to drink the poisoned wine, but Hamlet demands that he remain alive to tell his side of the story. Osric announces the return of Fortinbras from Poland; Hamlet declares Fortinbras his successor and dies. Fortinbras arrives and takes command, ordering a stately funeral for Hamlet.

COMMENTARY

Hamlet is the most notoriously problematic of Shakespeare's plays, and questions about it still bedevil commentators after almost 400 years. Tremendous amounts of energy have gone into considering its possible interpretations, and the range of opinions on them is immense; as Oscar Wilde wittily put it, perhaps the greatest question raised by *Hamlet* is, 'Are the critics mad or only pretending to be so?'

Hamlet was classed with the PROBLEM PLAYS when that term was first applied to Shakespeare's works of the early 17th century (see BOAS). Like those dark comedies, this TRAGEDY deals with death and sex and with the psychological and social tensions arising from these basic facts of life. And like the problem plays, *Hamlet* treats these issues without providing clear-cut resolutions, thereby leaving us with complicated, highly emotional responses that cause both satisfac-



Illustration of the grave-diggers scene in *Hamlet*. 'Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio' (5.1.178). Hamlet confronts the fact of human mortality. (Courtesy of Culver Pictures, Inc.)

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tion—at seeing basic elements of our own lives treated dramatically—and pain—at the nagging persistence of these difficulties, as in real life.

It is precisely through such ambiguity, however, that *Hamlet* offers a robust and vital assertion of human worth, for the play is essentially a moral drama whose theme is the existence of both good and evil in human nature, a central concern in Shakespeare's work as a whole. Although it anticipates modern psychological dramas in some respects, *Hamlet* is not itself such a work; the extraordinary presentation of Prince Hamlet's troubled mind is simply the vehicle—albeit a vivid one—for the development of his acceptance of humanity's flawed nature. Shakespeare's great accomplishment in *Hamlet* was to express the philosophy that underlies this realisation.

Some of the play's many puzzles are interesting but superficial, such as Horatio's status at the Danish court, the identification of Hamlet's inserted lines in *The Murder of Gonzago*, or the determination of the prince's age. These matters chiefly reflect the playwright's lack of concern for minor inconsistencies, a trait seen throughout the plays. Others are deeper matters of plotting and psychology: Is Hamlet's emotional disturbance real or feigned? What is the nature of his relationship to Ophelia? Is King Claudius an unalloyed villain? The 'problem of problems', as it has been called, is Hamlet's unnecessary delay in executing the revenge he plainly accepts as his duty.

The basic story—a young man grieves for his father while faced with the duty to avenge his death—came from Shakespeare's source, the UR-HAMLET, and its genre, the REVENGE PLAY, but Shakespeare's attitude towards vengeance is not the traditionally approving one. Hamlet's regret when he says, 'The time is out of joint. O cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right' (1.5.196–197), testifies to this, as does the existence of a parallel revenge plot, that of Laertes' revenge of his father's murder by Hamlet. The hero of one plot, Hamlet is in effect the villain of the other, casting an inescapable doubt upon his heroic role. Hamlet recognises the ambivalence of his position when he says of Polonius' death, '. . . heaven hath pleas'd it so, / To punish me with this and this with me' (3.4.175–176).

This paradox suggests the essential duality of human nature, which is both noble and wicked, and numerous comparisons throughout the drama stress this point. Several times Hamlet contrasts his murdered father and his uncle—the former an ideal ruler, just and magnanimous; the latter an unscrupulous killer and lustful adulterer. Similarly, Hamlet juxtaposes his father's virtues with his mother's sin in accepting her husband's murderer and having sex with him. Other polarities abound: the chaste Ophelia versus the incestuous Queen; the faithful Horatio ver-

sus the treacherous Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; the devious duellist Laertes versus the manly soldier Fortinbras. Each of these contrasts recalls and reinforces the play's basic opposition between good and evil.

