

Re-constructing the Book

Literary texts in transmission

For
John Barnard

Edited by

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- 7 British MA courses taking a 'history of the book' approach currently exist at, for example, the Universities of Birmingham, Edinburgh, Leeds, London, Reading and at the Open University; at Birmingham a History of the Book course is available to undergraduates. Several departments of Library and Information Studies and of Communications Studies have relevant courses. North America has seen a similar flourishing of graduate provision. That the subject has 'come of age' is demonstrated not only by its increasing visibility in graduate and undergraduate courses, but in its increasing institutionalization. Centres for the book proliferate, national and international conferences are well established and the several national histories of the book are bringing the subject to prominence.

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Chapter Two

Why has Q4 *Romeo and Juliet* Such an Intelligent Editor?

Lynette Hunter

Background¹

The question sounds insulting. But as we find out increasingly more about editorial processes in the period 1600-1623, it needs to be asked. Correctors (Bland), scribes (Honigmann), theatre-related workers in printing houses (Jowett 1998), have recently been added to composers as important agents in the textual transmission of playtexts. These additions offer complexity to the production of the printed texts that matches a similar development in studies of the collaboration among writers and theatre workers in the production of the performed texts. In the process of answering the question here, it becomes apparent that all the early quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*, Quarto One (Q1: 1597), Quarto Two (Q2: 1599), Quarto Three (Q3: 1609) and Quarto Four (Q4: 1616-26), have been intelligently edited, and S.W. Reid (1982) has suggested an intelligent hand in the production of the Folio (F: 1623) as well. This essay will focus on the editing of Q3 and Q4, but it has to be said that *Romeo and Juliet* received remarkable attention while it was being printed for successive audiences over the first twenty-five to thirty-year period of its history in print.

The edition to which most editors today turn is ostensibly Q2, but to all intents and purposes they adopt a text that is usually closer to Q4 except in a few instances where they retain Q3 changes instead. Q3 is a carefully modified version of Q2 with over 100 significant changes and a probable use of Q1. Q4 offers an even more intelligent modification and makes a further 100 changes, again using Q1. By today's standards, these texts have been edited. It is unclear why Q3 is not taken as copytext when so many editors follow its modifications, but it is possibly because it has clearly been typeset page for page from Q2 and may have led readers into thinking that it is unedited. G.H. Evans calls it a 'reprint' (Evans 206). Nor is it clear why Q4 editing is not better collated. Only Evans's Cambridge edition notes which

collations indicate in Q3 and Q4 substantive changes to words, they indicate changes to punctuation, grammar, spelling, layout or metre, where these substantively change the significance of the text. That they are attributable to coincidence of the earlier editorial choices with those of later editors since: later editors make exactly the same changes, often in consultation of either Q3 or Q4. Of course, this is standard editorial practice. At the same time, the coincidence of practice is precisely what makes Q4 and Q3 appear so intelligent when they are consulted.

The story of the relationship between Q1 and Q2 is a matter which is taken up in the introduction to the commentary on Q1 in the forthcoming third edition. It is worth remarking here, however, that not only are there instances in Q3 of an attempt to bring Q1 and Q2 together at difficult points, but also there are over 45 changes to the 25 per cent of the text where Q1 is not present and only around 55 changes to the 75 per cent of the text where Q1 is present. Q4 follows Q3, but consistently questions its retention of text, questions its use of Q1, and questions its inattentiveness to some extent. The bibliographical and theatrical issues Q4 raises, either on its own or following Q3, are to a large extent identical with those editors raise today. This is hardly surprising on the bibliographical front since the methodology of bibliography is largely derived from analysis of the practice of earlier editors and haphazard. But the consistency of attention to theatrical issues that occupy us today is more startling.

