

John Lyly and the Marprelate Controversy: Innovation, Inhibition, and the 1589 Hamlet

by Karl Yambert

Rosencrantz: I think their inhibition comes by the means of the
late innovation. *Hamlet* Q2 (2.2.295–296)

This essay argues for a probable date of composition of 1589 for the First Quarto (Q1) *Hamlet*, which inferentially would favor Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, rather than William Shakspeare as the playwright.¹ En route to that determination, the essay demonstrates that neither the historical Essex rebellion (1601) nor the revival of Paul’s Boys and their participation in the War of the Theatres (1599–1601) adequately represents an occurrence of an “innovation” that sparks an “inhibition”—terms that are paired in the Second Quarto (Q2) and First Folio (FF) *Hamlets* to explain why the Tragedians of the City are on tour.

Instead, the Martin Marprelate controversy (1588–90), which began as a war of pamphlets, was precisely the sort of challenge to the established order that Elizabethans called an “innovation.” Indeed, Queen Elizabeth herself called the initial Martinist tracts an “innovation” (Arber 109–110). Furthermore, the Marprelate affair then led to the suppression of acting troupes of both boys and men (Gurr 46). That is, the Marprelate “innovation” resulted in what was clearly an “inhibition” imposed on stage performances, exactly as *Hamlet* has it.

Paul’s Boys were among the inhibited companies. They were dissolved about 1590 because of the involvement of their dramatist, John Lyly, in the Marprelate affair. Lyly played critical roles in both the initiating pamphlet war and ensuing theatrical productions.

Lyly had been a protégé of Oxford, serving as dramatist for Oxford's Boys at Blackfriars, whose lease Oxford had transferred to him. Under the aegis of Oxford, Lyly also directed performances at court. Oxford's personal interest in Lyly led him to allude to the Marprelate controversy in the version of *Hamlet* that he was writing in the late 1580s, a performance of which was alluded to by Thomas Nashe in 1589. Dating as it does to 1589, Q1 is the so-called *Ur-Hamlet*.

Brief History of the Hamlet Story

Toward the end of the 12th century, Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus incorporated medieval Scandinavian legends about Amleth (Amlethus) into his *Gesta Danorum* (*Deeds of the Danes*). Shakespeare may have referred directly to Saxo, but he borrowed more obviously from volume five of François de Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* (1572), which loosely translated and substantially embellished Saxo's tale.²

The first known mention of an onstage *Hamlet* appeared in Nashe's preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* in 1589. Theatrical impresario Philip Henslowe lists a performance of a *Hamlet* in his diary in 1594. In his *Wits Miserie* (1596), Thomas Lodge speaks of *Hamlet* performed at the Theatre.

Nashe's 1589 mention of *Hamlet* comes very early in any career arc imaginable for William Shakspeare. In 1585, twenty-one-year-old Shakspeare became a father of twins in Stratford. Then he dropped entirely out of sight for seven years, until Robert Greene's cryptic attack on an "upstart crow" in *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1592), which many believe refers to William of Stratford. Even if so, we lack documented evidence that William Shakspeare had written any specific work—or even his own signature—by 1592. To claim that he had composed a draft of *Hamlet* yet earlier, by 1589, requires a leap of faith that most orthodox scholars cannot fully manage.

Consequently, the 1589 *Hamlet* is frequently asserted to have been written by someone other than Shakspeare and is referred to by many scholars as the *Ur-Hamlet*, a phantom play now lamentably lost, its author regrettably unknown.³ That tack of argument discreetly allows young Shakspeare a few additional years to fledge as Greene's upstart crow in 1592, perhaps making Henslowe's 1594 *Hamlet* or Lodge's 1596 *Hamlet* more conceivably a creation of the Stratford man.⁴ However, orthodox chronologies usually date William

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Shakespeare's first *Hamlet* (by which they usually mean Q2) to within a couple years either side of 1600, shortly before a *Hamlet* play was entered into the Stationers' Register in 1602.

Q1 was published in 1603. Although the view has been vigorously challenged, Q1 is most frequently characterized by orthodox scholars as a "pirated," "corrupt," and/or "memorially reconstructed" derivative of Q2. That is, although published first, Q1 is conventionally considered to be a defective knockoff of Q2. In that orthodox view, in about 1600 the by-now mature and successful William Shakspeare stooped to adapting (or, frankly, stealing) the old *Ur-Hamlet*, which he revised into the manuscript that would be published as Q2. That new *Hamlet* of his was perhaps still in repertory on stage and therefore had not yet been printed by 1603, which created the opportunity for the presumed piracy, the bootlegged Q1, to jump the publishing queue. Q2 did achieve publication in 1604, with a press run that extended into 1605.

The third primary version of *Hamlet* appeared in FF, the collected plays of "William Shakespeare." FF was printed in 1623, nineteen years after the death of Oxford and seven years after the death of William Shakspeare. Of FF's thirty-six plays, fully half are not known to have been previously published. For example, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Tempest* were all first published posthumously in FF, no matter whether the Earl of Oxford or William Shakspeare is their presumed author.

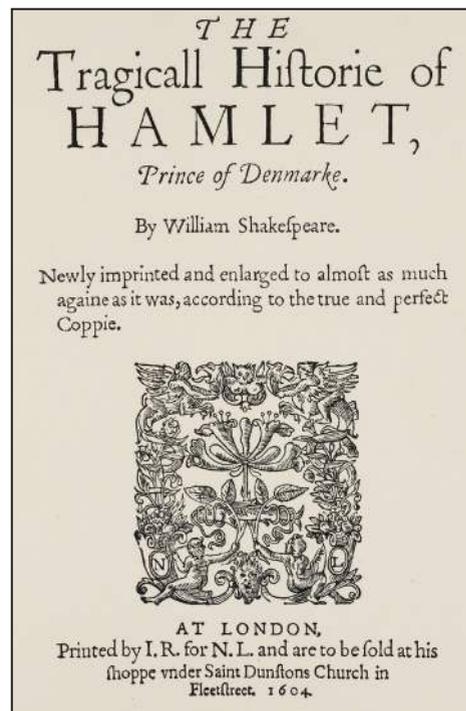
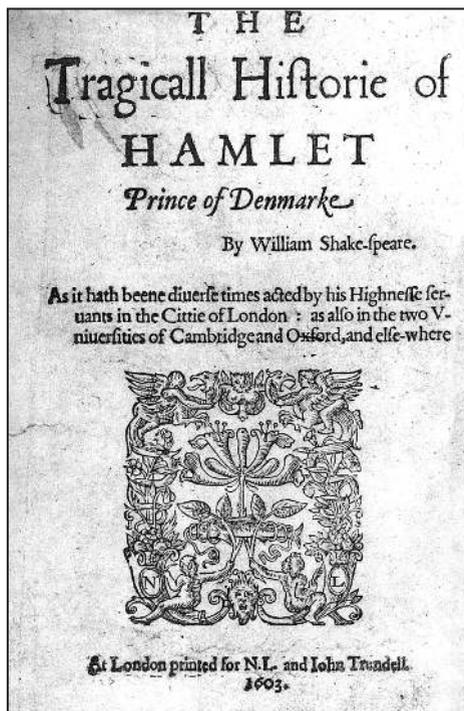


Figure 1: *Hamlet* Q1, published in 1603. Figure 2: *Hamlet* Q2, published in 1604.

