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A Narrative of Revision
Documents of Performance and the
Theatrical Abridgment Theory in Romeo and Juliet

by
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Abstract

One question lies at the heart of Shakespeare editorial studies: if multiple versions of a play were printed within his lifetime, how can we know what best represents Shakespeare's true vision? This concern is particularly contentious with *Romeo and Juliet*. A wealth of evidence suggests that the traditionally condemned first "bad quarto" of the play (Q1) was in fact an abridgment for the stage, adapted from the second "good quarto" (Q2).

Yet, the theatrical abridgment theory has struggled to gain universal acceptance and the term "bad quarto" remains a popular classification. This is due to the difficulty in identifying Shakespeare's hand in revision; early modern theatre was collaborative in nature and extant playbooks represent not only the playwright's artistry but the accumulation of entire industries of production and printing.

By engaging with recent scholarship on the presence of theatrical documentation in early plays, this essay will identify the narrative of abridgment from Q2 to Q1. The revisions in four of the play's theatrical elements will be analysed within this scholarly context: the extirpation of unessential lines, the careful construction of stage directions, the formulation of locales, and attempts to control the unpredictable extemporising of the company's resident clown William Kemp.

Keywords

Romeo and Juliet, theatrical abridgment, first quarto, *Documents of Performance*

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Romeo and Juliet exists in five extant early editions: the first quarto, Q1 (printed in 1597); the second, Q2 (1599); third, Q3 (1609); fourth Q4 (1622); and folio edition, F (1623). The second, third, fourth, and folio editions differ only in minor textual adjustments. Q1, on the other hand, is some 800 lines shorter and contains a number of dramatic peculiarities unusual for Shakespeare that will be addressed later in the essay. Q1 was largely

ignored until the early 20th century when a new wave of bibliographers attempted to explain the existence of such abhorrent, unpoetic, and fundamentally un-Shakespearean texts. Alongside early quarto editions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry V*, and *Hamlet*, Q1 *Romeo and Juliet* was designated a "bad quarto", a vilification coined by Alfred W. Pollard in 1909 to explain the obvious errors and omissions in these texts. Pollard proposed the most likely scenario for their existence was that an enterprising spectator recorded the play in action using some kind-of shorthand.[1] In the following year, W.W. Greg proposed an alternative theory. Noting how the minor parts in the plays had far fewer errors than those of the main characters, he offered the "memorial reconstruction" theory. By far the longest surviving "bad quarto" hypothesis, it supposes that an enterprising actor or actors leased by the Company recalled the play to a publisher by memory, thus explaining the greater number of discrepancies in the bigger roles.[2] Pollard and Greg's theories were not called into question until the end of the 1970s, when theatrical production and the revision process became the new scholarly vogue. Pioneered by Gary Taylor and Michael Warren's revaluation of Q1 *King Lear*, this new era of editors was entirely sceptical of the bardolatry that underlined the production theories of the "bad quartos". However, whilst editions like Folio *King Lear* enjoyed revived scholarly appreciation, Q1 *Romeo and Juliet* struggled to shake its categorisation despite an obvious issue: the length of Q2. At almost 3000 lines, a performance within the 'two hours traffique of our Stage'[3] as indicated in the prologue would be impossible; 2500 lines is considered the absolute maximum for this performance time.[4]

A number of theories have arisen to defend the quarto; David Farley-Hill argues that Q1 is a version redacted for performance by a travelling troupe. The play was edited 'as quickly as possible, with the emphasis on producing a text that is effective onstage' to a less sophisticated audience.[5] Y. S. Bains proposes that Q1 is a first draft of the play, edited into Q2, a text

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1 Lukas Erne, "Introduction" in *The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet*, edited by Lukas Erne (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 5.

2 Ibid, 5.

3 William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet: A Parallel Text Edition of the First Two Quartos*, eds., *The New Shakespeare Society* (London: John Childs and Sons, 1847), Accessed 10 January, 2014, https://ia600500.us.archive.org/5/items/romeojulietparal00shakuoft/romeojulietparal00shakuoft.pdf.