Part 3

In dealing with Q2, the ostensible copy-text, and Q4, there are five main areas of concern to which this essay will attend. First, Q4 makes many changes to the text, phrases and passages of text, and to punctuation, grammar, spelling, and metre, throughout the text. Second, Q4 follows Q3 in nearly all changes to Q2, with a few exceptions. Third, Q4 takes care with stage directions (SDs) and speech prefixes (SPs) in ways that at times recall Q1 and Q2. Fourth, Q4 makes the same choices as Q1 in many places where Q3 does not. Fifth, Q4 introduces a number of differences to Q2 which have no correspondence with any of Q1, Q3 or F.

The extent to which Q4 uses Q3 itself raises questions. Does the editor of Q4 have no access to Q2? There are a few Q2/Q4 similarities not in Q3, including the following: 1.1.127 humour (2/4) honour (1/3), the reincorporation of a name in 1.3.95 No less, (2/4) lesse (3) with a significant change in meaning

and rhythm, the shift back to 3.3.152 the Prince (2/4) thy Prince (3), or to 5.3.75 Mercurio's (2/4) Mercurius (3). Yet apart from the first example, these changes do not form a strong argument that Q4 held a copy of Q2. The remarkable consistency with which it follows Q3's changes to Q2 (over 100), and the fact that in no case that I have found does it change Q2 where Q3 is not either identical with Q2 (over 50), or has not already made a slight change (13), back up the idea that Q4 is using Q3 alone, or at least as the most dependable text. For example, Q2 has 2.4.205 dog, name, where Q3 has dogname and Q4 has Dogges name.

The most unusual aspect of Q4's use of Q3 is that it hardly ever changes the text where Q3 has already changed it, even where Q1 has a different solution. The few examples that I could find, less than 10, look far more like an imposition of spelling or layout style than considered changes: 3.1.136 be gone (2) begone (3) be gone, (4); 3.3.16 here, of (2) hereof (3) here of (4); 4.2.14 self wild harlotrie (1) selfweild harlotry (2) self willde harlotry (3) self willed harlotry (4); 4.4.15 lack the day (1) weceday (2) weledy (3) weleday (4). Given the independent frame of mind that Q4 brings to many other changes (over 100), and given that many of the Q3 changes to Q2 (over 100) are concerned with difficulties of meaning that might tempt someone into alternative solutions anyway, the thoroughgoing resistance to changing Q3's decisions implies an editorial policy of some kind that this essay will attempt to understand.

Leaving aside this question for the moment, whether the Q4 editor could not get a copy of Q2 or decided that Q3 was more dependable, why would the Q4 editor trust Q3's changes? Possibly because theatre practitioners said so, possibly because this was the most-produced version and hence conventional wisdom, possibly because the printing house already had Q3 easily available, and possibly because the Q4 editor understood what the Q3 editor had done. They may even have been the same person. Q3 had been printed by John Windet for John Smethwicke in 1609. In 1607, having earlier that year received a number of titles transferred from Cuthbert Burby, Nicolas Ling had assigned the titles of *Hamlet*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet* to Smethwicke with whom he may have worked (Arber 2:832), but *Romeo and Juliet* was not published for another two years.³ Windet's printing house was substantial: he served as Printer to the City from 1603–10 (McKerrow 295). But the last book entry under his name in the Stationers' Register is on 14 May 1604 (McKerrow 295), and in 1611 he assigned his copyrights to William Stansby (Arber 3:465–7). Stansby had been apprenticed to Windet and bought a share in the business in 1609 (Bland). He may well have been

involved in the printing of Q3. Bracken (1985) argues that many books printed at Winder's press in the first decade of the seventeenth century were in fact the work of Stansby, who was responsible for printing Q4 for Smethwicke, somewhat later. Winder appears to have employed a corrector (McKerrow 194-5), although the 1608 edition of *I Henry IV* that Winder printed for Matthew Law is apparently little changed (D. Kastan, personal communication).