Relationships among the Primary *Hamlets*

The interconnections among Q1, Q2, and FF—the primary *Hamlets*—have been endlessly debated by Shakespeare scholars. As a general tenet, I accept as authoritative the carefully reasoned and evidenced demonstration by Margrethe (Eddi) Jolly in her *First Two Quartos of Hamlet* that, on several internal metrics, Q1 can consistently and convincingly be shown to occupy an intermediate position between the Belleforest narrative source for *Hamlet* and Q2. For example, compared to Q2, Q1 employs a higher proportion of older verb forms than does Q2, uses terms that more closely translate Belleforest, and models its major characters more closely on the French source, all of which strongly suggests Q1's transitional status between Belleforest and Q2. In sum, a first-draft-and-revision model best explains the relationship between Q1 and Q2 (Jolly 60–61). I envision many more drafts than two, but the point is that Q1 was early and Q2 was later in a continuum of manuscript revisions.

For reasons explored below, I also concur with Jolly's assessment not only that Q1 represents an early (1589) stage but that it was William Shakespeare's own draft of *Hamlet* (184–93). Q2 was revised at considerable length from Q1, chiefly by Shakespeare, although perhaps incorporating other influences as well. The texts of both Q2 and FF show evidence of at least some adjustment around 1600, notably in FF's possible allusion to the War of the Theatres and the revival of boy-actor troupes.

Despite ample argument to the contrary, the publishing history of *Hamlet* is straightforward. As early as 1920, Frank Hubbard countered the rising theories of an illicit Q1 by emphasizing the regular progression of publication from Q1 to Q2 and then well beyond. The first two quartos of *Hamlet* each bore a title page attributing it to “William Shakespeare.” They were both published by the reputable Nicholas Ling, whose rights to *Hamlet* were transferred legally to John Smethwick in 1607. Smethwick then published quartos of *Hamlet* in 1611 and 1637, plus a third, undated quarto. He also held shares in the First Folio (1623) and the Second Folio (1632). Between them, Ling and Smethwick maintained a continuous, legitimate line of *Hamlet* publications that lasted well over thirty years, beginning with Ling's Q1 in 1603 and lasting through Smethwick's quarto of 1637 (Hubbard 18–19).

Why Do the Tragedians of the City Travel?

Three counterpart versions of a passage appear in the primary *Hamlets*. In all three, Rosencrantz and/or Guildenstern (with the variant spellings of their names in each version) inform the prince of the imminent arrival of a traveling troupe of players at Elsinore. The troupe is identified in all three versions as the Tragedians of the City. The prince then asks why the actors are traveling instead of performing at home.

Q1 (7.266–273)⁵

- Hamlet: How comes it that they travel? Do they grow resty?
- Gilderstone: No, my lord, their reputation holds as it was wont.
- Hamlet: How, then?
- Gilderstone: I'faith, my lord, novelty carries it away. For the principal public audience that came to them, are turned to private plays, and to the humour of children.

Q2 (2.2.293–299)

- Hamlet: How chances it they travel? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.
- Rosencrantz: I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.
- Hamlet: Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?
- Rosencrantz: No, indeed are they not.

FF (2.2.328–360)

- Hamlet: How chances it they travel? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.
- Rosincrance: I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.
- Hamlet: Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?
- Rosincrance: No, indeed they are not.
- Hamlet: How comes it? Do they grow rusty?
- Rosincrance: Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace. But there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for't. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages (so they call them) that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.
- Hamlet: What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escotted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Rosincrance: Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tar them to controversy. There was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Hamlet: Is't possible?

Guildensterne: O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Hamlet: Do the boys carry it away?

Rosincrance: Ay, that they do, my lord—Hercules and his load too.

Innovation and Inhibition

Hamlet asks in Q1 why the company is traveling. Gilderstone's response concerns the "novelty" of child actors in private theaters that has drawn audiences away from the adult companies in public theaters. The implication is that, because of straitened finances, the adult company must tour to find remoter audiences that have not yet fallen under the faddish spell of the children in the city. Significantly, neither "innovation" nor "inhibition" is mentioned.

In Q2 it is Rosencrantz who answers Hamlet, although his reply is opaque. Hamlet asks about the troupe's travels and Rosencrantz talks instead about the players' "inhibition," which he leaves unexplained except to indicate that it was caused by "the late innovation," which he also does not explain. Hamlet presses for a more direct reply, this time asking whether the company is as popular ("followed") as previously. He learns that their "estimation" is not what it once was (contrary to their "reputation" that still "holds as it was wont" in Q1). Rosencrantz's implicit message, then, is that the troupe has lost popularity in the city and must travel to find new audiences. Q2 does not mention "children."

Rosincrance's answer in FF is also initially unresponsive to Hamlet's question. As in Q2, the courtier again cites an unexplained "inhibition" deriving from an unexplained "innovation." However, Hamlet follows up by asking a question similar to the one he also posed in Q1, about whether the adult players have grown "rusty" ("resty" in Q1).⁶ Rosencrantz then elaborates on the outlandishly enthusiastic reception that the child actors are receiving. He also calls attention to the "controversy" that involves "much throwing about of brains." Again, it is left implicit that the adult players travel because they have lost much of their customary audience in that "controversy" to the boys, who "carry it away."

However, another possible interpretation is that the "controversy" described in FF has brought down on the adult players some form of official displeasure, or "inhibition." Rather than resorting to touring because of direct economic losses that they have suffered from the competition of children's

companies, the adult actors might have had to leave the city and go on tour under a cloud of disapproval from civic authorities. As demonstrated below, official suppression rather than economic displacement is at the heart of what happened in 1589.

