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Ros. It does not mean he is mad. It does not mean he isn't. Very often, it doesn't mean anything at all. Which may or may not be a kind of madness

Guil. It really all boils down to symptoms.

—Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

Introductions

Can we diagnose Hamlet with melancholy? Can we diagnose him with anything? What entity is the proper subject of medical diagnoses: is it only the biological human subject, or can it also be a fictional character? And in what ways are fictional characters relevantly (dis)similar to humans?

One of the formative questions of *Hamlet* is asked in a climate of political and perceptual uncertainty, and is taken up by metatextual analyses: Barnado's 'Who's there' (1.1.1) resounds throughout critical efforts to understand Hamlet's motivations, beliefs, reflections, and intentions. It is a question also affirmed within the play as other characters attempt to pry into these aspects of Hamlet's inner life. The central thesis of this paper is that the world of *Hamlet* constitutes a modal (or hypothetical) world constructable from the real world:^[1] a world containing events 'as if' they happened in the real world. This paper interrogates the quality of this 'as if' with a view to establishing exactly how far Hamlet can be medically diagnosed or interpreted as though he were a human biological subject in the real world, a subject 'like us'. The modal world is governed and created by intentionality (notably authorial and directorial intentions) and relationships between human subjects (characteris, it is argued below, created by

the relationship between actors and audience). The real world is one which we know empirically, and one which is not necessarily created by human intentionality. Traditionally, knowledge and interpretation of the modal world has been the province of literary analysis and knowledge of the real world has been the province of scientific analysis as well as *prompting* literary creation. In this paper, the examination of the relationship between the real and modal worlds, and between characters and ‘real’ people provides a way into establishing whether Hamlet can be diagnosed as if he was real. Accordingly, the word ‘Hamlet’ in this paper denotes Hamlet the character as he exists in the world of the play (this holds whether Hamlet seen as a subject constituted wholly by text,^[2] or by an actor’s impersonations, or by a combination of actor, clothing,^[3] and audience,^[4] and to whatever extent this character impacts on the actor).^[5] Hamlet the character is thus an entity emphatically distinct from the actor, the real human, who impersonates Hamlet.

Evidently, in order to effect this comparison between personhood in the real world and personhood in the fictional world of *Hamlet*, a definition of a person must be given. This paper focuses on the relevant aspect of personhood: the distinction between belief- and intentional- behaviour and the actual holding of beliefs and intentions in one’s ‘inner’ thoughts. It is argued here that it can only be said with certainty that Hamlet exhibits belief-behaviour and intentional behaviour, it is unclear whether it is right to talk of Hamlet as actually having beliefs, intentions, and so on (he behaves, then, as if he believes and intends to do things without necessarily having an inner life in which he *holds* beliefs or is motivated by intentions). This is true, again, whether character is conceptualised as pure text or as somehow related to the human body. If we see the characters as pure text, the script can be described as containing certain data indicating beliefs and intentions Hamlet seems to hold, without demonstrating that he actually does hold any beliefs; Hamlet indeed speaks of his inner self as composed of script and of blank places to write *in*: ‘the table of my memory...the book and volume of my brain’ (1.5.98-103) whether by Shakespeare as author or by other characters.^[6] If we see

character as an entity parasitic on a human, an actor, this actor may act as though (s)he is Hamlet intending and believing certain things, but may privately hold their *own* beliefs and remain ‘distant’ from the part both in their inner thoughts and the interior of their body (even down to feeling hungry or wanting to cough or burp when the character of Hamlet ought not to be doing these things). Essential here is the difference between ostensible behaviour which seems to signify an intention or a belief, and the much more inaccessible interior world of a person. The opacity of this interior world characterizes, initially at least, our appreciation of real people: we can observe their actions, but it is much more difficult to know what they are really thinking. This paper’s thesis is that, due to his behaviour, which suggests beliefs and intentions, such an inner world of intention and belief, of second-order desires and reflexive thought, is potentially (but only potentially) attributable to Hamlet.

On the contrary, several critics have inferred from Hamlet’s behaviour that it is applicable to talk of him as though he actually does hold beliefs, reflections, and intentions, without questioning their reasons for such a method. Such critics have (whether explicitly or not) exploited the fact that real people are ostensibly ‘all behaviour’ when it comes to intentionality and belief, and urged a similarity between Hamlet and real humans. They have relied on the slippery argument that because Hamlet exhibits intentional behaviour like us, he must like us have an interior life in which he actually holds intentions, motivations and so on. This attributed inner life is essentially an empty space within Hamlet into which various interpretations have been read. In terms of his inner mental life, Hamlet has been seen to have an Oedipus complex for instance (see Ernest Jones, Otto Rank et al, all deriving from Freud’s famous footnote in his *Autobiographical Study*);^[7] whilst reading in to the equally opaque interior of his body, for example Euphemia Vale Blake has posited the existence therein of a fatty heart,^[8] and those critics who believed that Hamlet is a woman have posited the existence of a womb.^[9]