The person who produced Q3 worked through the text of Q2, either from marked-up copy or possibly reading for solutions to bibliographical or theatrical problems. Again, this editor may have been someone from the playhouse, a clever compositor, or a professional corrector. It is unlikely to have been a scribe because the play has clearly been set from Q2, and would not have needed a complete copying out. The first option is also unlikely. Despite the many changes Q3 makes to Q2 (over 100), there are very few corrections to SPs, SDs, and other odd peculiarities of spelling and typography in Q2. For example, in Juliet's opening speech in 2.5.16-17 are misspelled in Q2 to 'M', which Q3 duplicates. This mistake may also indicate that the second option, the compositor, is also unlikely. Although I have not carried out a compositorial analysis there are several other duplications of erroneous layout that suggest a naive compositor. For example, at 5.2. Q2 mistakenly prints 5.2.23 (Exit: when Friar John leaves: Q3 slavishly reproduces this clear error, even adding a bracket to Friar Lawrence's 5.2.30 Exit. (2) (Exit. (3). Q3 is also set nearly entirely page-for-page, with Q3 duplicating catchword errors in Q2.

If the compositor of Q3 seems naively to have followed the printed copy of Q2, he must have been following a marked-up text because Q3 otherwise makes a large number of intelligent changes to Q2 and appears to have had access to Q1. In this regard, two or three changes seem significant. Q3 produces at 3.4.23 *weele keepe, from weele make (1) and well, keepe (2)*. Q3 has 5.3.227 *too or else, for or els (1) and too, else (2)*. And at 5.3.163 *there is drinke all, and left (4) for drinke all and leave (1), drunk all, and left (2)*. Approximately 75 per cent of Q1 covers the same ground as Q2, and over half the lines in that 75 per cent are the same if not very similar (trace). Twenty-five per cent of the text of Q2 has no counterpart in Q1. Q3 changes have been gathered into three categories: those which occur in text that is not found in Q1 (A), those which follow Q1 (B), those which occur where Q1 makes a change but does not make the same change (C).

A) *Changes to Q2 in Text not Found in Q1*

Changes to Q2 in text not found in Q1 vary. There are significant word changes: 1.3.36 *hylone (2) a lone (3)*; 1.4.80 *Persons (2) parson's (3)*; 3.2.47 *aruing (2) daring (3)*; 4.1.116 *walking (2) waking (3)*; 5.3.107 *pallar (2) palace (3)*; 5.3.136 *unthrift (2) unluckie (3)*, and significant 'corrections': 2.5.11 *Is there (2) Is three (3)*; 3.5.145 *bride (2) Brideroome (3)*; 4.1.110 *is (2) in (3)*; 4.5.51 *bedold (2) behold (3)*. There is also a large number of changes to punctuation (17+) which affect the significance of the text: 1.3.90 *For fair without the fair, within to hide (2) For fair without, the fair within to hide (3)*; 3.5.17 *on Wednesday next./ But soft,... (2) on Wednesday next, /But soft,... (3)*; 4.5.65 *confusions care lives not (2) confusions, care lives not (3)*. Changes that affect meaning also occur in grammar (6), spelling (3), metre (5), and number (3).

B) *Changes to Q2 which Follow Q1*

Similarly, changes where Q3 follows Q1 vary. Here Q3 coincides with Q1 in a smaller number of significant word changes (c. 5): 1.1.127 *humour (2) honour (1/3)*; 1.4.57 *ortarme (2) atomi (1)* atomies (3); 2.3.22 *staves (2) slaves (1/3)*; 4.1.98 *breast (2) breath (1/3)*; 5.3.209 *My Liege (2) Dread Sovereign (1) Sovereign (3)*. Agreement is also present in changes to tense, punctuation and grammar (4-6 examples each) and a few instances of number and spelling. Punctuation that affects meaning is particularly evident: 1.2.45 *one fire burns out, anothers burning (2) one fire burns out another's burning (1/3)*; 1.4.100 *wind who wooes (2) wind,/ Which wooes (1) wind, who wooes (3)*; 3.5.171 *smaller with your gossips go (2) smarter with your gossips, go (1/3)*; 5.3.12-13 *with flowers thy bridal bed I strew/ O woe, thy canopy is dust and stones (2) with flowers thy bridal bed I strew,/ O woe, thy canopy is dust and stones (1/3)*.