Innovation as “Insurrection” and “Novelty”

Commentators on the passages generally strive to identify the alluded-to “innovation” because it is the primary cause of a subsequent “inhibition.” That is, as Rosencrantz has framed it, the inhibition “comes by the means of” the innovation. Commentators regularly note two principal meanings of *innovation* (see Crystal and Crystal, “innovation”):

1. *Innovation* can signify some kind of disturbance or challenge to the established order ranging from, say, commotion to “controversy” (which word is used in FF) to tumult to armed insurrection, rebellion, or revolution.
2. Not surprisingly, *innovation* can mean simply something that is new—that is, a “novelty” (the word used in Q1). More broadly, it can denote a fashion, vogue, fad, craze, or the like.

Based on expectations that a topical allusion in *Hamlet* would refer to an event or situation from about 1600, orthodox scholarship regularly acknowledges either (or both) of two chief candidates for the pertinent “innovation” at that time. The first candidate is the February 1601 rebellion of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, who had recently lost the favor of the queen. Essex and his principal supporters engaged William Shakspeare’s company, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, to stage *Richard II* for them at the Globe. The performance included the politically sensitive scene of deposing and later murdering God’s own chosen monarch. The conspirators then marched on the palace of Whitehall the next morning but failed to spark the popular protest against the queen that they had counted on. Essex was quickly apprehended and tried. The commissioners who condemned him to death included Oxford. Essex was beheaded before the month was out.

The other leading “innovation” candidate is the novelty of the return to the stage of the Children of St. Paul’s in about 1600, after the troupe had been shut down in about 1590. Paul’s Boys and the Children of the Chapel, together with the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, engaged in a boisterous War of the Theatres (1599–1601). That hubbub consisted of satirical attacks between the playwrights John Marston and Thomas Dekker on one side and Ben Jonson on the other. The tit-for-tat succession of plays on the two sides is often the presumed referent for Guildensterne’s comment in FF that “there’s been much throwing about of brains” and for Rosincrance’s description of the entertainment value of watching the poet and the player go to “cuffs.”

Inhibition: The Essex Rebellion and the Revival of Paul's Boys

The prime candidates for Rosencrantz's "late innovation" are first the Essex rebellion and second the revival of Paul's Boys and their role in the War of the Theatres. Assuming for the sake of argument that either main definition of *innovation*—disturbance or novelty—might be a reasonable postulate, the challenge in either case is then to forge the causal link expressed by Rosencrantz, in which the posited innovation entailed a subsequent inhibition. Given the rebellion of Essex in 1601, what historical inhibition, prohibition, or ban did it engender? Alternatively, given an Elizabethan craze for boy actors around 1600, especially as the boys performed in a satirical war of words between playwrights, what historical inhibition, prohibition, or ban was triggered by that fad?

To take the first candidate first, E. K. Chambers (*Hamlet* 196) considered the conspiracy of Essex to be Rosencrantz's "innovation." He interpreted the subsequent inhibition to be the supposed disgrace of the Globe company at court for having played *Richard II*, deposition and all, for the conspirators. Shunned at court, according to Chambers, the Lord Chamberlain's players perhaps traveled on tour. Thus, the political innovation or conspiracy led to an inhibition—banning the players from court—which circumstance compelled them to travel.

John Dover Wilson (*Hamlet*, 2.2.335–336n) accepted the conclusion that if "innovation" were taken in the sense of a political upheaval in 1601, it "can hardly be other than that of the Earl of Essex," but he observes that neither the Lord Chamberlain's Men nor the Admiral's Men were inhibited because of the abortive uprising. E.A.J. Honigmann (27) states flatly that "the Essex rebellion did not lead to an 'inhibition.'" Harold Jenkins agrees that "there is no evidence that the rebellion in fact led to a closure of the theatres" (2.2.330–331, Long Note), and Susanne Wofford concurs: William Shakspeare's company "were not in fact punished by inhibition" (2.2.324n).

Chambers himself came to agree. As he pointed out in 1923, far from tramping the provinces in exile, Shakspeare's company was in fact acting at court on the virtual eve of the earl's execution. "On the whole," Chambers conceded, "there is no reason to suppose that any serious blame was attached to the Chamberlain's men" for any part they played in the Essex uprising (*Stage*, 2: 204, 206).

A century after he recanted, Chambers's original suggestion nonetheless still lives on in the literature. However, while the dramatized treatment of an event, person, or situation need not adhere faithfully in all particulars to the alluded-to history, any editorial commentary is unsatisfying that explains

the “innovation–inhibition” connection in *Hamlet* by invoking the historical Essex Rebellion but without referring to an identifiable, historical inhibition. We are brought to wonder why Rosencrantz (and William Shakespeare) bothered to bring up an “inhibition” at all. That is particularly the case because the inhibition is not identified by Rosencrantz, which implies that Shakespeare expected the mere mention of a current or “late” inhibition to be so obvious to the patrons in the audience that they would catch the allusion on their own.

Switching to the children’s companies, then, “innovation” might refer to the new theatrical vogue for children around 1600 that is described in some detail in the FF-only passage about an “eyrie of children, little eyases” (Wofford, 2.2.324n). Paul’s Boys had returned to the London theatrical scene by about 1600, after an absence of about a decade. Their reemergence suggests to some the “novelty” of Q1 and/or the cognate “innovation” of Q2 and FF. Paul’s Boys and the Children of the Chapel Royal were then involved with the adult company of the Lord Chamberlain in the War of the Theatres. That circumstance, too, might qualify as an “innovation” in that it was a competition of one-upmanship between playwrights and adult and boy companies, conspicuously carried out on public and private stages with “much to-do.”

What would be the inhibition that was imposed because of the theater war? Although with differing degrees of endorsement, some editors conjecture that the pertinent inhibition might be a Privy Council order of June 22, 1600, which limited the number of London playhouses and performances. For example, Henry Hudson annotates “inhibition” as “referring, no doubt to an order of the Privy Council, issued in June 1600” (110n47). Cyrus Hoy defines the term as a prohibition against performances of plays, “possibly with reference to [the] decree of the Privy Council of 22 June 1600” (2.2.310–311n). Honigmann identifies a connection between the Privy Council decree and the children’s companies. He characterizes the 1600 order as an “inhibition with a vengeance” (28), directed specifically against the innovation that was the renewal of acting by the boy companies. Let us then examine that decree.

The Order of the Privy Council—June 22, 1600

The order that the Privy Council issued on June 22, 1600, was in response to “diverse complaints” made to members of the Council about “the manifold abuses and disorders that have grown and do continue by occasion of many houses erected and employed in and about the City of London for common stage plays” (Chambers, *Stage*, 4: 329–330). According to the decree, the multitude of playhouses, and the “misgovernment” of them, had become the “daily occasion of the idle riotous and dissolute living of great numbers of people” (330).