Faced with the awareness of evil, Hamlet longs for death and is disgusted with life, especially as it is manifested in sex, which he not only sees as the drive behind his mother's sin but which he abhors as the force that inexorably produces more life and thus more evil. 'Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?' (3.1.121–122), he cries to Ophelia, and his rejection of her stems from his rejection of sex. Shakespeare did not intend their relationship as a love story; instead, it is an allegory of the condemnation of life, a point of view whose ultimate rejection is central to the play.

Hamlet's notorious procrastination of his revenge has a similar function. Though he accepts the Ghost's orders, he senses the evil in this duty, sent from 'heaven and hell' (2.2.580), and he resists its fulfilment. Though psychologically true to life, Hamlet's delay serves primarily to offer opportunities to stress the duality of human nature: as revenger, Hamlet is both opposed to and involved in evil. His repeated insistence on postponing his highly ambiguous duty emphasises his ambivalence and stimulates our own. Emotionally, Hamlet's procrastination produces in him a growing rage that leads to his killing of Polonius in 3.4, an act that provokes the King and Laertes to set in motion the incidents that lead to the bloody climax and that hastens Hamlet's exile and his escape from the King's execution plot. This event, in turn, jars Hamlet from his absorption in his personal tragedy and prepares him to find the 'divinity that shapes our ends' (5.2.10).

Both Hamlet and the play undergo a sweeping change before the climax, and this change is well prepared for by the establishment of a dominant tone in the play's language that is later varied to quite dramatic effect. Through Acts 1–4, the pervasiveness of evil and its capacity to corrupt human life are conveyed by an extended use of the imagery of illness, evoking a strong sense of stress and unease. In the play's opening moments, Francisco declares himself 'sick at heart' (1.1.9), and Horatio, speaking of evil omens, refers to the moon being 'sick almost to doomsday with eclipse' (1.1.123). Hamlet equates evil with bodily disorder when he speaks of a birthmark, 'nature's livery' (1.4.32), as the 'dram of evil' (1.4.36) that makes a virtuous man seem corrupt and ignoble. He is referring figuratively to the excessive drinking of Danish courtiers, rather than to the more serious evils soon to arise, but he strikes a note of disease, death, and physical corruption that recurs throughout the play.

For instance, Hamlet speaks of the King's prayer as



Hamlet. 'Alas, poor Yorick, et confronts the fact of human s, Inc.)

'physic [that] prolongs thy sickly days' (3.3.96) and of resolution as 'sicklied o'er' (3.1.85); the King refers to those who tell Laertes of his father's death as '... buzzers [who] infect his ear / With pestilent speeches ...' (4.5.90-91). Strikingly, diseases of the skin, where an inner evil is presumed to be present, are often mentioned, as in Hamlet's reference to a 'flattering unction ... [that] will but skin and film the ulcerous place, / Whiles rank corruption ... / Infects unseen' (3.4.146-151), or in his image for the outbreak of a pointless war: an abscess 'that inward breaks, and shows no cause without / Why the man dies' (4.4.27-29).

Planning to exile Hamlet, the King observes, 'Diseases desperate grown / By desperate appliance are reliev'd' (4.3.9-10). He refers not only to the danger he faces from an avenging Hamlet, but he is also thinking of Hamlet's apparent insanity. Hamlet's lunacy seems at times to be real, at least in some respects, such as his hysterical rejection of sex and love, but he himself asserts that it is false on several occasions—e.g., in 3.4.142-146. The question remains one of the play's many enigmas. In any case, Hamlet's insanity, whether feigned or real, is itself a major instance of the imagery of sickness, a constant reminder that 'something is rotten in the state of Denmark' (1.5.90).

A particularly vivid example of disease imagery is the Ghost's clinical description of the action of the poison that first thinned his blood and then produced on his skin 'a vile and loathsome crust' (1.5.72) before killing him. The poisoning is enacted twice in 3.2, first in the Players' dumb show and then by the Player playing Lucianus. Further, a similar fate awaits the four major characters in 5.2.

