

Pre-Codex to Post-Code: Editorial Theory in the Second Incunabulum

by

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B.A. McGill University, 1995

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of English

We accept this dissertation as conforming  
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## ABSTRACT

This project studies the ways recent changes in cultural theory and information technology are influencing the delivery of texts, and how these changes signal a need for innovation in editing practice. The word *incunabulum* describes the material objects produced in the early stages of the development of a technology; most commonly, it refers to printing during the period just before the turn of the sixteenth century when material textuality in the west was changing from a manuscript to a print base. According to critics of digital culture like Janet Murray the current shift to digital media entails many of the same changes. Following this, I will refer to this period as the *second incunabulum*. Given the limitations of HTML and SGML markup and storage technologies used in early digitization projects, scholars realize that the second incunabular period, much like the first, will not be a simple linear change succession. Just as the shift from manuscript to print involved a multifaceted series of complex social and practical transformations over decades, our current technological transition generates a wide variety of communicative, cultural, and political implications. As a critical point of entry, the comparison of the first and second incunabular periods offers insight into the ways in which past practices can help us approach our textual future. As a broad study of highly particular textual practices, the current work presents something of a paradox. However, through a series of focused historical readings and formal applications, this trans-historical study provokes questions that may lead to effective new work in the field. In *Theories of the Text*, leading editorial theorist D.C. Greetham points out the need to

study the same three projects that I examine: William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, *The Oxford Shakespeare*, and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. By examining the editorial practices underlying each work, I develop a theory of editing based on a form of philological critique that engages with problems faced by many current research projects and which provides suggestions for further research.

Examiners:

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## Pre-Codex to Post-Code: Editorial Theory in the Second Incunabulum

### Chapter 1: Introduction

Classifications are useful, sometimes indispensable conceptual tools in controlling a subject matter, and for the purposes of classification it matters very little whether we use Roman numerals, the weeks of the year, or the phases of the moon. The one thing that does matter is the degree of reliance we place on the definitive character of these arbitrary schemata. If we believe they are constitutive rather than arbitrary and heuristic, then we have made a serious mistake and also set up a barrier to interpretation.

E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (111)

I thought of that old joke, you know, this guy goes to a psychiatrist and says, "Doc, my brother's crazy. He thinks he's a chicken." And the doctor says, "Well, why don't you turn him in?" And the guy says, "I would, but I need the eggs."

Epilogue to Woody Allen's *Annie Hall*

This project studies the ways in which recent changes in cultural theory and information technology are influencing the delivery of texts and pointing to a need for changes in the practice of editing. The word *incunabulum* describes the early stages of the development of a technology;<sup>1</sup> most commonly, it refers to printing during the period just before the turn of the sixteenth century when material textuality in the west was changing from a manuscript to a print base. According to critics like Janet Murray, the current shift to digital media entails many of the same changes.<sup>2</sup> Following this, I will refer to this period as the second incunabulum. Given the now apparent limitations of HTML and SGML markup and CD ROM storage technologies used in early digitization projects, scholars realize that the second incunabular period, much like the first, will not

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<sup>1</sup> The *OED* defines *incunabulum* in this way: 1. The earliest stages or first traces in the development of anything. 2. (With sing. *incunabulum*): Books produced in the infancy of the art of printing; spec. those printed before 1500. Hence *incunabular a.*, of or pertaining to early printed books.

<sup>2</sup> Murray 28-9.

be a simple one-dimensional change.<sup>3</sup> Just as the shift from manuscript to print involved a multifaceted series of social and practical alterations occurring over decades, our current technological transition involves a wide variety of communicative, cultural and political implications. As a critical point of entry, the comparison of the first and second incunabular periods offers insight into the ways in which our past practices can help us approach our textual future. As an abstract study of practical applications, the work in whole presents something of a paradox. Still I hope that within the space of this document, I will raise questions that lead to effective work in the field. Studies in method must always be abstract; in some sense the quality of their focus is what defines their individual contribution.

In his recent book, *Theories of the Text*, leading editorial theorist D.C. Greetham points out the need to study the three projects that I examine.<sup>4</sup> These are William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, *The Oxford Shakespeare* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. While examining each, I will develop a theory of editing based on a form of philological critique that points toward solutions that I hope will work for other research projects.

This study takes as its starting point the burgeoning field of editorial theory. Changes in literary theory stemming from Continental linguistics, philosophy, and psychoanalysis that arrived at virtually the same time as affordable personal computers and functional network options have introduced a variety of questions about how and why editors should perform their duties.<sup>5</sup> While early technophiles such as Marshall

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<sup>3</sup> The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is the leading body attempting to create and maintain universal standards for markup and encoding. Their updates and records of change can be found at: <http://www.w3.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> Greetham points to *Piers*, the Gabler *Ulysses* and the *Oxford Shakespeare*. Greetham 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> We should note that while theory came early to English Departments as a whole, it came much later to textual studies. The opposite is true of computer technology. For more on these issues see, Peter

McLuhan and Nicholas Negroponte were quick to forecast the digital dissolution of these problems and the concomitant death of the book, others like Jay David Bolter, George Landow and Geoffrey Nunberg see new media as an opportunity to test the possibilities and limitations of poststructural and postmodern theory and practice.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Bolter and Richard Grusin have proposed that the digital shift, like print before, is a “remediation” of our textual past.<sup>7</sup> Each of these formulations intersects editorial theory and textual studies.

Many early digital projects worked from the assumption that using electronic media to record all available documents, recordings and materials pertinent to a given editorial project would render obsolete those critical editions that present a central authorial figure and a unified text. My argument shows that while digital archives are an excellent means of storage, they will inherently involve a need for a series of new editors or *docents* that will in fact make their mark by offering linear texts. The *docent* of whom

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Shillingsburg's *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> McLuhan's media theory from *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and especially from *Understanding Media* are counted as the most influential books in media studies. Building on McLuhan's work, Nicholas Negroponte of MIT (who have recently re-released a series of McLuhan's work) developed what he calls the “gumball theory” of information that would see the Internet turn into a pay as you go source of limitless data, Nicholas Negroponte. *Being Digital*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995). In contrast to this, Jay David Bolter in *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing*. (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum and Associates, 1991), begins a project (which he continues to this day – see note 7) of placing the digital humanities in an historical perspective, George Landow in *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, 1997), does so in terms of recent literary theory, and Geoffrey Nunberg in his “Introduction,” and “Farewell to the Information Age,” in *The Future of the Book*. (Geoffrey Nunberg ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 9-20, 103-138) argues for a form of socially responsible textuality that re-implements a critique of the “material” even while operating in the realm of the digital.

<sup>7</sup> Bolter, Jay David and Grusin, Richard. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999. Bolter and Grusin discuss the ways in which all forms of media influence one another. In particular, they examine the ways in which an earlier form of media is developed in its successors and counterpoise this with the notion that new medium can reverse influence back onto an earlier form. Thus, influencing new textual layout formulas that lead to the creation of what I have called elsewhere, “hypertextual television.” See Finn, “Hypertextual Television: The Rhetorical Use of Space on NBC's *The West Wing*,” In *The Images of the President on Film and Television*. Peter Rollins and John O'Connor Eds. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, Forthcoming.

I am thinking stems from the German library tradition where these individuals are formally trained scholars whose area of expertise relates to a specific archive. These experts help visiting scholars and researchers to find pathways through their archive. These *posited pathways* offer a multiplicity of options, each of which is potentially its own unified text.

Following this, my work shows that there is a growing need for skilled editors who can posit testable pathways through texts to address changes related to our current information environment. This dissertation presents the argument that future scholarship will best be served by abandoning the adversarial model of editing that has marked our recent past, and instead encouraging a variety of coexistent editing projects. These might involve the use of the Anglo-American empiricist techniques of the so-called Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line, the socio-historical critique of Jerome McGann, diplomatic editions advocated by scholars such as Hoyt Duggan, and the genetic critiques used by Hans Walter Gabler commonly found in contemporary Franco-German editing.<sup>8</sup> This multiplicity of methodology allows for enrichment by propinquity, answering poststructural questions concerning the tyranny of fixity, while at the same time offering *posited pathways*, which act as a curative to the charges of relativism that sometimes plague the postmodern.

At its simplest, editorial theory refers to the practice of studying the methods used to edit texts. This work can focus on the earliest written materials up to and including the

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<sup>8</sup> The best source for general information on the variety of editing schools is to be found in the work of D.C. Greetham. His books, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*. New York: Garland, 1994, *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. D.C. Greetham ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1995, and *Theories of the Text*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 are essential reading for those interested in textual scholarship and editorial theory. I am grateful to Professor Greetham not only for his work, but also for his consultation on this project.

marked up digital texts of the present day. In my project, I will be looking at three specific textual traditions with origins in the fourteenth, sixteenth and twentieth centuries in order to draw a comparison between the two cultural events that I see as crucial to thinking about the tradition of editing. These are the advent of print during the first incunabular period and the recent rise of digital communication in the second.

My theoretical position develops specifically out of and for this project. It is a philological critique using formalism and historicism to blend form, content and context. Work of this kind can roughly be described as hermeneutics, or the pursuit of meaning through the interpretation of texts. Recent work by this name is usually divided between the philological hermeneutics of the classical tradition culminating with Humboldt, and the philosophical hermeneutics developed in Heidegger and Gadamer. The position I develop falls between these two. To demonstrate this method, I will make examinations of the three aforementioned textual traditions, each of which shows how structure, story and cultural position have influenced the ways in which editors have participated in information transmission and the construction of meaning.

In order to stage this examination, I will begin with a rather large assumption. I accept that there is value in people having connection with their cultural heritage. Without this assumption, my argument would change dramatically in tone. Still, I would assert that while we may be able to debate theoretically about whether or not it is important for a society to be in contact with its cultural heritage, it would be hard to deny that there now exists a belief in such significance. In fact, such is the extent of this belief that it is inscribed in law at the national and international levels. In particular, I refer to

Article 27 of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which guarantees a peoples' right to free access to their cultural heritage.<sup>9</sup>

Once we accept this premise, something very interesting happens. Textual scholarship becomes egregiously relevant. As custodians of culture, university scholars and private researchers inherit a very real responsibility in these terms. We immediately face a rather serious question. What happens if a scholar obstructs a people's ability to engage with its cultural heritage? Because of my original assumption, it follows that scholarship that fails to take account of its own societal responsibility borders on negligence. While I do not want to belabor the point, I believe we should recognize the importance of editing to societies that base a large portion of their self-definition on textual traditions. As Jerome McGann has recently pointed out, academic libraries in the West are moving to digitize their holdings within the next fifty years. He continues by asserting that what is currently needed is a greater emphasis on bibliography in graduate education in order to prepare scholars to work on these projects.<sup>10</sup> Where I would like to add to McGann is in terms of his own editorial work, which has emphasized a socio-historical model – one that favours the exact reproduction of first editions, without editorial intervention – which has failed to offer effective means to produce accessible editions in the manner that his predecessors did. The difficulty with any approach that merely reproduces information is that it does nothing to increase accessibility. Rather, it is akin to the old lawyer's trick of sending too much information to opposing council when forced to share information. The idea being that too much information is the same –

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<sup>9</sup> The entire declaration is posted on the United Nations web site at: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>. More on this below.

<sup>10</sup> McGann elaborates this position in his March 10, 2002 speech at the University of Virginia's Humanities Center. The speech is online at: <http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/news/mcgannwebcast.htm>.

or worse – than no information at all.<sup>11</sup> I will argue that one of the central jobs of editing is to edit. That is, not only to make information accessible, but to do so in ways that promotes access through informed decision.

These terms may require some clarification. In particular, I will argue that preventing someone from accessing his or her cultural heritage is a criminal act. Universities throughout the world are examining these issues in several related forms. Beginning in Canada, this type of assumption led to the examination of early attempts to separate First Nations from their languages, and echoes Britain's long history of doing the same to the Irish, to the Australians, to Indians and to Euro-Canadians to name a few. Those working on the literatures of colonial and postcolonial writers argue that there is scarcely a region of the world not affected by this type of history.<sup>12</sup> Recently, a number of countries have started making efforts to alter these processes. Textually, this has meant the reediting of books in order to restore sections of work that were removed in order to fit a predetermined norm. In Canada, a good example of this is found in the debates over the editing of Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush*.<sup>13</sup> In this spectrum, we find a broad definition of the putative criminality of separating persons and cultural heritage.

This has an important correlative in the genesis and development of Departments of English – the field that partly determines the way in which I work. Throughout Western history, there are numerous examples of cultures seeking the development of

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<sup>11</sup> In the lead up to the recent Gulf War, the Bush administration accused Iraqi officials of doing this with their reports on weapons destruction.

<sup>12</sup> There are a number of exciting examples of "postcolonial" editing; one of the most articulate is the work of Paul Eggert reediting Australian texts. See, *Academy Editions of Australian Literature Manual for Editors*. Eggert, Paul, and Morrison, Elizabeth, Eds. Canberra: Australian Scholarly Editions Centre, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> See, Moodie, Susanna. *Roughing it in the bush, or, Life in Canada*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988. This Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts (CEECT) edition features an Introduction by editor Carl Ballstadt that details the Anglicization of Moodie's text and the need to re-establish its ties to Canadian composition.

national culture as support for political function. Beginning with the Roman appropriation of Greek Drama, Art and Artisanship, and later European countries' use of various strains of those same traditions, we see that the manipulation of culture often intricately ties to national identity. It would be hard to deny the power of establishing normative views of a people when what the political leadership desires is a nationalist form of identity or unity.<sup>14</sup> It seems to many now, that the cost of this norm is often too high. That is, more is lost than is gained when we exclude one set of voices in order to drive up the value of others.

This has meant that over time people have fought for greater rights of inclusion for a broader range of voices. What I will now ask is if this drive for inclusion can lead us too far from a useful structure – can it become counter productive to its cause? Can there be so many voices that we can no longer hear over the din? Or, in the current vernacular, could information-overload create an environment where no one is heard? As I will illustrate below, these arguments though noble in intent have led to a form of timidity in editing that has thrown us back by about a century in terms of our practice of editing. Each of the three major editing projects that I will examine is now dominated by groups who have opted for a form of digital reproduction of artifacts that amounts to a rebirth of the antiquarian movement that preceded the work of the New Bibliographers.

For now by way of maintaining our focus on English Departments, these questions involve issues known as the canon debates or culture wars. Those arguments involve a variety of different views, which have been rehearsed at length in a number of

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<sup>14</sup> I think here of the strategic development of identity in the writings and music of Wagner and their subsequent interaction with Nietzsche's early work. Regardless of the latter's rejection of their early shared interests it would be impossible to deny the central importance of their work (whether due to "authorial intention" or not) in the establishment of the Nazi regime.

venues.<sup>15</sup> For my purposes, I would like to observe in these debates the challenge to, or support of, choice - and in particular the choice of which texts to study, read and teach. Some portray these selections as part of an unfair attempt to find greater representation for particular texts within the scholarly curricula.<sup>16</sup>

The charge of criminality in these cases refers to the same notion of obstruction that I cite in my argument. Those who have challenged the canon along these lines have focused on three ideas. First, there is the suggestion that the professoriate took certain texts and elevated them in a concerted effort to display a specific type of subject that was useful to their own political purposes. Second, in order to achieve this end, the group established a system that showed certain works to be superior using a strict set of guidelines that establish a meritocracy. Third, they only implemented these formal evaluations when they delivered predetermined results – that is they implemented that meritocracy only for certain authors, thereby not only ignoring what is best by their own terms, but in effect precluding authors who might attempt to learn the codes by which to compete within the confines of the meritocracy from attempting to enter. The response to this set of problems was twofold. The first was a movement to open the canon – to render the obstruction permeable; the second sought to radically undermine the founding notions of canonicity. Accompanying both was a move toward a more cultural, less formal set of criteria for rendering works applicable for institutionalized instruction. In

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<sup>15</sup> Anyone reading this will by now be familiar with the debates over culture that have split across what many would see as right wing influence in the National Endowment for the Humanities in the United States and the left leading humanities academy on the other. For those who would like further information, Yale University's Jim Kalb maintains an online database of links related to the "wars" at: [http://counterrevolution.net/culture\\_wars.html](http://counterrevolution.net/culture_wars.html).

<sup>16</sup> The best analysis of the canon debate is John Guillory's *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

the work that follows, I will argue that while both advances have some merit, we need to refit formal critiques in order to continue working with our textual past.

In terms of editorial theory, we need to accept that editors may require rigid evaluative structures even more than their colleagues in other fields. Since the texts that editors deliver are the texts that we teach and read, we must recognize that editorial theory has an inherently different status than many other disciplinary distinctions within academic departments. While deconstructive challenges to fixed texts may be fascinating for second-order scholarship, i.e. the academic essay, they are anathema for editing. Further, to rely on recent developments in personal computers to argue that we no longer need to make decisions about texts, but rather leave readers to edit for themselves, removes a necessary entrance point for first time readers. That the developments of this form of literary theory and computational advancement occurred at almost the same moment creates an exciting set of circumstances. In order to demonstrate one way in which we may address these circumstances, I will argue that we should maintain the procedures that have worked for us in the past. For my purposes, I will demonstrate the need for a rigorous, localized application of formalism and show that without this, editors cannot edit texts. Here I will revisit the work of the New Bibliographers and their studies in philological approaches to texts. What we find is that this group, whatever their failings, were extraordinarily successful at providing usable texts. Those who have come after – those who are at the head of our current world of digital editing – have been quick to criticize, but slow to offer any real solutions. Moreover, I will show that the progressive political platforms of the newer editors are actually better served by their predecessors, who expanded readers' access to culture. In short, they edited texts. My

thesis will demonstrate that failing to edit is tantamount to erecting a new wall between society and its textual past.

The commitment to editing is of particular importance at a time when textual information and access to digital information are increasing exponentially. This climate creates a growing need for editors who can mediate the mass of texts that are the result of the development of digital technology. While it would be preposterous to assume that *Piers Plowman*, *Hamlet* or *Ulysses* will overrun the din of the Internet, their presence is a necessary part of the textual heritage of which the latter is a part. In a flood of textuality, academics must stand up for texts that deserve attention. As scholarly guides, we should be prepared to point out useable editions of texts that we feel have some place in our society.

A failure to engage with and edit the texts of our cultural heritage neglects the needs of readers who look to scholars for guidance. This requires a rethinking of the culture of self-laceration that has arisen out of certain forms of literary theory. While much of the critique of authority that arose from literary theory has successfully rooted out previously undisclosed structures, it has left a vacuum in certain areas. Certainly, we must question our assumption of authority, but failure to mediate culture is not an abdication of oppressive authority as much as it is the refusal of responsibility. Specifically then, I will argue for a return of some of the more effective aspects of formalism from the pre-theory period, in combination with some of the now well-established theoretical modes of critique in the name of providing access to our collective cultural heritage. These two moves can function effectively within the realm of philological critique under the broader category of hermeneutic study. Put in another

way, we need to refocus on the study of words in historical context under the sign of interpretation.

In terms of editorial theory, this leads to the idea that we need to lobby support for the editing of texts. It puts the impetus on scholars who must assume a form of cultural stewardship with regard to their small corner of the information world. To highlight this need, we need a critique of the modes of information dissemination. For textual scholars the two greatest historical moments involving dissemination are the first and second incunabular events.

For the next several pages, I want to look at two specific ideas that I will use to direct this study. First, I will examine the way in which I develop my method out of a study of the interaction of medieval studies and literary theory, the same ground which gives rise to D.C. Greetham's work and which has come to underwrite much research in computing in the humanities.<sup>17</sup> At this juncture, I find the initial material to develop my philological critique.

The second idea I examine involves the contemporary information climate. I will highlight what I see as a need for scholarly engagement in digital editing as a response to our contemporary situation. Once I have established these two lines of thought, I hope to demonstrate their practical value by conducting a series of meditations on the three specific textual traditions I mentioned earlier, with two chapters on each of *Piers*

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<sup>17</sup> In a panel discussion at "The Humanities Computing Curriculum / The Computing Curriculum in the Arts and Humanities," in Nanaimo, British Columbia (Nov.9-10, 2001), Dr. Susan Hockey of University College London explored the idea that classicists and medievalists seem to be more adept at making the cross into multimedia and digital projects. While I would include early modernists in this grouping, I agree with Dr. Hockey that these groups seem to have arrived more quickly on the digital scene. One would assume that this may have to do with the cost/benefit of being able to digitize materials that are difficult to access (i.e. manuscripts), but it might also be supposed that those already familiar with working "hands-on" with materials have skill sets that easily translate to a new technological application.

*Plowman, Hamlet* and *Ulysses*. My concluding chapter reflects on these examinations with a discussion of the relevance of this work and some suggestions for future research.

Along the way, studying Langland and Shakespeare will allow me to bring together considerations of the first incunabulum and editorial theory, since these works nicely bracket that period. Further, both authors are now finding a home in the second incunabulum with large-scale digital projects devoted to each.<sup>18</sup> In order to round out my examination of the second incunabulum, I look at James Joyce's most famous work, which not only is the result of a fascinating print history, but was also the subject of the first major computerized editing project when the TUSTEP program was used for the now famous Gabler edition.<sup>19</sup>

### **Theorizing History, Historicizing Theory**

There has been a great deal of discussion in the academy over the notion of interdisciplinarity during the past few years. Largely because of challenges to earlier categories of instruction, interdisciplinary projects were introduced to allow different research modes to co-exist and interact. One of the most significant results of these changes has been the growth of the "studies" model.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the most recognizable

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<sup>18</sup> I refer here specifically to Hoyt Duggan's *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* at: <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/seenet/piers/index.html>, and the *Internet Shakespeare Editions* at: <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/>.