The Council recognized that it was not the plays and theaters as such that were the central problem, but the ancillary attractions and temptations that drew people away from their honest work and potentially into mischiefs of many kinds. Overall, then, the Council declared that “the use and exercise of such plays, not being evil in itself,” could be tolerated in a well-governed state.

The Privy Council’s solution to the issue of retaining playhouses and their companies, while simultaneously redressing their abuses, was to restrict the number of playhouses within the City of London to two. Furthermore, each house was to perform no more than twice per week, and not ever on the Sabbath. Edward Alleyn of the Lord Admiral’s Men was granted the license for one of the allowed houses. By terms of that grant, Alleyn in 1600 built the Fortune Theater, which supplanted the Curtain, as provided for in the decree. The other allowed house was the Globe, as newly built and occupied by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in late 1599 (Chambers, *Stage*, 4: 330–331).



Figure 3: The Globe theater location on Wenceslaus Hollar’s 1647 Map of London.

However, the 1600 decree essentially reasserts a 1594 reordering of theatrical affairs, in which plays at London inns had been banned. According to Andrew Gurr, that earlier circumstance appeased the Lord Mayor by removing from his jurisdiction a source of habitual complaints about plague as well as crowds and their various vices. Likewise, the 1600 decree’s restriction of performances to two playhouses in the suburbs had been previously established in 1594, when the Admiral’s Men and the Lord Chamberlain’s Men climbed to preeminence in the London theater scene, forming a government-approved theatrical “duopoly,” as Gurr (57) terms it.

The promotion of those two companies in 1594 “seems to have been a fresh concept set up by two Privy Councilors” (Gurr 55), namely, Charles Howard, the Lord Admiral, and George Carey, the Lord Chamberlain, who became the respective patrons of the two allowed companies.⁷ Further, the Admiral’s Men, under the leadership of Edward Alleyn, were allocated to the Rose, which was owned by Philip Henslowe, Alleyn’s father-in-law. The Lord Chamberlain’s Men, led by Richard Burbage, were allocated to the Theatre, which was owned by Richard’s father, James (55–57).

The 1600 order of the Privy Council assigned allowances to the same two companies that formed the duopoly in the 1594 arrangement. The limitation to two theaters was therefore not a new inhibition: the 1600 order reaffirmed the 1594 ordering of theatrical prerogatives and updated it to acknowledge that each of the two permissioned troupes now occupied a new theater, compared to 1594. The theatrical rearrangements of 1594 antedated the revival of the troupe of Paul’s Boys by some six years and the 1600 order itself nowhere mentions children. It is apparent that the 1600 measure was not launched against an “innovation” of children’s companies in 1600, but instead revisited persistent problems that had plagued London’s lord mayors since even before the theatrical duopoly was established in 1594.

The Marprelate Innovation

Neither the Essex Rebellion nor the revival of boy companies adequately qualifies as Rosencrantz’s innovation that then provoked an inhibition against one or more acting companies.

A clue to a more likely linkage of innovation with inhibition emerges from a different perspective on Paul’s Boys. The children’s troupe that reappeared on London stages about 1600 had been disbanded since about 1590. However, to focus on their reappearance in 1600 as a possible innovation is perhaps to work at things backwards. We might instead first inquire into the cause of the boys’ disappearance a decade earlier. When we do, we find a clear sequence of innovation and subsequent inhibition.

Instead of regarding the *revival* of Paul’s Boys in about 1600 as an *innovation*, we can see the troupe’s *dissolution* in about 1590 as the result of an *inhibition*. That prohibition on acting was mandated by authorities as a direct consequence of a yet earlier commotion, the Marprelate controversy. To state it plainly: the Marprelate controversy of 1588–1590 is the “innovation” behind Rosencrantz’s report to Hamlet. Along with limits imposed on other companies because of the Marprelate innovation, the staying of Paul’s Boys plays in 1589 and the dissolution of Paul’s Boys in about 1590 are elements of Rosencrantz’s “inhibition.”

The Marprelate controversy began as a war of pamphlets that was itself part of a larger, preexisting contention between Puritans and adherents to the established Church of England. The Marprelate aspect of that continuing dissension started in reaction to *A Defense of the Government Established in the Church of England for Ecclesiastical Matters*, by Dr. John Bridges, dean of Salisbury. A tract by “Martin Marprelate,” conveniently referred to by the short title, *Epistle*, appeared in October 1588. With savage sarcasm, the *Epistle* directed a Puritan attack on Bridges’s work while mocking individual bishops and the Anglican episcopacy. Martin’s *Epitome* followed a month later, expounding similar themes.

Because the Martinist pamphlets had been published without allowance, the press that printed them was repeatedly moved to avoid detection by authorities. And for good reason. On February 13, 1589, the queen herself proclaimed her “high displeasure” with certain “schismatical and seditious” books lately published, clearly intending Martin’s *Epistle* and *Epitome*.⁸ She warned that anyone assisting the “contriving, writing, printing, publishing, or dispersing” of such books stood to answer for their actions “at their uttermost peril.” The queen considered the works to be “dangerous and wicked enterprises” that worked against “the Government ecclesiastical established by law...and also against the persons of the bishops, and others placed in authority ecclesiastical under her Highness by her authority” (Arber 109–111).

Orthodox Shakespearean scholarship must identify and justify an event around 1600 that might plausibly be called an innovation. The case is quite different when events of 1589 are examined. Charging that the “schismatical and seditious” Marprelate pamphlets posed threats to church and state, it was Queen Elizabeth herself who explicitly identified the tracts as an “innovation.” The queen declared in her February 1589 proclamation that those books and writings bring to ecclesiastical matters a “monstrous and apparent dangerous *innovation*.” Even more broadly, such attacks threaten “the overthrow of her Highness’ lawful prerogative, allowed by God’s law, and established by the laws of the realm.” All “such *innovations*” amount to the “willful breach” of the laws and statutes of the realm (Arber 109–110, emphases added).

Martin’s illegal tracts were innovations in their advocacy of fundamental ecclesiastical change, but they were also innovations in the revolutionary sense of potentially challenging the queen’s monarchical authority (Black 711). The opening salvos of the Marprelate challenge to church and state in fall 1588 followed closely upon the thwarted invasion of the Spanish Armada earlier that summer, leaving the Martinists open to portrayals as domestic insurgents (716, 719) in either deliberate or fortuitous league with foreign and/or Catholic adversaries of Elizabeth’s reign.