These critical approaches are united in perceiving the interpretative problem of *Hamlet* as located in the pathology of Hamlet. This paper argues that an attribution of such an inner life to Hamlet is unfounded. Rather, I contend that it is the very conditions of uncertainty generated by the opacity and inaccessibility of this inner life that are most profitably examined, and that it these are most usefully understood by deploying Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholy*. For in this treatise Bright argues that the actions that a melancholy person performs (sighing, laughing, pondering and so on) as an involuntary result of their melancholy are indistinguishable from the actions of a person who is deliberately choosing to sigh, laugh, and ponder. This is because sighing laughing and pondering (and other symptoms of melancholy) are things we can normally control; as Hamlet provokingly notes his symptoms could well be 'actions that a man might play' (1.2.87). Bright's contemporary medical account of melancholy yields the same result as an analysis of Hamlet as a fictional character: he is *indistinguishable* in terms of his behaviour from a real person. Melancholic symptoms hold, for Bright, the equal potentialities of constituting either a form of fictionality, of acting without a corresponding motivation in disease, or a mode of action truly caused by inner malady (in general, an excess of black bile filling the body's spaces, and altering the mind and actions).

Hamlet's personhood in his world, and the real world where real people fall ill

Hamlet makes several claims to similarity to the real world, and applicability to the real world. A play may be, as Hamlet says 'a mirror up to nature' (3.2.18-19), asking us to perform acts of recognition and, having recognised our own traits, or traits we aspire to have, in the play, to develop or alter our lives (the neutrality of any mirror has of course been highly contested since the Renaissance, of which Koderá provides an excellent history). *Hamlet* as a fiction can also make claims to truth within the world of the fiction:^[10] for instance it can be said that it is true or not true within the world of the fiction that Hamlet has a mother, that he likes Horatio, or that he believes in the ghost. Even though as a fictional character

Hamlet arguably cannot actually hold beliefs in the way that a real person can (though he exhibits, as we have seen, similar or the same belief behaviour as real people), it is possible to debate about what, within the context of the modal world of the play, Hamlet 'believes' or 'intends'. This can be done veraciously as long as the distinctions between Hamlet the character and real people are identified and acknowledged. This section has precisely the purpose of establishing the distinctions relevant to an analysis of how far Hamlet can be diagnosed.

In his world, Hamlet appears as an individual, and one who reflects upon this individuality and thereby makes it explicit (not to discount the theatrical effect of this: this emphasis on his reflections constitutes a making-real of Hamlet as an individual *for an audience*) that he has a point of view based on spatiotemporal coordinates. Hamlet often alludes with dissatisfaction to being individuated spatiotemporally, feeling supremely trapped in a body and in a time that is 'out of joint' (1.5.188).^[11] That Hamlet, indeed, enunciates that he does not wish be in physical space (or at least the physical prison-like space he is in) – 'O that this too too solid flesh would melt' (1.2.129) 'Denmark's a prison' (2.2.242) – suggests that he can, importantly, *reflect* on this physical space: he is not just a thing with co-ordinates, he *seems* to be a thinking logical subject aware of these coordinates: hence we may be lead to infer that he has an inner mental life.^[12] Hamlet's interiority is also partially created by other characters, who respect Hamlet as having some form of inner life; Polonius tells Ophelia not to 'believe his tenders' of love (1.3.103) as Hamlet's intentions are other than what Ophelia takes them to be, clothed in external holiness, he warns, Hamlet secretly wishes to degrade her: '[d]o not believe his vows, for they are brokers,| Not of that dye which their investments show| But mere implorators of unholy suits| Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds| The better to beguile' (1.3.127-31). Claudius, too, having secretly observed Hamlet's behaviour ('as he is behaved', 3.1.35), deduces therefrom that Hamlet is afflicted by not love or madness but by something within his inner metaphysical life of reflexive thought: 'There's something in his soul| O'er which his melancholy sits on brood' (3.1.158-9).

However, this interpretation, in which Hamlet is individuated by the differentiation of his viewpoint from those of other characters and therefore not easily understood by other characters - after Claudius's 'now my cousin Hamlet and my son', for instance, Hamlet disagrees with him 'a little more than kin and less than kind' (1.2.64-5), suggesting that he sees the world differently to Claudius (and his regime) – does not provide a satisfactory definition of individuality in *Hamlet*. For, far from being an individual purely because of his unique position onstage,^[13] Hamlet (and *Hamlet*) is distinguished by an unease over precisely these conditions of existence: we are not allowed to forget that Claudius and Gertrude are one flesh his 'uncle-father and aunt mother' (2.2.344-5) and thus not satisfactorily individuated spatially in Hamlet's mind; critics who posit that Hamlet has an Oedipus complex have propounded that Claudius and Old Hamlet, or Claudius and Hamlet, are identical in Hamlet's mind; Claudius and Gertrude are in some senses in two places at once when represented by Players in the dumb show they watch (in 3.2.121ff.), and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are interchangeable (they are often greeted the wrong way round by Claudius and/ or Gertrude at 2.2.33-4 in performance – Tyrone Guthrie's 1963 production being a well-documented example: see Rossi). It is such not (dis)individuation, then, that is of significance for the present investigation but rather the (non)presence of an inner life constituted of belief, intention, motivation in Hamlet.

