of Emilia in *Othello*, who, having finally comprehended what her husband Iago has done, answers his order that she remain silent by saying, "'Tis proper I obey him, but not now" (5.2.203).

Thus, erotic or romantic love in these great tragedies yields pride of place to friendship and to loyalties of parent and child. Hamlet and his mother both die tragically, but they die reconciled; Hamlet has succeeded in winning his mother back from the detested uncle. And with Horatio, Hamlet finds a wonderful consolation in friendship. They love to argue with each other; they respect differences; they refuse to allow worldly consideration to interfere with the disinterestedness of their love for each other.

Here, perhaps, is one more way in which Shakespeare's plays can be brought into the context of current critical discourse, with its New Historicism and feminist concerns, and still honor the play as a central part of the core curriculum. Shakespeare can usefully be seen as a central to the entire matrix of what post-modern criticism is all about. Students, readers, and critics need to keep coming back to these texts in order to explore the kind of rich literary layering of meaning that we all cherish as central to the core experience. Shakespeare does not merely survive; he flourishes today, and not because he offers a respite from contemporary criticism but because he is so able to endow it with critical purpose and insight.

CHAPTER 20

Prophecy Eclipsed: *Hamlet* as a Tragedy of Knowledge

*William Franke*

To define what is distinctive about knowledge in the humanities, by contrast with what has tended to be the dominant paradigm for knowledge in modern culture, namely, science, it is instructive to consider *Hamlet* as a tragedy of knowledge. The play was written probably in 1600 and at any rate at the opening of the 17th Century, the golden age of the rise of modern science. Its language and imagery are tinged with the new vocabulary and embody the new sensibility and outlook together, and in tension with, the old. Thematically, moreover, *Hamlet* wrestles with the incalculably far-reaching meaning of this transition from an older, traditional *epistème* or general framework for knowledge based on revelation, particularly the biblical revelation of the ultimate ends and context of human life as resting upon a metaphysical order of being, to a scientific worldview in which knowledge, now sought preeminently through the physical senses and their direct perceptions, lacks all transcendent foundation. The tragic loss involved in this transition is made palpable and poignant both in the overarching conception and in the imaginative and expressive textures of the play.

Shakespeare inherited and indeed provided some of the most compelling representations of what has been dubbed "the Elizabethan world-picture,"
Prophecy Eclipsed: *Hamlet* as a Tragedy of Knowledge

...whole nature and foundation of knowledge that are being experienced in Shakespeare's time.

The eclipse of prophetic vision ushers in an age of skepticism represented from the play's outset especially by Horatio, who is unbelieving with regard to "this thing," the "apparition" of the dead king Hamlet reported by Bernardo and Marcellus, holding it for nothing more than their "fantasy" (1.1.236f). Horatio's rational suspicion of superstition is but one expression of a crisis of traditional belief in all sectors, not only religious but also political. The general cultural predicament is one of a defunct moral and spiritual order. On a political plain, it translates into the crisis of state noted at the outset as following upon the death of the king, indeed in Denmark and in Norway alike. The deceased kings Hamlet and Fortinbras are chivalric figures who had engaged in a noble duel "by a sealed compact / Well ratified by law and heraldry" (1.1). They are succeeded respectively by the usurper scorned by Hamlet as "[a] king of shreds and patches" (111.4.104) and by the "young Fortinbras" who has "Sharked up a list of lawless resolutes" (1.1.98). Against the former generation of kings' lawful and valiant warring, the present marshal maneuvers are described rather as an unruly mob's marauding. These are the earliest signals of the general moral degeneration that upsets Hamlet and provokes his scathing eloquence.

Hierarchies of value in the traditional medieval world-view depended upon a supreme and divine good, namely, God, and an animate universe of angelically guided spheres, and without this the whole structure of the moral order and of the social world, no less than of the physical cosmos, collapses. 'The world is out of joint.' "It is the times." "The times now give it proof." *Hamlet* shows extreme sensitivity to its own time as a time of crisis. Formerly this world, both natural and social, fit into and was supported by a cosmic order. Hamlet evokes this old world-picture, become, however, stale and tacky like discarded theatre scenery, in describing his sense of the rottenness and corruption of life as he experiences it in the present:

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The concept on this page is the changing mission of the theoretical framework for the understanding of the universe. As the boundaries of our knowledge expand, so do our questions. This is not an easy task, as our understanding of the universe is constantly evolving. The framework of our current understanding is based on the theories of the early 20th century, which have been refined and expanded over time. It is important to remember that our understanding of the universe is not static, but rather it is a living, breathing system that is constantly evolving. As our knowledge grows, our theories must be updated to reflect the new information. This is a challenging task, but it is essential for the advancement of our understanding of the universe.
In The Winter's Tale

Ellen Belin

Chapter 21

Speech in Dumbness: Female

Echoes in Duplication, Male Authority

Core Texts in Conversation

never. Greater love of commerce and exploration, devoid of morality, snips...