C) *Changes Coincident with, but Different from, Q1 Differences*

While there are approximately 45-50 changes to the 25 per cent of the text where there is no Q1 for Q2 (A), there are only between 55-60 changes to the 75 per cent of the text where Q1 does exist (B+C). In this latter number the breakdown is interesting. Roughly 40 per cent of the 55-60 changes are made to agree with Q1 (B), another 12 per cent are changes made to Q2 where Q1 agrees with Q2. The remainder, just under half, are changes made to Q2 at places where Q1 is different yet where Q3 does not agree with the change.

Most of these changes are clustered from Act 3 onward and include: 3.1.124 he gan (2) A live (1) he gon (3); 3.1.126 fier end (2) fier eyed (1) fier and (3); 3.5.25 How is't, my soul (2) What says my Love (1) How is't my soul (3); 3.5.171 Prudence smatter: (2) prudence smatter (1) Prudence, smatter (3); 3.5.180 Hand (2) traunde (1) allied (3); 4.5.9 needs must (2) must (1) must needs (3); 5.3.204 it (2) it is (1) is (3); 5.3.500 at such rate (2) of such price (1) at that rate (3). However, many changes are to spelling: 1.4.39 dunn (2) done (1) dun (3); or to punctuation: 1.2.99 maide: (2) maid (1) maid, (3); or layout: 3.3.61 mad man (2) madmen (1) mad men (3); or number: 3.5.139 give you thanks (2) thanks ye (1) gives you thanks (3); or to combinations of these such as 4.1.75 death, himselfe (2) deach it selfe (1) Death himself (3).

The coincidence of changes at these points (c. 30), despite their disagreement, renders the statistical likelihood of Q3 making changes at these points without consulting Q1 quite low. In other words a difference between Q1 and Q2 may prompt Q3 editor to consider a change. However it has to be said that the decisions made frequently seem open to straightforward corrections either of misunderstanding by Q2 or of the many typographical errors and the idiosyncratic grammar and spelling in that edition. In other words, if in its difference with Q1, Q2 makes a mistake or imposes an unusual style, it may in the process construct a reading that Q3 recognizes as needing correction even if it has not consulted Q1. At the same time, the sheer overall number of significant agreements, let alone the questionable disagreements, between Q3 and Q1, argue for substantial interaction – as does the difference in the number of changes between the 25 per cent of text for which there is no Q1 (45–50) and the number made for the remaining 75 per cent (55–60). At a conservative estimate that difference results in the statistical probability that Q3 will change Q2 twice as many times where Q1 is not there to corroborate, as when it is there.⁴ Nevertheless, while the Q3 editor respects Q1, the number of changes that are different from Q1 (c. 35) indicate that he has a mind of his own. This is underlined by his treatment of 1.2.99 she shall scant show well hat now shows best (1/2) she shall scant show well that now seems best (3).

Quarto 4

Q4 seems to recognize the authority of the skill involved in editing Q3. It follows nearly all of Q3's changes, adding over 25 that agree with Q1 differences from Q3/2 (D), over 25 that do not agree (E), and over 25 unique to Q4 (F), with a thoroughgoing revision of SPs and SDs which indicate

possible consultation of F. Again, Q4 never substantially changes Q3 if it has already made a change from Q2, and in only one or two places does Q4 change Q3 if Q1 agrees with Q3.

