



1603 and 1605 Versions of Hamlet's Soliloquy and Cognitive Linguistics: Why is the Second Version so Popular?

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Abstract: Today, this topic is still in the mist of research. I rarely find any essay or thesis about analysis of two versions of Hamlet's soliloquy which only exists in online British Library. My purpose of writing this thesis is to clear up the fog of confusion and explain the reason why the second version is so popular among these versions. By reading the text of Hamlet's soliloquy between the line, I have used linguistic methods to analyze it. This thesis will be about introducing two versions of the monologue, and from cognitive linguistic aspect (textual analysis), illustrating the reasons of the second version's popularism.

Keywords: Hamlet's soliloquy; Three versions; Psycholinguistic; Aesthetic

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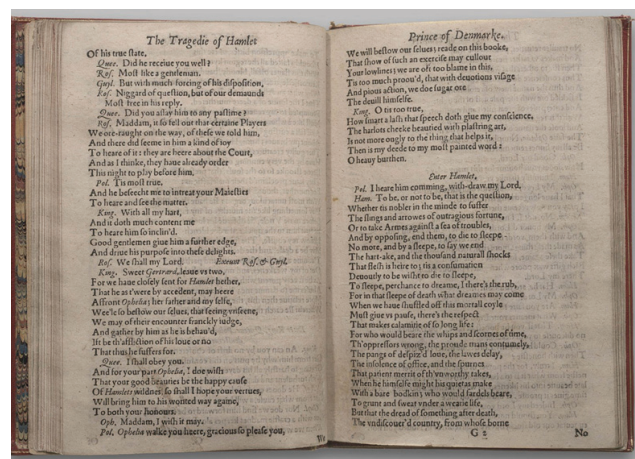
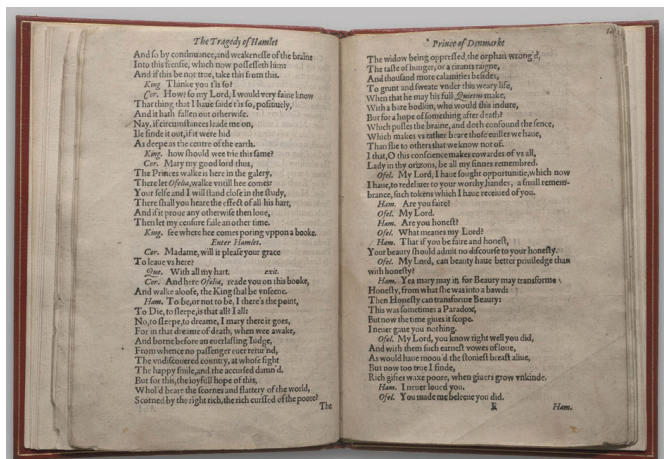
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1 Two Versions

"To be or not to be, that is the question." (Hamlet, 1604) Probably, it is one of the most famous lines in literature. This philosophical question is so universal that everyone in every country can memorize it. However, in fact, this soliloquy is just one of three forms---in a text published in 1603, a text published in 1604-1605, and a text published in 1623^[1]. The most well-known version is the second version. And the third version is similar to the second, except for the punctuation. Let's have a look at these first two forms.

The first 1603 version is the earliest surviving version of William Shakespeare's Hamlet. There are only two copies of this book in the world---one at the Huntington Library, discovered in 1823, and missing the last page of text; and the British Library copy (C.34.k.1.) which does not have a title page. This was discovered apparently in Nottinghamshire by a Dublin student in the 1850s and eventually acquired by the British Museum Library in 1858.

Shakespeare's Hamlet is thought to have been written and first performed around 1600. This edition was printed in 1603. In 1603, Nicholas Ling and John Trundle published the first Quarto, or the First Quarto, of Shakespeare's Hamlet, which was 2,200 lines long. This book was often criticized as "pirated text reconstructed by memory" without the troupe's official authorization, and almost from its inception, it was notorious as "bad Quarto". The term quarto refers to a fairly small book whose pages were made by folding a sheet of paper twice, producing four leaves, or eight pages. And "bad" refers to a small number of early versions of Shakespeare whose textual authority is somewhat questionable. In the case of Hamlet Q1, the text is significantly different from the later versions. For example, there are about 2,200 lines for Q1 and 3,800 lines for Q2 (the second version). Moreover, in Hamlet's most famous soliloquy Q1, "To be or not to be, aye, there's the point." The speech also appears in an entirely different place in the text -- equivalent to act II, Scene II, rather than the more common act III scene.



"To be or not to be, aye, there is the point
 To die, to sleep, to dream; is that all? Aye, all.
 No, to sleep. To dream, aye, marry, there it goes.
 For in that dream of death, when we awake,
 And borne before an everlasting judge,
 From whence no passenger ever returned,
 The undiscovered country, at whose sight
 The happy smile, and the accursed damned.
 But for this, the joyful hope of this,
 Who'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world,
 Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the
 poor?