An extension of the play's imagery of death is the repeated suggestion of suicide, although it is rejected. Hamlet's first soliloquy regrets the religious 'canon 'gainst self-slaughter' (1.2.132). Horatio worries that the Ghost may tempt Hamlet to the 'toys of desperation' (1.4.75) on a cliff overlooking the sea. In 5.1 the Grave-digger discusses the law on suicides, and Ophelia's death is declared 'doubtful' (5.1.220) by the Priest. In his last moment, Hamlet prevents Horatio from killing himself with the poisoned cup. The prince also discusses the possibility of suicide at length in the soliloquy beginning 'To be or not to be ...' (3.1.56-88) before rejecting the idea. More important, near the crucial mid-point of the play, just before his dramatic rejection of Ophelia and love, Hamlet raises the question of the desirability of life and answers, in effect, that we have no choice but to accept our destiny and live. Thus, while suicide serves as part of the play's imagery of despair, its rejection foreshadows the ultimate acceptance of life and its evils.

Act 5 opens with Hamlet meditating on death in the graveyard, but now death, represented with ghoulish

humour by the skulls dug up by the Grave-digger, is not a potential escape, nor is it the fearful introduction to a possibly malign afterlife; it is merely the destined end for all humans. The conversation with the Grave-diggers offers comic relief as the climax draws closer, and Hamlet's recollections of Yorick offer a healthy appreciation of the pleasures of the past as well as a sardonic acceptance of death: 'Now get you to my lady's chamber and tell her, ... to this favour she must come' (5.1.186-188). The prince is no longer in the grip of his grief. Ophelia's funeral and Hamlet's encounter with Laertes bring a final catharsis, and he is able to assert the love for Ophelia that he once denied and to accept his role in life by taking the royal title 'the Dane' (5.1.251).

In the first episode of 5.2, we hear of the cause of this change as Hamlet tells of the plot he has foiled by sending Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths in his place; in impulsively acting to save himself, he has learned, 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will ...' (5.2.10-11). Hamlet finally comes to terms with his duty to exact vengeance, even though he cannot do so without committing the very crime he avenges, murder. In realising that he must be evil in order to counter evil, Hamlet also accepts his own death; although he senses his end approaching as the King's plot takes form, he remains composed, saying, 'There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all' (5.2.215-218).

The tragic paradox at the close of *Hamlet* is that the protagonist's psychological liberation comes only with his own death, a death that inspires Horatio's lovely farewell wish to Hamlet that 'flights of angels sing thee to thy rest' (5.2.365). The attitude towards death expressed in this elegiac prayer is unlike anything earlier in the play, and its emphatic placement after the climax clearly marks it as the drama's conclusive statement, a confirmation of the benevolence of fate despite the inevitability of evil and death.

SOURCES OF THE PLAY

Shakespeare's basic source for *Hamlet* was the UR-HAMLET (c. 1588), a play on the same subject that is known to have been popular in London in the 1580s but for which no text survives. This work, believed to have been written by Thomas KYD, was apparently derived from a tale in François BELLEFOREST's collection *Histoires Traiques* (1580). Although Shakespeare knew Belleforest's work, he adopted a central element of *Hamlet*, the Ghost, from the *Ur-Hamlet*, and this fact, along with the theatrical success of the lost work, suggests that it was Shakespeare's chief source.

Belleforest retold a story from a 12th-century Latin work, the *Historiae Danicae*, by SAXO GRAMMATICUS, first published in 1514. Saxo provides the earliest com-

plete account of aments are known Amleth, a Danish his uncle killed his name Amleth, from 'brutish', in reference to madness after his execution of *Hamlet*—in between Amleth and his spy; his love affair with England and his execution with one sent in Saxo's account.

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plete account of a legendary tale—9th-century frag-
 ments are known from the Icelandic sagas—of
 Amleth, a Danish nobleman who took revenge after
 his uncle killed his father and married his mother. The
 name Amleth, from Old Norse, means 'dim-witted' or
 'brutish', in reference to his stratagem of feigning
 madness after his father's murder. Many other ele-
 ments of *Hamlet*—including a dramatic encounter be-
 tween Amleth and his mother, during which he kills a
 spy; his love affair with a beautiful woman; his exile to
 England and his escape by replacing the order for his
 execution with one condemning his escorts—are pres-
 ent in Saxo's account.