D) Changes to Q2/3 which Agree with Q1

First, there are the changes Q4 makes to agree with Q1 where Q2 and Q3 agree. The most obvious agreements are at 2.2.188–91 and 2.3.1–4. 2.2.188–91 represents the lines which nearly duplicate those at 2.3.1–4, something that has worried editors ever since. They do not appear in Q1 or Q4, but do appear in Q2/3 and F. At the same time Q4 retains the duplication at 3.3.40–43 while Q1 cuts, and at 5.3.108 Q4 cuts a four-line duplication retained by Q2/3 and F, that does not exist in Q1. This pattern of allowing Q1 to advise but not dictate is found throughout the Q4 editorial changes. Just as Q3 with Q1 and Q2, Q4 appears to combine ideas from Q1 and Q3 in some places: 2.2.162–3 as mine/With (1) then/With (2.3) then myne/With (4); 3.3.143 frownst upon (1) puts up (2.3) pours upon (4); 4.5.129 and 4.5.132 Preue/Pretie too (1) Prates//Prates to 2) Prates//Pratest to (3) Pratee//Pratee, to (4). However, most of the Q1/4 agreements are over significant words or phrases. They include: 1.1.26 sense (2/3) in sense (1/4); 1.1.200 A sick man in sadness makes ... (2/3) Bid a sick man in sadness make ... (1/4); 1.2.99 fly (2/3) it fly (1/4); 1.4.90 Ellocks (2/3) Ellocks (1/4); 2.1.12 her (2/3) heir (1/4); 2.1.38 Open, or (2/3) Open et cetera (1) Open & cetera (4); 2.2.43 Whars in a name (2/3) What's in a name? (1/4); 3.1.168 aged (2/3) agile (1/4); 3.1.109 devote (2/3) denote (1/4); 3.5.194 never (2/3) ever (1/4); 4.1.72 stay (2/3) slay (1/4); 4.1.83 chapels (2) chappels (3) chaples (1) chapless (4); and 5.1.76 pray (2/3) pay (1/4).

Like Q3, Q4 clearly respects Q1 and treats it as a reliable text. Nevertheless Q4 is also eager to make changes, and follows the Q3 pattern in making more changes when Q1 is not present to corroborate. It is of note that, in those places where Q1 differs from Q3 and Q4 does not follow it (E), there are between 8 to 10 examples where Q4 moves in the direction of the spirit of Q1. For example: 3.5.25 talke it is not (2/3) talke, tis not yet (1) talk, it is not (4); 3.5.130 show'ring in one little body? (2/3) show'ring? In one little body (1) show'ring: in one little body? (4); 3.5.151 proud (2/3) proud. (1) proud: (4).

E) Changes to Q2/3 which do not Agree with Q1

The changes independent of both Q1 and Q3 made by Q4 focus on punctuation, with a few changes to spelling and words and a few other areas. Examples of

changes in punctuation include: 2.1.7 passion, liver (1) passion lover (3) passion, lover (4); 2.1.13 Abraham: Cupid (1/2/3) Abraham Cupid (4); 3.5.131 resembest a (1) counterfaits. A (2) counterfaits. A (3) counterfaits, a (4); 5.3.223 greatest (1,2,3) greatest, (4). Q4 also tends to add parentheses in addition to the few found in Q1 and Q3 at 1.2.3, 3.3.75, 3.3.76, 4.1.85. Changes in spelling include 4.1.63 umppeer (1,2,3) umpire (4); 4.2.14 self wild harlorrie (1) self willde harlorry (3) self willled harlorry (4).