<sup>19</sup> The TUSTEP program was developed at the University of Tübingen and continues to be improved upon. For more information on its creation and its uses in various projects (including the Gabler *Ulysses*), see the TUSTEP homepage at: <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/zdv/zrlinfo/ed1.html>.

<sup>20</sup> In a talk entitled, "Affect, Determination, and Constitutive Sociality in Literary Education," Charles Altieri addressed concerns he had about the functioning of the administration at Berkeley. As an administrator at that institution, he is part of a team looking for ways to foster a better working environment (ACCUTE. Laval, Quebec. May 25, 2001). The solution, according to Altieri, will come in the form of the "studies" model. For Altieri, this meant "cultural" and "film" studies, for others, "queer" or "women's"

among these groups have been Women's Studies, Queer Studies and the broader Cultural Studies. These areas of research seek to benefit from an intersection of various disciplines such as history, literature, philosophy, sociology and political science. These groupings have not only developed interesting work for their participants in particular and the community in general, they have provided new models for the way in which research, teaching and writing can occur within the academy. In these cases, the disciplinary categories are relatively new, coming about only within the last few decades.

I too have found the "studies" model useful in my work. My particular interest began with the Medieval Studies model. What I would like to consider for the next several pages is the idea that while some within medieval studies have complained in the past of being kept on the margins of larger research departments, it is this very exclusion that has fostered a mode of work that managed to fly by some of the theoretical quagmires that paralyzed many during the height of the culture wars.<sup>21</sup> In so doing, medieval studies offers unique examples of how one may work productively with texts in a manner that could well serve editorial practice in the digital age. In effect, medieval studies was functionally interdisciplinary *avant la lettre* and guaranteed a way of grounding research by focusing on a form of editing that involved manuscript studies. If the subject and signifier came under challenge, many medievalists were able to counter this, by using individual manuscripts to ground signification and found research projects. It is at precisely this point, where the textual meets the artifactual, that medieval models are able to offer a form of material engagement that has been missing in the others

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studies, for my study the development of a model out of medieval studies is far more effective, since it can provide room for all of the other models, while maintaining a level of material interaction with culture that leaves it perfectly situated to incorporate new technology.

<sup>21</sup> There are of course many famous examples of this paralysis, the grandest being the theory shift at Duke and the fragmentation of the grand American deconstructionists (along with the visiting Derrida) at Yale.

“studies.” What we find is that this addition is particularly useful when we begin to think of producing texts.

One of the ways in which the challenge of theory in medieval studies migrated into work on *Piers Plowman* was through critical commentary on the Athlone editions. Perhaps the most compelling work in this area is Lee Patterson’s “The Logic of Textual Criticism and the Way of Genius: The Kane-Donaldson *Piers Plowman* in Historical Perspective.” Lee Patterson’s criticism as it developed from 1987 to 1990 sought a place for medieval studies that would guarantee the discipline a chance at effecting change while participating in the theoretical debate.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, he tried to address the great “semiotic challenge” that first developed in Structuralist theory and culminated in the many forms of Deconstruction. Eventually, Patterson viewed medievalists as a disenfranchised group who needed to fight for more attention from their fellow scholars. While Patterson has a valuable contribution to make, I feel that he sometimes goes too far in bending medieval studies to fit theoretical molds that are one part theory, one part discipline-specific formulation. It is at this precise point that my philological critique departs from what Patterson has called “The New Philology.” While much of what I will argue can relate to Patterson’s work, I feel that he surrenders too much to the abstract.<sup>23</sup>

Patterson begins his article, “On the Margins: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies” with a quote from Umberto Eco: “The postmodern reply to the

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<sup>22</sup> Lee Patterson. *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987. In this book my primary focus was on the, “Preface” ix-xiv; and chapters 2 and 3 entitled, “Historical Criticism and the Claims of Humanism,” and “The Logic of Textual Criticism and the Way of Genius: The Kane-Donaldson *Piers Plowman* in Historical Perspective,” respectively. From 1990, I looked at “On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies.” 65 *Speculum* (1990) 87-108; and, “Critical Historicism and Medieval Studies.” *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380-1530*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

<sup>23</sup> The journal *Speculum* committed a full edition to a discussion of the New Philology which is now most often associated with Patterson and Howard Bloch. See, *Speculum* 65 1990.

modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot be destroyed, since its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently.”<sup>24</sup> Patterson builds on Eco and advocates an “ironic history” that would allow medievalists to forge ahead. They will however have to give up many aspects of their discipline, including much of the hands-on study of manuscripts.

I would argue that rather than using an ironic history, one might use an *ironic theory* to address the past. It is in this manner that scholars such as Steven Justice are able to address Patterson’s concerns without sacrificing the essence of the form of medieval studies. Further, by becoming aware of the sometimes-restrictive implications that theory has had on Patterson’s approach, we begin to see why it is important for medievalists to theorize – that is why a certain amount of theory is required in order to keep material analysis from being a form of highly specialized antiquarianism. An examination of Patterson’s work and Justice’s response will illustrate my point.

“The difference between past and present must be both absolute and yet, if history is to be written at all, negotiable.”<sup>25</sup> Lee Patterson’s preface to *Negotiating the Past* posits a new historicism based on, “cultural products” that are, “full participants in a historical world.”<sup>26</sup> Patterson argues for a totalizing politicization<sup>27</sup> that would act in response to the works of the Frankfurt School<sup>28</sup> and the legacy of Foucault<sup>29</sup> in a way that would help

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<sup>24</sup> Patterson, “On the Margin” 87.

<sup>25</sup> Patterson, *Negotiating the Past* xiii.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* xi.

<sup>27</sup> See Patterson, *Negotiating*, Chapter 3.

<sup>28</sup> Patterson, *Negotiating* 72. Patterson particularly warns against the collapsing of subject and object distinctions in the Frankfurt School’s Identity Theory. For more on Theodor Adorno’s attempt to avoid the logic of identity see his posthumously published *Aesthetic Theory*, 1970.

<sup>29</sup> Patterson’s ongoing dilemma with Foucault stems from his belief in a paralysis caused by Foucault’s methods. While this might be better attributed to Foucauldians rather than Foucault, Patterson does make his point. In particular he warns, “The Foucauldian vision of a carceral society is dangerously self-confirming: the individual disappears because the historian stops looking for him, just as the non-political

revitalize historicism, and in particular medieval historicism. The general thesis hinges on the negotiation of the text-context challenges originating in Saussurian<sup>30</sup> semiotics.

The second chapter of *Negotiating the Past* is entitled, "Historical Criticism and the Claims of Humanism."<sup>31</sup> Patterson believes that by viewing texts as part of a totality we can access forms of truth. In the chapter, he attempts to show that text without context is an illusion. In a shot at purely formalist criticism, Patterson asserts, "nothing makes the literary literary except the historical."<sup>32</sup> By examining and collapsing Jameson's three stages of totalization and Raymond Williams' idea of writing as production, Patterson manipulates traditional Marxist positions that attempt to address social issues while remaining aware of the challenges to binary formulations brought by antifoundationalist poststructuralism.<sup>33</sup>

Patterson explains critics' recalcitrance concerning Marxism as a fear of the "dogmatism" of political views. From this, he argues that while New Historicists avoid dogmatism, their solution leads to paralysis.<sup>34</sup> Deconstructionists, he feels, run from the whole issue in order to "escape history."<sup>35</sup> For example, Patterson contrasts Stephen Greenblatt's concept of "cultural poesis," which melds all things historical and textual with Williams' aforementioned "cultural materialism," which views history as a function of power struggles. For Patterson, these examples fail because of the paralyzing nature of

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yields wholly to a decoding that reveals it to have been political all along. There is no space outside power because power is the only term in the analyst's arsenal." *Negotiating the Past*, 67.

<sup>30</sup> See Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, New York: McGraw Hill, 1966. Patterson is more concerned with the reception of Saussurean linguistics than their origins.

<sup>31</sup> Patterson, *Negotiating* 41-74.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 41.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 45-74.

<sup>34</sup> The paralysis referred to in the attacks on the early Foucauldian position is seen as a natural outcome of collapsing discipline's variant methodologies. By examining the world and its history through a single lens, Foucault creates intriguing work but is accused of depriving his followers of a solid point from which to take action.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 59.

semiotic circularity and ideological dogmatism.<sup>36</sup> Finally, Patterson refuses to accept the outcome of Foucauldian theory, which, though reintroducing history, does so in such a fashion that it negates all opportunities for action. In this sense, the author accuses Foucauldians of a political conservatism they never intended.<sup>37</sup>

Patterson warns, “if you do not have an explicit politics – an ideology – then one will certainly have you.”<sup>38</sup> In what amounts to a rallying cry, the author warns of a unified attack on the humanities by the political right and the theoretical left. As an answer, Patterson argues for an awareness of the inherent difficulties in the question of subject/object or text/context but advises against collapsing them in the fashion of “identity theory” posited by the Frankfurt School. The merging of subject/object is useful for literary theory, but deadly to historicism – the solution lies in the recognition that although the subject (the present), and object (the past) are not “on equal footing,” we can still *negotiate* between the two.<sup>39</sup>

In Chapter 3 of the book, Patterson examines positivist historicism and humanist belief by analyzing the Kane-Donaldson edition of *Piers Plowman B*. We are told, “[l]iterary historicism is necessarily predicated on the assumed coherence of all historical periods and the correlative belief that a text can yield up its significance only when its

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 57-59.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 69-70. This conservatism as Patterson calls it is a direct outcome of the paralysis associated with Foucauldian method and develops from earlier criticism of Foucault, mostly in the popular press of the political left in France. See note 14. It should be noted that this conservatism requires that we disregard both the early and late writings of Foucault that specifically addressed activism and political identification. For more on this see Foucault’s early article on Binswanger and the second and third volumes of the *History of Sexuality*. Secondary sources include Richard Dellamora’s *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990; David Halperin’s *Saint Foucault: Toward a Homosexual Hagiography*. Oxford University Press, 1997; and David Macey’s biography, *The Lives of Michel Foucault: A Biography*. New York: Pantheon, 1994.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 70.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

affiliations with its historical moment are laid bare.”<sup>40</sup> This stems from Patterson’s thesis from Chapter 2, which states, “[s]pecifically I wish to argue that historical criticism must abandon the hope of any theoretical foundation and come to rest instead on its own historically contingent moment, and upon convictions that find their final support within experience.”<sup>41</sup>

Patterson explores these themes with an analysis of Kane and Donaldson’s editing techniques. The chapter focuses on the edition’s notion of the “logic of error”<sup>42</sup> and uncovers a semi-ethereal, or “transhistorical”<sup>43</sup> nature of editing and textual study that shows the editors tapping into the “genius” of history.<sup>44</sup> While countering the limitations he perceives in Foucauldian archaeology, Patterson includes a new positivist twist. Patterson criticizes the negative connotations surrounding positivism in this tradition while attempting to reinstate a form of history that will allow for action. The argument almost necessarily invokes early connections between this form of historical literary studies and German Idealism when Patterson writes, “[i]n effect, *Altertumswissenschaft* becomes *Geistesgeschichte*, a spiritualized historicism in which historical analysis is at once justified and contained by the discovery of the genius that is at the heart of history.”<sup>45</sup>

Patterson continues his call for a new “active” history in several other articles. In “Critical Historicism and Medieval Studies” and “On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 101.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 48.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 86.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 99.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 95-98.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

History, and Medieval Studies,” he describes the systematic marginalization of medievalists.

The first article points out two groups that have pursued a reinstatement of functional history. The first are “antifoundationalist poststructuralists,” who seek to place critical attention on texts that were not previously given attention. The other group consists of “socially aware” critics who have come to acknowledge theoretical choices as “life choices.”<sup>46</sup> Ever the historian, Patterson hastens to remind us, “theory itself is historically contingent.”<sup>47</sup>

In a more detailed presentation of the above, the second article develops a view of where medieval studies have been and where they must go, if they hope not to “suffocate.”<sup>48</sup> Patterson continues his policy of demanding a kinetic historicism by pointing out the areas that have hampered medieval study.

The difficulties, as Patterson sees them, result in a marginalization of medieval studies. For Patterson, this marginalization is largely the responsibility of Renaissance scholarship.<sup>49</sup> Renaissance scholars, who claim the period was the beginning of the modern ideas of selfhood and individuality, are said to use the Middle Ages as the non-modern “other” against which the Renaissance defines itself. Further, this marginalization, which in turn causes medievalists to suffer academically and professionally, are partly the fault of medievalists themselves, who, Patterson argues, are too involved in the hands-on analysis of texts to theorize their way out of their marginal position. Moreover, the suffering of medievalists has only increased because of

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<sup>46</sup> Patterson, “Critical Historicism and Medieval Studies” 8.

<sup>47</sup> Patterson, “Critical Historicism” 9.

<sup>48</sup> Patterson, “On the Margin” 108.

<sup>49</sup> Patterson, “Margin” 92ff.

encroaching literary theory, which has robbed historicism of its academic credibility and political agency.

Yet, I wonder if this exclusion is entirely negative. I believe that the resulting isolation leaves the medievalist in a unique position to capitalize on the post-modern project. That is, medieval scholars are “othered” out of a field of discussion that could only serve to limit the inherently interdisciplinary aspects of their research.<sup>50</sup> Patterson has a different response. By raising the postmodern banner of “performativity,” Patterson argues that medievalists can benefit from the concerns of the marginalized by embracing the freedom of “the loss of meaning” as laid out by Jean-François Lyotard.<sup>51</sup> In order to do so, medievalists are encouraged to “let down the barriers” between their discipline and other literary groups and to redefine interdisciplinary studies to encompass a program of performance-related work. The author reflects on E.N. Johnson’s 1953 position that, “if we cannot help fix the problem, we will be replaced.”<sup>52</sup> Curiously, this seems to argue that in order to be medievalists, medievalists must give up being medievalists.

In total, Patterson’s contribution to theoretical analysis of medieval studies is formidable if somewhat overzealous. Certainly, his suggestion that he is avoiding abstract theory in order to operate in an historically contingent moment is fallacious, but his analysis of medieval studies in the context of the “great semiotic challenge” and the

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<sup>50</sup> Patterson, “Margin” 104ff.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 89. Patterson plays fast and furious with notions of totalization and performativity that he extrapolates from Lyotard’s, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1972. Patterson argues that, “The question is no longer ‘Is it true?’ but ‘Does it work?’” 89. While loosely presenting totalization as a symptom of Foucauldian methodology he argues that Medievalists need a new idea of interdisciplinary study that works and that avoids totalization. If the concepts seem somewhat unclear, it is due to Patterson’s redefinition of these loaded terms in relation to his particular version of postmodernism.

<sup>52</sup> Taken from, E.N. Johnson, “American Medievalists and Today,” *Speculum* 28 (1953), 844-54. It is in this context of performativity that I feel Justice and Kerby-Fulton have shown that their scholarship “works” – meaning, quite simply that their articles hold up against a close critique. Taken to the logical extreme, bad scholarship would not hold up, proving Johnson’s point that if something/one did not work it/they would be replaced.

marginalization of the Middle Ages as a period forms an excellent groundwork for studying the question of how one might effectively theorize the area. Perhaps the best critique of Patterson's work comes from an aside in Steven Justice's introduction to his award-winning book, *Writing and Rebellion*.<sup>53</sup>

In his introduction, Justice deftly manages a critique of Patterson and sidesteps the difficulties that the latter sees in Foucauldian paralysis and deconstructive *différance*. Moreover, Justice's non-theory proves itself in terms of the aforementioned postmodern performativity without sacrificing the empirical tools of the medieval scholar. The result is that his work on the John Ball letters, for example, shows a history that can help "fix the problem" without surrendering itself to a prefabricated or tendentious theory. The counter-theory argument is practice – or "work," a consistent theme in Justice's writing. The fix is, however, somewhat different from Patterson's perspective. While Patterson seeks to forge bonds between the medievalist and others in departments of English, Justice's interdisciplinarity reaches more toward departments of history.

Justice points out two central problems in Patterson's position. These are: 1) if medievalists give up learning how to work hands-on with manuscripts, they leave themselves bound to using texts that are delivered to them by others; and 2) the empirical disciplines themselves allow for the reconstitution of texts that have not yet been examined or that have been insufficiently represented. Moreover, he makes the case that the physicality of the text can teach us things about that text.<sup>54</sup> I would like here to mark

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<sup>53</sup> Justice, Steven. *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 6-7. For comparison, see Gabrielle Spiegel's article, "History, Historicism and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages." *Speculum* 65 (1990): 59-86. Spiegel makes a call for change that is much more moderate in tone than Patterson's, though Justice would argue that she does not go far enough in preserving the empirical aspects of Medieval Study. Additional work on the importance of the physicality of texts can be found in the development of the concept of "bibliographic codes" developed by Jerome McGann, for which see his, *The Textual Condition*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

two points that I will deal with in detail below. The first is the problem of attestation, which entails questions of who constitutes a reliable source, and how and when we can trust a source. The second stems from Justice's note on the materiality of the text, which coincides with Jerome McGann's idea of "bibliographic codes," which has recently come to the fore in editorial theory. Both of these ideas are of central importance to the discussion of how to edit texts, and I will deal with them in more detail later.

When dealing with "Foucauldian gloom" Justice is quick to point out that not all texts are incorporated in a theory of the powerful – adding that the historian must look not only for the "cunning of power" but also its "moments of stupidity."<sup>55</sup> As for deconstruction, Justice quickly acknowledges the gaps and cracks left by Derridean *différance* and observes, "fissures and gaps are things one can see through and past."<sup>56</sup> An *ironic* theory if ever there was one.

This ability to "see through and past" finds a home in Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton's *Written Work: Langland, Labor and Authorship*. In the introduction to that book, Justice speaks to the formalist roots of the "great semiotic challenge" where critical historicism was first attacked, and asserts that "[t]he power of modernist formalism as a conceptual tool derived from the audacity with which it pulled writing free from

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 5. It is worth pointing out that I disagree with the reading of Foucault to which Justice is responding. While I do not want to spend too much time away from my main point, the reception and interpretation of Foucault's work that Justice takes issue with is a form that is used in the New Historicist school of Stephen Greenblatt and relates rather directly to the translation and interpretation of Foucault by Dreyfus and Rabinow (see in particular *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Herbert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), whereby those two contributing editors attempt to draw a line of progression through the early Foucault by demonstrating a form of progress leading from the early "archaeological" work which Dreyfus and Rabinow tie to structuralism, and the later "genealogical" work which the two link to Nietzsche and poststructuralism. It is my position that this is a fundamental misreading of the Foucauldian project; one that Foucault fought throughout his career.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

contingency.”<sup>57</sup> Arguing that poststructural criticism merely recasts many of the notions of its formalist predecessors, Justice points out that when contemporary literary theorists found the need to address historical figures, they “made biography the metaphorical expression of literary form.”<sup>58</sup> *Written Work* challenges the limitations of a non-historical view of authorship by presenting a series of studies that examine the “Apologia” in the C text of *Piers Plowman*. Justice argues that these limitations can only serve to reify the “axiological contest between the versions.”<sup>59</sup>

In a chapter entitled “Langland and the Bibliographic Ego,”<sup>60</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton makes clear the need for an awareness of audience and reader response in the study of *Piers Plowman*, while demonstrating the way that history and literature can work together to produce functional scholarship. Neither Justice nor Kerby-Fulton is a pretender to absolutism. Throughout essays such as “*Piers Plowman*”<sup>61</sup> and “Who Has Written This Book”<sup>62</sup> (a precursor to her chapter in *Written Work*), Kerby-Fulton is as relentless in her emphasis on the inherent difficulties of studying texts historically, as she is adamant that it is “worth the risk.”<sup>63</sup> It is in this enthusiasm for the “risk” of the historical approach that Kerby-Fulton and Justice meld a practice based on what editorial theorists know as internal and external evidence. It is worth noting that research such as this, that makes careful attempts to examine its own methods as part of its critique, bears striking similarity to the Heideggerian philosophical hermeneutics, while the commitment

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<sup>57</sup> *Written Work: Langland, Labor and Authorship*. Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton Eds. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, 3.

<sup>58</sup> Justice, “Introduction: Authorial Work and Literary Ideology,” in *Written Work*. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Justice, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, “Langland and the Bibliographic Ego,” in *Written Work* 67-143.

<sup>61</sup> Kerby-Fulton, Kathryn. “*Piers Plowman*.” 1-19.

<sup>62</sup> Kerby-Fulton, Kathryn. “Who Has Written This Book?” *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England*. M. Glasscoe ed. Cambridge: Brewer, 1992. 110-116.

<sup>63</sup> Kerby-Fulton. “Bibliographic Ego” 68.

to literary/historical, historical/literary research connects to classical or Humboldtian philological hermeneutics.