4 Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 123.

5 Erne, "Introduction", 16.

'superior to the first because [Shakespeare] revised it.'[6] The most popular theory is that Q1 is a theatrical abridgment of Q2, itself an early draft of the play that was sold to publisher Cuthbert Burby two years after Q1 was first printed.

In his 2007 edition of Q1, Lukas Erne tentatively concludes that 'much of the difference between Q1 and Q2 is most likely a matter of abridgment.'[7] He offers rational deconstructions of alternative arguments. Farley-Hill's theory of a provincial abridgment is fundamentally uneconomic; a professional company in the 1590s performed around 40 plays in a season, of which half would be new. Even the well-trained memory of an early modern player would have found this challenging; having to switch from London to provincial versions would have been both impractical and confusing.[8] Bains' theory of Q1 as a first draft is undermined by the greater textual similarity between Q2 and Shakespeare's source material, Arthur Brooke's tragic poem *Romeus and Juliet*, not to mention the problematic addition of over 800 lines of new material.[9]

Yet Erne hesitates in providing a conclusive theory for Q1 largely due to the ambiguity of authorship; if Q1 does represent an abridgment, the cumulative world of early modern theatrical production makes it very difficult to identify what revisions came from Shakespeare's hand. This lack of certainty has fostered Q1's continual condemnation. The popularity of the intellectual framework provided by Taylor and Warren means that more recent denigrations of the quarto are often tainted with hypocrisy. Stephen Greenblatt writes in the introduction to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the 2008 edition of *The Norton Shakespeare* that Q1 – the first of three quartos pre-folio – has been used as the copy text 'in keeping with the Oxford editors' principle of basing their text on the most theatrical early version of each play.'[10] Yet in the introduction to *Romeo and Juliet*, Greenblatt wholeheartedly accepts the memorial reconstruction theory without any reference to the last thirty years of scholarship.[11]

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6 Y.S. Bains, *Making Sense of the First Quarto of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Henry V, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Hamlet* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1995), 25.
7 Erne, "Introduction", 25.
8 Ibid, 21.
9 Ibid, 9.
10 Stephen Greenblatt, 'Introduction to "A Midsummer Night's Dream"' in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, 2nd Edition (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, Inc., 2008), 847.
11 Stephen Greenblatt, 'Introduction to "Romeo and Juliet"' in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 903.

In her seminal work *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*, Tiffany Stern provides a new narrative for theatrical production by identifying in early playbooks traces of the dramatic documents that informed performance. These documents were often not authorial and Stern's model places great significance on removing the modern obsession with the author from an early modern context where it does not apply. Her work provides a new lens through which Q1 can be analysed so as to identify at what point in the abridgment process specific revisions occurred and who was responsible. The present essay will analyse how the textual presence of performance documents in both quartos informs a narrative of revision in four particularly theatrical elements of *Romeo and Juliet*: the extirpation of lines unnecessary to the development of the plot; Shakespeare's concern with formulating locales during revision; the unusual stage directions indicative of another editorial hand; and the linguistic manipulation of the unpredictable extemporising of the company's resident clown William Kemp. By identifying a narrative of revision, this essay will secure Q1's status as a theatrical abridgment and as an invaluable artefact of theatre history.

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The nature of the early modern stage was such that, from the original rough draft to publication years later, authorial regulation was often minimal. The narrative of a play text from page to stage has been mapped out by Stern. First, either the playwright or a scribe would write the rough draft and edit it into a "fair copy". This would then be delivered to the prompter, a company employee charged with sitting backstage with the playhouse book making sure the players did not miss their cues. He would make extensive additions to the play clearing up direction for his own benefit. Shakespeare, as an actor, could not possibly have performed the prompter's role. After, the play was sent to the Master of the Revels, a government official in charge of censoring theatrical texts. Finally it would be returned to the company and additional documents, such as players' parts, were drawn up.[12]

Shakespeare's role as actor, principal playwright, and sharer in the company undoubtedly meant that he exercised more control over his work