Despite the express “uttermost peril” of continuing their work, Martin or his confederates released five other tracts through 1589, for a total of seven Martinist publications. Meanwhile, the bishops found it expedient to recruit adroit, professional writers in response. The result was a nimble anti-Martinist pamphlet counteroffensive that could reach a public readership by matching the appeal of biting sarcasm on topical matters and the rapid pace of publication that the Martinists already enjoyed. Thomas Nashe is often credited as the author of the anti-Martinist tracts written by “Pasquill Cavaliero,” which were published in summer 1589 through summer 1590. John Lyly is identified as the author of *Pap with an Hatchet*, which appeared in September 1589.

John Lyly’s Association with Oxford

John Lyly had begun his literary career as a writer of prose romances. His two *Euphues* volumes—*Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580)—are sometimes described as the earliest English novels. A wave of imitations of Lyly’s highly stylized language—called Euphuism—swept through English letters, although by about 1590 its patterned reliance on elaborate antithesis, alliteration, and allusions to classical mythology and fabulous natural history had become parodied as old fashioned.

It was probably through Lord Burghley, the queen’s Lord Treasurer, that Lyly began his association with Burghley’s son-in-law, Edward de Vere. Oxford appears to have rented rooms for Lyly at the Savoy Hospital by 1578. For his part, Lyly dedicated the second volume of his *Euphues* to Oxford and by 1582 was employed by the earl. Modern commentators often refer to Lyly as Oxford’s secretary.

The study of the influence of Lyly and Euphuism on Shakespeare is a staple of Shakespearean scholarship. However, John Dover Wilson, an orthodox scholar, made a case in 1905 for the influence of the Earl of Oxford upon Lyly, for it was not until his association with Oxford that Lyly conceived the idea of writing comedy. The interesting thing about Oxford, says Wilson (*Lyly* 87),

is that he also wrote comedy. Like many members of the nobility in those days he maintained his own company of players; and we find them in 1581 giving performances at Cambridge and Ipswich. His comedies, moreover, though now lost were placed in the same rank as those of [Richard] Edwardes by the Elizabethan critic [George] Puttenham⁹. . . . It was to Oxford’s patronage, therefore, and not to his subsequent connexion with the “children of Powles,” that Lyly owed his first dramatic impulse, and probably also his first dramatic success.¹⁰

Wilson considers the lyrics that Lyly integrated into his plays to be better than any songs of previous dramatists while also being superior to anything else Lyly himself had previously written. The best of Lyly's songs, Wilson says, "are to be ranked with Shakespeare's lyrics, and our greatest dramatist was only following Lyly's example when he introduced lyrics into his plays" (116). Lyly would become the dramatist of Paul's Boys and would have written songs for them. Before achieving that post, however, and while still in Oxford's employ, he had already written songs for his *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao*, "a fact which points again to de Vere, himself a lyricist of considerable powers, as Lyly's advisor and master" (116). In fact, the love of music was a bond between Oxford and Lyly that "played an important part in the beginning of our [English] comedy" (87).

Wilson explicitly recognizes Oxford's tutelage of Lyly in composing plays and lyrics. He then considers "Shakespeare"—by whom he means Shakspeare of Stratford—to have been a follower along a path set by Lyly. Thus, for Wilson, Shakespeare in the 1590s draws inspiration from Lyly's earlier dramatic efforts and lyrics in the 1580s, which in turn are indebted to Oxford's tutoring of Lyly. But if we consider Oxford *to be* William Shakespeare, a profound reversal occurs. Instead of influencing Shakespeare, Lyly first begins writing plays and songs under the personal instruction and example of Shakespeare himself, in the 1580s, at a formative juncture of English drama.

Oxford was also instrumental in placing Lyly in the position, not just of writing dramas, but of staging them as well. The earl passed on to Lyly the lease of the Blackfriars playhouse¹¹ and provided his boys' company to perform in it. Further, Oxford's connections made it possible for Lyly and his troupe to perform at court. Lyly brought his *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao* before the Queen's Majesty on respective occasions in 1584. Henry Evans, also associated with the theatrical enterprise, took a play called *Agamemnon and Ulysses* to court later that year.¹² The Earl of Oxford was the official patron, or royal impresario, for all three plays. The prologues of the first two plays indicate that they were also performed at the Blackfriars Theater. The records are unclear as to their performers at court, but Chambers (*Stage*, 2: 17) posits that the company drew upon combined members of the Children of the Chapel, Paul's Boys, and Lord Oxford's Boys.

A hiatus in the appearances of Lyly's plays at court occurred between the staging of the 1584 comedies and January 1588, when his *Gallathea* was performed, followed by *Endymion* in February. *Endymion* especially commands our attention for its possible associations with Oxford. It is broadly allegorical: Queen Cynthia is an obvious allusion to Queen Elizabeth. In the play, Tellus allegorizes the treacherous allures of Catholicism. Jealous of Endymion's truer love for Cynthia, she abets an enchanted sleep for him. Only Cynthia's kiss finally rescues him. David Bevington identifies Oxford as Endymion's referent. Lyly's "portrait of Endymion is one of a generically

ideal Elizabethan courtier,” Bevington allows, and “Oxford may be implicitly put forth as a representative of that ideal” (“Catholic Question,” 43n11).

De Vere had stirred Elizabeth’s anger more than once. While estranged from his wife in 1581, for example, he had sired a son by one of the queen’s maids of honor. For that transgression, he served time in the Tower of London and then in confinement at home. But he reconciled with his wife in 1582 and was formally forgiven by Queen Elizabeth, who allowed him to return to court in 1583.

Bevington observes that the reconciliation of queen and earl would have been stale news in February of 1588. A more likely topicality in *Endymion* was Oxford’s Catholicism. The earl had returned from Italy a secret Catholic in 1576 but had since confessed that lapse to Elizabeth and had eventually been restored to her grace. He had even voted to condemn to death Elizabeth’s Catholic rival, Mary, Queen of Scots. However, Mary’s execution in February of 1587 spurred Spanish military mobilization. As the threat of King Philip’s invasion mounted, it was feared that his plans to subdue England relied not just on a mighty navy and a formidable continental army but also on an internal revolt led by a class of old-family English nobles—perhaps including Oxford—who might have been suspected of harboring latent Catholic sympathies.¹³

In this intensely charged and unsettled context, *Endymion* is Lyly’s appeal to Elizabeth for leniency and forgiveness—for his former patron, Oxford, surely, but also for the wider population of Catholic-inclined Englishmen. “By the climactic theatrical gesture of Cynthia’s kiss,” Bevington says, “Lyly implicitly urges Elizabeth to recognize the essential goodness of loyal English Catholics like Oxford and to forgive their indiscreet attachment to the Catholic faith” (34). Unfortunately for Lyly, though, an inhibition against his plays soon followed.