Shakespeare doubtless found much of this in the
Ur-Hamlet, but this work, to judge by its probable com-
 panion piece, Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1588-1589),
 lacked *Hamlet*'s dramatic development and thematic
 unity; Shakespeare may have found hints of a unified
 point of view in Belleforest's version. In particular, the
 French writer develops the contrast between the good
 king who is murdered and his evil, incestuous killer, a
 comparison that is prominent in Hamlet's thoughts.

Many scholars believe that *The Spanish Tragedy*, also
 a revenge play, was itself a source for numerous ele-
 ments in *Hamlet*. For instance, Kyd's play has a pro-
 crastinating protagonist who berates himself for talk-
 ing instead of acting and who dies as he achieves his
 revenge; it also features a play within a play, a heroine
 whose love is opposed by her family, and another
 woman who becomes insane and commits suicide. How-
 ever, some commentators feel that Kyd took at
 least some of these elements from the *Ur-Hamlet*,
 whether he wrote it or not, and that Shakespeare could
 have done so as well.

Other sources contributed to *Hamlet* in minor ways.
 A play that provokes a confession of guilt was a well-
 established literary motif, but Shakespeare's company
 had recently staged an anonymous drama, *A Warning
 for Fair Women* (1599), in which it is used, so this work
 was probably the immediate stimulus for Hamlet's
 'Mousetrap' plot. The physician Timothy BRIGHT's *A
 Treatise of Melancholy* (1586) may have influenced
 Shakespeare's portrayal of Hamlet's depression. Thomas
 NASHE's widely popular pamphlet, *Pierce Pen-
 niless His Supplication to the Devil* (1592), influenced several
 passages of the play, especially Hamlet's diatribe
 on drunkenness in 1.4.16-38. Some of Hamlet's re-
 marks on graves and death in 5.1 echo a popular reli-
 gious work, *Of Prayer and Meditation*, by the Spanish
 mystic Luis de GRANADA, which Shakespeare probably
 read in the translation by Richard HOPKINS. *The Coun-
 sellor* (1598), an anonymous translation of a volume on
 good government by the famed Polish diplomat Lau-
 rentius GOSLICIUS is echoed in several passages, most
 notably Hamlet's speech beginning, 'What a piece of
 work is man' (2.2.303).

PLUTARCH's *Lives*, always one of Shakespeare's fa-

vourite sources, mentions a Greek tyrant, famed for
 many cold-blooded murders, who wept at a recital of
 HECUBA's woes, and this may have inspired the recita-
 tion by the First Player in 2.2. However, the playwright
 also knew the tale of Hecuba from VIRGIL's *Aeneid*,
 where it first appears, and from *The Tragedy of Dido*
 (1594), a play by Nashe and Christopher MARLOWE (1).

Shakespeare could also have read a retelling of Plu-
 tarch's Hecuba anecdote in the *Essays* of Michel de
 MONTAIGNE, either in French (publ. between 1580 and
 1595) or in a manuscript of John FLORIO's translation,
 (publ. 1603). Echoes of Montaigne occur in several
 key passages—e.g., both Hamlet and the French es-
 sayist liken death to a sleep and to a 'consummation'
 (3.1.63).

Some scholars believe that an incident of 1577 at
 the court of Marguerite de Valois, a French princess
 married to the King of Navarre, influenced Shake-
 speare's conception of Ophelia's death. A young
 woman of the court was reported to have died of love
 for a young nobleman; he was absent from the court
 at the time and learned of her death only when he
 accidentally encountered the funeral procession upon
 his return. This event was widely reported in England
 at the time, due to the English support of the Protes-
 tant forces, led by Navarre, in the French Wars of
 Religion. The same event is thought to be referred to
 in *Love's Labour's Lost* (see KATHARINE [1]).

A real event also inspired the murder of Hamlet's
 father by pouring poison in his ear. In 1538 the Duke
 of Urbino, one of the leading military and political
 figures of day, died. His barber-surgeon confessed
 that he had killed the duke by putting a lotion in his
 ears, having been hired to do so by one Luigi Gon-
 zaga. Shakespeare gave the name of the plotter to the
 victim (as *Gonzago* [3.2.233]), but the combination of
 his name and the unusual method of poisoning point
 to this actual crime as the stimulus to the playwright's
 fictional one, although the *Ur-Hamlet* may have used it
 first.