In a manner similar to that in which Justice sidesteps Patterson's traps of poststructuralism and Foucauldian gloom, Kerby-Fulton contextualizes *Piers* studies in the aftermath of the "axiological challenge between the versions:"

That it should be somehow unusual to stress the historical reality of Langland's authorship of *Piers Plowman* is a peculiarity of *Piers* studies. It runs counter to an attitude built up over decades of well-intentioned scholarship on the poem, from the early authorship controversies which divided Langland into as many as five authors, through the New Critical insistence that every "I" speaker has only aesthetic existence as a persona, to Deconstruction's view that Will functions merely as an "unstable analogy" – whatever that may mean.<sup>64</sup>

What is clear in Kerby-Fulton's work, as in Justice's, is the *ironic theory* applied to any challenge that might inhibit material work. This is not to say that either is flippant in their commentary. Both acknowledge the value of other approaches, but what they seem unwilling to do is to abandon empirical methods in favour of appeasing the theoretical challenges of which Patterson warns. These are the works of theoretical pragmatists; they remain skeptical of anything that challenges meaning wholesale, but include analyses that stem from the work of the continental theorists whose work is at the heart of Patterson's discussion. If their work is in one sense resistant to theoretical categorization, it seems much easier to capture them as committed scholarly *workers*. In this sense, Kerby-Fulton joins Justice in answering Patterson's worries, while quickly moving to demonstrate the "performative"<sup>65</sup> power of their work.

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<sup>64</sup> Kerby-Fulton. "Bibliographic Ego" 73.

<sup>65</sup> The performative here connects directly to Lyotard's "postmodern performativity." By implementing an ironic theory, the authors are able to choose work over idleness in the face of the loss of meaning. See, Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979. 112.

The examination of the medieval convention of bibliographic ego in “Langland and the Bibliographic Ego” is meticulous and determined. Pausing four times to remind us of the risks involved in her approach, the author forces us to consider, or reconsider, the position of the author in relation to text, to scribes, to contemporary audiences and to the modern reader, while at the same time relying on the material roots of codicology and paleography.<sup>66</sup>

The work raises questions of scribal communities and those of disenfranchised or underemployed clerics and the challenges they faced. Importantly, it also mimics their practices. Placing the author of *Piers Plowman* within these ranks changes the ways in which we might evaluate the poem. Moreover, it goes a long way toward explaining the type of audience that may have conditioned the various stages of the writing of the poem. Adding to Justice’s work on the John Ball letters, Kerby-Fulton gives us further insight into the way in which socioeconomic classes were beginning to rub against one another in and around the time of the 1381 uprising. This historical evidence is used to argue that any editorial attempt at uniting the (at least three) “versions” of *Piers Plowman* into a single volume would sacrifice far more than was ever before imagined.<sup>67</sup>

Uniting the historical and the literary, Justice and Kerby-Fulton utilize the concepts of “malleable texts” and “social authorship.”<sup>68</sup> In these terms, if close reading

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<sup>66</sup> Kerby-Fulton. “Bibliographic Ego” 67-143.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 110.

<sup>68</sup> Both Justice and Kerby-Fulton explore the way in which texts in a manuscript culture change or are changed by various forces. In examinations that beg for reinterpretations of reader response theory, we see evidence, as in the C “Apologia,” of an author’s struggling against the implications of amorphous texts and what it meant to have them linked to the author. Two other items to consider along these lines are Gerald L. Bruns, “The Originality of Texts in a Manuscript Culture.” *Comparative Literature*. 32 (1980): 113-129; and, Stephen G. Nichols, “Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture.” *Speculum* 65 (1990): 1-10. Bruns offers a comparison of closed texts and open texts. Closed texts are those of a print culture and open texts those of the manuscript culture. Nichols’ article provides a more general approach to studying manuscript expression.

and semiotics have offered one reading of critical history, this new interdisciplinary approach attempts to provide a complement. Locating the origin of meaning in a historically placed manuscript, rather than searching specifically within the story or literary biography, the project finds a useful starting point. In an answer to Lee Patterson, this work not only “performs,” it opens space for continued research with an even greater emphasis on the empirical tools with which medievalists began. As Kerby-Fulton argues, “[o]nly further (and massive) textual, codicological, and cultural work can really supply us with the evidence for these historical readings...”<sup>69</sup> This continual return to the manuscript, which is itself an historical artifact, ensures a solid ground upon which to build future projects. Moreover, these documents by nature of their rarity guarantee the institution of an unquestionable basis for value. If scarcity was in the past determined by rarity of form, this work is able to maintain the benefits of scarcity by linking them to rarity of extant documents and the shrines within which they must be studied. One might contest the aesthetic value of *Piers Plowman*, but the market value of the artifact known as *Douce 104* is not as easily denied. The editors and authors of *Written Work* are further able to connect to an author function that borrows directly from the power of the manuscript. Kerby-Fulton continues this same line, saying of her paper, “if it serves the purpose of engaging other scholars in these problems it will have done enough to satisfy its own author’s bibliographic ego.”<sup>70</sup> This is clearly, a call to action that subverts the hyper-personalized trend inherent in New Historicism, while reminding scholars that they must, like Piers, plow their half-acre before they can wander off into mental and spiritual speculation. What is interesting is the line of authority that seems to run from the *Piers*

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<sup>69</sup> Kerby-Fulton. “Bibliographic Ego,” 142-3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

poet to the current critic, to the scholars of the future. Again, I would argue that this form of traditionalism finds its roots in philological study, where authority is most often rooted in the physical.

Lest I seem too excited over the prospect of this work, we should remain aware of the potential dangers of this approach. Over-reading and under-theorizing can lead scholars to join the Johns But and Ball and others in the “social authorship” of these texts. Wading too far into literary history without remaining continually aware of the risks that Justice and Kerby-Fulton acknowledge can lead to a particularly tendentious form of scholarship. The corrective for this in philological terms is the implementation of the Heideggerian/Gadamerian critique of onto-theological origins. Without straying too far into an explanation of this work, I believe that both Justice and Kerby-Fulton are implementing this critique when they use what I have termed *ironic theory*. Whether one agrees with this implementation, it is hard to argue with its efficacy.

I see work of this kind as particularly important for any medieval digitization projects, which focus on transcription. We should note that while these pursuits have great potential, they run the risk of becoming merely an electronic mode of hobbyist collecting if they too do not find some way to incorporate a critical analysis of method. Failure to ground work in effective editorial theory is one sure way to fall prey to this trap.

Another danger forms the root of a debate that is already underway. While Justice and Kerby-Fulton present their studies in a way that serves their work, their commitment to empirical methods creates a backlash from strictly theory-based scholars.<sup>71</sup> While one

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<sup>71</sup> For an intriguing look at some of the possibilities brought about by this work see *Representations* 56 (1996). In particular Carlo Ginzberg's, “Making it Strange: The Prehistory of a Literary Device,” (8-28)

aspect of this involves the ongoing battle between material and purely theoretical criticism, I believe that there is a further, more basic problem. Simply put, close hands-on examination of manuscripts and texts is arduous work that requires specialized training. Not everyone will be excited at the prospects of dusting off their Latin texts and getting out their magnifying glasses. If we are experiencing a paradigm shift to an ironic theory that overlays a new commitment to multi-disciplinary work, then scholars in many fields are faced with new challenges, whether those involve a greater knowledge of theory for some, or the learning of empirical study techniques for others. This is an inherent threat of interdisciplinarity. In a world where scholars are already overworked, arguing for training that is more comprehensive may not be a popular position. This problem is compounded by the fact that if we accept the relevance of material textual information, then most scholars currently operating in the academy will also require upgrading of their knowledge of the new and most popular mode of textual transmission – computers and networked databases.

When Steven Justice talks about the political conservatism that Foucauldians unintentionally supported, he highlights the crux of this problem. Uniting historical documents and literary works and viewing them as the same “text” oversimplifies the examination of each. While this can create fascinating research, the price is high; and in the end, its theoretical outcome is the paralysis that he has characterized as “Foucauldian

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Trash: The Changing Media of Cultural Memory,” (123-134) which is a fascinating look at the changing role of words and memorabilia in the long term process of historical memory/forgetting. All are excellent examples of new ground being opened up. In his introduction to the issue Randolph Starn provides us with four key components to “The New Erudition” (the issue’s title). These are: 1) “a penchant for detail;” 2) “a predilection for the curious or strange;” 3) “a latitudinarian attitude toward distinctions of genre, discipline and cultural states – similar to but outside of ‘interdisciplinary,’” and 4) “a genealogical approach” (2).

gloom”<sup>72</sup> and that Lee Patterson has seen as positively anti-historical. The result of this union of theorized versions of history and literature is that it has left the impression for some that the two areas cannot operate in a “performatively” positive way. Patterson’s work provides an example of these apprehensions. In fact, this is merely one further demonstration of the perils of interdisciplinarity. How can anyone possibly do the work required to function across fields? We should be reminded of Foucault’s early suggestion for those who would follow his archaeological method that “one ought to read everything.”<sup>73</sup> In the end, for many the cure is worse than the disease.

The distinction between these two groups that interests me involves a notion that is also of particular importance for editors, that of attestation, or the support of argument through evidence. What I highlight as the productive element in medieval studies has directly to do with the position of manuscripts as points of attestation for an editing project. While antifoundationalist literary theory had a distinct effect on the notion of the author, this same challenge did not reach to the level of the manuscript. As such, medieval studies founded on this work remained immune from certain forms of theoretical challenge. Patterson, for his part, did not see the potential in the use of the manuscript as foundation. My project seeks to further examine this migration of authority to the level of the artifact. My final destination, again lies somewhere in-between relying on manuscript proof uncritically, which would be an overt denial of contingency, and outright subscription to the poststructural position highlighted by Lee Patterson.

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<sup>72</sup> As I mentioned earlier, I am not convinced that Foucault’s work leads to this form of paralysis. However, the reception of his work is what is at issue here, and in its American New Historical form, the challenges that Justice perceives are valid. For a critique on the specifics of this form of New Historicism see Edward Pechter’s “The New Historicism and Its Discontents: Politicizing Renaissance Drama.” *PMLA* 102 (1987) 3: 292-303.

<sup>73</sup> Interview: “The Order of Things,” in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*. Sylèvre Lotringer, Ed. Lysa Hochroth and John Johnston Trans. New York: Semiotext(e), 1989, 1996. 14.

Developing from this, my *posited pathway* approach argues for the willful manipulation of meaning in order to continue the practice of editing. To support my argument I would point toward Cornelius Castoriadis' "assumption of autonomy," Kierkegaard's "leap of faith" and Michel de Certeau's "belief in believing." In each case, we choose to believe in order to achieve a given result – which for me is the provision of access to cultural heritage.

In one sense this is pragmatism, in another it follows antifoundationalism to its logical extreme. I am willing to accept the absolute loss of meaning. I would however remind readers of the old saying that nature abhors a vacuum. Into that vacuum, I insert the idea that in order to proceed we should accept a series of assumptions. First, as I mentioned above – there is value in a culture having access to its heritage. Second, barring such access may border on the criminal. Third, those who work with cultural artifacts have a responsibility to support the type of editing that contributes to accessibility. Later, I will add to this some specific assumptions about the way in which we can mount a postmodern practice of editing by positing a starting point that I will call the "author" in order to develop posited pathways that can result in outcomes that I will call "books." These final assumptions rely on a strategic implementation of structure. The reason this must involve such a rigorous reapplication of form is a response to needs created by our current information environment. It is to that situation that I would now like to turn.

### Information Overload and the Responsible Editor

“People who say that tomorrow belongs to them are usually angling for a piece of today.” – Geoffrey Nunberg, *The Future of the Book*.

Few who read these words will feel they are not currently getting enough information in their daily diet. People may want better information, but they are not suffering from lack of quantity. In the recent past, readers faced with multiple options turned to the critic for reading recommendations. In academic terms, this came to mean that most colleges and universities taught a list of authors from Chaucer to T.S. Eliot who fit certain aesthetic criteria. This group came to be known as the literary canon. Over the past three decades, there has been a shift away from this evaluative model and toward one that is more broadly political or cultural. A crucial part of this move has been an attack on the foundations of canonicity and aesthetic judgment. While I would not seek to deny the benefits of opening the canon, I would suggest that in our current information environment readers will benefit from a new generation of editors acting as information guides through our literary and cultural heritage. These are the guides that I have compared to *docents*. Whatever we call them, they would behave as editors who would produce texts and suggest reading lists.

Corporate content providers that answer the desires of readers increasingly speak to the paucity of evaluative comment that was in the past provided by large-scale editing projects. The public, abandoned by these editors, continue to read, though they do so in absence of relevant academic engagement. In order to offer a counter-interpretation, I suggest that intellectuals, whether aesthetically or politically minded, can learn from the traditions of hermeneutics and philology that I have mentioned above, which offer

aspects of formalism and can provide means toward a better form of content provision while maintaining an historical context. This new formalism can allow us a set of shared terms with which we can engage the texts from our past and the readers of our present. At worst, it will make us arms dealers in the culture wars. At best, we will be expert content providers that support informed choices by readers.

The quote from Geoffrey Nunberg at the top of this section highlights what I see as a trend toward capitalizing on information glut. In order to argue about who owns the future, prognosticators have very often shown a world that shines more brightly for those who arrive technologically prepared for the increased flow of information. Media broadcasts like *CNN Headline News* and *CTV News Net* make manifest a world unfolding against the backdrop of a new epistemology that is inextricably bound to this new technology. Failure to appreciate the challenges of the new modality result in our being left behind.<sup>74</sup> This trend is apparent in a number of ways, but makes itself most readily known in contemporary advertising for business solutions, up-to-the-minute news, and bandwidth provision. In the language put forth by companies like IBM, CNN, Shaw, Rogers, and AT&T a new vision of the multi-tasking human is forming. The implication is that those who think along linear lines will be replaced by a new group capable of monitoring the NASDAQ, current headlines and the weather simultaneously. A direct target of this message is the baby boom market. Fortunately for cash-flush boomers, the challenge dissipates after the purchase of a technological supplement. The digital solution overcomes human shortcomings with bandwidth, digital memory and central processing units.

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<sup>74</sup> So entrenched is the idea that new is better, that current television advertisements are attempting to erase the memories of the high-tech bubble burst, by speaking of the “*new new economy*.”

I would like to argue that the current transition from print-based communication to a form that is primarily digital would be well served by a new application of philology and hermeneutics. As I suggest above, the hermeneutics I argue for falls between the old Heideggerian/Gadamerian “philosophical hermeneutics” and the classical “philological hermeneutics” that started roughly with Augustine and culminated with Schleiermacher, von Humboldt and Boeck.<sup>75</sup> While I maintain the hermeneutic concern with the pursuit of meaning, what separates a hermeneutic examination of textual processes from current poststructural and postmodern investigations is the realization that text is at all points caught up in context. Thus, a new formalism does not necessarily have to attempt to pull textuality free of the world of its readers. It does however remain committed to notions of meaning and of engaged or immanent critique. I hope to show that power, as it relates to the web, bears a strong relation to the presentation, packaging and selling of understanding. As such, I believe that a critique of *retail meaning* is necessary.

As a site for examination, I offer the locus between material textuality and the allegedly hyper-real<sup>76</sup> world of the digital – a space that has seen calls for the death of the

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<sup>75</sup> Briefly, the first relates to Heidegger’s and then Gadamer’s attempts to establish a hermeneutics that escaped the teleology of the ontotheologic tradition. The second is more directly historical and more specifically concerned with defining understanding and quantifying its pursuit. I would not seek to undermine either critique, but rather to distance my work from the potentials for circularity in the Heideggerian-Gadamerian tradition and the need to incorporate the “voice of God” in terms of textual authority in the second. For English-speaking readers interested in pursuing the work, Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, Wilhem von Humboldt and Philip August Boeck, a good beginning point is *The Hermeneutics Reader*. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer ed. New York: Continuum Publishing, 1985.

<sup>76</sup> Mark Poster provides an excellent analysis of the line between pre- and post-digital realities. See for example his *The Second Media Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, and *What’s Wrong with the Internet?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. Poster’s critique makes use of Foucauldian social theory in order to mount a political reading of the digital age. His concept of the underdetermined and overdetermined aspects of media are particularly useful. Developing this theory from Freudian and then Althusserian overdetermination, Poster argues that hypertext and the virtual are underdetermined – which for him describes a state that is so complex that it leaves itself open to ever increasing interpretation. For Poster, this is politically efficacious; for my purposes it offers yet another diagnosis of the stress caused by the loss of meaning and information overload. See in particular, *What’s Wrong*, 1-20.

book in order to allow for the birth of hyperspace.<sup>77</sup> I suggest that we should consider the old-style textual editor and philologist as sources of information for new guides and designers. In so doing, I hope to illustrate the ways in which past methods can be further developed for use in new media. I would like to look first at the ways in which the textual has been moving into the digital age.

Many early projects in computer mediated editing experienced delays as standard forms of tagging and storage were tested.<sup>78</sup> Currently, we seem to be settling into a *mélange* of SGML, HTML, and XML markup,<sup>79</sup> with the latter poised to dominate the field.<sup>80</sup> While electronic encoding started out with the cataloguing and storing of information, it now focuses on the speed and strength of searches through databases and archives. It is at this point that we confront meaning. Editors who create textual databases must turn to notions of meaning if they hope to provide usable structures in their interface.

The structure of these databases and archives should relate to the relevant text. This would mean for example that a site dedicated to *Hamlet* would incorporate individual data in most records of the play mentioning that there is some form of narrative based on revenge. For this narrative to exist a particular output string needs to be acknowledged. This may at first seem obvious, but if we create databases that view

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<sup>77</sup> For more on this debate see the series of essays for and against this proposal in Geoffrey Nunberg's *The Future of the Book*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

<sup>78</sup> One of the best places to pursue this debate online is Humanist, an online computer seminar devoted to all aspects of Humanities computing. The group has mirrored sites at: <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/humanities/cch/humanist/> and <http://www.princeton.edu/~mccarty/humanist/>.

<sup>79</sup> I will for the remainder of the essay refer to marked up text in general as text that has had tags added to it in order to allow it to be presented in a web browser or similar reader.

<sup>80</sup> The move toward XML goes well beyond the use of computing in textual and cultural studies; Microsoft President Steven Ballmer has claimed that they are staking the future of their company on XML. A myriad of articles on this topic exist, for a general account, see Jay Greene's article "Microsoft's Big Bet" in *Business Week*, at [http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00\\_44/b3705001.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00_44/b3705001.htm).

each word or each line as separate and then allow for any output, we end up forgetting that in order for Hamlet to seek revenge, there must first be a murder (or at least the perception thereof). This need not be a rigid linearity, but must be something more than just a word list or corpora. Beyond this primary appreciation of a text's particular hermeneutic circle, there are three main areas of concern for new editors. Each of these involves human participation in the creation of and interaction with the database. The first of these is the data-entry interface, the second is the creation of search-enabling algorithms and the third is the output decision or reader interaction.

Primary interfaces, such as those using basic text-editing programs, are problematic because they involve long hours of repetitious work, and usually run on a volunteer or near-volunteer basis. (We would be on a dramatically different path if we had a large supply of adequately trained and funded workers to input data at the primary stage.) Currently a number of large companies employ great numbers of non-experts to create digital texts, the best known of these being the Chadwyk-Healy group.<sup>81</sup> In most of these cases, there is considerable distance between those working with the text and the actual content.

Secondary interfaces involve the implementation of various software and hardware solutions to support the editorial project. This level of interface is changing rapidly as researchers test new ways to encode their work and as software and hardware companies attempt to tap the funds available in the academic marketplace.<sup>82</sup> Editors can

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<sup>81</sup> <http://www.chadwyck.com/> The Chadwyk-Healy group is part of the larger Bell and Howell Company that trades in a variety of different forms of information products.

<sup>82</sup> Two recent, though methodologically different developments in this area are worth mention. The first is the move from the *web site* to the *web portal*. For a useful critique of this move see Vincent Miller's, "Search Engines, Portals and Global Capitalism" in David Gauntlett ed. *web.studies: Rewiring media studies for the digital age*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. See online component at: <http://www.newmediastudies.com/webbook.htm>. The second development involves Microsoft's recent

now use prefabricated Document Type Definitions (DTDs) when marking up a text for publication.<sup>83</sup> This saves time, but sacrifices variation that is part of text-specific editing practices. It is not that DTDs can never be reused, but the decision to do so should never be seen as final even after an edition is complete. This is particularly important in humanities research, which is predicated on an ability to grow and change with research rather than remaining relentlessly committed to a predetermined plan.

The third point involves the growing number of texts that incorporate the needs of researchers, students and general readers by providing a greater breadth and depth of information than has normally been available in scholarly monographs or trade paperbacks. Readers now expect a rich background of materials to complement every text they consult. In each of these areas, editors have a role to play in content brokerage.

It would be insufficient to arrange these materials along a merely formal line – for example, all texts and graphics supporting the theme of revenge in *Hamlet*. Here the sociohistorical should complement the formal. However, once we admit forms of cultural history, we need to ensure that some time goes to contemporary (in this case digital) cultural history. After all, the medium is part of the message. For example, primary textual content (an edited version of *Hamlet*) is complemented and/or constituted by external information (Shakespeare's biography, English theatre history, discussions of blank verse, transcriptions of other versions etc.), and by the recent notion of the simultaneous experience of each (the multimedia presentation of same), thereby creating an expression not only of one specific Shakespearean tragedy, but of a form of

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commitment to back XML as the primary force behind their software. XML, which is (almost) as readable by humans as by computer, allows for a level of document description that can greatly enhance some forms of document searching.

<sup>83</sup> In my experience, this has also come to be a popular way to demonstrate productivity in an editing project when dealing with granting agencies.

scholarship and a time and place of production and consumption. The very environment in which this operates is one that is for now primarily defined by corporate marketing strategies.