Metatheatricality in *Hamlet* brings these concerns of intentionality into the text: as well as played by players, the characters play the player (acting contrary to their inner thoughts) and are even played by players (in the case of Gertrude and Claudius) themselves. In his first soliloquy, Hamlet's awareness of humans' ability to feign passion entails that such pretence – a discrepancy between external behaviour and core selfhood – is something the characters of Hamlet are engaged with, rather than this being something only the real people personating those characters do:

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit
 That from her working all his visage waned,
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
 With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing?
 For Hecuba!
 What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
 That he should weep for her? What would he do,
 Had he the motive and the cue for passion
 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears.
 And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
 Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
 Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
 The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
 Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
 And can say nothing – no, not for a king (2.2.503-521)

This speech has variously been received by critics as strengthening the case for Hamlet's plausibility as a human subject.^[14] What is important for the present analysis is this speech's emphasis that pretence at motivated action displayed (and undone) through (an excess of) passion is indistinguishable from action which is really motivated. The players, furthermore, are made to play out the murder-scene to great effect (stirring Claudius, exciting Hamlet to resolutions for action, validating the Ghost's assertions in Hamlet's mind) whilst being entirely ignorant of the purposes for which they are being used. That the player can have 'his whole function suiting| To forms of his conceit' without 'the motive and the cue for passion' that Hamlet himself has underscores the observation (made both within *Hamlet* and of it) that behaving as though one had certain motivations and

intentions without having those motivations and intentions is, without deep analysis at least, indistinguishable from acting from motivation and intention. Having established this crucial fact regarding Hamlet's (quasi-)personhood, his ostensible similarity, and potential difference, to real people, the remainder of this inquiry will be devoted to one specific interdisciplinary reading. Bright's *Treatise of Melancholy*, which establishes the same conclusions regarding the symptomology of a melancholy such as Hamlet's, also focuses on the potential fictionality of symptomatic behaviour: we shall see that the problem of diagnosis here runs parallel to the problem of literary-critical interpretation.

Medical mimesis: (how) can we read Bright beside Hamlet?

Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholy* and *Hamlet* both posit an educative relationship to the real world. Straight after his behaviour has been observed carefully by the hidden observers Claudius and Polonius, Ophelia names Hamlet 'The glass of fashion and the mould of form,| The observ'd of all observers' (4.1.56-7). In exhorting the players to 'hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature' (3.2.18-19) playing 'something like the murder of my father' (2.2.548) presenting a mimetic form of knowledge to Claudius (not least in showing Claudius that he knows what he has done to the previous king his brother), Hamlet appreciates the knowledge-giving, and knowledge-showing power of mimesis and representation. He later posits such mirroring as a necessary educative tool for Gertrude: 'set you up a glass| Where you may see the inmost part of you' (3.4.19-20).

Many early modern English medical treatises (including Bright's) are underpinned by the purpose of showing their readers people like themselves. In *A boke, or conseil, against the disease commonly called the sweate, or sweating sicknesse*, Dr John Caius writes in English and 'plainly' to help others 'for the commune saufty of my good cuntrymen' (Caius 12). An early modern translation of Pope John XXI (d. 1271)'s collection of treasures from Galen, Hippocrates, Dioscurides, and Avicenna, entitled *The treasury of helth*, is also expressly written with this purpose. Anthony Ascham too writes in order that the common people may understand God better; his *A litell treatyse of astronomy* (1550) is 'not for

lerner men but al onelye for the unlernd Englishe reader' (Ascham A5^v). Texts such as Andrew Boorde's *The Breviary of healthe* (1552) which extols physicians' learning and is avowedly not for the amateur 'where the philosopher makes an ende, ther the physician doth begin' (Boorde A2^v), only underscore the significance of those such as Ascham and Caius in enabling the common reader to look into this mirror up to nature and learn for their own lives.

The key to this learning was developing an understanding of the causal relationship between symptoms and the inner workings of the body, imagination, or soul. Renaissance medical texts also often presented the symptoms of physical sickness as a metaphor for spiritual life (an example is the sixteenth-century translation of John Chrysostom: *Physick for the soule*). Even when it was not a spiritual inner life that was pointed to, several significant Renaissance examples demonstrate that transient symptoms and permanent complexion alike represented the interior workings of the body. In *The Castel of Helth*, oft-reprinted, Thomas Elyot explains how different distempers alter the body, for instance 'The harte colde distempered' causes several outward changes in action: 'fearfulnes', 'curiosities', 'slownesse in acts' as well as elements of the outward appearance, such as '[t]he brest narrow' and 'cleane without heares' (Elyot 6). Thomas Hill's *The Contemplation of mankinde* (1571), a translation of Melampus' (and other) works on physiognomy, centres around outward signs of inner moral states: 'Why dost thou limpe and halt| Thy minde is lame I see,| These outward signes are tokens plain| of secrete yll in thee' (Hill '¶' 1^v).