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12 Tiffany Stern, *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page* (London: Routledge, 2004), 145.

than his contemporary playwrights.[13] It can therefore be safely assumed that he was responsible for significant amendments in the dialogue and as such it is possible to identify the playwright editing the rough draft into the fair copy. Q2 II.ii ends as Romeo exits to tell the Friar of the events at the masque. The Friar enters onstage in the following scene:

> *Ro.* Would I were sleep and peace so sweet to rest
> The grey eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
> Checking the Eastern clouds with streaks of light
> And darkness flecked like a drunkard reels,
> From forth day's pathway, made by *Titans* wheels.
> Hence will I to my ghostly Friars close cells,
> His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell.
>
> <div align="right">*Exit*</div>
>
> <div align="center">*Enter Friar alone with a basket*</div>
>
> *Fri.* The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night
> Checking the Eastern clouds with streaks of light:
> And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels,
> From forth day's path, and *Titans* burning wheels[14]

Shakespeare may have jotted these lines down in his commonplace book with the intention of incorporating them into one of his plays. What is certain is that when writing the rough draft, Shakespeare designated the passage to both characters with the intention of determining who speaks them during revision. Consequently, Q1 shows that the Friar was chosen. Q1's structure displays the playwright's fundamental concern with extirpating lines with an eye to the play's theatricality. The stage direction between Benvolio's entrance into a servant brawl and the Prince's condemnation of the feuding families in I.i provides another fitting example:

> *They fight, to them enters Tybalt, they fight, to them the Prince, old Mountague, and his wife, old Capulet and his wife, and other Citizens and part them*[15]
> This direction replaces 33 lines of dialogue in Q2, none of which aids the plot's trajectory. Benvolio's attempt to part the servants as he enters onstage and Tybalt's vitriolic verbal and physical assault on Benvolio are cut in Q1, removing the unnecessary character development for Tybalt ('Peace. I hate the word/ As I hate hell, all Montagues and thee'[16]) that is

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13 Ibid, 145.
14 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q2 II.ii.196. – II.iii.4.
15 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 I.i.
16 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q2 I.i.63-64.

formulated later in the play in Mercutio's "Prince of Cats" speech.

When the fight has been broken up, the Prince delivers a speech condemning the two families that is edited in Q1 so as to remove all lines surplus to plot requirements:

> Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
> Profaners of this neighbor-stained steel—
> Will they not hear? What, ho! you men, you beasts
> That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
> With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
> On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
> Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,
> And hear the sentence of your moved prince.
> Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
> By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
> Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets,
> And made Verona's ancient citizens
> Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments,
> To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
> Canker'd with peace, to part your canker'd hate;
> If ever you disturb our streets again,
> Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
> For this time, all the rest depart away:
> You Capulet; shall go along with me:
> And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
> To know our further pleasure in this case,
> To old Free-town, our common judgment-place.
> Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.[17]

The prince identifies them as rebellious subjects, orders them to throw down their weapons, tells a short history of the feud, and finally threatens punishment ('your lives will pay the ransom of your fault'[18]). He then indicates who will leave the stage ('Come Capulet'[19]) and who will stay on ('Montague, come you this afternoon'[20]), progressing the plot by smoothly transitioning to a discussion about Romeo's melancholy disposition between the remaining onstage characters.

Although direction can be incorporated to replace unnecessary dialogue, the style of the stage directions in both quartos complicates the narrative of

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17 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 I.i74-96
18 Ibid, I.i.56.
19 Ibid, I.i.58.
20 Ibid, I.i.59.

a theatrical abridgment. Stern shows that where an author is more likely to say '*Enter at the window*' or '*Enter soldiers upon the castle walls*', a prompter is more likely to write '*Enter above*'.[21] A stage direction Q1 III.v reads '*Enter Romeo and Juliet at the window*'; in Q2 it reads '*Enter Romeo and Juliet aloft*'.[22] Why does Q1 present an authorial stage direction and Q2 a prompter's? Some elements of revision in both quartos must have happened in the printing house.