Recalling Foucault's thesis that meaning fundamentally connects to power, we should realize that the Internet, which is one of the main sources (if not *the* main source) of information for college and university students today, is a form of medium developed by researchers in conjunction with the United States military.<sup>84</sup> Further, even though its chief overlay (the World Wide Web) was developed by an independent researcher (Tim Berners-Lee), it is increasingly in the hands of corporate capital and government regulators.<sup>85</sup> There is no need to participate in a sadomasochistic quest for conspiracy here, but scholarship that fails to consider these material conditions seems insufficient. Irony cannot sufficiently reposition intent. This means that in the same way that the medievalist must analyze the manuscript, the digital editor must examine the machine(s).

As I mentioned above, the marketing of new technology is currently using a notion of simultaneity, which it suggests is inherent in digital thought. Hi-tech marketing strategies foreground this notion, implying that there is a new epistemology based on an ability to experience multiple streams of information concurrently. The only way to ensure simultaneity is to keep up with the newest releases of computer hard- and software. Conveniently, this message most often targets the baby boom generation, which is now reaching the age at which it is expected to feel threatened by "the new" and can afford to address these fears with expensive, mechanical remedies.

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<sup>84</sup> I would suggest here not only the early structural analysis of power in Foucault's works on prisons and mental hospitals, but also the later formulations involving identity politics and power on an incrementally smaller basis.

<sup>85</sup> For more on the history of the Internet see: <http://www.isoc.org/internet-history/> For more on Berners-Lee, see his site at: <http://www.w3.org/People/Berners-Lee/>.

While the fifty-plus demographic has ensured the rapid uptake of computer hardware, it is their progeny, the so-called Echo Generation, who have cemented the digital age. Students now see digital technology as their primary interface with schoolwork. Nowhere is this techno-historical transition more clear than in the move from the book to the digital text. To highlight this change, it is useful to draw comparisons to a similar shift that occurred when the west moved from a manuscript to a print-based culture.

In her book *Hamlet on the Holodeck: the Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*,<sup>86</sup> Janet Murray usefully describes our current state as “the second incunabulum.” She argues that present conditions mirror those that occurred during the transition from manuscript to print culture. At that time, many felt that the advent of the printed book would erase manuscript culture. Murray argues that during a technological shift of this nature we must go through a manifold transformation, which will ultimately lead to a richer textual condition.<sup>87</sup> During this transformation, we must endure the radical successionist rhetoric of the fetishizers of technology,<sup>88</sup> but in the end, the technology finds its own uses and can even coexist with previous modes and methods.<sup>89</sup> In both incunabular periods, there is widespread belief that new technology entails a radical epistemological shift that affects our ability to conceive of ourselves and to make long-term plans. Each then involves a degree of eschatology or apocalypticism.

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<sup>86</sup> Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997.

<sup>87</sup> Murray, 28.

<sup>88</sup> Perhaps the leading force in this movement in terms of the second incunabulum is *Wired Magazine* and its most colourful proponent Nicholas Negroponte. Negroponte’s “Gumball Theory” of information distribution is typical of the flamboyance that surrounded early expectations of hi-tech.

<sup>89</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the cross-fertilization of media, see Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1999.

For Murray, the complexity inherent in the transition makes prediction difficult. I would agree with this, but propose that forward-thinking editing and encoding may counter foolhardy fetishists who are poised to make us look bad in retrospect. I would argue that editors and textual scholars versed in new technologies can offer useful heuristics in order to help us navigate the data-drenched desktops of the future by doing what they have always done – applying rigorous scholarship, based on a pursuit of contextualized meaning, to various modes of information. This strategy has the added effect of offering a counterbalance to the mercenary approach to technology, which preys on a desire for a return to meaning by providing data run through insufficiently theorized filters. This results when decision-makers use short-term, cost-effectiveness models rather than sound research formulae, which can adjust over time on project-specific paths.

Against the multi-faceted change inherent in shifting technologies, Murray's argument focuses on the constancy of a human need for interaction with narrative.<sup>90</sup> It seems that if this interaction is to be shared or discussed, there must be some common ground or meeting place. Even if this ground must remain overtly provisional, we must defer to some aspects of linear construction. Works (be they sites or books) that fail to consider this ignore the history of texts as communicative events and foreclose areas of debate that could otherwise remain open. The need for narrative, whether from manuscript, codex or database, is a critical point. No matter how contingent one person's reading may seem, we might consider that it is better than no reading at all – we simply cannot communicate with one another without beginning somewhere. Further, in order to remain responsible editors, we must leave as much room for counter readings in our work

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<sup>90</sup> Murray continues the work she began in *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*. New York: Free Press, 1997. She is currently finishing a book on digital narrative and is spearheading a graduate program devoted to the topic at Georgia Tech.

as is possible. In terms of the current digital shift, this entails a respect for our textual and cultural traditions, as well as an appreciation of the exigencies of a technology that is too often assumed to be transparent because of a dearth of critique.

Allow me to present an example. As I have argued above, the current technological shift involves the delivery of texts as well as their technologies of composition. Thus, the editor that approaches the hypertextual piece *Afternoon* by Michael Joyce will do so in a different manner than they would for Langland's *Piers Plowman* or James Joyce's *Ulysses*.<sup>91</sup> Using these latter texts as examples, I would like to spend a moment looking at works created in the manuscript and print book tradition that are now crossing over to the electronic (as opposed to those documents created primarily in and for the digital realm).

A good deal of recent editorial theory has focused on the computer's ability to incorporate the multiplicity implied in poststructural considerations of textuality. For example, Jerome McGann's appreciation of the Gabler *Ulysses*, which was created using the TUSTEP program,<sup>92</sup> called that edition "the first truly postmodern *Ulysses*."<sup>93</sup> While I find some very real strengths in the Gabler text and its use of poststructural editing techniques, I would like to argue that rigorously antifoundationalist theory (such as deconstruction or certain forms of constructivism) based on infinite contingency can be anathema for editing. This does not mean that the digital scribes who edit must surrender successful points of theoretical critique, but rather that they should acknowledge a split

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<sup>91</sup> The current developments around the editing of *Piers Plowman* and *Ulysses* offer useful examples of the transition from manuscript to print to digital. Both are among a handful of works considered by editorial theorists to be the most challenging works in terms of editing. For further information on the *Piers* Project see <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/piers/tcontents.html>. For recent work on the digitization of James Joyce's novel see <http://publish.uwo.ca/~mgroden/ulysses/> and <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/pl/exhibits/joyce-nemla/catalog.html>.

<sup>92</sup> For more on TUSTEP see: [http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/zdv/tustep/tustep\\_eng.html](http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/zdv/tustep/tustep_eng.html).

<sup>93</sup> "*Ulysses* as a Postmodern Text: The Gabler Edition", *Criticism* 27 (Summer, 1985), 283-305.

that would see them become theoretically progressive, but textually conservative – that is conservative enough to actually edit.

For the purposes of editorial theory, and for reading in general, it seems that whether *Ulysses* was written by a fully constituted subject named James Joyce or constructed by an inter-war European society, it has had some existence as a linear, spatiotemporal product. One aspect of its study must take this into account. Failure to admit at least a provisional point of discussion seems to me to be one more way to erect a barrier between people and culture.<sup>94</sup>

I am speaking then of the strategic implementation of structure. Consider a limit case: a great deal of attention is paid to historical occurrences of book burning. Implicit in the condemnation of these acts is the notion that whether one group agrees or disagrees with certain views, there is some responsibility to maintain cultural heritage – that is to allow access to the texts in question. I would argue that this same idea is at play when we edit texts. If we disassemble our past in order to provide a certain kind of reading, but in the process leave only rubble or fragments behind, we perform an act that is similar in its result to that of book burning.

Consider again *Article 27* of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*:

***Article 27.***

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

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<sup>94</sup> The “people” here being the speakers, readers, interpreters, and/or victims of the English language. The argument is as easily made for any language and its participants.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.<sup>95</sup>

In terms of the first point in the article, I would argue that actively working to obscure the documents of our past (whether or not we approve of their content) denies citizens' rights to "participate in the cultural life of the community," and "enjoy the arts." Further, failure to afford some position to the author of a given text denies that entity's right to the protections outlined in the second point. While I would never argue for any form of teaching that seeks to gain ascendancy at the expense of diversity, I believe that we must recognize that impeding the transmission of documents and artifacts from our past is not only poor scholarship, it comes dangerously close to a form of criminal negligence.<sup>96</sup>

One solution relevant to my work is the separation of the contemplative from the more practical aspects of editorial theory. This again calls for the strategic implementation of structure – a locally pragmatic version of philology and hermeneutics. I hope that even the most anti-canonical thinkers will be convinced of the efficacy of this type of negotiated textuality once we examine the power at play in current content management.

There are a variety of names for this type of information architecture in other areas of digital technology and communications. In advertising, it is the "relationship," and involves "convergence" - in marketing these same themes surface as "branding."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

<sup>96</sup> Of course, the balancing factor is that we cannot possibly maintain all artifacts, but this is exactly the reason why content provision and editing are so important to the operation of our society.

<sup>97</sup> Relationship Theory has developed out of the work of Charles Berger (in particular see *Language and Social Knowledge: Uncertainty in Interpersonal Relations*. London: Arnold, 1975) and involves a bond that is created through communicative exchange. In its simplest form, relationship theory argues that you can offer customers/clients or targets a feeling of comfort through relentless data exchange. Convergence is a

What commercial groups have found is that shortly after readers gain limitless amounts of information they begin asking for filters.<sup>98</sup> One of the results is marketing strategy based on broad-spectrum campaigns that sell a unified identity offering individuals a more focused level of choice. Thus, the technology is used as a tool to help create an illness related to the decentring effects of information overload and is then offered as its own cure. We see evidence of reconciliation in sites that specialize in personalized, channeled information presented as “portals,” which are rapidly multiplying on the web.<sup>99</sup> These changes bear a remarkable resemblance to early book reviewing, which came about as a result of the explosion of printed reading materials in Europe.<sup>100</sup>

It is important to highlight the differences and similarities between content provision and editing in terms of materials related to edited or marked-up texts. An inherent part of the function of editors in the past was an assumption of curatorial responsibility for all texts in the tradition of a given work. This involved a power that was taken up or borrowed in the name of either improving or protecting the author’s message and conveying it to a reading audience. Regardless of the tradition, a *de facto* condition of the editor’s power came to involve a responsibility to state one’s method and then to

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broader notion that relates the ways in which divergent aspects of a business can benefit from alignment. A useful example here would be the AOL/Time-Warner merger, which seeks to benefit from the convergence of print and digital media. Branding is the notion that companies can benefit from the retailing of a name and image rather than a specific product. The most famous examination of this field is Naomi Klein’s best-selling *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2000. The book also has an elaborate web site at: <http://www.nologo.org/>.

<sup>98</sup> An example of the response: A recent television advertisement for the investment firm Merrill Lynch told its viewers, “The average online investment company has over 8,500 investment reports online... which begs the question, who has the time to read 8,500 reports?”

<sup>99</sup> Consider the related field of portal browsers like AOL and the recently updated version of MSN explorer. The trend in this sector, which was led by AOL, is particularly telling. Their browser, famous for being cumbersome, was predicted by the techno-literate to fail. Its massive success lies in its ability to filter information, to limit rather than expand choice. Microsoft manufactures the leading stand-alone browser (Internet Explorer), has countered the AOL portal model with its own MSN Explorer.

<sup>100</sup> The seminal historical account of the development of print technology in the west is Elizabeth L. Eisenstein’s *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 1982.

adhere rigorously to its dictates. Failure to do so could negate an entire edition.<sup>101</sup> This is not the case with content providers, whose only real goal is provision. By utilizing a broad spectrum of editorial skills, the web's docents or editors can provide the reader/viewer with a compilation that is more aware of its roots in the multivariant codex (there are a number of examples; I think in particular of those that contain a variety of different narratives, such as the *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Pearl*, *Patience*, and *Purity* manuscript), the critical/variorum edition, and current portal sites. Those who fear an ardent, imposed linearity should be reassured that one of the strengths of digital work is that testing its underlying and structuring methodologies is much easier.<sup>102</sup>

This can only fully be realized if we discontinue the trend toward the image of the computer as an invisible, non-historical device. Herein lies the primacy of letting philological and philosophical hermeneutics interact. Far from arguing for an ethereal or exclusionary notion of organicism and/or unity that gets formalism into trouble with cultural critics - this is an appeal for a set of terms that can lead to a shared discussion. The digital editors become hosts, viscerally linked to their methodologies and scholarship.<sup>103</sup> I realize that it is insufficient to merely map the current practices of

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<sup>101</sup> A poignant example of this is the ill-fated Garland Press edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Edited by Hans Walter Gabler, this text was the first major editorial project to use a primarily computerized form of editing. Unfortunately, as was uncovered by scholar John Kidd and reported in the Washington Post and later critiqued in the *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, the Gabler project did not maintain its strict commitment to extant documents and instead took a series of shortcuts that led to the cancellation of its publication. For a general introduction to what is now referred to as "The Scandal of *Ulysses*" see Bruce Arnold's *The Scandal of Ulysses: The Sensational Life of a Twentieth Century Masterpiece*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991). For a different approach see Daniel Klynn's (now aging) web site *Haveth Versions Everywhere*: <http://members.tripod.com/~fn0rd/Joyce.htm>. For a more scholarly approach, see the special edition of *Studies in the Novel*, 22:2 1990, devoted to the issue.

<sup>102</sup> This is of course particularly so in the case of editions which make all relevant materials available through links.

<sup>103</sup> As an example, one would find entirely different textual parties at the "homes" of self-professed Bardolator Harold Bloom and the renegade Shakespeare editor, Stanley Wells.

textual scholarship onto the web. Those same processes can however be adapted so that we may highlight their benefits.

Textual scholars in the intentionalist or Anglo-American empiricist tradition<sup>104</sup> have argued that a good editor can find and publish a unified text where one did not previously exist. Others, such as Jerome McGann,<sup>105</sup> see this notion as untenable and argue that extant documents should be viewed as artifacts possessing an authority or validity only in terms of their given historical contexts. This approach generally questions the authority that intentionalist editing assumes. In sum, the first group is looking for a needle in a haystack (all the while creating an ideal haystack in which to search); the second are more interested in the working conditions on the farm.

Poststructural literary theory and its cultural antecedents have changed the nature of the debate between these traditions. The current blend of textual scholarship and literary theory that underwrites editorial theory has moved away from notions of a fixed text and toward Jerome McGann's sociohistorical approach. At the same time, computer-mediated editing has seemed to fit most readily with the McGannian critique. This is perhaps due to the difficulties involved in having a computer decide between substantive variants, as intentionalist editors must, and the simplicity with which those same machines can pictorially record historical texts such as the medieval manuscripts or first

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<sup>104</sup> That is the "New Bibliographic School" usually associated with W.W. Greg, Fredson Bowers and now G. Thomas Tanselle, which works from a chosen copy-text toward an eclectic edition. The work of the New Bibliographers can be usefully traced in the University of Virginia journal *Studies in Bibliography*, which is online at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/bsuva/sb/>.

<sup>105</sup> McGann is chief among the "socio-historical" editors. In his book *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983, he provides a rigorous critique of the New Bibliography's belief in a unified notion of the author and argues for a more detailed account of the social practices surrounding textual production. McGann's work has led to widespread change in Editorial Theory. The chief journal in this tradition is *TEXT: An Interdisciplinary Annual of Textual Scholarship*, which has an information page online at <http://www.textual.org/text/index.htm>.

edition printed books more prized by the McGannians. The debate then is not so much resolved as delayed or elided by our current position.

As I have argued, into this vacuum have come the content providers who are effectively marketing what their cultural counterparts no longer provide – meaning embodied in unified messages or texts. Examples of this are found in the aforementioned *Chadwyck-Healy*, which makes its money selling document structures through subscription, *bibliomania*, which attempts to sell related books that it links to public domain texts, and *xrefer*, which makes money from both subscription and advertising. While these operations have taken over the provision of linear reading texts, editorial theory has been stranded on the rocks of a more abstract form of analysis.

In *Hypertext 2.0: the Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*,<sup>106</sup> George Landow argues that hypertext offers the perfect arena to test the assertions of poststructural theory. He envisions a world where the reader is free to explore a limitless array of pathways through computer libraries. Building on this type of argument, liberationist theorists such as Nicholas Negroponte have argued that new electronic webs of communication will supersede the book. This line of thinking fails to address the bottleneck that occurs when limitless information meets limited time.

We must assume that someone wanting to read *Piers Plowman*, for example, has a finite amount of time in which to do so. Rarely will students go to class, or readers to the library, asking if the text that they are reading has another fifty-three instantiations they can peruse. Given a limited amount of time in which to read, there is a need for effective textual pathways – and if there is a need for effective textual pathways, there will be a need for a particularized pathway. People do not have the time to read

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<sup>106</sup> Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997 (1992).

decide that we would like to continue reading, one of the fundamental jobs of editors will be to create pathways and make recommendations that we can then evaluate and use or usefully reject.

We need to foster this type of work. Not in a manner that brings back the old, but in a fashion that addresses the challenges of the new. These editorial recommendations need not be intentionalist paths, but could be a series of informed, documented hypotheses. Given the advantages of computerized work, simultaneous pathways are possible, I am not arguing a single solution, but for at least one focused solution per archive. Hypotheses in this strain bear a striking resemblance to what we may in the past have called *books* and in the end satisfy the desire for a text that arises when people ask for advice about which edition of a particular work to read.

Much has been made of the ability of high-tech to solve long-standing debates over complex textual traditions like *Piers Plowman*, *Hamlet* and *Ulysses*. In each of these cases, arguments are made that a definitive text will never be found.<sup>107</sup> Some suggest that digitizing and representing all relevant material solves this problem. The seeming response to this would involve editions that no longer have to follow a tradition of paradigmatic shifts from one to another in an adversarial loop. However, until intellectual property laws can accommodate the requirements for production placed upon scholars and creators, there is likely to be little in the way of true cooperation between those working on competing editions.

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<sup>107</sup> As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Greetham sites the *Piers Plowman*, the *Oxford Shakespeare* and the Gabler *Ulysses* as the three most interesting editorial projects today (Greetham 22-3). As such, references to them appear throughout his recent *Theories of the Text*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

In either scenario, the successful editors of the digital realm will be those that solve the problem by providing today's most desired commodity: *meaning*.

Many difficulties trouble an easy movement from critical codex to critical electronic editions. Most of the challenges to eclectic or deep editing from the Anglo-American line accuse such editors of fetishizing a fixed text with a single-author function.<sup>108</sup> Yet, foreclosing on earlier projects due to their lack of poststructural codes is to a certain degree anachronistic and does a disservice to scholarship. A historical analysis of the type of fixity that McGann dispels in the *New Bibliographers* can be as easily ascribed to contemporary marketing that needed to convince households to buy *another* edition of Shakespeare. Moreover, those that espouse the virtues of computerized diplomatic/facsimile editions (that is those that present digitized, photographic reproductions of all pertinent documents along with a related transcription) need to more fully analyze the material nature of their interface.<sup>109</sup> This situation becomes even more complicated once we add markup, metadata, search terms and links. As Donna Haraway notes in *Modest\_Witness*, no link or path is or can be neutral.<sup>110</sup> Thus, the digital computer interface is not a McLuhanesque "hot medium."<sup>111</sup> Each time we click on a link, we are making a selection from a solution-set which is predefined by a designer –

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<sup>108</sup> The critics most often associated with the Anglo-American tradition are W.W. Greg, Fredson Bowers and G. Thomas Tanselle. The so-called Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line has come under fire from the socio-historical school that is headed by Jerome McGann. Digital editing finds its strongest critique in the work of Peter Shillingsburg, whose views run close to those of McGann.

<sup>109</sup> This debate is currently playing itself out in the study of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. John Kidd has edited the text following the dictates of the Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line, Michael Groden is working on the *Hypermedia Ulysses Project* that develops the work of Gabler and McGann, and Sam Slote at the State University of New York, Buffalo, is currently undertaking a program of digitally imaging all relevant documents.

<sup>110</sup> *Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium: Femaleman Meets Oncomouse: Feminism and Technoscience*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

<sup>111</sup> Marshall McLuhan. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1964, 1997. In particular, see Chapter 2: "Media Hot and Cold." 22-32.

this is controlled choice dictated by the interpreter or provider. The power inherent in creating these links requires clarification.

Issues of material access, raised by people like Carla Hesse and Paul Deguid,<sup>112</sup> as well as those issues involving the theorization of the various aspects of media that create value-added editions, also need to factor into the changing landscape of textual authority. Critics of the visual components of text such as Jerome McGann and Randall McLeod<sup>113</sup> have forcefully argued for the physical presence of information in cultural artifacts, whether these are pieces of parchment, papers or geographic locations. Each of these elements challenges the architects of information in their quest for relevance. The current situation is dire, since scholarly editing is becoming more challenging, more necessary, and yet receives little compensation.<sup>114</sup> This environment provides the perfect site for a commercial response. I view this as an unacceptable response. The short-term thinking that characterizes market-driven approaches simply cannot provide the same benefits of a long-term humanities research project.

This information profile is not likely to change anytime soon. As stores of data grow, editing will become increasingly important. If taken seriously, an examination of philology, hermeneutics involving hands-on manuscript, book and computer study, could

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<sup>112</sup> Hesse, Carla. "Books in Time," in Geoffrey Nunberg ed. *The Future of the Book*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 21-36, and in the same book, Deguid, Paul. "Material Matters, the Past and Futurology of the Book." 63-102.