TEXT OF THE PLAY

Hamlet was probably written in late 1599 or early
 1600, though possibly a year later. It followed *Julius
 Caesar*—performed in September 1599—for it echoes
Caesar in 1.1.116-118 and alludes to it in 3.2.102-105,
 and it probably preceded John MARSTON's play *An-
 tonio's Revenge*, staged in late 1600, which recalls *Ham-
 let* in many places, indicating that Shakespeare's play
 had been performed by no later than the autumn of
 1600.

However, one passage in *Hamlet*—2.2.336-358, de-
 scribing the competition of the PLAYERS (2) with a
 troupe of child actors—clearly refers to THE WAR OF
 THE THEATRES, a rivalry among acting companies that
 dominated the London theatre in the spring of 1601.
 If *Hamlet* was written in 1600, then this passage must

have been inserted later. Some scholars, however, hold that *Hamlet* was written in its entirety in early 1601 and that either *Antonio's Revenge* was Shakespeare's source rather than the other way around or both Marston and Shakespeare took their common materials from the *Ur-Hamlet*.

Hamlet was first published in 1603 by Nicholas LING and John TRUNDELL in a QUARTO edition (known as Q1) printed by Valentine SIMMES. Q1 is a BAD QUARTO, a mangled version of the text, assembled from the memories of actors who had performed in the play. It was supplanted by Q2 (1604, with some copies dated 1605), printed by John ROBERTS and published by him and Ling. A sound text, Q2 is believed to have been printed from Shakespeare's own manuscript, or FOUL PAPERS, with occasional reference to Q1 where the manuscript was unclear. However, two substantial passages appear to have been deliberately cut from Q2: Hamlet's reflections on Denmark as a prison (2.2.239–269), perhaps thought offensive to the Danish wife of England's new king, JAMES I; and the passage on child actors mentioned above, which may have been cut because James patronised a CHILDREN'S COMPANY or perhaps simply because it was out of date by 1604. In 1607 Ling sold his rights to the play to John SMETHWICK, who published three further quartos, Q3 (1611), Q4 (1622), and Q5 (1637), each of which was printed from its predecessor.

Hamlet was published in the FIRST FOLIO edition of Shakespeare's plays (1623). This text, known as F, derives from Q2 but differs from it significantly. It corrects many small errors and improves on Q2's stage directions, but it also contains its own, more numerous, omissions and errors. F 'modernises' words the editors or printers thought old-fashioned, and some bits of dialogue apparently derive from actors' ad libs, such as a cry of 'Oh Vengeance!' in the middle of Hamlet's soliloquy at the end of 2.2. More important, F provides the significant passages cut from Q2. It is thought that the printers of F followed both Q2—probably a copy that had been annotated for production use—and a FAIR COPY, a transcription of Shakespeare's manuscript, with errors and alterations made by a scribe but including the missing material.

Modern editions rely on Q2 because it is plainly closest to Shakespeare's own manuscript, but they turn to F for its restored cuts and for frequent minor improvements. Rarely, Q1 provides a correction of an obvious error in the other two texts or a clarification in stage directions.

THEATRICAL HISTORY OF THE PLAY

From the outset, *Hamlet* has been recognised as one of the greatest works of the English stage, and it has remained the most widely produced of Shakespeare's plays (though most productions—probably including

the original one—have used an abridged text). Most leading actors—and some actresses—of every generation have played the title part. The play has also been frequently performed in other languages.

The first production was that of the CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN in 1600 or 1601, referred to in the registration of the play with the STATIONERS' COMPANY in 1602. Contemporary references, along with many echoes of the play in the work of other playwrights, testify to its early popularity. Richard BURBAGE (3) was the first Hamlet; after his death in 1619 the role was taken, to great acclaim, by Joseph TAYLOR. A tradition first recorded by Nicholas ROWE in 1709 reports that Shakespeare played the Ghost in the original production.