In Q2 IV.v a stage direction reads '*Enter Will Kemp*.'[23] It is possibly a slip of Shakespeare's pen as he was imagining Kemp in the role. Stern argues that the stage direction was inserted into the playhouse book by the prompter, copying the backstage plot in order to elucidate direction.[24] The backstage plot was a piece of paper on a pulp board containing all the entrances in the play. It was produced from the playhouse book and placed within the tiring house, the backstage area, as a point of reference for theatre personnel. The names of prominent actors were often written instead of their characters; the backstage plot for the play the *Battle of Alcazar* contains the direction reading 'Enter Muly Mahamett mr Ed: Allen',[25] referring to Edward Allen, star of the Lord Admiral's Men.

Stern is correct in identifying '*Enter Will Kemp*' as a remnant of the backstage plot, but Q2's length indicates it could not have been a prompter addition in the playhouse book. The backstage plot has often been found within or enclosing extant play manuscripts, and it is likely that printing house correctors referred to the plot to remove textual discrepancies and interpolate missing stage directions. When sending the 'newly corrected, augmented, and amended'[26] text off to publisher Cuthbert Burby, other documents of performance would have been included for the purpose of editing.

Why does Q1, copied from the prompter's book, contain stage directions indicative of an early authorial draft? John Jowett believes the answer lies in the printing house. In early 1597, John Danter was tasked with printing sheets A-D of Q1. Another printing house, run by Edward Allde,

21 Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 213.
22 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 III.v and Q2 III.v.
23 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q2 IV.v.
24 Stern, *Documents*, 213.
25 Ibid, 212.
26 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q2 Title-page.

was charged with printing sheets E-K. Jowett argues that the dramatist and pamphleteer Henry Chettle, who in 1597 was working under Danter as a printer, was responsible for the interpolation of some extravagant stage directions.[27] Chettle is referred to in Francis Mere's *Palladis Tamia* (a directory of contemporary literary figures) as 'one of the best for comedy', something which Jowett suggests allowed him to figure what textual peculiarities could be cleared up through elaborate stage directions.[28] Erne embraces the theory and, whilst it is dangerous to posit obscure persons as the producer of textual specifics, Jowett's argument provides extensive textual evidence to support the claim.[29]

In spite of this, a printing house corrector like Chettle was only tasked with correcting typographical errors. Joseph Moxon's tract the *Art of Printing* indicates that compositors and correctors focused on formal qualities like spelling and punctuation, necessitating a detailed knowledge of the 'Derivations and Etymologies of Words'. Theatrical and textual discrepancies were the writer's business, and Moxon warns that 'it behoves an Author to examine his *Copy* very well e're he deliver it to the *Printer*'.[30] It is unlikely that the early modern printing house provided the leisurely environment where Chettle could analyse the text for theatrical irregularities and incorporate modifying stage directions.

When considering Shakespeare's concern with staging during revision, the simple answer would be that direction was interpolated sufficiently during revision so as not to warrant editing by the prompter. Modern editors who insist on Q2 for their copy text adopt the stage directions in Q1 III.v (printed in Allde's shop) as they help clear up the direction by discerning where there has been a shift in locale, a key concern of Shakespeare's when amending the play for performance. Romeo and Juliet converse on the balcony after consummating their marriage. After Romeo states he will descend from the balcony, a stage direction is included that specifies him climbing onto the stage below. The stage now represents an area exterior to the Capulet household from which Romeo continues to converse with Juliet on the balcony above until he exits. The Nurse then '*Enters hastely*' onto the balcony and warns Juliet that her 'Mother's coming

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27 Erne, "Introduction", 37.
28 Ibid, 37.
29 Ibid, 41.
30 Sonia Moxon, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 12.

to your chamber'. It is then indicated in Q1 that the Nurse – presumably in an equally hasty manner – '*goeth downe from the window*' and enters onto the stage with Lady Capulet. For some unexplainable reason, Erne reads this stage direction as indicating Juliet's descent from the balcony. This would lead to a very awkward and unnecessary exchange if the following dialogue was to take place after Juliet had entered onstage:

> *Moth:* Where are you daughter?
> *Nur:* What Ladie, Lambe, what *Iuliet.*
> *Iul:* How now, who calls?
> *Nur:* It is your mother.
> *Moth*: Why how now *Juliet?*[31]

In Q1, the stage represents Juliet's chamber and, after this exchange, Juliet enters from backstage. Q2 ignores all of this. The nurse enters the balcony when Romeo is still present and it is not indicated in the stage directions that she leaves until she comes back onstage later in the same scene with Capulet. After Romeo descends and exits, on comes Lady Capulet: 'Enter Mother.' It is unclear where she is entering; the tiny balcony would not have offered a suitable visual space for the scene. Lady Capulet entering onstage and asking 'are you up?'[32] only makes theatrical sense if she cannot see Juliet. The change in dialogue when Lady Capulet enters in the respective plays is suggestive of Shakespeare's awareness of the theatrical problem Q2 creates in establishing locale. It would therefore be prudent to find Shakespeare's hands in the theatrical revisions in sheets A-D rather than that of a rogue printing house corrector.

Shakespeare's concern with formulating locales during revision is apparent throughout the text. The shift from outside the masque to inside in Q2 is signalled by Romeo stating 'Direct my suit, on lusty gentlemen' followed by a stage direction reading '*They march about the stage, and servingmen come on with Napkins.*'[33] It should be assumed that Romeo, Mercutio, and the others march *off* the stage at this point because the following line reads '*Enter Romeo.*'[34] After a short comic interlude by Kemp and the other servants – in which Romeo has no lines – Act II begins with '*Enter all the guests and gentlewomen to the maskers.*'[35] Does this mean Romeo is still onstage

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31 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 III.v.37-60.
32 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q2 III.v.64.
33 Ibid, I.iv.105-106.
34 Ibid, I.v.
35 Ibid, II.i.

and stays until joined by the guests in the next scene? The incoherence of the direction requires modern editors rectify the confusion by having Romeo and others leave before the servants come on and then join the other partiers onstage in Act II. Q1 offers a simpler and far shorter action: Romeo states 'Direct my suit, on lusty gentlemen' (signalling a move into a new locale) and they are immediately joined onstage by '*Capulet and the Ladies*';[36] the entire scene with Kemp and the servants is removed.

Although it is quite understandable that editors prefer incorporating their own direction rather than cut any of Shakespeare's words, it is clear that this scene in Q1 is not only an abridgment (with the removal of 13 lines unnecessary to the plot) but an amendment. Shakespeare cut these particular lines not only as surplus but because of how Kemp's extemporising could potentially impact on the fluidity of the action.

The early modern clown specialised in extempore comic performance in the vein of the *commedia dell'arte Arlecchino* character and the vice tradition of medieval morality plays. Extemporal interruptions and merriments were as much a part of the play-going experience as the scripted drama. The famous clown Richard Tarlton was renowned for quipping with a restless crowd; in long tragic speeches he would poke his head around the arras and pull grotesque faces.[37] Whilst the great tragedians Richard Burbage and Edward Alleyn stirred the blood and soothed the intellect, Tarlton and Kemp attracted the crowds. However, despite the commercial pull of the clown, extemporising was problematic. Hamlet chastising fools who 'speak more than is set down for them'[38] in Act III.ii reveals the production difficulties that the playwright faces when affronted with uncertainty. The removal of the servant scene before the masque displays an effort to overcome this issue. Rather than interrupt the action with an irrelevant and potentially disruptive scene, Shakespeare extirpates it altogether and has the surrounding scenes merge into each other onstage.

Kemp can be identified as the Capulet serving man in the play for two reasons: first, the Q2 stage direction '*Enter Will Kemp.*' Second, in Q1 IV.iv. Capulet orders a servant to gather drier logs for the fire, stating 'Will will

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36 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 II.i

37 "Tarlton, Richard (*d.* 1588)," Peter Thomson in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26971 (accessed March 30, 2015).