Whilst in medical treatises 'yll' is clearly the enemy, and the educative value of comparing such texts to real life is without doubt constituted by eliminating ill from the human subjects, the educative value of theatre was more explicitly usable for good *or* ill. Some antitheatrical writers saw plays as co-opting humanist rhetoric by providing an education pleasurable to absorb but pernicious in content. One of 'Eutheo's' main arguments against stage plays is that, among the many ways Satan uses plays to manipulate us, one involves just this 'Seeke to withdrawe these felowes from the Theater vnto the sermon, they wil saie, By the

preacher they maie be edified, but by the plaier both edified and delighted;’ (‘Eutheo’ 88-98) the lessons we learn from plays are, for ‘Eutheo’ as for William Prynne, bad ones: we learn wicked tricks we couldn’t have thought of ourselves, such as eloping to cheat our parents. The antitheatricalists were included here because they remind us that the world of theatre can be used for good *or* bad: it remains with the audience to make a decision regarding how they apply what they see on stage to the real world. These antitheatricalists were however in general (some antitheatricalists were indeed later to become, or once were, playwrights) peripheral not only to the process of Renaissance dramaturgy, but also to the critical tradition ranging from Horace (and before) through Sidney which presented the pleasure of literary fiction or style as a positive enhancement of educative value. And it remains a commonplace that tragedy can teach us how to comport ourselves in real life; from Aristotle to the Aristotelianism of AD Nuttall and Richard Joyce,^[15] fictional characters in general, and Hamlet in particular (Hazlitt 74) have been received as presenting a world similar enough to nature to allow human beings to learn from it and give it reality with their acts of recognition. Theatrical representations of inwardness can also arguably cause audience members, through a form of aspirational comparison (‘were I as intelligently introspective as Hamlet!’) to cultivate deeper reflective interiority within themselves.

Timothy Bright

Charles Kemble and AC Bradley are examples of the plethora of critics who interpreted Hamlet as a melancholic (or as a madman). Dover Wilson (who categorised the parallels between Bright’s text and Shakespeare’s: Dover Wilson 309-20), acknowledged the importance of Bright’s *Treatise of Melancholy* to the character of Hamlet, both in the form of verbal parallels (phrases such as ‘custom of exercises’ 2.2.281) and as explanations for Hamlet’s actions. These parallels mark out Hamlet as a text informed by a multitude of disciplines. Bright’s treatise stands alongside André Du Laurens, Ercole Sassonia, Jourdain Guilbelet, Robert Burton and Caspare Marcucci as formative early modern treatments of

melancholy (Gowland 2), and as well as close to Shakespeare's themes, was physically close to him, published close to his lodgings, editions were probably passed to and kept by the publisher of Venus and Adonis, Stratfordian Richard Field once the original publisher Thomas Vautrollier died in 1588.

For Bright, the human subject is very much the dual *homo intus* and *homo exus* of Renaissance Augustinian philosophy, enjoying a rich yet opaque inner life discrepant to his or her exterior: '[t]his tabernacle thus wrought, as the grosse part yeilded a masse for the proportion to be framed of: so had it by the blessing of God, been inspired, a spiritual thing of greater excellencie then the redde earth, which offered it self to the eye onely' (Bright C1^v-C2^r). Within this model of mind and body melancholy is, Bright affirms, a state of mind, and though there are some differences among medical opinions of the exact nature of melancholy, 'it signifieth in all, either a certayne fearfull disposition of the mind, altered from reason, or else an humour of the body [the melancholy], commonly taken to be the only cause of reason by feare in such sort depraued' (A1^r). Bright presents a symptomology of a melancholy that has a difficult relation to the motivating mind in that mind and body are not fully integrated, for melancholy is situated for Bright in the animal spirits. Though there are some undeniable physical symptoms – melancholics are 'of colour blacke and swart, of substance inclining to hardnes, leane, and spare of flesh: which causeth hollownes of eye, and unchearefulness of countenance' (Bright H6^v) – much of melancholy lies in actions performed by the posited melancholic, in their

deedes, and such as are actions of the brayne, either of sence and motions, dull, both in outward sense and conceit. Of memory reasonable good, if fancies deface it not: firme in opinion, and hardly remoued wher it is resolued: doubtfull before, and long in deliberation: suspicious, painefull in studie, and circumspect, giuen to fearefull and terrible dreames: in affection sad, and full of feare, hardly moued to anger, but keeping it long, and not easie to be reconciled: enuious, and ielous, apt to take occasions in the worse part, and out of measure passionate, whereto it is moued.