'The Grave-Makers', an adaptation of 5.1 of *Hamlet*, was performed as a DROLL during the period of revolutionary government in England (1642–1660), when the theatres were legally closed. After the restoration of the monarchy, *Hamlet* was revived by William DAVENANT, though with a much abridged text, in a 1661 production starring Thomas BETTERTON, who was celebrated in the role for the rest of the century.

David GARRICK played Hamlet many times between 1734 and his retirement in 1776. Susannah Maria CIBBER (2), who often played opposite him, was regarded as the best Ophelia of the day. Garrick's production of 1772 was one of the most severely altered, and is still notorious for its elimination of much of Act 5. Beginning in 1783, John Philip KEMBLE (3), regarded as one of the greatest Hamlets, played the part often, sometimes opposite his sister, Sarah SIDDONS, as Ophelia.

Siddons herself was the first of many women to play Hamlet, taking the role in 1775. Female Hamlets were most popular in the late 18th and 19th centuries; among the best known were Kitty CLIVE, Charlotte CUSHMAN, Julia GLOVER, and Sarah BERNHARDT. In the 20th century Judith ANDERSON (1) (at the age of 73) and Eva Le Gallienne, among others, have also played the prince.

Most of the major theatrical entrepreneurs of the 19th century produced *Hamlet* at least once. Among the most acclaimed Hamlets of the period were Ira ALDRIDGE, William Charles MACREADY, Edwin BOOTH (1), and Henry Irving (usually opposite Ellen TERRY [1] as Ophelia). Irving had his first great Shakespearean success with the play in 1874, later staging an extravagantly scenic and very popular version (1879). William POEL used the Q1 text in 1881.

F. R. BENSON (1) staged Shakespeare's complete text in 1900, confirming that the resulting four- to five-hour performance was feasible. Other noteworthy 20th-century *Hamlets* have included the controversial 1925 Barry JACKSON (1) production, which introduced modern dress to the Shakespearean stage; a New York staging by Margaret WEBSTER (3), starring Maurice EVANS (4) (1939); and Joseph PAPP's productions of 1972 and 1987, starring Stacy Keach and Kevin Kline

respectively. Specially well known including John B. OLIVIER, and Eva *Hamlet* has been more than any other when Sarah Berr movie. Among heavily abridged liam WALTON; the presentation of a (1964); and the (1928), with Nicol presented on TEL

Hamlett, Katherine death may be resident of Tippin tress Hamlett was fetching water, and possibility of suicide later, that she had speculated that the family name the protagonist might death to the playwright—as he described declared 'doubtful though the coroner

Hands, Terry (b. Hands has been a SPEARE COMPANY in associate director, and artistic director. He has directed many in the United

Hanmer, Thomas Shakespeare's plays House of Commons lected plays. His ed elaborately bound and was illustrated by H MAN and was intended was a disrespectful in his own, insisted that could not have been annotate adoptions. In addition, he did not simply worked from under POPE (1) in 17

Harcourt Minor character. In 4.4 Harcourt Lord BARDOLPH (2) a (1) have been defeated

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are's complete text lting four- to five- Other noteworthy d the controversial 1, which introduced n stage; a New York), starring Maurice P's productions of ch and Kevin Kline

respectively. Several 20th-century actors are especially well known for their portrayals of Hamlet, including John BARRYMORE, John GIELGUD, Laurence OLIVIER, and Evans.

Hamlet has been acted on FILM at least 25 times—far more than any other Shakespeare play—since 1900, when Sarah Bernhardt played the prince in a silent movie. Among the best-known films are Olivier's heavily abridged version of 1948, with music by William WALTON; the Russian Grigori KOZINTSEV's epic presentation of a prose translation by Boris Pasternak (1964); and the 1969 film by Tony Richardson (b. 1928), with Nicol WILLIAMSON. *Hamlet* has also been presented on TELEVISION five times.