The widow being oppressed, the orphan wronged,
 The taste of hunger, or a tyrant's reign..." (Hamlet,
 1603)

The second version in 1604-1605, also called the
 second quarto version, may strike you familiar. It
 contains about 3,764 lines. The composers of Q2
 made occasional use of printed text Q1, especially the
 layout and typography. It is much more popular than
 other two versions. At the end of 1604, James Roberts
 and Nicholas Ling, together, printed "The second
 Quarto," or the Second Quarto. This copy claims to
 have been "reprinted in accordance with the original,
 almost doubled from the previous version." Indeed,
 the final edition, often regarded by posterity as the
 "good Quarto," contains 1,600 lines more than the
 first. Since then, the edition has been hugely popular.
 Together with many subsequent quarto, this version is
 known as the "actor quarto".

"To be, or not to be- that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
 And by opposing end them. To die- to sleep-
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die- to sleep.
 To sleep- perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub!
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause. There's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life.
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death-
 The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
 No traveller returns- puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pith and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry
 And lose the name of action." (Hamlet, 1604)

2 The Cognitive Linguistic Aspect

So why is the second version so popular nowadays? From the psycholinguistic aspect, there are two reasons behind it.

Firstly, according to the Lykoff, a modern cognitive linguist, believes that metaphor is not only a special linguistic form in the traditional rhetorical sense, but also a mode of thinking and cognition of human beings. He thinks that metaphor is a mapping from one conceptual domain (source domain) to another conceptual domain (target domain) in the human conceptual system, which is called "conceptual metaphor"^[2]. Conceptual metaphors are rooted in human cognition and thinking, and they are embodied as metaphorical expressions in language. Metaphorical expressions at the linguistic level are clear because of the metaphorical nature of human thinking. There are a lot of metaphorical expressions in literary works, especially in drama, which enrich the dramatic language. And the second version of Hamlet has more conceptual metaphors than other two versions. "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune / Or to take arms against a sea of troubles / And by opposing end them." (Hamlet, 1604) This line has been added into the second version, while the Q1 doesn't have. From the perspective of cognitive metaphor, it compares all injustice and suffering in the world to slings and arrows and those actions taken in the face of difficulties to weapons. This reflects the inner thinking system of the protagonist Hamlet, namely the explanation of the question in the previous sentence "to be or not to be, that is a question". The ambivalence of Hamlet to act or not to act, to revenge or not to revenge, needs more subtle metaphors. However, in the first version, such a series of metaphors is missing, which leads directly to the next sentence, "to die or to sleep", which is incomplete and evocative. The function of metaphor is to make speech more appealing and make readers more empathetic with the characters in the works. These are all things that the first version failed to achieve.

Secondly, the use of psychological verbs in Shakespeare's four tragedies and their artistic effects are discussed from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. As an important part of language use and understanding, mental verbs have always been one

of the focuses in cognitive linguistics. Shakespeare's plays, which are broad and profound, full of poetry and philosophy, through the skillful use of language, profoundly reflect the inner world of the character Hamlet and depict the colorful social life. Through the psychological representation of "like, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate, doubt and knowledge" shown by psychological verbs, the cognitive function of psychological verbs and its influence on artistic expression skills are investigated. The first version "is that all? Aye, all", comparing with the second version where there is only one phrase "no more" to answer the question of "to die, to sleep". Apparently, the second version has more strength of using the "no" and "more" to show how Hamlet's desperation and struggle in his mind. We can see that "aye" is a mental verb or an onomatopoeia of sighing which is to show how complex feeling that Hamlet have. But "aye" is too weak. It doesn't show any decision or explosive epiphany in this philosophical Hamlet. Also, the second version uses a lot of concrete mental verbs not abstract words to depict the inner world of Hamlet. Like this line in the Q1, "Who'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world?" which has been changed into this edition, "for who'd bear the whips and scorns of the time?", in the Q2. Scorns and whips are concrete things which is easy for people to imagine the pain and suffering. But what is the flattery? It is so ambiguous that if you don't have the true experience of the flattery you can't understand its meaning. And from the aspect of mental verbs used in cognitive linguistics, people need more direct reaction of the text. Such those concrete mental words like "scorns" and "whips" can be completely caught in one's mind, even for the kids. Therefore, that's the reason why the Q2 can be more popular and universal.

3 Conclusion

Above all, I have analyzed the reason why the 1605 version of Hamlet's soliloquy could be more popular from the cognitive linguistic aspect. The second version is not only more metaphorical but also more concrete and comprehensive in using many mental verbs.

References

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