From these two dispositions of brayne and heartearise solitariness, morning, weeping, & (if it be of sanguine adust) melancholie laughter, sighing, sobbing, lamentation, countenance demisse, and hanging downe, blushing and bashfull, of pace slow, silent, negligent, refusing the sight and frequency of men, delighted more in solitarines and obscurity (Bright H6^v)

However, Bright explains (I3^v) ‘These are actions that lie in our powers to doe and are called animall’, an attestation perhaps urged by contemporary religious constraints.^[16] The symptoms of melancholy, that is (solitariness, sadness, angriness, walking slowly and so on, as well as blushing and laughing which Bright maintains humans can control) could either be caused by melancholy, or be enacted in pretence, because they are symptoms affecting those aspects of our life which we can usually control. Therefore, if a melancholic sighs, walks slowly with their head down due to melancholy, and a non-melancholic impersonates a melancholic by affecting these symptoms, due to the opacity of their inner motivations, the two people would be at first sight indistinguishable. Real melancholy is potentially indistinguishable from of performance or fictionality, then. These symptoms are, as Hamlet himself says, ‘actions that a man might play’:

Gertrude why seems it so particular with thee?

Hamlet Seems, madam? nay it is, I know not seems.

‘Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,

That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,

For they are actions that a man might play,

But I have that within that passes show –

These but the trappings and the suits of woe (1.2.74-89)

Hamlet mentions that all the symptoms he has could be either voluntary and pretended enactments of grief and melancholy, or involuntary and truly caused by melancholy or grief: putting on sombre clothing, looking down, deploying ‘forms, moods, shapes’ (words that emphatically denoted the external signs of inner causes). His remark that ‘I have that within that passes show’ alerts us to the problem faced by both disciplines – fiction and medicine in the hands of Bright – *does* Hamlet as a character have an inner life, and is the ostensibly melancholic human subject in control of their symptoms and putting them on in pretence, or truly in the grip of disease? When we approach the problem of Hamlet’s melancholy, and the bearing this has upon literary-critical interpretation of his character, these two problems coalesce.

Conclusions – can we diagnose Hamlet, and what does this imply for an interdisciplinary approach?

The intrinsically problematic nature of attempted diagnosis of melancholy in one medical text, Bright’s *Treatise*, has been shown to coalesce with the problems with literary critical analyses of Hamlet as a person with intentions. The flaws in this latter approach have been clarified in this paper, and the extent to which Hamlet can be diagnosed as a human biological subject has been delineated as centring round an important uncertainty: Hamlet shares with real people his intentional, believing, behaviour (from which the presence and nature of intention and belief can, as with real human subjects, only probabilistically be inferred), and the uncertainty over whether he truly holds the intentions, beliefs and so on indicated by his behaviour. This is, I have argued, as far as we ought to go in interpreting or diagnosing Hamlet: it would be wrong to assert that he actually has beliefs and intentions exactly as we do, though it is acceptable to attribute intentions and beliefs to him within the confines of the modal world he inhabits.

Yet it is precisely the aporia in this analysis that is significant: there comes a point even with human subjects when intentions cannot with certainty be said to be present, and intentional behaviour could as easily be a Machiavellian pretence as an action directly motivated by an intention. Melancholy, as discussed in Bright's treatise, is potentially a form of fictionality in exactly this sense too; thus in terms of diagnosing Hamlet, Stoppard's Rosencrantz was accurate in his aporetic diagnosis of Hamlet as 'Stark raving sane' (Stoppard 60): it is intrinsic to this definition of melancholy that it cannot be ascertained whether the seeming melancholic is in fact truly a melancholic, (s)he contains irresolvably the possibility of both melancholy and pretended melancholy. As the essence of the melancholy is its ineliminable and unclarifiable potential for fictionality, so the essence of Hamlet as a fictional character is his almost ineliminable and unclarifiable potential for indistinguishability with a real person.

This paper has raised interesting implications for current trends in *Hamlet*-criticism. The trajectory of the human subject through history is both charted and contested by Robert Pippin as being perceived as constituted by a move from 'non-discursive self-awareness, a neglected and largely misunderstood sense of self which can help establish the reality and priority of "the subject"', to 'the traditional "modern subject" experiencing by being aware of its own states of mind as if aware of entities full of aporias', to 'the postmodern play of subject-less discourses, fields of power, texts, etc' (Pippin 177). Whether accurate or not, an analogous perceived historical shift has informed perceptions of Hamlet: he has become, increasingly, a 'modern' person, and has often been evoked as initially ahead of his time in his introspective inner life; this stance is represented by Francis Barker's evocation of Hamlet as originally a vacuum which could not be filled until the dawn of 'modern' human subjects (Barker 25).^[17] In the twentieth century it remained a somewhat uncontroversial position to follow Harold Bloom in calling Hamlet 'the western hero of consciousness' (Bloom 409) and to identify with him as a conscious being emphatically like us. The modern incarnation of the received Hamlet as an intending, pondering agent has, in the early twentieth

century, been manifested in psychoanalytic readings and characterological approaches like AC Bradley's. Renaissance Studies in the later twentieth century has, with works such as Greenblatt's and Sawday's also been preoccupied with teasing out the relations between the inside and the outside of the early modern subject and their body.