Hamlett, Katherine (d. 1579) Englishwoman whose death may be reflected in that of OPHELIA in *Hamlet*. A resident of Tippington, a village near STRATFORD, Mistress Hamlett was drowned in the Avon River while fetching water, and a coroner's jury hesitated over the possibility of suicide before declaring, two months later, that she had died a natural death. It has been speculated that the coincidental similarity between a family name he once knew and the name of his protagonist might have recalled Katherine Hamlett's death to the playwright—who was 15 when it occurred—as he described Ophelia's death by drowning, declared 'doubtful' (5.1.220) by the PRIEST (3), although the coroner 'finds it Christian burial' (5.1.4-5).

Hands, Terry (b. 1941) British theatrical director. Hands has been associated with the ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY in STRATFORD since 1966, serving as associate director, joint artistic director from 1978, and artistic director and chief executive since 1986. He has directed many of Shakespeare's plays, at Stratford, in the United States, and on the Continent.

Hanmer, Thomas (1677-1746) Early editor of Shakespeare's plays. Hanmer, a former Speaker of the House of Commons, was the fourth editor of the collected plays. His edition was published in 1744 in an elaborately bound and expensive set of six volumes. It was illustrated by Hubert GRAVELOT and Francis HAYMAN and was intended for a wealthy market. Hanmer was a disrespectful editor who inserted alterations of his own, insisted that passages he did not approve of could not have been by Shakespeare, and failed to annotate adoptions of the readings of earlier editors. In addition, he did not go back to the early texts but simply worked from the collection published by Alexander POPE (1) in 1725.

Harcourt Minor character in *2 Henry IV*, a messenger. In 4.4 Harcourt brings King HENRY IV news that LORD BARDOLPH (2) and the Earl of NORTHUMBERLAND (1) have been defeated, thus ending the rebellion that

began in *1 Henry IV*.

Harfleur City on the northern coast of FRANCE (1), location in *Henry V*. Harfleur is besieged by the army of HENRY V. In 3.3 the king describes the bloody terror Harfleur can expect if it continues to resist, and the GOVERNOR (1) surrenders the city. This episode is a good instance of the play's ambiguity. Henry may be seen as merciful and statesmanlike; he spares the town, and he explicitly orders EXETER (2), 'Use mercy to them all' (3.3.54). On the other hand, his brilliant evocation of a sacked city, with vivid descriptions of rape and murder, stresses the horrors of an army gone amok, an emphasis that reinforces a reading of *Henry V* as a mordant anti-war work.

Harington, Sir John (1561-1612) First English translator of ARIOSTO's *Orlando Furioso*, a source for *Much Ado About Nothing*. Harington, a godson of Queen ELIZABETH (1), spent much of his life at court. It is thought that his translation of *Orlando Furioso* (1591) was made at the Queen's command, as an ironic punishment for having independently translated one of its indecent passages.

Harpy Supernatural creature in whose guise ARIEL appears in 3.3 in *The Tempest*. PROSPERO's sprite accuses the 'three men of sin'—ALONSO, ANTONIO (5), and SEBASTIAN (3)—and his disguise makes him more terrifying. The Harpies, three mythological monsters, sisters, were woman-headed birds. They stole things from mortals—especially food (appropriate to the banquet setting of Ariel's appearance)—and defecated vilely as they left. Apparently wind-gods in origin, these semi-divine beings may have derived in part from rumours reaching Greece of an actual creature in India, a large, fruit-eating bat noted for its excrement.

Harris (1), Frank (James Thomas) (1856-1931) British author and editor. Best known today for his sexually explicit autobiography, *My Life and Loves* (1927), Harris also wrote short stories, two plays, a novel, essays, biographies, and other works. Among these were *The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Life Story* (1909), a biography laced with elaborate interpretations of the SONNETS and various plays as detailed evidence of Shakespeare's life, especially his love life. For example, Harris advocated the theory, first suggested by Thomas TYLER (2), that Mary FITTON was the 'Dark Lady' of the SONNETS, and he furthered this notion in his play *Shakespeare and His Love* (1910) and in another book, *The Women of Shakespeare* (1911). He saw Shakespeare's works as delivering a message to humanity, extolling forgiveness and love, and he equated it with Christ's. Being immensely egotistical, he identified himself with these two personages—and GOETHE—as 'God's spies' (*King Lear*, 5.3.17).