The Inhibition of the Children of Paul’s

While the Marprelate pamphlet war was at its height in 1589, the controversy branched off into another arena, moving from page to stage. Serving as both a polemical pamphleteer and the dramatist for the Boys of Paul’s, John Lyly prominently bridged those two aspects of the innovation, and ultimately was central to the consequent inhibition as well.

A caricature of the character Martin Marprelate was brought onto the stage, as we learn from Nashe’s anti-Martinist tract, *Return of the Renowned Cavaliero Pasquill of England*, published in October 1589. There, Nashe describes having seen an old-style morality play in which Martin was depicted as physically assaulting the personification of Divinity. “It was this performance which occasioned the temporary inhibition of plays in the City,” comments J. Payne

Collier (266). The Privy Council ordered the Lord Mayor of London to stay all plays within the city. On November 6, the Lord Mayor reported to Lord Burghley that he had dutifully met with the players of the lord admiral and Lord Strange and charged them to forbear playing until further notice. The Admiral's Men had complied with the prohibition, but Lord Strange's Men contemptuously defied orders and performed again that same afternoon (Chambers, *Stage*, 4: 305).

In *Pap with an Hatchet*, Lyly alludes to the same staged incident as Nashe. He reveals that similar anti-Martin plays had already been written but had been banned from performance. "Would those comedies might be allowed to be played that are penned," Lyly complains, "and then I am sure he [Martin] would be deciphered, and so, perhaps, discouraged" (Scragg 85).

Lyly muses about a hypothetical play in which the Martin character might be hanged from a tree. A marginal note in his tract observes that, were that scene to be "showed at Paul's, it will cost you fourpence; at the Theatre, twopence" (Scragg 86). Collier emphasizes the significance of that remark:

Here we see named the very theatres at which dramatic productions upon the subject of the dispute between Martinists and the Bishops had been represented—viz., at St. Paul's by the dramatic children, and by the actors at the Theatre in Shoreditch. (267)

The actors at the Theatre at that time were the Queen's Men, whose aid the bishops had sought to combat the Puritans (Collier, 267–268). But the dramatist for the "dramatic children" of St. Paul's was Lyly himself. That is, the anti-Martin plays that were already penned but prohibited from performance were Lyly's own.

What is it that so disturbed the Privy Council about anti-Martinist plays that they directed the Lord Mayor to stop them? That question is answered in letters of the Privy Council on November 12, 1589, pronouncing its displeasure that players were imprudently and ignorantly meddling in affairs of "Divinity and State." Using "inconvenience" to denote "harm" (Crystal and Crystal, "inconvenience"), the Council noted "that there hath grown some inconvenience by common plays and interludes" in that "the players take upon themselves to handle in their plays certain matters of Divinity and of State unfit to be suffered [allowed]" (Chambers, *Stage*, 4: 306).

Although the anti-Martinists with their tracts and plays ostensibly defended the queen, their continued engagement with the Martinists kept the implicit challenges to Elizabeth's authority actively before the public. The queen eventually had an interest in squelching both sides of the matter. Accordingly, "all the playing companies for a time were suppressed," observes Gurr. The adult companies "were considerably dampened" by their part in the

Marprelate affair and “the boy companies did not resurface for several years” (46).

No direct documentation of a closure of the Children of Paul’s is known, but by late 1589 the performances of the boys’ troupe were stayed and at that time, or shortly later, the company was disbanded and some of its plays were released to book publishers. The printer’s address “to the Reader” in Lyly’s *Endymion* explicitly references the situation: “Since the plays in Paul’s were dissolved, there are certain comedies come to my hands by chance which were presented before Her Majesty at several times by the Children of Paul’s” (Bevington, *Endymion*, 74).

Endymion had been entered into the Stationers’ Register in October 1591, and the quarto bearing the printer’s address to the reader appeared the same year. Bevington suggests that “the acquisition of these plays by a publisher may have been occasioned by the closing down of the boys’ acting companies in 1590” (*Endymion* 1). Chambers sums up the affair neatly:

Lyly was one of the literary men employed about 1589 to answer the Martin Marprelate pamphleteers in their own vein, and to this end he availed himself of the Paul’s stage, apparently with the result that when it suited the government to disavow its instruments, that stage was incontinently suppressed. (*Stage*, 2: 18)

In short, the inhibition against Lyly’s Children of St. Paul’s was a direct result of Lyly’s participation in the Martin Marprelate innovation as both pamphleteer and dramatist. It is that series of events surrounding the Marprelate controversy of 1588–1590 that best corresponds to the “novelty” of Q1 *Hamlet* and to the linkage of “innovation” and “inhibition” in Q2 and FF.

Oxford’s Life Reflected in *Hamlet*

It may be difficult to imagine a 1589 *Hamlet* by young Shakspeare of Stratford, but that is not the case for Oxford, who likely wrote and revised *Hamlet* over many years before 1589. He perhaps began writing his *Hamlet* as a teenager, when Saxo’s history of Amleth was close at hand in Burghley’s library, and he thereafter also drew upon his life experiences to flesh out his *Hamlet* drama. As a cursory illustration of Oxford’s long preparations for a 1589 *Hamlet*, here are six selected examples of correspondences between his early life and *Hamlet*:

- In all three primary *Hamlets*, the Danish king calls for lights and abruptly withdraws from the *Mousetrap*. His sweeping departure with torchbearers strikingly evokes Queen Elizabeth’s angry exit from an offending skit at Hinchinbrooke in 1564, when she took all the

attendant torches with her and left everyone else in the dark—as personally witnessed by the fourteen-year-old earl (Whittemore 17–18).