This has been a comparatively recent shift, beginning only in the last couple of centuries, and is perhaps running out of steam, Margreta de Grazia notes that recently there has been a 'turnabout': parts of *Hamlet* are becoming dated, we no longer have 'purgatory, patrilineality' and so on as the same concepts, meanwhile recent conceptualizations of *Hamlet* as 'early modern' further suggest a move from the late modern to the post modern: Hamlet is no longer someone like us, but like someone we used to be (de Grazia 374-5). This shift can be aligned with a shift in the subject of science (or the subject who relates scientifically to the world), especially in terms of the development of the Cartesian moment through Kant, Husserl, and Merleau Ponty. Dylan Evans argues that the Lacanian 'empty subject' of science (differentiated from the subject of fiction) is the *only* subject available to us now: 'in the era of science it is impossible to recapture any 'humanistic' subject' (Evans). This paper, situated at the cusp of this present moment described by Evans and de Grazia, looks in a normative manner at the past: how ought we to respond to problems of motivation in *Hamlet* in this era of a post-modernity which de Grazia sees as waving a last goodbye to these very problems. It was written in acknowledgement of the fact that history alters as present ways of knowing and of perceiving the world alter,^[18] and also that, as we do potentially move away from recent traditional intention-and-motivation focused accounts of *Hamlet*, returning to original source-texts such as Bright's *Treatise* can help more sharply to define and hence to understand the literary text.

In the early modern era, to which we accordingly re-approached, scientific knowledge experienced many crossovers with the dramaturgical, in that both were seen as generated through action (Spiller 2009),^[19] though different forms of knowledge were differentiated, 'science *was* knowledge, and only later became

coterminous with the kinds of knowledge required of the natural and physical sciences [in the 1650s]' (Mazzio 1-32) However, there was a sense of priority in different communities of knowledge, or of those knowledge-holders forming a Kuhnian 'scientific community':^[20] some scientific knowledges were asserted as validating others or being only for the learned. The interdisciplinary community for which I write is just as blurred. There is much medical terminology in *Hamlet*: ulcers especially have been of interest to critics such as Tilmouth reading *Hamlet* for their evocation of a deep interiority different to the outside,^[21] but we are faced with the pervasive problem that Shakespeare is not always 'pathologically precise' (Hoeniger 216-7) in his definitions of illness, or use medical such terminology: often it is used merely for effect (such as to give an impression of depravity as with Petruchio's diseased horse in *The Taming of the Shrew*). This paper, however, has shown that inspecting the *methodologies* of medical diagnosis alongside those of literary interpretation has been a much more successful way in to *Hamlet*.

There are limits to Hamlet's similarity to real human subjects. There are therefore limits to the particular interdisciplinary approach (the medical or psychoanalytic combined with the literary) espoused and tested in this paper: sometimes it is only appropriate to treat Hamlet as a fictional character, however informed this character, and our reading of this character, might be by texts applicable to real people. The strength of reading Bright's *Treatise* in particular as a medical text alongside literary analysis of *Hamlet* is that the acceptance of precisely these limits is endorsed by Bright: as with Hamlet, we cannot tell whether the melancholic is pretending or not. This paper's examination of behavioural analyses might be extended to other contemporary disciplines: religious introspections into conscience for instance (in the 1605 pamphlet *Two Most Unnatural and Bloodie Murders*, the behaviour of a congregation is watched during a sermon on the evils of murder, and the murderer identified from his reaction) or early modern judicial proceedings (for the methodologies used by JPs to analyse the behaviour of murderers in court, see Gaskill 224). This paper has

re-affirmed the relation between *Hamlet* and the world of human biological subjects and shown that, as ‘guilty creatures sitting at a play| Have by the very cunning of the scene| Been struck so to the soul that presently| They have proclaimed their malefactions’ (2.2.541-5), audiences should continue to beware of Hamlet’s similarity to us.

Endnotes

^[1] After formulating this idea, I found Hugh Grady’s well-put formula describing Shakespeare’s ‘aesthetics conceived as generating an imaginary realm separate from empirical reality, but one that draws its materials from that reality...in each domain there are traces of its excluded other’ (Grady 2008, 276). See also Stanley Cavell’s a-historical claim (Cavell’s thought is here largely influenced by twentieth century productions) that in Shakespearean theatre, the actors are present to the audience but not vice versa, thus constituting an ‘incomplete’ form of ‘acknowledgement’ (Cavell 103).

^[2] Paul Westire presents an often playful suggestion that inquiring into Hamlet is congruent to inquiring into *Hamlet* (Westire in Kinney 115-33).