38 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by G.R. Hibbard (Oxford: OUP, 2008), III.ii.34-7.

tell thee where thou shalt fetch them.'[39] David Wiles, who theorises that Q1 is a 'text based on the play that Shakespeare's and Kemp's company actually performed', argues that this line shows that an 'actor or reporter in a moment's lapse' used Kemp's real name.[40] The interpolation is in fact the product of the prompter. It was common practice for a prompter to insert a line or a name in the text as a reminder to call for a player before his scene.[41] The anonymous play *The Welsh Ambassador* includes the line 'Penda be ready' followed by the aforementioned character's entrance twenty lines later. 'Will will tell thee where to fetch them' is a reminder to call for Kemp to prepare him for his entrance seventy lines later. Whilst this is an extensive warning, this much allowance was not uncommon; the play *Thomas of Woodstock* includes the line 'a bed / For Woodstock'[42] fifty four lines before it is brought onstage. The scene in Q1 *Romeo and Juliet* is fast-paced, with a collection of characters coming on and off in quick succession, lamenting the apparently deceased Juliet.

The playwright and clown were not irreconcilably antagonistic: instances where extemporal performance was designed to happen are indicated in the stage directions of a number of plays: Thomas Heywood's *The Second Part of King Edward the Fourth* (1599) includes the direction '*Jockie is led to whipping over the stage, speaking some wordes, but of no importance*'; and in the anonymous play *The History of the Tryall of Chevalry* one direction reads '*Enter Forrester* […] *speake anything, and Exit.*'[43] It might seem peculiar that Shakespeare's plays are devoid of any such freely scripted railing when he worked with the most famous clown of the age. This is purely symptomatic of the playwright's style. Through structural and linguistic manipulation, Shakespeare exercised a great deal of control over the drama in action. He simultaneously curbed and exploited Kemp's extempore performances by imposing tightly structured textual direction that force adherence to his dramatic vision. In I.ii, Q2 has Kemp enter with Capulet and Countie Paris. As he does not speak until 36 lines later, this scene would have been a proposed period for the extempore merriments that would pull crowds. In Q1, Kemp enters at l32 after being called by Capulet, removing any period in which he can speak 'more than is set down for' him. This scene was

39 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 IV.iv.16-17.
40 Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown*, 87.
41 Stern, *Documents*, 229.
42 Ibid, 229.
43 Ibid, 250.

obviously targeted by Shakespeare for abridgment as there is also a slight reduction in Capulet's lines; any that are not crucial to the development of the plot are removed.

Kemp's response to instructions from Capulet to 'Seeke them out:/ Whose names are written'[44] on a list of party guests is adapted by Shakespeare in Q1 in order to create a quick, uninterruptable succession of clauses:

> (Q2) Find them out whose names are written. Here it is writ-
> ten that the Shoo-maker should meddle with his yard, and the
> Taylor with his last, the fisher with his pencil, & the painter
> With his nets. But I am sent to find those persons whose names
> Are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person

> Hath here writ (I must to the learned) in good time
> (Q1) Seeke them out whose names are written here
> And yet I know not who are written here; I must to
> The learned to learne of them, that's as much to say as
> The Taylor must meddle with his laste, the Shoomaker
> With his needle, the Painter with his nets, and the Fisher
> With his pencil, I must to the learned.[45]

The phrase 'in good time' in Q2 indicates that the clown has seen Romeo and Benvolio entering onstage. However, if the clown recognises Benvolio and Romeo as 'learned', the question 'I pray sir can you read?'[46] and the following confusion is merely surplus. Ending the monologue with 'I must to the learned' helps the shift in locale by instigating the act of seeking onstage; Romeo's interrupted line, 'Whipt and tormented, and Godden good fellow'[47] followed by the servingman's question suggests the characters have just that moment met. Thus, Q1 presents a more theatrically logical version. By restructuring Kemp's speech so that there are no distinct pauses, Shakespeare removes the possibility for mid-speech interruptions and thereby curbs Kemp's anarchic methods through linguistic direction. The twelve lines between Romeo and Benvolio's arrival and the exchange between Romeo and Kemp leaves a brief period in which the clown is left to his own comic devices but is afterwards reined in by the demands of the script: in this case, Romeo noticing him midline.