<sup>113</sup> McGann's discussion of "bibliographic codes" argues convincingly for the meaning imparted by the physical aspects of a text. Among a variety of examples, he discusses F. Scott Fitzgerald's worry that the illustration for the cover of *The Great Gatsby* was so good it rendered the text redundant. McLeod has taken this one step further, attempting to read bibliographic codes in isolation. McLeod, who also operates under the pseudonyms Random Cloud and Random Clod, is perhaps the most creative textual scholar working today. He teaches at the University of Toronto and is said to be currently at work "studying the shape of sonnets."

<sup>114</sup> During a campus visit from then MLA president Linda Hutcheon, a group of graduate students from the department of English at the University of Victoria was told that editing was worth half of a book and electronic editing was worth half of print. I should add that Dr. Hutcheon was trying to be honest with the group and in no way attempted to privilege one type of work. The statement is significant because of its frankness and due to the position of its author (October 7, 1999).

present interesting challenges to the more abstract aspects of poststructural theory currently in use by leading digital theorists. At the same time, research along these lines might complicate the techno-liberalism that has been at the heart of some of the more confused digital projects to date - and all of this while creating new offerings for readers.<sup>115</sup> In this sense, I would argue that electronic editors should become expert guides through information who can as one part of their work contribute to critical editions. A critical edition in these terms is an archive or library that allows for a potentially infinite variety of testable pathways, all of which can be supplemented with the advice of those who have gone before you.

The digital edition can serve as an expandable, participatory field with posited pathways offering downloadable/printable trade editions or relevant copy-texts as reference points. Challenges and/or updates would be easier to implement to these editions than to any in our textual past. Having single critical texts with links to electronic versions should address even the most rigorous challenges from the new diplomatic and facsimile editions, while at the same time presenting works that allow access to a variety of versions and histories of texts. These editions would provide testable editorial methodologies, which could afford textual scholars and theorists an opportunity to pursue the long-standing debates over intentionality, authority and textuality. In addition, these theoretical frameworks could shed light on the concerted effort that has gone into

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<sup>115</sup> Two examples come immediately to mind. The first was a presentation at the 2000 MLA in Washington, D.C. that dealt with the new frontiers of editorial theory. In a tribute to a new vision of "conjectural emendation," two scholars involved with the *Blake Digital Text Project* took turns reading aphorisms that hinted at the freedom inherent in no longer being bound by meaning. This series of *ad hominem* attacks on Fredson Bowers and linearity, which was followed by idolatrous descriptions of McGann managed to fully throw off the shackles of relevance. The second and more tangible example is the online *Canterbury Tales Project*, which has gained fame for its use of algorithms developed in evolutionary biology. What is compelling about this project is its ability to use computer technology to impose a normative reading that would seem little short of textual eugenics if done by human hands. See <http://www.cta.dmu.ac.uk/projects/ctp/>.

creating the image of the computer as an invisible medium by techno-fetishists who seek to benefit from the provision of an unending stream of content.<sup>116</sup>

Within this new medium, we can provide access to relevant data, while ensuring that decisions on how and where to link become available for examination. Thus, a reader would be able to follow a posited pathway through a textual tradition, web site, archive or corpus, and at the same time examine the construction of the path itself. As a whole, the project becomes an exercise in public hermeneutics or a more participatory engagement with culture. In this mode, the best electronic texts will be those that can posit and maintain a viable hermeneutic circle while allowing that very circle to be available for critique.

Before I end this section, it is necessary to visit the position of artifacts and communicative events in the context we have created. If any methodology is worthy of consideration, and all methodologies are testable, then our new editors have a role to play in each of the three interface points mentioned earlier. At the primary, or data-entry level, editors can assist in finding changes that occur in transmission, just as we now do with the work of medieval scribes and typesetters stretching from the early modern period well into the nineteenth century. As an important function of this process, we should realize that the workers involved need more purchase over their work, if not for ideological reasons, then for aesthetic ones – they need better support in order to make better webs. At the secondary level, they must help analyze the way a narrative changes in its interaction with databases and algorithms. This form of research can answer such questions as, “is our culture is changing along with the transformation from print to

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<sup>116</sup> It has been suggested that it is equally important to consider the opposite of the techno-fetishist – that is those who vilify new technology. I am not at this time convinced that this raises the same level of concern in terms of the topic that I am discussing.

digital text transmission” – and “what are the material ramifications of the physical presence of computers?” Further, cultural critics and editors of all stripes must record the relationships of corporations such as *AOL Time-Warner*, *Bell and Howell*, *Oracle*, and *Microsoft* who are assuming an intermediary role much different from that of the publishing houses of the past.<sup>117</sup> Finally, at the third level, the output or decision-making stage, the new editors need to work to ensure that the electronic field of exchange is as transparent and welcoming as possible.

At the top of this section I quoted Geoffrey Nunberg: “[p]eople who say that tomorrow belongs to them are usually angling for a piece of today.”<sup>118</sup> My argument is that too much of our textual environment is currently run by commercial anglers. It is my belief that a large part of tomorrow should belong to a broader public. This will not happen without responsible editors. Though we may not know the future of the labyrinth we are creating, we should do our best to leave a discernible string behind us. In order to do this, we must now turn briefly to the notion of implementation.

#### **Four Causes and the Practice of Editing**

I would like therefore to put forth the idea that what is now needed for editing is a form of philological critique that finds its roots somewhere in between philological and philosophical hermeneutics. To finish this chapter and introduce those passages that will examine specific editing traditions, we need to establish just what this theory will look like in practice.

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<sup>117</sup> It is not that we have not had monopolistic or corporate publishing before, but we have to experience the particular types of interactions that involve issues as divergent as author/publisher copyright and proprietary user interfaces.

<sup>118</sup> Nunberg 11.

Taking philosophical hermeneutics first, I would like to introduce Heidegger's examination of technology through the Aristotelian model of the four causes. In "The Question Concerning Technology", Heidegger develops these causes, which stem from classical philosophy. In that essay, the four causes are listed as: 1) *causa materialis*, 2) *causa formalis*, 3) *causa finalis*, and 4) *causa efficiens*.<sup>119</sup> By way of explanation, Heidegger describes the *unconcealment* of a sacramental chalice. To paraphrase, the first involves the silver that is required to create a chalice. The second, the chalice-ness that allows a chalice to be conceived and to exist as something other than, for example, a silver ring or necklace. The third is the sacrament that allows for the reason behind which one would want to create a sacramental chalice. The fourth cause is the silversmith who, operating in the knowledge of each of the three is able to make the chalice. Heidegger introduces this critique in order to ask after the ontic category of what is behind the four in order to question the "essence of technology." Along the way, he demonstrates the usefulness of the four causes in any number of applications. In examining that which is behind the four causes, Heidegger links this application of technology to a form of *unconcealment* that links to the notion of truth, which he is able to arrive at through an etymological analysis of the links between the Greek words *techné* and *episteme*. This construction proves extremely useful for editorial theory.

Allow me to restate the previous example in terms of textual studies. Consider, when editing, the *causa materialis* relates to the particular language and elements that make up one textual tradition. The *causa formalis* relates to the literary genre or mode that allows for that set of materials to be what they are, a poem or play or novel. The

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<sup>119</sup> Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology." In, *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. Revised and Expanded Edition. David Farrell Krell. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993. 307-41.

*causa finalis* relates to the culture that gives rise to our ability to conceive of a role for creative writing within our society. Finally, the *causa efficiens* is the editor, who with knowledge of the previous three, edits.

The reason that I choose the Heideggerian over any other construction is that it contains an explicit examination of that which lies behind the four causes. This question is crucial to editorial theory. On the one hand, if we conduct research without considering the ontic biases of a given project, we leave ourselves vulnerable to the critique of “logocentrism” leveled (many times incorrectly) at the New Bibliographers. On the other, if we remain in the ontic critique without any commitment to a functional methodology, we spiral off into abstraction in ways that negate all possibility for productive editing, such as we now see in relation to some aspects of the McGannian critique and those that foreground ideology rather than textuality. Finally, I believe that this formulation offers a judicious balance that can recast the debate between the Anglo-American critique of the Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line and the Socio-historical school of McGann and Peter Shillingsburg.

The key is the Heideggerian notion of *unconcealment*. This term allows for a postulated mode of being that can stand in for intention, which is an essential element of editing. Further, this mode of being is rooted in its own *being-in-the-world* – which usefully links a text’s editing to itself – that is we must find its ways of *unconcealment* in its own *concealment*. Five-dollar words aside, this should allow us to edit, while keeping the largest number of critics and readers happy – we can all just agree to disagree on the level of “authority” we attach to the intention behind *unconcealment*.

Over the next seven chapters, I hope to demonstrate the viability of this argument by offering meditations on three of the most challenging editorial traditions in English literary studies. In each case, I will offer two chapters, the first establishing context and the second looking in some respect toward one possible digital future.

Chapter 2 offers an analysis of the compelling history of William Langland's *Piers Plowman*. Called by Hoyt Duggan the "Mt. Everest of editing projects," the difficulties of *Piers* seem to grow over time. An examination of the methodology behind the famed Athlone A, B, and C texts of *Piers Plowman* and their revolutionary assumptions forms the central part of this chapter. In particular, general editor George Kane's rejection of the technique of recension and his use of the heuristic "logic of error" used for excising scribal intervention offer fascinating studies. Kane rather famously challenges all other editors to follow in his path if they hope to challenge his edition. That is, an editing project of this type must be challenged in its overall conception, not at the level of individual emendation. In his work on the edition, Lee Patterson supports Kane's assertion. This chapter examines Kane's general editorship on those terms.

Chapter 3 investigates the reception of Kane's work by Charlotte Brewer, Derek Pearsall and others and compares their responses to solutions offered by electronic versions in general, and to Hoyt Duggan's *Piers Plowman Project* in particular. In terms of medieval manuscript studies, digital technology promises a democratizing power by giving greater access to the contents of manuscripts stored in reading rooms that are physically accessible to only a few fortunate scholars. It is this potential that has seen many medievalists become leaders in digital humanities. Here, more than in either of the other two cases I study, the need for an expert guide is clear. Access to *Piers* will remain

limited if all potential readers have no choice but to sort through extant documents or expensive editions. In the end, I will argue, that the future of *Piers* studies must include a standardized reading text – a Readers’s Langland if you will – for use by students and as a general, scholarly reference.

Chapter 4 examines the rich history of textual scholarship that has developed in Shakespearean studies. In particular, the work of W.W. Greg, Charlton Hinman, and Fredson Bowers and their roles in defining the Anglo-American tradition are developed. In order to maintain focus, the chapter introduces a study of *Hamlet*. As Leah Marcus has noted, the changes in this play that occur between the so-called “bad” quarto of 1603 and the First Folio of 1623 reveal a great deal about the dynamic lives of Shakespearean texts. The desire for a fixed or definitive text is particularly strong when it comes to this hallmark of the Western Canon. As such, its editorial history offers a rich fabric of textual mediation. Developing on the work of William Hazlitt, Edward Pechter and Hugh Kenner, I will demonstrate the way this play influences its own editing.

Chapter 5 focuses on the presentation of *Hamlet* in digital form. The University of Victoria’s *Internet Shakespeare Editions* project provides an excellent opportunity to examine a new way of approaching old problems. By comparing the web-based presentation of the old-spelling texts and the forthcoming edited text, this chapter highlights ways in which many of the best ideas of the Greg-Bowers line are meeting and productively cohabitating with those traditionally thought to be anathema to their work. Against this research, I pose an analysis of Bernice Kliman’s *Enfolded Hamlet*, the University of Virginia’s *Shakespeare Resources*, and MIT’s *Hamlet on the Ramparts*, all of which offer different responses to the challenges of the text.

Chapter 6 examines the complex bibliographic path of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in terms of the history and transmission of that text. *Ulysses* in many ways exemplifies high modernist composition. Joyce worked tirelessly to have the book exalted for its complexity. With early textual interventions by Ezra Pound, a two-tiered serial publication and a variety of censorship controversies, Joyce's novel is in many ways uneditable. I argue that this resistance is intrinsic to the work's appeal and offers an interesting reflection directed back on those looking in on the text trying to capture it in a final form. Key to this debate is the now famous Garland *Ulysses* edited by Hans Walter Gabler published in a three volume "synoptic" edition in 1984 and in "corrected" form in 1986. Of central importance to both Joyce chapters is the consideration of copyright law and Joyce's struggle to establish and maintain control over his work.

Chapter 7 explores the reception of Gabler's "synoptic" *Ulysses* referencing its critique by John Kidd and the debate that led to Bruce Arnold's book *The Scandal of Ulysses*. With the text currently locked in a number of copyright disputes worldwide, a variety of electronic editions created in an attempt to solve past problems are pitted against the dual restrictions of a complex textual past and an increasingly litigious Joyce Estate. John Kidd, who works in the editing tradition started by Greg and Bowers, has produced a new edited text and companion multimedia database to which the Joyce estate is openly hostile. At the University of Western Ontario, Michael Groden, who was a co-editor on the Gabler project, is developing the *Hypermedia Ulysses*, using five previously edited texts, focusing primarily on the corrected Gabler edition. Finally, at the State University of New York, Buffalo, Sam Slote is heading a group attempting to digitize facsimiles of all available *Ulysses* materials using the portable document format (pdf).

These three projects break down across a delineation of traditional schools of editing, these being the copy-text, the socio-historic, and the diplomatic/facsimile respectively. Taken as such, each has much to offer and one can only hope that scholars have the chance to examine all of the work openly. An interesting sideline to this analysis is a growing online exchange of texts that runs counter to the restrictions imposed by the James Joyce Estate.

As my concluding chapter, Chapter 8 gathers my suggestions for applying the results of this research. My intent is to avoid trends that lead to the creation of costly editions that are subsequently disregarded. In this context, I recommend that digital technology offers opportunities to incorporate a variety of editorial work from the past in a way that will enhance future study. My research shows that while long-term editorial projects such as those examined in my case studies should not be dismissed too quickly, neither should we maintain them as definitive merely out of respect for their temporal largess. Rather, projects should become part of growing records of textual exploration.

The adversarial model of production, which focuses on the supersession of one definitive edition by another, too often wastes scholarship. The forum created by digital media can help to alleviate this drive toward supremacy and can instead allow for simultaneous participation of versions or *posited pathways* established by various researchers. While we must beware utopian assumptions about technology, my work argues that digital communication offers the potential to remediate our textual past in a way that could enrich the work of textual scholars, editors and all those who participate in the cultural study.

I opened this chapter with two quotations. The first is from E.D. Hirsch's milestone book on hermeneutics, *Validity in Interpretation*.<sup>120</sup> In the section to which I refer, he is speaking of the use of genre as a category for study. Taken more broadly, Hirsch is pointing toward what is perhaps the editor's greatest task, the provision of categories that make room for thinking. Editorial theory asks whether these groupings become so imposing that they place undue constraint on the evidence. Here we confront the same questions that are found between the infinite differences of two signifiers, or on the organizational table that Foucault speaks about at the beginning of *The Order of Things* – questions that involve the relativistic nature of meaning. These questions, so important for certain types of work in the academy, are necessary, but not sufficient for editorial theory. I will argue that while the contemplative life is one that is much to be desired, unless we wish to become citizens of Laputa, we must plow our half-acre before we begin the journey thither.

If this talk of an editorial necessity for full and coextensive interaction between theory and praxis seems daunting, it underwrites my own feelings about editing. Given the demands of the work, and the seemingly nugatory returns, contributing to a large-scale editing project is almost certainly a sign of madness, but in the end, I really think we need the eggs.

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<sup>120</sup> E.D. Hirsch. *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.

## Chapter 2: Editing Medieval English Literature<sup>121</sup>

Until recently, editors have taken the view that texts are easily extracted from their means of transmission. Currently, scholarship in editorial theory and in medieval studies proper has done away with that assumption. If, for example, we accept the broad implications of Jerome McGann's notion of the importance of bibliographic codes, then almost any new instantiation of a text or work carries messages and meanings, which constitute new editions.<sup>122</sup> The idea that shape, presentation and layout should hold such importance is not something that would be unfamiliar to medievalists as diverse as Mary Carruthers<sup>123</sup> and Malcolm Parkes,<sup>124</sup> each of whom has shown the influence of mnemonic and semiotic techniques passed on from medieval writers and creators who made manuscripts.<sup>125</sup> Further, the positions of the scribe, illustrator and rubricator have gained much from recent scholarship in both editorial and medieval studies projects. I will discuss this further below. Under the influence of editors such as McGann and

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<sup>121</sup> Besides the standard catalogues and prefatory materials to individual editions, the following passage has benefited greatly from A.S.G. Edward's chapter (including bibliography) "Middle English Literature" in D.C. Greetham's *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995. (184-203), from Anne Hudson's "Middle English" in *Editing Medieval Texts: English, French and Latin Written in England. Papers Given at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto 5-6 November, 1976*. A.G. Rigg, Ed. New York: Garland, 1977. (34-57) and for historical details surrounding the academic climate around the EETS groups to Jonathan Green's *Chasing the Sun: Dictionary-Makers and the Dictionaries They Made*. New York: Henry Holt, 1996.

<sup>122</sup> In McGann's approach to the physical nature of texts is an essential part of their message. As such, any new edition should attempt to recapture the constitutive components of the first edition of a given text. In this manner, McGann gives credit to the work of printers, publishers and others who work with the author in order to create a given text. This socio-historical approach (as it has come to be known) is shared by D. F. McKenzie, whom McGann often cites.

<sup>123</sup> See Mary Carruthers' *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Carruthers followed the book up with a volume that made use of the additional materials from her original study in *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

<sup>124</sup> Parkes' article "The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compliatio* in the Development of the Book," remains one of the most significant studies in the field of paleographic and codicological study. See Malcolm Beckwith Parkes. "The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compliatio* in the Development of the Book," in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969 and 1976.

<sup>125</sup> For Carruthers the mnemonic techniques of medieval thinkers helped to shape the pages of manuscripts in a way that would allow those same methods to be used by the reader. For Parkes the order is both more broadly epistemological and more specifically practical.

medievalists such as Carruthers and Parkes, the title of editor has expanded to include more participants along the path of transmission. That manuscript studies should be a starting point for an examination of the physicality of literary documents is of little surprise. Still, scholarly editing in the English literary tradition began its great expansion with the examination of printed texts rather than with manuscript studies. The uniformity of print – while bringing its own considerations – afforded easier analysis and slowly began to change the nature of intermediary expression.

The early print editions by William Caxton clearly fit into the mold of what general readers accept as editing. His second edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, for example, included improvements made upon consultation with extant documents and seemed to relate clearly to the type of scholarly editing based on improving texts with which most readers are currently familiar. With the exception of localized projects, this form of editing did not change much from Caxton's time until the late nineteenth century. During that time however, a great deal of important – and still mostly unrecognized – work was done by editors and collectors in the antiquarian tradition that developed throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which culminated in a series of club editions that revolutionized editorial study. No other marker of this is as great as the establishment of The Early English Text Society.<sup>126</sup>

EETS, or the Early English Text Society, was perhaps the most significant single body in the development of the study of medieval English literature. Its ties to the *New English Dictionary* (which was to become the *Oxford English Dictionary*) solidified a form of philological critique that led to the editorial theory's most influential form, the so-called New Bibliography, which helped to define post-War study of English in the

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<sup>126</sup> See the Early English Text Society's homepage at <http://www.eets.org.uk/>.

Western academy. Traditionalists in editorial theory such as G. Thomas Tanselle carry on the legacy of the New Bibliography and EETS. That same mode of study has since served as the counterpoint to McGann's socio-historical theories, which directly challenge the central assertions of the earlier editors. At the same time, editors using *Critique Genetique* in France, Germany and The Netherlands have focused on a form of editing that attempts to capture the growth of works across time by recording all developments in a given work.<sup>127</sup> While these challenges developed new notions of textuality, they also carried a new emphasis on the relationship of texts to oral communication.

For medievalists the study of the connections between the textual and the oral are well developed. The study of orality in relation to medieval texts has three main aspects. Cognitive analysis examines the oral mind and the way in which it translates into written form. Mary Carruthers has shown that the structure of mnemonic techniques necessary to develop complex bodies of knowledge in a culture that is primarily oral leads to a series of specialized practices that allows individuals to maintain and organize large bodies of information for ready use. As a form of epistemology, this type of work highlights the changes of mental function that can occur as speakers, writers and readers are exposed to different communications technologies. Similarly, Michael Clanchy<sup>128</sup> and Timothy

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<sup>127</sup> The type of contextual formalism approach to editorial theory that I propose is rooted in the development of medieval studies and has a long history. In a special issue of *Speculum*, Stephen G. Nichols reminds us, "[i]n medieval studies, philology is the matrix out of which all else springs." See "Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture." *Speculum* (65) 1-10. (1) Nichols opens the special issue by establishing the need to pursue more than just abstract literary meaning. It is this type of awareness of manuscripts and the cultures in which they existed that can become part of a new, more robust philology that dovetails effectively with the needs of the editor in the digital medium.

<sup>128</sup> Michael Clanchy. *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*. London: Blackwell, 1993. Clanchy's book is a detailed examination of the development of written records in the legal and bureaucratic systems of England and the ways in which those developments influenced the lives and minds and of contemporary citizens.

Haskett<sup>129</sup> have illustrated the ways in which facets of memorial construction dovetail with the growth of the juridical establishment in the English-speaking world.