Of the few words changed in this category is one at 2.2.167 My Neece (2/3) Madam (1) My Deere (4), both Q4 and Q1 not picking up the highly probable reference to 'nyas', a nesting in its aery, suggested by J. Dover Wilson and G. Duthie (1955) and part of the dense texture of falconry exactly at this point and part of the lighter texture throughout the play. There is also the still contentious 2.1.10 dove (1) day (2/3) die (4), which raises a piece of probable evidence for the Q4 editor either having been involved in the theatre or having attended a performance: spoken 'day' would have been shifting from 'die' (1400) to 'day' (1600) to 'day' (seventeenth century), and 'die' from 'dee' (1400) to 'day' (1500) to 'die' (seventeenth century).⁵ In other words 'day' and 'die' could easily be misheard, each for the other, but Q4 would have little reason to change the word if the editor had not 'heard' something different. A third change comes at 4.1.85 where Q3 (following Q2) leaves a gap, and Q1 has 'tomb' and Q4 has 'his shroud'. Q4 on the whole tries to correct for metre in innovative ways, and this is one example. By informative contrast, the Folio 'editor', who also pays attention to metre, adjusts for it largely by using apostrophes to indicate dropped vowels and by expanding for example 'isht' to 'ished'.

F) *Unique Changes in Q4*

The most radical changes in Q4 occur in the 25 per cent of the text where there is no Q1 corroboration, a pattern that follows the Q3 editing and which doubles the number of changes made there. The majority of the changes are to punctuation (10), spelling (7), metre (8) and words or phrases (9). Some punctuation changes make only a little difference to significance, for example 5.3.8 something (3/4) some thing (4). However, changes at 3.2.76 ravenous dovefeathered (2/3) ravenous dove, feathered (4); 3.3.21 death, misernrd, calling (2/3) death misernrd, calling (4); 4.4.40 all life living (2/3) all, life, living (4) are substantive. Similarly the changes to spelling can reflect variant but meaningful shifts: 3.2.60 On (2/3) One (4); 3.3.79 errant (2/3) errand (4); and simple corrections can clarify: 5.3.252 hower (2/3) hour (4). Other spelling

changes are more considerable: 2.6.34 sum up sum (2/3) sum up some (4); 3.2.81 bower (2/3) power (4). The metrical changes are usually careful: 3.2.19 new snow upon (2/3) snow upon (4); 3.2.109 murdred (2/3) murdered (4); 3.5.82 [nothing] (2/3) him (4); 3.5.106 beseech (2/3) I beseech (4). Predictably the most clearly substantial are changes to words which include: 2.2.152 strife (2/3) sure (4); 3.2.13 maidenhoods (2/3) maidenheads (4); 3.2.21 I (2/3) hee (4); 3.5.126 Earth (2/3) Ayre (4); 4.1.100 Too many (2/3) roo paly (4); 4.3.49 O I walke (2/3) Or if I wake (4); 4.4.20 Father (2/3) faith (4).

The most interesting changes are the subtle adjustments to punctuation that radically affect or effect significance including: 3.5.130, 2.2.43, 2.1.17, 2.1.13, 3.5.131, 3.2.76, 4.4.40. This category of change suggests an exceptionally attentive mind, dealing with ambiguity of significance that has engaged all editors ever since. Of course, the Q4 editor is not faultless. Mistakes are made (for example 5.3.215 monthes of outrage (1) mouth of outrage (2/3) moneth of outrage (4), although this last may be 'moaneth' for Q4 elsewhere spells 'moans' as 'mones'). One spelling shift, 2.3.5 is (2/3) in (4), is uncharacteristically misjudged. And there are a few other examples, but very few. Apart from one or two cases, however, there is little evidence from the dialogue to suggest that Q4 editor is doing anything different to the Q3 text than the Q3 text did to Q2: both may have been highly skilled correctors or possibly the same one.

Discussion

Not only did Windet have a corrector in his printing house, but Stansby also appears to have employed one (Bland 8–10). He ran a high-quality printing house (Plomer 137), and as the printer of Jonson's *Workes* probably would have had a reputation as one 'who on evidence of past production, [was] ready to respect an author's artistic aspirations' (Bracken 1988, 19). More to the point, such a person may have had respect for the complexity of a text. If a corrector had been employed on both Q3 and Q4, Q4 differs because it is also peculiarly attentive to the theatrical guidelines, the SDs, SPS, lineations and assignation of speech. Given that a printing house corrector may not have been as skilled in this field, Q4 may possibly have consulted F.