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44 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 I.ii.35-36.
45 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 I.ii.31-35 and Q2 I.ii.38-42.
46 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 I.ii.50 and Q2 I.ii.57.
47 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1. I.ii.49 and Q2 I.ii.56.

Wiles identifies a far less restrictive structure to the parts Shakespeare wrote for Kemp and argues that the actor was provided with a monologue of his own 'at the end of a scene […] within which the clown may extemporise without risk to the rhythm of the play or direction of the narrative.'[48] It is an unconvincing argument when analysing Shakespeare's treatment of Kemp's servant character in Q1. The clown has one closing monologue in *Romeo and Juliet* and, much like his soliloquy in I.ii., the language and clause construction in the quarto show a self-conscious attempt to curb his extemporising:

> Q1)
> Clowne: *Maddam you are cald for, Supper is readie,*
> *the Nurse curst in the Pantrie, all things in extreamitie*
> *make hast for I must be gone to waite.[49]*

Kemp is governed by the language he is prescribed: 'make hast for I must be gone to waite' forces the end of the scene by exeunting the stage. Lady Capulet and the Nurse's lines are surplus and of no particular literary merit so have been extirpated in Q1. The only other scene in the play where Kemp would have room to extemporise follows exactly the same suit. In IV.v, Peter has a comic confrontation with some Minstrels where he asks them "Why doth music hath a silver sound?" When they cannot answer, he concludes by saying:

> (Q1) *Ser:* I thinke so, Ile speake for you because you are the
> Singer. I saye Silver sound, because such Fellowes as you
> Haue seldom Golde for sounding. Farewell Fidlers, fare-
> well.   *Exit*
> [Minstrel] I. Farewell and be hangd: come lets goe.   *Exeunt[50]*

The punchline relies on the fact that Kemp would be holding in his hand the gold to pay them, but, as the wedding is cancelled, the musicians will not receive any money. As with his speech in I.ii, the joke requires a speedy delivery and a speedy exit, severely limiting Kemp's opportunity to extemporise.

Writing an early modern play was typically the cumulative effort of a number of hacks. A clear distinction between language and plot existed in

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48 David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 107.

49 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q2 I.iii.87-92 and Q1 I.iii.71-73.

50 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Q1 IV.v.133-136.

the period and it was often the case that one writer would be tasked with producing a "plot-scenario", a draft of each act of a new play that would be delivered to potential investors, whilst another or others would be hired to write the dialogue.[51] Thomas Nashe's account of his involvement in writing the seditious play *The Isle of Dogs* (1597) claims responsibility for only the 'induction and the first act of it', and that 'the other foure acts without my consent, or the least guesse of my drift or scope, by the players were supplied.' *The Isle of Dogs*, now lost, most likely contained parodies of the Queen or Lord Cobham. Nashe attempted to redirect the blame by claiming the players had no sense of his 'drift', meaning the play was completed without access to his plot-scenario. The fact that Nashe had already delivered scenes to the company and was required to produce a plot before the play was commissioned makes his excuse entirely disingenuous.[52]

Although distributing the workload was common practice in the early modern theatre business, Shakespeare appears to have exercised an unusual degree of artistic control over his plays due to his position within the company. The Hispanist and minor poet Leonard Digges (whose stepfather Thomas Russell was one of two overseers of Shakespeare's will) pays the playwright the unusual compliment that 'all that he doth write, Is pure his owne, plot, language, exquisite.'[53] No plot-scenarios exist for any of Shakespeare's plays; however, a comparison of V.iii in both quartos highlights an issue with characterisation which can be explained by Shakespeare's interaction with a plot-scenario. Whilst "Peter" is the name given to Romeo's man in the play's main source material, Arthur Brooke's narrative poem *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, all editions of the play identify the Capulet servingman by this name. However, during a brief interaction between Romeo and his servant in V.iii, Q2 refers to the servant as "Peter" rather than "Balthasar", the name provided in Q1 and F. This confuses the narrative. How can two feuding families have the same servant? The mistake is indicative of the characters' literary journey from plot-scenario to "fair copy".