Beyond individual memory, critics such as Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Steven Justice have shown the ways in which oral culture in the form of reading groups may have extended textuality in ways we had not previously conceived. In these studies, individuals who were not literate or semi-literate may have been exposed to a wide variety of texts through reading groups in the home or in other community organizations such as religious groups. Further, reading groups of those with more advanced literacy are uncovered by exploring critical and interpretive exchange in a manner that prefigures the expansion of the secular academy and the popular interpretation of literature.

In a broader, cultural sense, the work of Marshall McLuhan and Walter J. Ong has looked to medieval English literature for forms of complex culture which are at risk from the taxonomies inherent in print technology.<sup>130</sup> Jerome McGann contributes to this debate when he suggests that current digital technology will allow us to return to a more robust concept of language that he locates in the medieval period.<sup>131</sup>

If any figure can be seen as the gatekeeper between the oral and textual worlds, it is the medieval scribe. This long unsung profession has of late gained an increasing level of attention from medievalists and editorial theorists. Scribal culture is important in and of itself for cultural history, but it is also of particular interest for textual scholars who

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<sup>129</sup> See in particular 'The Medieval English Court of Chancery,' *Law and History Review*, XIV no 2 (Fall, 1996), 245-313 and "'I have ordeyned and made my testament and last wylle in this forme": English as a Testamentary Language, 1387-1450,' *Medieval Studies*, 58 (1996), 149-206.

<sup>130</sup> Both men made these assertions across the entire body of their writing. See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000 and Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy (New Accents)*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

<sup>131</sup> For McGann's most recent presentation of these arguments see his "Textonics: Literary and Cultural Studies in a Quantum World," online in video, audio and textual form at <http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/news/prlymanaward.htm>.

must examine the role of the scribe as editor. Moreover, the treatment of scribes by editors who have come after them provides useful information about the development of texts. Recent research has illustrated the way scribes formed a part of a burgeoning middle class of educated yet often underemployed citizens. Evidence of this has value not only for locating the origins of manuscripts but also for examining the types of emendation that an individual scribe made. These emendations, once seen as contamination, are now just as likely to be valued for their own contribution. Further, as more appreciation is given to all communicative aspects of manuscripts, scholars are turning (or returning in some cases) to more focused work in paleography, codicology, numanistics, diplomatics and dialectology, all of which make for a more robust examination of the field of communication carried by the manuscript as a communicative artifact.

What this more thorough scope of study captures is a wide variety of expressive forms that can exist in and around a particular manuscript or manuscript tradition. Consequently, scholars are extending the perception of what it means to be an editor and are beginning to include the medieval scribe, illustrator and illuminator in the group. Along with this extension of the role of textual mediator have come deeper descriptions of the critical trappings of the position. Thus, we now have detailed profiles of certain scribes that we know to have worked on the manuscripts of Chaucer and Langland and other writers of the period. Further, the examination of figures such as Thomas Hocceleve, who were both conventional authors and scribes, serves to advance the cause of this heretofore-neglected group.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Another important role that may have been performed at least partly in the scriptorium was the act of grouping different tales and tracts within one codex, creating a complex form of expression that offers

Scribes, illustrators and illuminators have a long and complex relationship with scholarly editors that is differently described depending on the approach taken by more recent editors. Though they were formerly seen by certain schools as corruptors who get in the way of authorial intention, more recent interest in the social construction of the texts made by the followers of McGann has led to the scribes being embraced in a move which does less to dissolve authorial intention than to extend its franchise. This extension takes two forms. Editors interested in preserving intact the transmission of a particular manuscript argue for the inclusion of scribal interaction in the margins and at the foot and head of the document. Cultural critics seek a loftier resolution by granting a form of subject-construction to these ghostly mediators. Thus, the scribe as professional is written into the social history of a textual tradition as a whole. In the first case, those presenting diplomatic editions would seem well equipped to preserve specific occurrences of scribal engagement; in the second case, socio-historic editing traces the material basis of the text through the living conditions of the scribal community. Eclectic or best-text editing of the New Bibliographic line (the group affiliated with the need to excise the corruptions of scribes and establish a text based on authorial intention) seems to come in for the heaviest criticism here, since its proponents have most often been responsible for expunging scribal influence and deriding scribal competence. Yet, there is no reason that critical editions should not be able to incorporate this new research and merely, as I claimed above, extend the franchise of authorial intention to all of those who participate in the creative process.

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interesting parallels with the current possibilities offered by “print on demand” services, which will create and bind books from available texts at the reader’s request.

Suffering a similar, but perhaps less dismal fate is the printer. The development of print technology, which has so often been linked to the birth of the modern mind, added sheen to the English Renaissance, but the luminescence did not reflect on many others beyond the pioneers such as Gutenberg and Caxton. Of course, much of the early impact of print was appropriated by religious and political concerns against which literary concerns paled. For the medievalist, the print revolution saw the incorporation of medieval concepts of textuality and the birth of a new kind of scholarly edition of medieval texts.

Early print versions of medieval works sought to replicate the appearance of manuscripts rather than establishing their own aesthetic. Thus, early printers attempted to make fonts that resembled the cursive and book hands they recognized on the exemplars from which they worked. As Malcolm Parkes has shown, this influence had far reaching implications for the ways in which books were laid out for print. Using the medieval concepts of *ordinatio* and *compilatio*, Parkes demonstrates the way in which compositorial remediation occurred during the first incunabulum. This influence carries with it traces of meaning imbedded in the architectural arrangement of texts and images – a move which has immediate relevance for the digital environment which is currently seeking the means to re-explore the notions of text in a more robustly visual mode.

As the first printer of texts in English, Caxton has earned his place in history as a patron of textual accessibility. This achievement goes a long way toward establishing his credibility with textual scholars, but for them, it is his second edition of Chaucer that is of greatest interest. For that edition, Caxton not only included a scholarly introduction, which he did with many of the works he printed, but also re-edited his own text as the

result of further documentary evidence. This establishes him as a central figure in the development of mediaeval and textual studies. In fact, this now seems a critical starting point for the treatment of Chaucer, the politically elusive poet, who, as the quintessential humanist poet of the Middle Ages saw print at a time when most printed material was veering toward political polemic. The position of *The Canterbury Tales* allowed it, along with various manifestations of Arthurian Romance, to be used as important starting points for English letters. When we chart the progress of *Piers Plowman*, a more obviously political body of work, we might ask if this distinction between the political and the literary played a role in the way in which it was produced.

The period from 1500 to 1800 saw the editing of medieval English literature, continue at a steady, if somewhat reduced, pace. In the sixteenth century, the most significant editions were William Thynne's *Canterbury Tales* and Robert Crowley's three printings of *Piers Plowman*. The direction that each editor took speaks to a fundamental difference in the text editing of the time. Thynne was one of the earliest editors to use critical methods to improve upon earlier edited texts. In editions of *Anelida and Arcite*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, *Troilus and Criseyde* and Chaucer's tales, Thynne collated various manuscripts, incorporating new evidence as it became available. He also paid meticulous attention to translation and the etymology of important words in the texts he edited. The fact that many of his decisions were influenced by a desire to do what was most efficient for his printers opens him to criticism from authorial intentionalists; however, his contribution has an obvious appeal for socio-historical editors eager to socialize and historicize the author function. Thynne was not the only person editing texts at the time, but others such as Thomas Speght and John Stow who were working at

the same time came under the influence of his work and commentary. The great significance in Thynne's work lies in this scholarly interaction with the materials and his inherent assumption that textual research is something upon which one can build.<sup>133</sup>

Robert Crowley's three editions of *Piers Plowman* work in different, yet equally fascinating ways.<sup>134</sup> The fact that Crowley was able to print and sell three editions indicates to Langlandians that *Piers Plowman* enjoyed a real popularity during the English Renaissance. Editorial theorists and textual scholars look to Crowley because his editions seem to have come from very good exemplars. Thus, when scholars list the extant MSS of *Piers* that should be consulted in order to prepare an edition, these first print editions are considered part of the mix. The theory of remediation is enriched by this example, in which new print technology not only benefits from the old; but incorporates the architectural traces of the original artifacts in an attempt to maintain proximity to the work's origins.

Crowley's editions were printed in Quarto, all appearing in 1550. If we consider Thynne as operating at the early stages of aesthetic criticism, Crowley was his counterpart in political criticism. His preface to *Piers Plowman* instructs the reader to see the work as an eye-opening text that will lead her or him along a Wycliffite path toward God. Pursuant to their construction, the two major works of the period, *The Canterbury Tales* and *Piers Plowman*, began their print existence sharing public popularity, but were later separated by the assignation of artistic immortality to Chaucer and contemporary

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<sup>133</sup> For different accounts of this chronology see A.S.G. Edward's "Middle English Literature" in D.C. Greetham's *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995. (184-91), and Anne Hudson's "Middle English" in *Editing Medieval Texts: English, French and Latin Written in England. Papers Given at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto 5-6 November, 1976*. A.G. Rigg, Ed. New York: Garland, 1977. (35-9)

<sup>134</sup> Readers can get an idea of what one of Crowley's black-letter editions looked like in the facsimile edition *The Vision of Pierce Plowman, First Printed in 1550, Reprinted 1976*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. Intro. J.A.W. Bennett. This facsimile is of the so-called Pepys' version.

moral and political relevance to Langland. It should however be noted that Chaucer was affiliated with neo-Wyclffite/Protestant interests in terms of such items as the spurious sixteenth-century "Plowman's Tale."

Thynne's and Crowley's works stood well into the seventeenth century when it became clear that the subject of the former's work was gaining ascendancy in literary study. So strong was Thynne's work that, when John Urry's long-laboured edition of *The Canterbury Tales* appeared posthumously, it was discounted for not improving upon its predecessor. During this same period, Hy Wharton contributed to the growing practice of scholarly editing with his critical edition of Pecoock's *The Book of Faith*, published in a black-letter edition in 1688. While Chaucer was becoming the dominant force in English literature from the medieval period, translated European tales in medieval romance were also well in place. This pan-European genre incorporating multiple languages entering English literary study chiefly with Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century, who, though writing in Latin, introduced a national narrative that was of central importance for the development of literature in English. The later translations of *Morte Arthur* and the *Gawain* tales offered localized use of the broader genre that would culminate in its parody in Cervante's *Don Quixote*. The pinnacle of this tradition in the English language might reasonably be assumed to be found during the early Renaissance in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, where we again see the British use of the broader romance tradition in relation to its own national identity. The editing tradition of the medieval romance involves fundamental questions regarding translation, and accordingly follows a different

course than texts originally composed in Middle English. Among these latter texts, Chaucer has retained the dominant position.<sup>135</sup>

The edition of *The Canterbury Tales* produced by Thomas Tyrwhitt in 1775 finally displaced Thynne. For this work, Tyrwhitt made an extensive examination of most, if not all, of the available manuscripts. Indeed, Tyrwhitt included a list of the manuscripts he examined in the introduction to his edition. His most famous act, however, is his work establishing the order in which the tales should appear. Working at roughly the same time as Tyrwhitt was John Pinkerton, who published a wide variety of editions including a recognizably scholarly edition of the Scottish ecclesiastic John Barbour's *The Bruce* in 1790.

Nineteenth-century editing of medieval texts is most significant for the beginnings of the institutionalization of medieval studies. The move from the editions of small groups of antiquarians toward the established procedures of the Early English Text Society, which was founded in 1864, highlights one of the most important moments in medieval studies and in the study of English literature as a whole. It also marks a moment when a clear break began to occur between the appreciation of the manuscript as artifact, which had long been the purview of the collector, archivist and antiquarian and a more uniformly textual approach based to a large extent on German philology.<sup>136</sup>

In the early to mid nineteenth century, groups such as The Roxburgh Club, The Society of Antiquarians, The Abbotsford Club, The Maitland Club, The Camden Society, The Bannatyne Club and The Percy Society sponsored editions of medieval texts. Editors Thomas Wright, J.O. Halliwell, F. Madden, W.B.D.D. Turnbull, and F.C. Hingeston

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<sup>135</sup> Edwards 190ff, Hudson 37ff.

<sup>136</sup> Green 277-82.

produced editions of texts in order to gain exposure for work that was increasingly seen as crucial for the development of British society. The antiquarian groups, while often scorned by academics, served a central role both in preserving manuscripts and in increasing their availability through the sponsorship of editions. These groups were an important precursor to the more focused efforts of Frederick J. Furnivall, Richard Morris, Walter W. Skeat and their compatriots who founded EETS.<sup>137</sup>

The Early English Text Society's influence on the study of English can hardly be overestimated. Through the application of its two stated missions – “to bring the mass of unprinted Early English literature within the reach of students and to provide sound texts from which the *New English Dictionary* [subsequently the *Oxford English Dictionary*] could quote” – the group was able to provide a foundation for the academic study of English literature and for modern editorial practice.<sup>138</sup> Their work continues to focus on these same two policies.

Frederick J. Furnivall was the second of three founding editors involved in the EETS project. The first was the cleric, later Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Trench, while the third and preeminent head was James Murray. EETS was only one of seven clubs that Furnivall created, one of the others being the Chaucer Society, a fact that explains EETS's scant offerings from that author. To understand the path that the Text Society would take it is necessary to briefly consider the origins of the dictionary project.

*The New English Dictionary*, which appeared in ten volumes from 1884 to 1895, was constructed on the principles of what was then known as “The New Philology.” This form of study was largely developed in Germany, but began as a result of the work of the

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<sup>137</sup> Green 281-90.

<sup>138</sup> See <http://www.eets.org.uk/>.

British scholar, lawyer and diplomat Sir William Jones. Jonathan Green describes the method as:

language studies based not on the old philosophical bases that dominate eighteenth-century philology, but on a new historical method, that would in turn dominate the nineteenth century, classically in the example of the methodology that underpinned the *New [Oxford] English Dictionary*. (277)

Jones, who spoke twelve languages and had a reading-knowledge of twenty-eight more, was fervent in his call for the combination of historical evidence and etymological study. His main contribution, however, came in his assertion that Sanskrit was the language of origin for most, if not all, European languages. An avid Orientalist, he spoke out against “conjectural etymology.” His research reached its pinnacle during the last years of his life (1783-1794), while he lived and worked as a lawyer and British bureaucrat in India.

There he worked with a team of Hindi and Muslim scholars to trace word origins. During that time, he also became an expert on Hindu chronology, music, games, botany, law and linguistics. His work directly challenged Noah Webster’s formulas of “roots and radicals,” but it was often attacked in England where he was seen as too friendly with Indian locals and too radical in his anti-racist politics. Examples of these attacks came from Jeremy Bentham, who was hostile to Indian culture, and from the British linguist Douglas Stewart, who referred to Sanskrit as “kitchen Greek.” Green summarizes the situation by indicating that his work did not catch on in England because its findings might in some way elevate Indian tradition above its English counterpart. Jones gained recent prominence as the central figure of attack in Edward Said’s 1978 book

*Orientalism*.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> We are only now getting to the point where scholars are openly challenging Said’s rather one-sided representation of Jones. Recent work by postcolonial scholars Aijaz Ahmad and Paul Stevens make a case

German scholars were far more willing to incorporate Jones' findings. Indeed, George Steiner argues that it was Herder's romanticization of Jones' work that allowed for Josef Goebbels' *Nazi Linguistics (Language and Silence 119-20)*. Moreover, Friedrich Schlegel studied with one of Jones' students and went on to become one of the greatest proponents of the Sanskrit theory. This work continued in Germany giving rise to a number of etymological studies and dictionaries ranging from the work of Bopp to that of the brothers Grimm, whose collection of oral and folk tales was undertaken in conjunction with their own etymological work in a manner that parallels the operations of EETS and *The New English Dictionary* group. In fact, Benjamin Thorpe (1782-1870) and Richard Kemble (1807-1857) both studied philology in Germany before returning to England to publish Anglo-Saxon texts for the British Philological Society, which was the founding group behind the New Philology in England.

It would be in a Philological Society meeting that Richard Chenevix Trench would deliver a lecture in two parts entitled "On Some Deficiencies in Our English Dictionaries." These talks, which occurred on 5 and 19 November of 1857, would lead the following year to the beginnings of *The New Dictionary* project under the guidelines imported from German Philology. (Green 290-95)

Trench's speech outlined seven deficiencies, which would be corrected by means of this new form of study:

1. The inclusion of more obsolete terms
2. The establishment of word families

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for a reevaluation of Jones' contributions to scholarship. For more on this, see Ahmad's "Orientalism and After: Ambivalence and Metropolitan Location in the Work of Edward Said," from his book *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992. 159-219. For more on Paul Stevens' approach to the same, see "England in Moghul India: Historicizing Cultural Difference and its Discontents," in *Comparing Imperialisms: From Early Modern to Late Romantic*. Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer, Eds. London: Palgrave, Forthcoming 2004.

3. A better system of dating both the life and death of a word
4. The inclusion of all alternative meanings
5. The listing of wide ranging synonyms
6. The need to exclude certain non-standard language (slang, technical terms and jargon)
7. The use of literary of literary citations to establish usage, dating and etymology.<sup>140</sup>

This final aspect is what is of most importance for the medieval scholar. Here the impetus came for the exploration of Anglo-Saxon, medieval English, French, and Latin texts.

When Furnivall took over from Trench after that man left to take up the post of Archbishop of Dublin, he established EETS to supply the citations necessary to build the dictionary. Both organizations were predicated upon notions stemming from the New Philology.

As a member of the Early English Text Society, the Reverend Walter William Skeat (1835-1912) edited a vast number of medieval texts, including the complete works of Chaucer and Langland, contributed introductions to early facsimiles of Old English manuscripts, and develop medieval and Anglo-Saxon miscellanies, a study of dialect and a number of grammars. He was considered the leading etymologist of his day, and his most famous scholarly work was *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (1882), which continues to attract readers. Of greatest importance for the current study is his parallel text edition of *Piers Plowman* for EETS that first appeared in 1867. (Hudson 40)

The EETS environment, with its close ties to *The New English Dictionary* and its principles of New Philology, would be the foundation of the school of New Bibliography that began in England around the turn of the last century. This group shared many ideas

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<sup>140</sup> Jonathan Green. *Chasing the Sun: Dictionary-Makers and the Dictionaries They Made*. New York: Henry Holt, 1996. (296-7).

with Ludwig Wittgenstein and the logical positivists who enshrined the analytic school of language philosophy. It was in this environment that twentieth century medieval studies would begin and that George Kane would start to work on the Athlone editions that were supposed to replace Skeat's parallel text edition.<sup>141</sup>

The early twentieth century saw a move away from the manuscript-as-artifact culture of the clubs and collectors and toward a more scientific approach to the establishment of texts. We can now see that the history the group used to found their work was too selective. Following another of Richard Trench's seven rules of deficiencies, the authors of *The New English Dictionary*, and with them most of the editors at EETS, excluded slang and provincialisms from their publications. This would begin the excision of scribal influence and oral localisms that, along with the exclusion of images, illustration and annotation from manuscripts, would bring medieval studies into step with the Anglo-American formalism that would dominate the study of English literature until at least the late sixties. Eventually these elements would re-enter mainstream medieval scholarship with the rebirth of manuscript studies and the concomitant arrival of several useful theoretical modes – most notably reader response criticism – though in the process there would be a new battle to fight with an even newer new philology.

The developments in the editing of medieval English literature have, through the changes resulting from the introduction of print, the religious shifts of the Reformation

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<sup>141</sup> For more on the development of The New Philology and *The New English Dictionary*, see Jonathan Green's "Chapter 12: The New Philology," and "Chapter 13: *The New English Dictionary*," in *Chasing the Sun: Dictionary-Makers and the Dictionaries They Made*. New York: Henry Holt, 1996. The connection between the two is made by Hans Aarsleff, who defines New or Comparative Philology as "language studies based not on the old philosophical bases that dominated eighteenth-century philology, but on a new historical method, that would in turn dominate the nineteenth century, classically in the example of methodology that underpinned the New [Oxford] English Dictionary." Green 277.

and Counter-Reformation, and the incorporation of the literary clubs and then the formation of EETS, marked medieval studies as a special case in humanities research. As such, consideration of their influence provides useful questions about the current shift toward digital editing. The relevance is particularly clear in the case of medieval English texts, which are now being made into digital editions. The best case of this can be found in the long and varied history of the editing and transmission of William Langland's *Piers Plowman* up to and including the current digitization project headed by Hoyt Duggan and the team at the *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*. However, before we examine the workings of the new archive, we need to first look more specifically at the tradition of editing *Piers Plowman* and the manner in which that history relates to the Athlone editions headed by George Kane, which were intended to update and replace the work done by Skeat.

**From the Scriptorium to the Printing House:  
Editing *Piers Plowman* before the Athlone Editions**

In the introduction to her book *Editing Piers Plowman*, Charlotte Brewer points out the two focuses necessary to study the history of the editing of Langland's poem.<sup>142</sup> The first of these is the examination of *Piers* before the advent of print; this is the study Brewer does not undertake, and the one that is still in its early stages. The second is the scrutiny of the post-print editing of *Piers*. The cooling of debate surrounding the issues raised by this has not, however, led to any sufficient resolution of the exigent textual

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<sup>142</sup> Brewer, Charlotte. *Editing Piers Plowman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 1-3. The following section owes a great debt to Brewer's thorough examination of the editing of *Piers Plowman* since the advent of print. Also of help have been A. J. Colaianne's *Piers Plowman: An Annotated Bibliography of Editions and Criticism, 1550-1977*. New York: Garland, 1978, Derek Pearsall's *An Annotated Bibliography of Langland*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990 and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton's "Piers Plowman," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*. David Wallace, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. (513-38).

problems. In order to better understand the decisions that went into the formation of the Athlone editions of the A, B and C texts that I will discuss below, it is necessary to spend some time establishing the two traditions.