- Hamlet calls the king’s counselor a “fishmonger” in all three *Hamlets*. As minister to Elizabeth, Oxford’s eventual father-in-law, William Cecil (advanced by many scholars as a model for *Hamlet*’s Corambis/Polonius), designated each Wednesday a mandatory fish day (known colloquially as “Cecil’s Fast”) from 1563 to 1584. That policy effectively made him England’s foremost seller of fish, or “fishmonger.”
- In Q1, Ofelia laments the mad disintegration of Hamlet’s fine qualities as “courtier, scholar, soldier,” prompting commentators to editorialize on the traits of the ideal courtier, a literary preoccupation of elite circles throughout 16th-century Europe. The leading exemplar of that genre was Baldassare Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano* (*The Courtier*). Bartholomew Clerke’s Latin translation of Castiglione’s book in 1572 was sponsored by the twenty-two-year-old Oxford, who wrote a Latin preface to the volume.
- Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy and his attitudes throughout the play draw so closely upon themes in Jerome Cardan’s *De Consolatione* that orthodox scholar Hardin Craig calls Cardan’s volume “Hamlet’s book.” Thomas Bedingfield’s English translation of “Hamlet’s book,” *Cardanus Comforte*, was published in 1573 “by commandment” of Oxford, who provided a commendatory letter for the book.
- Orthodox scholar Geoffrey Bullough proposes the historical murder of Francesco Maria I della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, as a model for *The Murder of Gonzago*, the play-within-the-play in *Hamlet*. The Italian duke and Gonzago (and King Hamlet) died alike from poison administered through an ear. Bullough also suggests that Titian’s portrait of the armored duke inspired the fully armored Ghost in *Hamlet* (Bullough 31–34). Oxford traveled in Italy in 1575–76, where he would have encountered the duke’s story and read it firsthand in “choice Italian.” He settled for some months in Venice, near Titian’s workshop, where he could have seen a model portrait of the duke by Titian himself, instead of the undistinguished engraved copy that Bullough assumes the untraveled William Shakspeare had to rely upon.
- In 1579, Oxford and Philip Sidney notoriously quarrel over tennis. Oxford self-mockingly has Corambis list “tennis” among vices in Q1, while Polonius cites “falling out at tennis” in Q2/FF.

By the time of Nashe’s reference to *Hamlet* in 1589, Oxford’s oft-revised manuscript incorporated many layers of allusion to contemporary societal events and his own experiences and personal connections over the preceding quarter century. Perhaps the chief topical allusion in 1589 was the Marprelate

controversy. Oxford's close connection with Lyly, his former troupe manager, establishes a context for his nod to the Marprelate controversy in *Hamlet*. The matter was probably still ongoing while he was writing the Q1 Tragedians of the City passage.

That Q1 passage refers to the role of child actors in the controversy. However, the mention of children must postdate publication of Martin's *Epistle* and *Epitome* in October and November 1588, respectively, which began the controversy.

Another pertinent date for the Q1 passage can also be deduced. Lyly's *Pap with an Hatchet*, published in September 1589, complained that his comedies were no longer allowed to be played. Simply said, Paul's Boys were inhibited. Q1 does not mention an inhibition, most likely because its composition predates the suppression of Paul's Boys. The Tragedians of the City passage thus probably dates to 1589, or more specifically, between very late 1588, when the public arousal over Martin's two publications began, and September 1589, when Lyly's plays with the Boys of Paul's are known to have been stayed and the word "inhibition" would first have become relevant.

Between those two dates, in February 1589, Queen Elizabeth provided a connection between the historical Marprelate episode and *Hamlet* by labeling the Martinist volumes an "innovation." That term is picked up in Q2 and FF, but the affair involving child actors is called a "novelty" in Q1. The Q1 term suggests that Oxford had written the Q1 passage before February 1589, using the less accusatory "novelty" as regards to the children as the Marprelate controversy was starting to unfold. By September 1589, however, the queen's angry "innovation" was a salient part of the public understanding of the affair and "inhibition" had become newly consequential to both child and adult acting companies. Oxford began linking the two terms as an alliterative pair in his post-1589 revisions of *Hamlet*, versions of which were eventually published as Q2 and FF.

Conclusions

Q1 *Hamlet* is Oxford-as-Shakespeare's precedent effort to his Q2 and FF *Hamlets*. In an apparent topical allusion, Q1 refers to a "novelty" whereas Q2 and FF correspondingly refer to an "innovation" that spawned an "inhibition." Orthodox attempts to identify a plausible historical referent for the "innovation" in about 1600 have failed to identify a corresponding "inhibition."

In contrast, the Martin Marprelate controversy of 1588–1590 provides clear referents for the "innovation" and "inhibition" of *Hamlet*. The Marprelate affair had two aspects: publication of rival Martinist and anti-Martinist tracts, seconded by stage performances by adult and child troupes, specifically Paul's

Boys. Their playwright, John Lyly, participated prominently in both aspects of the affair.

Before his association with Paul's Boys, Lyly had been employed and tutored by Oxford to present performances of Oxford's Boys to the public at Blackfriars and to the queen at court. Oxford himself was a lauded court poet and dramatist. As evidenced by the multiple aspects of Oxford's life as reflected in *Hamlet*, Oxford had been revising a Hamlet play throughout the 1570s and 1580s. It was a natural progression for Oxford to incorporate into his current *Hamlet* script in 1589 an allusion to his former troupe manager's early involvement in the Marprelate controversy.

Four chronological mileposts guide interpretation of *Hamlet's* allusion to the Marprelate controversy:

1. *Late 1588*: The controversy begins with publication of the first two Martin Marprelate tracts.
2. *February 1589*: Queen Elizabeth explicitly denounces the Martinist books as seditious "innovations," authoritatively attaching that term to the controversy.
3. *September 1589*: Lyly complains that his plays for Paul's Boys have been halted, for which the term "inhibition" would apply.
4. *1589–1591*: No precise date for it is known, but the dissolution of Paul's Boys is revealed in Lyly's *Endymion*, published in late 1591. Other boy companies also disappear for several years and even the adult companies are "suppressed" and "considerably dampened" (Gurr 46), which is to say, they were also inhibited.

Hamlet's "innovation" and "inhibition" are clearly connected to the unfolding aspects of the Marprelate controversy. The year 1589 emerges as a pivotal reference point for dating *Hamlet*, particularly because early 1589 is arguably the latest time that Q1's "novelty" would have been pertinent, before the queen's "innovation" supplanted it. Late 1589, in turn, is when Q2/FF's linkage of "innovation" with "inhibition" would first have been appropriate.

Q1 was not printed until 1603. However, the Q1 text was written by Oxford in 1589, even as the Marprelate affair played out. We can date its text—as indicated, for example, by *novelty* rather than *innovation* and *inhibition*—to early 1589. The Q1 script was performed in 1589, perhaps when the Queen's Men visited either the university or the town of Oxford (Cairncross 113). That performance or one like it prompted Nashe to refer to the tragedy by name, also in 1589. In short, Q1 is the 1589 *Ur-Hamlet*. The *Ur-Hamlet* is not lost, and its author is neither Kyd nor Anonymous, but Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Dedication:

This paper is lovingly dedicated to my sister-in-law Sarah Roberts for her interest and encouragement for previous writing endeavors.