51 Stern, *Documents*, 31

52 Thomas Nashe, *Nashe's Lenten Stuffe* (London: Printed by N.L and C.B, 1599), 2, Accessed 15 January, 2015. http://eebo.chadwyck.com.elib.tcd.ie/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgthumbs. cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99848338&FILE=../session/1428757903_23122&SEARCHSCREEN =CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR/.

53 Stern, *Documents*, 31.

Wiles's insightful analysis of Q2 V.iii shows how Shakespeare wrote scenes out of order and intended Kemp to play Romeo's man when he was first drafting the play.[54] When Romeo tells Peter to leave in a speech of hyperbolic violence, Peter answers with a comical line:

> *Rom:* I will tear thee joint by joint… my intents are savage and wild… More fierce and more inexorable far than empty tigers or the roaring sea
> *Peter*: I will be gone sir and not trouble ye[55]

The bathos provided by Peter's cheeky reply is absent from Q1, where the lines are changed so as to remove the comic couplet. When ordered to leave before Romeo prises open Juliet's tomb, he hides behind a yew tree (presumably one of the pillars). Peter's gaping mouth is visible to the audience as Romeo opens the trap door:

> Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death…
> Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
> And in despite I'll cram thee with more food[56]

As Romeo continues his hyperbolic speech, Peter is downstage of him, ideally placed to engage in some visual play with the audience. Wiles continues his analysis, noting how the final comic touch comes later in the scene when the Friar trips over the sleeping Peter:

> St Francis be my speed, how oft tonight
> Have my old feet stumbled at graves? Who's there?[57]

Yet the punchline never comes; instead, an entirely new character, "Man", replies to the Friar, delivering a solemn report of how 'my maister and [Paris] fought,/ And my maister slew him.'[58] Wiles's condemnation of Q1 has him overlook the implications of his research on securing the theatrical abridgment theory. Shakespeare's use of Peter as Romeo's servant in this scene shows him working in accordance to a plot-scenario that was produced from Brooke's poem. Peter's comic responses to Romeo's melodramatic tirade in V.iii were drafted early on in the play's lifetime and, finding Kemp put to better use in the play as the Capulet servant, Shakespeare wrote the remainder of Q2 as such. When revising Q2 into Q1, he created a wholly new servant for Romeo, Balthasar, and stripped

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54 Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown*, 90-92.
55 Ibid, V.iii.35-40.
56 Ibid, V.iii.45-48.
57 Ibid, V.iii.125-126.
58 Ibid, V.iii.145-146

his dialogue of any comic potential.[59]

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Vital to deconstructing the nature of an early modern play text are the many documents that inform its performance. The remnants of these documents found in both quartos provide a clear production narrative for *Romeo and Juliet*. The present essay allows many of the authorial ambiguities in Q1 to be positively asserted as revisions by Shakespeare, the prompter, or even the printing house corrector. The two quartos are invaluable artefacts in the history of English theatre, illustrating the life of a play from its conception in the mind of the playwright to its performance and eventual publication.

Yet uncovering the abridgment narrative in the quartos poses a profoundly complex question: how are future editions of *Romeo and Juliet* to be published? Q1 can no longer be overlooked due to its dubious authorship and sacrificial line reduction; Q2 cannot be the copy text due to its glaring irregularities and theatrically confusing structure. The hangover from New Bibliography began to subside when Gary Taylor and Michael Warren argued against conflating the two extant editions of King Lear into a single text. Their thesis, arguing that Q1 represents Shakespeare's rough draft and F the play in performance, would eventually lead to the standardisation of publishing both the first quarto and folio editions side-by-side. Where a vastly different text with theatrical, literary, or historical value is extant, this model provides an editorial solution.

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59 Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown*, 91.

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