Until recently, research into the textual trajectory of *Piers* viewed the role of the scribe as, at best, an invisible transmitter and, at worst, an ignorant corruptor.<sup>143</sup>

However, recent work in manuscript studies has changed our opinion of scribes, and they are now generally seen as intellectual workers with varying, and at times discernible, talent, limitation and motivation. The influence of the historicist studies researching around scriptoriums for signs of medieval life, and thereby granting the scribes the necessary importance to warrant study, was one important element in this change. A second and equally important component was the reemergence of the notion of manuscript-as-artifact within scholarly study.<sup>144</sup> In one sense, this shift marks a return to the appreciation of the manuscript as an entity unto itself – a concept that was held by the early antiquarians, but it is also a positive result of developing research in art history which has provided detailed examination into the communicative role that the visual aspects of manuscripts contain.<sup>145</sup>

The results of this interdisciplinary research mesh well with the concept of bibliographic codes established by Jerome McGann. For McGann, bibliographic codes

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<sup>143</sup> For an insightful look at the distinction between scribal and authorial writing relevant to this case see Charlotte Brewer, "Authorial vs. Scribal Writing in *Piers Plowman*," *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretation*. Tim William Machan, Ed. Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991. (59-89) While I do not agree with all of Brewer's assertions, particularly her position on the Z-text and more generally concerning her representation of herself as somehow less subjective than Kane and Donaldson, the overall impact of her work is profound.

<sup>144</sup> Derek Pearsall sums this up by saying that it is "sobering to return to the manuscripts" after spending time with critical editions and argues that the study of manuscripts "helps to enlarge our understanding of the literature of the period." "The Uses of Manuscripts: Late Medieval English," *The Harvard Library Bulletin* 4.1 (1993). (30-36).

<sup>145</sup> Camille, Michael. "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History* (1985), 8 (1). (26-49). See in particular, page 24.

are the physical attributes of a text that are external to its textual content. These extra-textual elements contribute to the manuscript or book's ability to convey meaning and give a more robust picture of the text's production of meaning through an examination of, among other things, the connections or disjunctions with the textual narrative.<sup>146</sup> While McGann's concerns with bibliographic codes are focused on the world of print, his notion that the physical makeup of a given text contributes to its overall meaning is one that lends itself well to the context of manuscript studies. It has also become one of the central concerns of editorial theory in the digital age. In the context of *Piers* studies, the concept of bibliographic codes can easily be extended to argue for the inclusion of paleographic research and the interaction of marginalia, rubrication and illustration with the narrative. Taken together, the results of historical, art-historical, literary and bibliographic study in these specific engagements broaden the scope of who qualifies as an editor of the text.<sup>147</sup> This then offers a contextual formalism (that is, a critical position that takes into account social conditions as well as textual concerns) that proves highly effective when we consider the editing of complex texts such as *Piers Plowman*.<sup>148</sup> This contextual component offers the rigor of close reading and philological critique while avoiding

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<sup>146</sup> McGann has discussed his theory of bibliographic codes (as opposed to linguistic codes) in a number of publications. In its simplest form, the theory argues that the physical aspects of a text such as the cover, the font and the layout can carry as much or more meaning than that within the text itself. For his most recent views on this theory see, "Dialogue and Interpretation at the Interface of Man and Machine," in *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. 193-207. See especially 197-203 and 206-7.

<sup>147</sup> John M. Bowers refers to those concerned as "scribe-editors" (84). "*Piers Plowman's* William Langland: Editing the Text, Writing the Author's Life." *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 9 (1995): 65-90.

<sup>148</sup> In editorial terms, it is a melding of internal and external examination. Some useful examples of this type of work are to be found in many of the medievalists that I have mentioned, including Pearsall, Justice, Kerby-Fulton, Camille and Carruthers. In each of these cases the scholar in question works across physical (i.e. paleographic) and abstract (i.e. exegetical and/or hermeneutic) thresholds in order to come up with a reading of a given "text." Thus, these writers collapse the distinction between what Tim William Machan calls "textual and interpretive studies." See, Tim William Machan, "Late Middle English Texts and the Higher and Lower Criticisms," in *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretation*. Tim William Machan, Ed. Binghampton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991. (3ff).

“[t]he word-love of philology,” which Assmann suggests is a component of “graphocentrism and bibliolatry.”<sup>149</sup> In order to demonstrate this we need to look at the development of the tradition to this point.

To the extent that scholars now accept scribes and other participants in the manuscript tradition as potential contributors to the trajectory of a work, we must keep foremost in our minds that their type of editorial work operated in a different fashion than contemporary editor, whose main task has often been to produce a single useable text. In contrast to these contemporary editors, the work of scribes was of a more localized form – that is, they focus specifically on the needs of the given manuscript and its specific audience. In other words, they recognize that

There is a need to be conscious, always, of how behind every text presented in a modern edition, with all the reassuring apparatus of titles and text divisions, capital letters and full stops, paragraphs and line numbers, there lies the spoil heap of the manuscripts from which it has been drawn.<sup>150</sup>

Even in *Piers* studies, where the maintenance of the A, B, C, three-text delineation provides an argument for a multiple-text existence, one text has always seemed to stand out as the canonical or representative text.<sup>151</sup> Until recently, that text was the B text, stemming from Skeat and culminating in the Kane and Donaldson Athlone

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<sup>149</sup> Aleida Assmann. “Texts, Traces, Trash: The Changing Media of Cultural Memory.” *Representations* (56) 1996, 123-34. (123) I am not certain that it is necessary to go as far as Assmann. Moreover, I believe that the system of checks and balances that exists within a study founded on a material-based philology offers a good chance to avoid biases on either the word-love or the history-love sides.

<sup>150</sup> Derek Pearsall. “Texts, Textual Criticism, and Fifteenth Century Manuscript Production,” in *Fifteenth Century Studies*. Robert F. Yeager, Ed. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1984. (121).

<sup>151</sup> An interesting encapsulation of this position leading into our time can be found in David Fowler’s Chapter “Vita De Do-Wel, Do-Bet, Do-Best in the A-text” in his book *Piers the Plowman: Literary Relations of the A and B Texts*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961: “In the last twenty years much has been accomplished... What is especially encouraging about these studies is that each concentrates on a single version, thus reducing that speculative tendency which too often hinders the critic who would deal with ‘the poem,’ meaning all three texts seen as one. Of course, the ultimate goal should and must be a synoptic interpretation. But differences concerning proper methods of literary analysis must first be resolved, agreement must be reached on the nature of the allegorical structure in all versions, and then all the texts will need to be re-examined.” (3).

edition of the same line. Currently, some would argue that Pearsall and others have successfully demonstrated the validity of C. These arguments aside, the three-text structure remains an effective designation for discussing the early editing of the text.

The broadest set of differences in the A, B, C structure involve what appears to be a time-sensitive compositional trajectory, with A being the first version of the text, and C the last. The shortest of the three texts, A, ends after eleven sections (or passus), and seems to run aground when considering sensitive theological issues.<sup>152</sup> There is some debate over the authenticity of a twelfth passage, that most now feel was written by John But in what appears to be an attempt to finish the work.<sup>153</sup> The B text rewrites some of the early passages, but also continues from A's endpoint. It includes twenty passus. C rewrites major portions of B, but stops short, including no emendations for the final two passus, although it adds a further two sections for an overall total of twenty-two. In all three cases, internal evidence is the primary basis for dating. The exception to this rule can be found in the C tradition, where the effort is helped by possible signs of influence in Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*. Since we know that Usk was executed in 1388, we can assume that at least some of the C text was in circulation before that point.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> An excellent summary of this development can be found in Kathryn Kerby-Fulton's "*Piers Plowman*," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*. David Wallace, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 513-38. For the A-text ending, see in particular 515ff, culminating on 520.

<sup>153</sup> So engrained is the belief that John But attempted to finish the incomplete A text, that Walter Skeat includes the "John But Passus" in his edition of the A tradition. For more on this, see Anne Middleton. "Making a Good End: John But as a Reader of *Piers Plowman*," in *Medieval Studies Presented to George Kane*. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron and Joseph S. Wittig, Eds. New York: Boydell and Brewer, 1988. (243-66).

<sup>154</sup> A.S.G. Edwards and Derek Pearsall think it possible that the echoes of *Piers* in Usk's *Testament of Love* cannot be fully explained "simply [by] memorial retention." "The Content of Books: The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts." In *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. (258).

Internal evidence suggests that A was written sometime in the 1360's and B in the latter part of the 1370's.<sup>155</sup> Beyond the dating of the three traditions, any examination of the early editing of the text requires a manuscript-by-manuscript analysis.

Acknowledging scribal work as part of an editorial process has two further distinctions that contribute to our understanding of the textual tradition. The first is the overt use of different copies in order to create a finished manuscript. This "scribal making" is well argued by both Charlotte Brewer and Steven Justice,<sup>156</sup> who look at the John But passus in the A tradition in a manner that highlights work that seems to prefigure collation procedures now considered the backbone of critical editions in the Anglo-American tradition. The second involves the application of McGannian concepts, which share key features with recent developments in manuscript studies. These studies elevate the physical attributes of the manuscript so that they are seen as relevant parts of the communicative whole.<sup>157</sup> For the sake of consistency, I will use as an example the Corpus Christi College, Oxford MS 201 (F) manuscript from the B tradition. The use of this text in order to discuss this second set of issues allows for an examination of the editing process up to Hoyt Duggan's *Electronic Piers Plowman Archive*, which published F as its first release in March of 2000.

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<sup>155</sup> Greetham, D.C. "Reading in and around *Piers Plowman*." In *Texts and Textuality: Textual Instability, Theory, and Interpretation*. Philip G. Cohen, ed. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997. (26).

<sup>156</sup> Brewer, Charlotte. "Authorial Vs. Scribal Writing in *Piers Plowman*." *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretation*. Tim William Machan, Ed. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991. 59-89. Justice, Stephen. *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

<sup>157</sup> For example see Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Denise Despres' detailed study *Iconography and the Professional Reader: The Politics of Book Production in the Douce 'Piers Plowman'*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1998. In this book Kerby-Fulton and Despres examine the relationship of the "professional readers" of *Piers Plowman* and their interaction with a series of communicative figures (or icons) that can be traced to the illustrations in C-Text, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 104. Their book follows the publication of a facsimile of the same with a detailed introduction by Derek Pearsall with descriptions of the images by Kathleen Scott in *Piers Plowman: a facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Douce 104*. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 1992.

Following the McGannian viewpoint, the reader will notice that the F manuscript contains a number of extra-textual features that seem to interact with the overall meaning of the narrative. These elements, which would commonly appear in the bibliographic description of the text, are afforded greater relevance; they are maintained as an active component in the conveyance of meaning, rather than being listed merely as identifying features of a given artifact. Though the fact tends to be obscured by the limitations imposed by print, manuscript features such as illustration, rubrication and script can be seen as communicatively contributory, making such additions part of editorial practice.

The first thing one sees when looking at F is an illustration in the top left corner of Fol. R1 that depicts a seated, sleeping figure. This illustration appears within a letter 'A' and extends down the left hand side of the page and across the bottom, in effect nestling the text, leaving the right side open – the direction in which we will pursue the rest of the narrative journey. As Anne Middleton points out, the drawing of the dreamer wearing what may be labourer's gloves on may indicate a blurring of the narrator and the central character.<sup>158</sup> To blend these two has direct effects for the description of character within *Piers Plowman*. It complicates the perception of the Plowman as contemplative, a concept which would become important after the peasant uprising of 1381.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Middleton's is one of many opinions on the subject. Her position is quoted from "private correspondence" on the F CD in a footnote in the "Introduction" under the section "Illustrations." That same note records Kathleen Scott's view that the figure is wearing gentleman's clothing as well as James Weldon's support for the same notion. For more on this see Kathleen L. Scott, "The Illustrations of *Piers Plowman* in Bodleian Library MS Douce." 104.*YLS* (4) 1990 (1-86), in particular page 18 and James Weldon's "Ordinatio and Genre in MS CCC 201: A Mediaeval Reading of the B-Text of *Piers Plowman*," in *Florilegium* 1993 (159-75) see in particular page 12. (Note this latter article is also available for download in .pdf format at <http://www.arts.uwo.ca/florilegium/vol-xii/weldon.html>. Different interpretations aside, what is important in my argument is the generally appreciation of the direct interaction between text and illustration which all of these scholars share.

<sup>159</sup> For more on the use of an "active" reading of *Piers Plowman*, see Steven Justice's chapter "Piers Plowman in the Rising" in his *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994 (102-139). See also Richard Firth Green's "John Ball's Letters: Literary History and Historical

The opening illustration is also significant because it is represented inside the letter 'A,' a letter that is not found at the beginning of the poem in any of the other B tradition manuscripts, in which the first letter is always 'I'. Here we may find an example of the poem's first line being rewritten in order to facilitate the space for a drawing gained from using a close looped 'A.' Coming as it does in the first line of the poem – and in the first position visually on the manuscript – the influence of this decision can hardly be overstated. These considerations, taken together with Brewer and Justice's analysis of the textual emendation of scribes, provide us with a picture of manuscript creation that shows a wide range of individuals involved in the writing or creating process.

The example I have presented here is only the first of many that are relevant with regard to this manuscript. Latin is rubricated in F, and switches colouring midway through the work, thus providing more grounds for speculation about how many hands were involved in its making. Elements such as orthography and punctuation are also of concern, as are the details of the manuscript's physical description in terms of foliation, pagination and size.<sup>160</sup> These latter components have received some attention in the work of editors since the New Bibliography, but usually only as a part of the overall function of the classification of manuscripts. Since McGann, textual scholars are now more aware of the importance of all of these material elements. The F dreamer illustration serves as a poignant example of how much further manuscript studies can usefully develop

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Literature." *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context.* Barbara Hanawalt, Ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992. (176-200).

<sup>160</sup> M. B. Parkes discusses the development of a "grammar of legibility" in scribal work across the medieval period. See *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. In Parkes, this refers to what non-letter marks on a page contribute to meaning or reading. (23).

McGann's assumptions. While I have only scratched the surface of this type of work, it seems clear that a great deal more research will need to be done in the area of the material and textual interaction of manuscript evidence. For now, I want to move on to examine the first adaptations of Langland's poem that were to appear in print.

When Robert Crowley decided to bring out a print version of *Piers Plowman* in 1550, he faced the same limitations that other authors of the period did. Print, an excellent means for mass-producing texts, saw a steady move toward the normalization of spelling and the exclusion of most illustration. There were exceptions, usually based on who was sponsoring the edition, but in general, illustration by hand fell by the wayside and was often replaced by more print-friendly forms like woodcuts and etchings.<sup>161</sup> Crowley's work offers evidence that *Piers* was popular with contemporary readers: he produced three separate editions, all in 1550, with a fourth being produced by Owen Rogers in 1561.<sup>162</sup> Beyond their position in the transitional process between print and manuscript tied to their physical properties, Crowley's editions hold a special place in the critical editing of the text. Seen as creations stemming from a particularly strong exemplar, Crowley's editions are usually included in lists of extant manuscripts. Thus, we find the interesting case in Charlotte Brewer's *Editing Piers Plowman* where, after having stated that she will not consider the editing of manuscripts, but only of printed versions, she collates Crowley's editions as manuscripts, and then treats them as print editions for the purposes of her history.<sup>163</sup> The point is not necessarily a problem for

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<sup>161</sup> The move from illustration to woodcuts and etchings is one of the well-known effects of the transition from manuscript to print culture occurring at this time.

<sup>162</sup> Owen Rogers' edition used as its basis Crowley's third edition, but Rogers rearranged the material – breaking up Crowley's preface into sections and placing them above each passus they summarized. Rogers also added the text of *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede*. Brewer believes Rogers wrongly thought this text to have been written by the same poet as *Piers*. Brewer, *Editing* (7, 20).

<sup>163</sup> Brewer (7-19).

Brewer's argument, but stands as a testament to the unique position of Crowley's work at the intersection of manuscript and print. The editions are important also for editorial consideration for two reasons. First, Crowley made "improvements" to his editions after finding further manuscript sources, and secondly, he included prefatory material. This use of a variety of sources in order to produce a better text, one which began with attempts to complete the A version of the poem, is brought closer to contemporary practice by Crowley's improvement of his own editions through the collation of manuscripts. Further, the emphasis on a textual interpretation – here as a means of furthering Crowley's reformist agenda – is in keeping with the move away from the manuscript as an independent entity and toward its position as a vehicle for hermeneutic pursuits of an individual or focused, extra-textual message.<sup>164</sup>

Although interest in the poem can be assumed from Crowley's and Roger's editions in the sixteenth century, it would not be until the antiquarian pursuits in the eighteenth century that the poem would be edited again. Among the new editions, the most significant are the work of Bishop Thomas Percy and Thomas Warton. The former began a new phase of interest in Early English poetry that included a call for scholarly editing of medieval texts. Percy, who first published his three-volume *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* in 1765, would later be seen by Frederick Furnivall as his direct influence when he established the Early English Text Society.<sup>165</sup> Warton offered in his *History of English Poetry* (1774-1781) what Charlotte Brewer reports was "the first work since Crowley to

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<sup>164</sup> Crowley's emphasis on textual interpretation grew with each of his editions. His preface became longer, eventually including summaries of each passus. Each new edition included a larger number of marginal annotations, many of which demonstrate, in Brewer's words, a "clear polemical orientation" that point, toward Crowley's belief in the text's immediate relevance for the contemporary political situation. Brewer *Editing* (16-19).

<sup>165</sup> Furnivall argued that Percy had "opened to us the road into the Early English home in which we have spent so many happy hours." Quoted in Brewer *Editing*, (23).

print a substantial portion of the text of *Piers Plowman*.”<sup>166</sup> Brewer points to other significant figures that were a part of a move away from the antiquarian study of the Middle Ages and toward a more organized pursuit of knowledge. Among these are Joseph Ritson and Thomas Tyrwhitt.<sup>167</sup> Following Brian Stock, Brewer views the move away from antiquarian study or collecting toward more focused editions as a result of Enlightenment thinking that gave rise to a desire to use the past for purposes of self definition.<sup>168</sup> Both Brewer and Stock are careful scholars who would not make these assertions idly, but it seems clear that as early as John But and John Ball and continuing with Crowley, editors of *Piers* were well versed in the ideological rewriting of texts that contain at least some notion of the existence of the self.

The first full edition of *Piers* since Crowley and Rogers came with Thomas Whitaker’s edition in 1813. Whitaker, like Crowley, included a preface that attempted to present the poem in a manner that agreed with his own position as a Lancastrian vicar, as well as commenting on formal aspects such as alliteration and allegory. Shortly after Whitaker’s work was published, Richard Price made a study of the available materials for inclusion in Warton’s *History of English Poetry*. This work, though only treating excerpts of the poem, demonstrates yet another step in editorial procedure, with direct comment on variants and the inclusion of a discussion of previous scholarship.<sup>169</sup> Thomas Wright, one of the leading antiquaries of the mid nineteenth century, pointed out the faults of earlier editors, and called for a greater attention to textual evidence. Each of these small steps shows the emerging interest in a more structured examination of the texts of the

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<sup>166</sup> Brewer *Editing*, (23).

<sup>167</sup> Brewer *Editing* 32-3.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.* 37-49.

Middle Ages. The trend would culminate in the foundation of the Early English Text Society (EETS) in 1864 and the creation of the most important edition of *Piers Plowman* since Crowley.

Walter W. Skeat's editions of *Piers Plowman* mark a new beginning in the editorial tradition. They were to enshrine the three-text state that still underpins current debate, while at the same time establishing a level of credibility for the EETS group. This credibility would help them to assume the foundational role that they have enjoyed ever since. Critics now agree that the main outcome of Skeat's editions – that the text of B was the best of the three texts – was the result of Skeat's mistaken use of the Vernon manuscript for the A text and the Ilchester manuscript for C.<sup>170</sup> These choices, if faulty, were made in the absence of information. Still, the greatest strength of Skeat's project lies in the fact that he produced useable editions. The independent texts (1867, 1869 and 1873 respectively) and the parallel text (1886) provided the scholars who followed with a useful starting point. Moreover, Walter Skeat's openness to the potential failings of his own work would create an environment that was welcoming to future research.

The accessibility of Skeat's work is demonstrated by three distinct contributions. The first is part of the mandate of the Early English Text Society: by preparing editions of the poem, Skeat provided greater access to the text.<sup>171</sup> In addition, through marking up his work in ways that helped to highlight areas that would need revision, Skeat demonstrated a form of hospitable scholarship that allowed him to welcome change and

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<sup>170</sup> Skeat, too, eventually came to believe that his use of the Vernon manuscript was problematic. In a 1909 letter to R. W. Chambers, the later editor of the A text, Skeat cited his initial inexperience in editing from a number of manuscripts, along with the general lack of knowledge about what manuscripts were extant. Brewer *Editing*, 119.