^[3] Thinkers such as Maureen Quliigan, Margreta de Grazia, Peter Stallybrass, Laura Levine, and Aoife Monks exemplify the recent tradition in re-examining costume as impacting dynamically *upon* actors rather than merely being passively put on. Such anxieties are present in several Renaissance texts such as *Haec-Vir or the Womanish Man*.

^[4] Leanore Lieblin contends that actor, person personated and audience engage in a ‘mutual transformation’ such that characters are ‘a product of the communication that takes place among them’ (Lieblin in Yachnin and Slights 117-9).

^[5] Though fairly peripheral figures, and though by no means constituting a uniform ‘genre’, early modern antitheatricalist writers examined this theme to death, from an emphasis on Augustinian possession of an actor by a character

(something analysed by Joseph Roach in *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (esp Roach 49, 56)), and almost Stanislavskian 'art of experiencing' (see Stanislavski 14-22, 195-228) to a completely contrary insistence that acting was false in its *hollowness*, viz in the very fact that actors were not the same as their character, were different 'underneath' (Rankins B2^f; Gosson C8^f; Prynne 125, 157).

^[6] In terms of the latter, one can conceptualise script-reading, as Lacan does, as something else taken *into* the play; Lacan sees Hamlet, as 'the drama of an individual subjectivity' (p. 12), but Hamlet, the central subject, in the 'distract[ion]'/delet[ion]' (14) of his own desire, is forced to carry 'a message that is not even his own' (12), rather, it belongs to the Ghost. I suggest that Hamlet being forced to carry to England Claudius's letter demanding Hamlet's execution is another example of Hamlet bearing the messages of another in this way. Hamlet carries others' scripts and agendas within the play then, as well as being the bearer of the Shakespearean script. Perhaps it is no coincidence that is traditionally thought to have played the Ghost, underscoring that Hamlet is produced as a subject through both Shakespeare's and Old Hamlet's interpellation

^[7] Jones's position that Hamlet's delay is due to repression is a classic Freudian reading, sees *Hamlet and Oedipus* (Jones 45, 47-8). Otto Rank, also, contends 'the murder of the player king is intended not to encourage Hamlet to carry out the deed, but to substitute for it', as Hamlet is 'unable to kill the man who has carried out Hamlet's own childhood wishes' (Rank). More recently more alternative Freudian readings have sprung up; to give one intriguing instance, Louis Amand links *Hamlet* to Freud's analysis of a father's dream of a burning son rather than his Oedipal theories (Amand).

^[8] Euphemia Vale Blake's 1880 article 'The Impediment of Adipose: A Celebrated Case' (Vale Blake) is a wonderful and at times hilarious piece: Hamlet delays, she argues, because of his morbid obesity, he literally cannot move quickly enough to take revenge. Vale Blake applies her explanation to aspects of

the text ranging from phrases such as ‘he’s fat and scant of breath’ and ‘how ill all’s here about my heart’ to actions: the Ghost does not appear to Hamlet initially, for instance, she contends, because it is put off by his fat.

^[9] For a historical discussion of theories that Hamlet was female, see Catherine Belsey, ‘Was Hamlet a Man or a Woman’ (in Kinney 132-58).

^[10] Several writers have advanced this view, notably in 1978 the analytical philosopher David Lewis formulated his thesis of ‘Truth in Fiction’ which rested on the notion of a fictional world in which events are fictionally ‘true’ if we can imagine them ‘told as known fact’ by that world’s interpretive community: i.e. events or statements made in a fictional world can be said to be ‘true’ if they would plausibly occur, or be vouched as plausible by characters, in that fictional world (Lewis 44).

^[11] Within the context of his model of ‘visceral knowledge’ – i.e. ‘knowledge experienced in as well as knowledge of the interior of the body’ by a subject differentiated from the world and to whom the body’s interior is opaque - as a transition to modernity, David Hillman sees *Hamlet* a ‘test-case’ for early modern subjectivity because it treats of a hero trapped solitarily in his body: (Hillman 1, 43).

^[12] Francis Barker enunciates the sort of description of Hamlet often made here, when he contends that Hamlet’s ‘desire to refine away the insistent materiality of the body is the necessary complement to that interiority of soul which would otherwise realize itself utterly in him’ (Barker 40).

^[13] A unique set of spatiotemporal coordinates making logical subjects individuated objects of reference is emphasized notably by Strawson as a condition of personhood (Strawson 25).

^[14] This occurs in three ways in the literature: (to give a representative example of each) in underscoring the reflexivity of Hamlet’s thought (further evidence of a psychomachia within Hamlet even as he ‘craves for himself an *impassioned* soul’,

Tilmouth 75), of manifesting Hamlet's realistically-opaque inner life ('[t]he frank fakeries of the playhouse, its disguisings and impersonations, stand for the opacities that seem to characterize all relations of human beings to one another', Eisamann Maus 1-2), and of strengthening the plausibility of *Hamlet* as akin to our real world in creating and containing smaller fictions within it (such remarks increase the realistic nature of Shakespearean drama even as they draw attention to fictionality (Edmund)).