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Endnotes

1. I use versions of “William Shakspere [sic] of Stratford” to refer to the Stratford actor and theater shareholder, traditionally held to be the famous poet and playwright. I use “William Shakespeare” as a neutral term to refer to the author of the Shakespeare canon. In contexts focusing on the personal identity of the author, it will be readily apparent that I consider Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, to be “Shakespeare.”
2. Oxford was fluent in both Latin and French, the languages of the narrative sources of the Hamlet play. Furthermore, Saxo’s *Gesta Danorum* is known to have been available to the young Oxford both in the library of his tutor Sir Thomas Smith (Hughes 32) and again in the library of William Cecil (Jolly, “Burghley,” 12), in whose household Oxford was raised from the age of twelve until attaining his majority. Belleforest’s volume of *Histoires Tragiques* would have become available for Oxford’s own purchase as a young adult, just as he also bought Plutarch’s works in French in 1570 (Ward 33).
3. Based on perceived similarities between Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet*, Kyd is commonly suggested—or baldly stated—to have also written the hypothetical *Ur-Hamlet*, which Will Shakspere later imitated or adapted. Although *The Spanish Tragedy* was probably written and published somewhat earlier, the play’s earliest documented performance, registration, and publication all occur in 1592. The conventionally presumed direction of influence is from Kyd to Will Shakspere, building on the assumption that Will Shakspere wrote Q2 *Hamlet* around 1600, which in turn is based on the tacit understanding that Will Shakspere would have been too inexperienced to have written a *Hamlet* of his own by 1589.

I am proposing that playwright Oxford-as-Shakespeare wrote the 1589 *Hamlet*, or *Ur-Hamlet*. That circumstance would deny Kyd the authorship of the *Ur-Hamlet* and possibly make *The Spanish Tragedy* an imitation of Oxford's 1589 *Hamlet* rather than the model for the Q2 *Hamlet*.

4. For example, Frederick Boas (25–26) calls attention to troupes of “little eyases” who occupied Blackfriars from 1577 to 1584. He specifically cites Oxford's Boys under John Lyly in his caution that external references in *Hamlet* might well predate circumstances circa 1601. He suggests that the *Hamlet* mentioned by Henslowe in 1594 and Lodge in 1596 is Will Shakspeare's Q1 but holds that Nashe's *Hamlet* of 1589 was probably by Thomas Kyd.

However, as an exception to my generalization about orthodox dating of *Hamlet*, Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor recognize a “process of production” that is irreducible to a single date because it potentially involves multiple manuscript drafts, performances in different venues, and publication of different texts. Given those considerations, “it becomes possible to admit” that a *Hamlet* by Shakespeare might date to 1589 or even earlier (*Hamlet* [Q2], 59).

5. The line numbers are those of the first and last lines of the corresponding passages, quoted here, in the two volumes (1604 and 1603/1623) of the Arden *Hamlet* edited by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor.
6. Hamlet in Q1 asks why the actors travel, wondering if perhaps they have grown “resty.” That obsolete word holds two contrary meanings. One might be parsed as “full of rest, or possessed by rest,” thus signifying “lazy,” “indolent,” or “sluggish” (OED “resty,” adj. 2). Editors have glossed the term to that effect, although it is opposite to Hamlet's purpose, which is to question why an established acting troupe is suddenly given to the active travail of touring the countryside instead of remaining comfortably at home in the city. The more pertinent meaning of “resty,” then, is “restive” (OED “resty” adj. 1b). Hamlet is thus asking if the actors have grown restless or unsettled for some reason. Gilderstone interprets this as Hamlet's concern for the actors' professional status and he assures Hamlet that the company has suffered no decline in its reputation. He instead points to the turning of audiences to the novelty of the child performers as the cause of the troupe's travels.

No analog to “resty” appears in Q2 but FF uses “rusty” in association with the FF-only Little Eyases passage. There, Hamlet learns that (contrary to the steady esteem that they hold in Q1) the tragedians in FF are no longer “so followed” as they once were. So, he asks if the actors

have therefore grown “rusty” from lack of performing. The June 1600 order of the Privy Council expresses a similar concern that playhouses be regulated but not entirely banned, in order to keep the actors “in exercise” (Chambers, *Stage*, 4: 330), especially for the benefit of the entertainment-hungry queen. Rosincrance assures Hamlet that the actors still perform as often as before (“their endeavor keeps in the wonted pace”) but their audience size has dwindled because fickle playgoers are thronging instead to the newly fashionable plays of the “little eyases.” Hence, it is implied, the company travels away from the city to find new audiences that are less distracted by urban fads.

7. Roslyn Knutson takes exception to crediting the duopoly entirely to the top-down efforts of Howard and Carey in 1594. Putative disorder and tumult had tormented companies of that year—plague, touring, splitting and amalgamation of companies, hastily cobbled-together repertories—and ostensibly led to their competitive reorganization by the interventions of the Council members. Amid all that noise, however, Knutson sees much continuity with conditions before and after 1594. For the players—the “socks and buskins on the ground”—matters were largely business as usual (Knutson 467).
8. It is conceivable that the queen’s decree was prompted and even written by Lord Burghley. The previous November, on the appearance of Martin’s *Epistle*, Burghley had written John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, to inform him of the queen’s wish that ecclesiastical authorities might search out the authors, accomplices, printers, and “secret dispersers” of the “lewd and seditious” pamphlet to apprehend and punish them (Arber 107–08).
9. Current author’s note: George Puttenham (77) opined in 1589 that Oxford and Richard Edwardes “deserve the highest prize...for Comedy and Enterlude.”
10. Wilson’s sources include R. Warwick Bond, who had expressed a similar opinion: “From the Earl, probably, it was that Lyly first received the dramatic impulse” (Bond, 1: 24).
11. This first Blackfriars Theater occupied part of a former Dominican priory near St. Paul’s Cathedral. The lease of that property, which Oxford had transferred to Lyly, was challenged in court and reverted to the claimant in 1584. Other spaces within the former monastery were purchased by James Burbage in 1596 and remodeled into a private theater as the second Blackfriars Theater.

12. Oxfordian scholars J. Thomas Looney (261–63), Eva Turner Clark (627), and Charlton Ogburn Jr. (680) all speculate that *Agamemnon and Ulysses* was an early drama of Oxford's that he later revised into *Troilus and Cressida*. Their arguments are based on the judgment that the parts of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* that involve Agamemnon and Ulysses are stylistically distinct from the parts involving Troilus and Cressida, which suggests to the commentators a conjoining of earlier and later efforts of the playwright.
13. Bevington's article closely follows the introduction to his Revels edition of *Endymion* (1996). In both of those publications, Bevington credits Josephine Waters Bennett with having identified the allegorical connection between *Endymion* and Oxford. Bevington's own chief contribution is his close examination of *Endymion* and Oxford within the specific context of the Catholic threat from both within and without the English realm in early 1588. Bevington and Bennett's focus is on Oxford in relation to John Lyly, *Endymion*, and Queen Elizabeth, without reference to the Shakespeare authorship question.

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