The two cited instances at lines 2.5.16–17 and 5.2.23 and 30 of slavish copying by Q3, are corrected in both F and in Q4. There are a number of other places where Q4 corrects 'Exit' to 'Exeunt', possibly from F (for example 2.1.42), or the shift in 3.3.71 They knocke (2/3) Knocke (4/F). Yet unlike F, Q4 clearly corrects misspelling: 1.4.23 Horatio (2/3/F) Mercutio (4); 3.1.

'5-7 Capulet (2/3/F) Montague (4). At a number of points Q4 editor seems have had knowledge of the play in performance: 2.1.16 may I'll conjure too signed to Benvolio 1/2/3/F), (assigned to Mercutio 4). Q4 assigns 2.2.185 to Juliet instead of Romeo (3/F), possibly because of the lineation in Q1. But the editions to assigning 3.5.172-3 to 'Father' and/or 'Nurse' are unique to Q4; they make sense, and have been followed by many editors ever since. Q4 also assigns 4.5.120 'Then have at you with my wirt, to Peter, again unique and particularly significant because it makes sense to retain the assignment to '2 Jusician' (1/2/3/F). Q4's 'unnecessary' change must have been prompted by something, and may be the result of practical knowledge of production.

Furthermore, another indication that the editor of Q4 may have had editorial experience is that Q4 completely recasts the incidental parts in Act Q2/3 have Romeo entering with 'Peter', Q1/4 'with Balthazar', and F 'with Peter'. Subsequent assignments run: 5.3.71 [unassigned] (2/3) Boy (1) Page (F); Peter (F); Romeo's man is 'Man' throughout Q1-3 except 1.272, and Balthazar' throughout Q4 but 'Boy' in F at 1.272 (clearly incorrect). Paris enters with a Page in all five editions, but 5.3.281-5: Boy (1/2/3/4) Page (F): are clearly correct, yet the Q1/2/3/4 assignment is probably on the evidence of the 5.3.180 SD to 'Whistle Boy' where 'Boy' is Paris' 'Page'). In other words only Q4 makes it clear that Balthazar returns with Romeo from Mantua. The fact in none of these instances where Q4 and F agree is there any strong evidence that Q4 used F. Nor is it easy to claim that F used Q4, for it incorporates none of the clear corrections.

Q4 was dated at c. 1622 on the basis of ornament breakdown, but new evidence from a survey of Stansby's use of this ornament indicates that the edition could have been printed from 1616 onward, probably from 1618, and probably no later than 1626.⁶ Hence any relation between Q4 and F is radically uncertain. Other circumstantial evidence for dating Q4 comes from the change to SP at 4.5 of 'Peter' for 'Will Kemp', an SP retained by Q3 even though by 509 Kemp had left the King's Men's company for many years (Gurr 157) it then Q3 is similarly haphazard elsewhere (for example 1.4.23). Q4 firmly deletes the actor's name presumably because it is no longer a selling point, emp must have faded from people's minds. In addition, Q3 and Q4, like Q2 and Q1 but unlike F, retain 'sounds' or 'Zounds' (3.1.42, 3.1.91, and possibly 2.52) in three places. If printers are so reluctant to print 'zounds' in particular following the Act of 1606, why are they reprinted in Q3 (1609) let alone Q4? It because they are less formal texts that F? Or possibly because they are 5th printed well before compositors began to take seriously the need to change rich words (Taylor 1993).