^[15] AD Nutall writes that with tragedy we may 'luxuriate' in emotion not caused by real pain, for 'Aristotle insists that the poet does not imitate the actual but the probable', something 'in the hypothetical not the categorical mode' (Nuttall 17-18, 38), and characters die, like Popper's hypotheses, so we don't have to (Nutall 77-8).

^[16] Gowland (97) offers that '[i]n the case of melancholy, it seems, no neo-Galenic physician risked heresy accusations by claiming that the immortal rational soul or understanding could itself be directly touched or primarily affected by melancholy'.

^[17] Stoll much earlier wrote of 'the disturbing intrusion of antiquarian learning into the interpretation of Shakespeare's characters, the substitution of Elizabethan textbook physiology or psychology for our contemporary sort' (Stoll 80). Conversely, Eisamann Maus explicitly distances herself from critics such as Barker, who view Hamlet's inwardness as a modern discovery: for her, it is present in the original early-modern conceptual context (Eisamann Maus 7).

^[18] This is something attested to by almost all new historicists, from Jardine to Grady; the latter writes, '[h]istory changes as we evolve and develop, and so do historical figures and cultural icons like Shakespeare' (Grady 2002, 2).

^[19] Spiller examines an 'epistemology of handiwork' at once dramaturgical, mathematic, and scientific, in which knowledge is created rather than discovered.

^[20] ‘A paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, *and*, conversely, a scientific community consists of men [sic] who share a paradigm’ (Kuhn 176).

^[21] Tilmouth (107) probes the ulcer as a confessional symbol of interiority. An interesting source for understanding ulcerous terminology of the time, and Hamlet’s ‘ulcerous place’ (3.4.147) is John Bannister’s *A Needfull, new, and necessarie treatise of chirurgerie* which consolidates Renaissance understandings of ulcers as ‘filthie’, ‘vexing and dolorous’, and ‘containing corruption’ (esp. Bannister A1^r-A2^v). Interestingly for Bright (G4^r): the melancholy brain ‘becommeth so tender, that the least touch, as it were ones nail in an vlcer, giueth discouragement thereto, rubbing it vpon the gale exulcerate with sorrow and feare: neither only doubleth it sorrow vpon smale occasion, but taketh it where none is offered’.

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First Response

This essay is really impressive in scope. And it takes up a genuinely significant question. It nevertheless slightly sidesteps the fact that a mimesis of character has been increasingly unacceptably debarred in recent criticism, to the effect that 'Characters are not real people!' has become a sort of reverse cliché, in seminar rooms and published criticism, preventing important thought about the ontology and kind of life Shakespearean characters enjoy: surely an important question for 'ordinary' as opposed to academic readers, not to mention dramatists? In that context, this piece is more of an intervention than in presents itself as. And it provokes, and indeed asks, important further questions. If Hamlet is truly life-like, how contagious are his affects and choices? What does exposure to him gain or risk? Is he still exemplary, or becoming exemplary again, and how might that affect our lives? How can someone so peculiar-someone who lapses out of sexual, political and even biological life, as much as fulfils himself in them-be central, and what does it mean if he is? What is the relation between 'melancholy' and current understandings of depression? Can we say Hamlet is depressed? One recent critic worth reading on Shakespeare, and indeed *Hamlet*, and life not mentioned here is Julia Lupton. This essay also opens the important, and to my mind, vexed question of the relation between literature, Shakespeare in particular, and medicine, which follows from a significant resemblance between Shakespeare and life. A pleasing feature of the essay is negative: the writer sees Shakespeare as instructing us as much in what cannot as what can be known about our fellow

human beings. This is where it resonates with Cavell, and the ethics of reserve and privacy.

One significant procedural issue occurs to me. If a mimesis of real life is central to the play, then shouldn't the personhood of the critic enter into Hamlet criticism more than professional decorum allows? On this question see the forthcoming **Shakespeare and I** volume, ed. William McKenzie and Theodora Papapodoulou, in mine and Simon Palfrey's 'Shakespeare Now!' series.

This essay also begs the big question as to **how far** Shakespearean drama is any kind of drama of personal life. Philip Davis has argued that Shakespeare is less about character than he is about the volatile spaces between characters: that is, after all, where drama transacted.

This brings Hegel, a neglected figure in current criticism, to mind, and that brings to mind in turn the volatility of the Shakespearean self—Bloom works a bit with this. The self is dramatically related to itself and everything else in Hegel: such is the life of **Geist**, the 'phenomenology of Spirit'. Could Hegel help us to close in on a Shakespearean mimesis, and in such a way as helps us to see that self and society are creatively related in a way that is potentially very different from the way in which materialist criticism has understood their relation?

I have digressed somewhat from the questions asked in this essay, but let the digression stand as a tribute to the big issues it broaches!