Summary

As noted above Q4 pays quite careful attention to devices of layout that affect theatrical production. While not bothered by the different prefixes for either Capulet Father or Capulet Mother of 'Old Man' or 'Wife' and so on (Williams 1997), it corrects Q3's sloppy copying of Q2 in many of these areas, changing assignments and lineation, trying to make 'Exit' SDs correct in number, corrects names of characters, and attempts to make SDs more accurate. Given the attention to theatrical detail in Q4, including some decisions that indicate direct experience of knowledge of production such as the cited instance of possible 'mishearing', it seems likely that the Q4 was edited by someone who had at least seen the play. The attention to metre which is extensive and is frequently adjusted by changing spelling, grammar and punctuation, as well as by adding or deleting words (with or without corroboration from Q1), may reinforce the sense that this editor had auditory experience of the text, and had possibly seen both versions of it. One of the most satisfying explanations for the heavy reliance on Q1 by Q2/3/4 and F, is that this shorter version of the play was in simultaneous production with the longer.

Finally, and most intriguing, if the subtle changes made by Q4 to punctuation that radically affect significance indicate an exceptionally skilful corrector, working on Q3, why did he never make substantial changes to the 100+ changes already made? Is there a limit to correctibility? Probably not, since editors ever since have had no qualms about changing Q3. Was there a printing-house policy in Stansby's works that the immediately preceding printing should be followed, or that if the text had already been printed by Stansby's works it had to be followed? If so, why would Stansby's printing-house make even more corrections? Was it the same corrector, who felt that if he had already made a change he need not revisit it? It is highly likely that the Q4 editor had a marked up copy of Q2, used to produce Q3, in his hands. The only probable way Q4 could have avoided making the changes to the more than 100 places where Q3 had already done so, would be to have located them first. If he only had an unmarked copy of Q3 he would have had to go painstakingly through Q2 and Q3, noting the differences (which takes a long time). Was the prompt to print Q4 the receipt of another marked up copy from someone in the theatre, which was collated with Q3? Or had the corrector seen the play and annotated the script? Or was the corrector a theatre worker, working for Stansby, like Chettle for Danter?

What the Q4 text shows is that it is the result of an editor working just like a modern editor on the text itself, with the addition of a theatrical understanding.

We may have misjudged the role of the corrector in the printing-house: it may be far more extensive and engaged than we have previously thought. More to the point, it is clear that early seventeenth century editing also recognised the need to bring the theatre to the text. The tradition of textual editing has not yet properly addressed what that might mean, but Q4 shows that good practice goes back a long way.

Notes

- 1 Methodological note: the essay makes hypotheses on the basis of observation of different kinds of change among the quartos, the frequency of that change, and in places its statistical significance. I have not logged every single change Q4 makes to Q3, or Q3 to Q2. 'Human error' makes it virtually impossible for me to have done so, even had computer collation been involved, which it has not. I have attempted to record every change that in my opinion might interest an editor, and have taken a wide view of what that might entail. For example, a contraction added to stabilize metre into a regular iambic pentameter is important because it reduces the possibility of significantly irregular speech. Where there are consistent patterns for contraction, as in F, this is especially worrying since compositorial or editorial style overrides any sense of textual particularity. Similarly, I approach punctuation, layout, grammar and spelling as potentially significant.
- 2 Evans's edition is the only one which collates Q3 and Q4 with any attention, and is the edition from which the line numbers of this essay are drawn. Jill Levenson's recent Oxford edition (1999) does not attend to either Q3 or Q4 in any detail.
- 3 I am grateful to Jonathan Sanderson, a doctoral student co-supervised by John Barnard and myself, for research on the publishing history which was funded by the Arden Shakespeare.
- 4 The ratio of the number of lines in Q2 alone, to those in Q2 and Q1 is roughly 1:3.5. If we hypothesize that the corrector-editor is not consulting Q1, then we would expect the changes to occur in the same ratio of 1:3.5. However, the changes are, respectively, 45 and 55 (conservatively), and a chi-square calculation renders the likelihood of the corrector-editor not consulting Q1 at well over 100:1; in other words, he probably did.
- 5 Dr Clive Upton suggested this possibility, drawing on Joseph Wright, §82 'day', §73 die.
- 6 L. Hunter, forthcoming article.

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