<sup>171</sup> See the published mandate of the Early English Text Society quoted above (page 71) or at their website at: <http://www.eets.org.uk/>.

correction. This contribution clearly allows for a greater ease of contributory scholarship, while also fostering a mode of scholarly inquiry that is non-adversarial. Skeat's position on these issues is made clear in the prefatory material to the 1873 edition of C, where he points toward both the importance of producing an edition in order to foster scholarly debate and also to the active role of the reader as key in engaging with the editions he produced: "[n]ow that all three texts are in the reader's hands, he can prosecute the comparison of them as far as he pleases, in a way that could never have been done before."<sup>172</sup> Perhaps most indicative of the generosity of Skeat's contribution are his supplemental publications designed to foster further research in the area. For each of the A, B and C texts, he produced separate editions that included detailed supporting materials. Moreover, he published a series of supporting notes and texts that were specifically designed to enlist the interest and assistance of other minds. Consider this from his revised edition of EETS publication number 17, which was produced to solicit help in finding all extant MSS of *Piers Plowman*:

The seventeenth publication of the E.E.T.S was my edition of "Parallel Extracts from twenty-nine manuscripts of Piers Plowman," published with the view of obtaining further information about the MSS. and their content. This led to further discoveries, and has enabled me to describe many more than those there noticed, and at the same time to do so more fully. I now take the opportunity to print a more complete set of these "parallel extracts," so as to give some notion of the general appearance of the spelling, &c. of the various MSS. (3)

What is telling in this humble introduction is the attitude of community inherent in Skeat's scholarship. His work took direct steps in order to allow readers who came after him to benefit from his research and to find an easier path to the poem than Skeat himself

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<sup>172</sup> Quoted in Brewer *Editing*, 160-61.

had traveled. Surely, this is exemplary scholarship and editorial practice.<sup>173</sup> Scholarship of this sort offers the additional benefit of attracting more people to the study of the text. The outcome of such work is that it both provides for and enriches future scholarship.

Beyond these broader contributions, the EETS editions also acted as a bridge for two important considerations in *Piers* studies. Skeat's belief in a single author led him to create editions based on the notion of scribal participation and transmission error. Shortly after his editions appeared, the authorship question would become a hotly contested area. Interestingly, even here Skeat's edition played a central role. When John Matthews Manly posited a theory of multiple authorship, it was founded on his desire to implement a recuperative project in the name of the A text, which he felt was superior to either B or C.<sup>174</sup> Only after the fact did it become clear that Manly's faith in A came from a reconstruction based solely on Skeat. In a clear example of the fundamental contribution that an edition can make, once Manly realized that his findings were a result of rather than a corrective to Skeat's work, he had already achieved the very useful effect of gaining further critical attention for the A text tradition. Thus, even where it disagreed with Skeat's personal position, the discussion fostered by his edition added to the richness of debate.

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<sup>173</sup> Listing all of Skeat's publications in this area would consume too much space. Interested readers should see Derek Pearsall's *An Annotated Critical Bibliography of Langland*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990. For Skeat's editions in particular see 6-10.

<sup>174</sup> Manly's position on the multiple authorship of *Piers* was first published in 1906 as "The Lost Leaf of 'Piers the Plowman'" in *Modern Philology* 3 (1905-6): 359-66. He also argued this position at a meeting of the Philological Society around the time of the article's publication, and a revised and expanded version of the argument appeared in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* in 1908; the perceived legitimizing effect of the *Cambridge History* publication of Manly's theory added further heat to the authorship debate. *Brewer Editing*, 184 and n6, 186.

Skeat's work also bears the marks of the influence of German philology in English editing.<sup>175</sup> Although EETS editions only partially collated manuscripts and, as such, missed a number of potentially important pieces of information, the level of scholarly rigor that Skeat was able to demonstrate served to raise the level of credibility of EETS and of scholarly editing in England. Skeat's errors, apparent to us now, were largely due to the lack of access to all extant manuscripts. That his publication directly contributed to the pursuit and classification of these documents is beyond doubt. Errors in interpretation that came under attack after Skeat's publications must be seen in the light of his contribution: he actually produced the editions that allowed for debate, and to a large extent caused further research to occur. This drive toward completion, even at the expense of detail, is the same drive that would later see Fredson Bowers become the most important editor in the American tradition. In both cases, the criticism that followed, even when hostile, owed a great deal to the possibilities for dialogue created by published editions.

One of the best examples of the enduring legacy of Skeat's work – in terms of the finite contributions of his text and method as well as the spirit of his labor – is found in the 1997 book *Written Work: Langland, Labor and Authorship*.<sup>176</sup> Editor Steven Justice begins his introduction by quoting one of the book's contributors: "Everything that Skeat says about *Piers Plowman* is worth attending to," advises Derek Pearsall.<sup>177</sup> Agreeing

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<sup>175</sup> The German philological influence in editing stems from the developments made in connecting language study with history mentioned above in connection with the work of William Jones and feeding into what would become the *Oxford English Dictionary*. For a general overview of this process see Jonathan Green's *Chasing the Sun: Dictionary Makers and the Dictionaries They Made*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996. See in particular 250ff.

<sup>176</sup> *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*. Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, eds. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

<sup>177</sup> Quoted in Justice, "Introduction: Authorial Work and Literary Ideology" *Written Work*, 1 and Pearsall, "Langland's London" *Written Work*, 185.

with Derek Pearsall is perhaps the safest bet one can make in Medieval Studies, but I would like to explore an additional level of his contribution to the volume. In the first paragraph of his introduction, Justice discusses the two main elements that set the horizon of debate for all of the essays that follow.<sup>178</sup> The first is an emphasis, following Skeat, on autobiographical elements in *Piers Plowman*.<sup>179</sup> At first glance, this appears to be the way in which we should “attend to” Skeat. A closer examination shows that there is a deeper connection to Skeat through textual work that echoes in the poem and which is reflected in the work of the volume’s contributors. The volume, as Justice points out, begins with an edited passage of text with a facing modernization put together by Pearsall.<sup>180</sup> Justice writes that “[a]ll the essays here presented take as a point of departure or of conclusion the single C version passage in which Langland seems explicitly to offer autobiographical detail.”<sup>181</sup> That this entire book can develop in multiple directions from this short passage illustrates the productive nature of posited text – what Justice calls “the paths taken through this opening.”<sup>182</sup> Here, editing in general is seen as a form of invitation to conversation, a leaping off point grounded in the notions of accessibility. Thus, Pearsall’s work editing the passage that all of the authors will address recalls the spirit of Skeat, prefiguring the studies that follow, while at the same time connecting to the conversation that started in the late fourteenth century.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> *Written Work*, 1.

<sup>179</sup> This line of critical work has been usefully explored by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton in “‘Who Has Written This Book?’ Visionary Autobiography in Langland’s C Text.” In *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: Exeter Symposium V: Papers Read at the Devon Centre, Dartington Hall, July 1992*. Marion Glasscoe, Ed. Woodbridge and Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 1992. 101-15.

<sup>180</sup> “Passus 5.1–104: Will’s ‘Apologia pro vita sua.’” Derek Pearsall, ed and trans. *Written Work* 13-21.

<sup>181</sup> Justice, “Introduction.” *Written Work*, 1.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* 1.

<sup>183</sup> Pearsall in *Written Work* 13-21.

A strong piece of evidence for this theme of connection through work – of definition through shared practice – is revealed in the bibliographic codes related by the edited version of the frontispiece. That picture, which shows “Will at Work,” is taken from the *Douce 104* manuscript and is complemented by an errata page that corrects its original printing, which was produced as a mirror image.<sup>184</sup> The two stand together as a useful reminder of Janus-like reflections, looking forward and backward, that can accompany textual engagement: it is through the recognition of both Skeat’s critical suggestions and his welcoming mode of work that we can glimpse the full effects of his contribution to *Written Work* and written work.

One final point should be made about Skeat’s labours. Perhaps the greatest challenge for any scholar is to face up to errors in a text that they have seen through the press. Nowhere is this more aggravating than in large-scale editing projects. Yet, after editing the A-text, Skeat was more than willing to accept that his selection of the Vernon manuscript may have been flawed. His support of these new ideas allowed textual scholarship in the area to continue with the benefit of his support and participation. While this seems a straightforward set of actions, it is far too rare in the world of editing, where debate can often impede the work necessary to improve editions. Skeat’s model is well worth attending.<sup>185</sup>

After Skeat, *Piers* studies maintained their position as one of the leading areas of development in textual scholarship. Various, J.M. Manly, R.W. Chambers and J.H.G.

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<sup>184</sup> *Written Work*. (insert).

<sup>185</sup> For more on Skeat’s position vis-à-vis his choice of the Vernon manuscript see J.A.W. Bennett’s introduction to Skeat’s *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Ploughman in Three Parallel Texts Together with Richard the Redeless by William Langland Volume I*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1886, 1924, 1954) 1961. (V)

Grattan made new contributions to the growing field.<sup>186</sup> At the same time, the editing of the texts was enriched by the participation of a group of graduate students (facilitated no doubt by the EETS publications and the developments in scholarly editing) working under senior editors. In particular, one of Chambers' students – George Kane – would come to play the most significant role in *Piers* studies since Skeat. On his way to achieving that position, Kane would pass through and put to rest the multiple authorship debate.

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<sup>186</sup> The influence of Manly's work is evident in J.F. Davis' *Langland, Piers Plowman. Prologue and Passus I-VII: Text B*. London: University Tutorial Press, 1896, where his arguments for multiple authorship were included in a revamped version of Skeat's earlier work. Chambers' contributions came in the form of a series of co-authored articles with J.H.G. Grattan and in introductions to facsimiles and descriptions of the Huntington Library of San Marino's *Piers Plowman* MSS. Chambers also began the work that his graduate student George Kane would adopt in order to produce his A text. For more on the considerable contributions of Chambers and Grattan see Pearsall's *Annotated Critical Bibliography of Langland* (esp. pages 10-14). For a critical-historical approach, see Charlotte Brewer's *Editing Piers Plowman*. (181-328).

**Chapter 3: Doing Better: Athlone and After,  
or *Citizen Kane* and the ABC's of Editing *Piers Plowman*<sup>187</sup>**

RAWLSTON:

That's it - motivation. What made Kane what he was? And, for that matter, what was he? What we've just seen are the outlines of a career - what's behind the career? What's the man? Was he good or bad? Strong or foolish? Tragic or silly? Why did he do all those things? What was he after? (then, appreciating his point) Maybe he told us on his death bed.

THOMPSON

Yes, and maybe he didn't.

RAWLSTON

Ask the question anyway, Thompson! Build the picture around the question, even if you can't answer it.

– *Citizen Kane*

In this section, I will take one large risk with one goal in mind. The risk involves an appearance of flippancy in my comparison of a Hollywood film with a set of scholarly editions. In order to follow this path, I want to qualify the comparison. For me, the story of George Kane's work on the editions of Langland's poem and the narrative of Orson Welles' famous film share many useful parallels. Both involve the pursuit of identity through the analysis of a disparate set of data. In each case, a definition of identity is the central means by which work takes place – a leaping off point, if you will. My study of the *Piers* editions uses *Citizen Kane* as a framing tale. It is not my intention to compare Charles Foster Kane with the eminent scholar who shares his last name – that part of the parallel is merely a coincidence. Moreover, the comparison is not between the Kane

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<sup>187</sup> For an excellent overview of the challenges facing editors of *Piers Plowman* and the ways in which those challenges have manifested themselves in terms of textual practice, see D.C. Greetham's "Reading in and around *Piers Plowman*," in *Texts and Textuality: Textual Instability, Theory and Interpretation*. Phillip Cohen, Ed. New York: Garland, 1997. 25-57. Greetham, who is without doubt the strongest reader of the intersection of literary and editorial theory, is also a medievalist who can be trusted to deliver solid entrées into almost any textual issue. Indeed so important is his contribution that it almost makes up for his coining of the unlovely term "textuist" to describe people working in contemporary textual studies.

character and the Kane editor, but rather between the pursuit of the identity of the author in *Piers Plowman* and the attempt to define the life of Charles Foster Kane.

My goal in conflating these two areas is to provide a form of response to a question raised by Lee Patterson more than a decade ago.<sup>188</sup> That question – which echoes George Kane’s peremptory, ‘how can you critique an edition unless you have edited it?’ – remains usefully unanswered, and I hope to demonstrate that my rhetorical conceit will prove effective as a pathway to exploring this area. But more on this below.

*Citizen Kane* begins with a montage that plays with images of the death of Charles Foster Kane inside Xanadu, the castle that he built to hold his life and his treasures. This modern day palace is an archive of human history:

#### NARRATOR

One hundred thousand trees, twenty thousand tons of marble, are the ingredients of Xanadu's mountain. Xanadu's livestock: the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, the beast of the field and jungle - two of each; the biggest private zoo since Noah. Contents of Kane's palace: paintings, pictures, statues, the very stones of many another palace, shipped to Florida from every corner of the earth, from other Kane houses, warehouses, where they moldered for years. Enough for ten museums - the loot of the world.

Surrounding the development of Xanadu is a series of accounts from various people describing Kane. At one minute he is described as a communist, then a fascist, one who was loved then one who was hated. The only consistent motif is diversity – we seem

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<sup>188</sup> Patterson’s “The Logic of Textual Criticism and the Way of Genius: The Kane-Donaldson *Piers Plowman* in Historical Perspective” picks up on George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson’s famous challenge at the end of the ‘Editing the B Version’ section of the “Introduction” to the Athlone B Text: “Whether we have carried out our task efficiently must be assessed by reenacting it. (220). Patterson presents a complex contemplation of the intent behind the Athlone editions, which must be read in its entirety to be appreciated. However, I am most interested in the article’s overall effect, which is to support an evaluation of Kane and Donaldson’s edition on its own merits and not against rival theories of editing. Patterson’s discussion forms the third chapter of his book *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987. (77-113) and is most effectively assessed when read with the chapter that precedes it, “Historical Criticism and the Claims of Humanism” (41-74).

to have no trustworthy accounts of Kane's character. The pursuit of this question of Kane's character is the film's central drive – Thompson is the head of the group that has been assigned the task of making a film to tell the story of the great man's life. From the beginning, it is clear that this will be an impossible task, and the film's concluding scene confirms this impossibility with the famous search for the meaning of Kane's final word, "Rosebud," ultimately leading nowhere. In the final scene, Thompson is standing in the midst of a vast array of boxed possessions, which are being archived by a series of accountants and photographers:

GIRL

What about Rosebud? Don't you think that explains anything?

THOMPSON

No, I don't. Not much anyway. Charles Foster Kane was a man who got everything he wanted, and then lost it. Maybe Rosebud was something he couldn't get or lost. No, I don't think it explains anything. I don't think any word explains a man's life. No – I guess Rosebud is just a piece in a jigsaw puzzle – a missing piece.

He drops the jigsaw pieces back into the box, looking at his watch.

Even after the camera famously shows the audience that "Rosebud" is the name of the sled that Charles owned as a child, it seems clear that its discovery would not have provided the type of information that Thompson and his employees seek. The central message of the film argues that, even with a detailed study of archival information, identity is not something that can be clearly defined. In this way, *Citizen Kane* is a study of the limits of information technology – of interpretation. No matter how much information is provided, the editor, the news writer and the archivist must make decisions about the organizing principles of information or that information remains an unrelated,

inaccessible mass. For Charles Kane it the failure to find meaning in a collection that defines his inability to find a functional identity and that leaves Thompson lost in the jumble of Kane's artifacts. It is clear that any move toward a posited pathway through an archive leaves us prone to missing or misrepresenting information, but we must ask – does the pursuit of meaning have to mean the pursuit of perfect or perpetual meaning?

For Thompson and his crew, the mitigating condition that forces them forward is society's desire for some engagement with Kane and his legacy. They have a responsibility to the public. In this way, they share the role of scholarly editors in general and of George Kane in particular. Each must find some meaning in a large amount of data in order to present it to their readers. Whatever the result, the narrative must be built around the available data so that, as Rawlston points out in the passage quoted above, even if there is no possible answer, we can “[b]uild the picture around the question.”

One further component of *Citizen Kane* complicates the comparison I wish to make. If the film is a quest for the definition of the character Charles Foster Kane by his chronicler, it is at the same time the story of Orson Welles' creation of the film. Welles, who gained fame as a Broadway actor and radio personality, was in his mid twenties when he was given what remains one of the most attractive contracts ever offered to a film artist. The deal Welles received was not lavish in monetary terms, but it was with regard to creative control. The studio retained the rights only to give initial approval to any film they would produce. After that, their only input would be with regard to the final

name of the films released. Welles put this agreement to good use in the production of his first film, *John Citizen*, which was later renamed by the studio as *Citizen Kane*.<sup>189</sup>

Perhaps the best way in which to capture Welles' interaction with the film's story is through the film's original trailer. In that short clip, we hear Welles' famous voice as he introduces us to the Mercury actors one by one. In the end, he presents a series of clips from the film showing the actors at work. Each clip shows someone telling viewers who Charles Foster Kane is. Predictably, no two opinions are alike. The clip ends with a shot of a microphone suspended in darkness. Welles' voice urges us to come to the theatre to find out who Kane truly is, since he himself does not know. Yet, as he divulges, he – that is Welles – is Citizen Kane. That Welles was playing on the fact that he was famous as a disembodied voice seems likely. That in doing so he deepens the question of identity in the film is a certainty.

In the world of Langland studies, no one has contributed more to the study of authorial identity than George Kane. His 1965 book *Piers Plowman: The Evidence for Authorship* resolved the question of single authorship proposed by Knott and Fowler.<sup>190</sup> Since then, challenges in that debate have moved away from arguments for more than one physical author and toward one that incorporates a fragmentation of Langland

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<sup>189</sup> The details of Welles' contract and the making of the film can be found on the recent re-release of the film *Citizen Kane*, dir. Orson Welles, perf. Orson Welles, Joseph Cotton and Agnes Moorehead, RKO, 1941. Re-release by Turner Classics Movies, 1996.

<sup>190</sup> Knott, T. A., and David Fowler, eds. *Piers Plowman. A Critical Edition of the A Version*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P, 1952. Charlotte Brewer (in *Editing Piers Plowman*) notes that Fowler's discussion of the question of singular versus multiple authorship explores both possibilities, but makes clear that he considers the case for multiple authorship is more compelling (329). In *Piers Plowman: The Evidence for Authorship*, Kane argues for the necessity of clarifying the authorship as part of the editorial process: "What the editor of *Piers Plowman* does when he edits is to create, out of textual detail, a hypothesis of original readings based ultimately on an assumption (however well or ill founded) about authorship." Kane's move to a model of single authorship was crucial to the larger move from Knott and Fowler's genealogical editing to Kane's own eclectic method. Quoted in Bowers, John M. "Piers Plowman's William Langland: Editing the Text, Writing the Author's Life." *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 9 (1995). (65).

himself.<sup>191</sup> These arguments allow for a more realistic depiction of an authorial revision process – one that allows for good, bad and indifferent emendation. In general, they leave behind the notion of an author assumed to be consistent at all points in his career and toward one capable of making revisions of varying quality throughout his life.<sup>192</sup>

For many twentieth-century editors, including Kane, authors were considered consistent at all points. With this assumption in place, the task of editing had a useful starting point. Whether we link this internal consistency to genius or talent, its implementation allows editors to make aesthetic judgments based on a seemingly noble cause of restoring the best or original message, which in most cases was assumed to mean the *authorial* message. Thus when discussing the assessment of evidence during the editing of the B version, Kane and Donaldson state “[o]nly the readings, ultimately, afford such evidence. This may be clear and positive, or obscure, or simply negative in proclaiming corruption, but it must be ultimately authoritative, and reliable if correctly interpreted” (129). Where evidence is inconclusive they are generous: “we think it judicious to allow Langland the benefit of the doubt” (135).

While this tactic would come under fire when the canon debates began, it had its history in the well-established principles of the editing of classical texts. There the vicissitudes of time and translation created a context in which it was often best to assume

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<sup>191</sup> Far from being as postmodern as this assertion sounds, it merely takes into account the notion that Langland may have been a different writer at different times in his life. There are a number of studies examining Langland’s writing process, its development and its interaction with the work of readers, scribes, illuminators and illustrators. For two different recent approaches see Kathryn Kerby-Fulton’s “Langland ‘In His Working Clothes’? Scribe D, Authorial Loose Revision Material, and the Nature of Scribal Intervention,” in *Middle English Poetry: Texts and Traditions: Essays in Honour of Derek Pearsall*. A.J. Minnis. Rochester, New York: York Medieval Press, 2001 (139-167) and A.V.C. Schmidt’s “Langland’s Visions and Revisions.” *YLS* (14) (2000) 5-27. (In this latter article see in particular section III beginning on page 19.)

<sup>192</sup> For a recent approach to the author question, see the interesting new article that examines what amounts to a form of ‘medieval self-unfashioning,’ in “The Essential (Ephemeral) William Langland: Textual Revision as Ethical Process in *Piers Plowman*,” by Alan J. Fletcher. *YLS* (15) (2001) 61-98, which includes responses by Wendy Scase and Judith Dale.

that documents contained a great deal of “contamination” by hands that did not understand the original text due to changes in language over time, or the intricacies of translation from classical Latin or Greek.<sup>193</sup> Kane and Donaldson acknowledge this lineage in their introduction to the edition:

These criteria are essentially traditional, having been discovered during several centuries of editing classical texts, the *New Testament*, and the *Divine Comedy*, and our own editing is only radical in the greater degree to which we have allowed their logical force. The editorial problems of the B version have shown us no cause for modifying them, only for extending their use. (130)

The decision to draw on this tradition may have allowed Kane an effective starting point, but it also opened the project to its largest methodological challenges. These issues were exacerbated as poststructural literary theory spread through university campuses in the West, contesting projects that showed ties with Anglo-American empiricism. This is not to suggest that if the New Criticism were still in vogue, the difficulties of the Kane and Donaldson B text would not exist. Rather, they might have escaped some of the glare that has thrown them into such high relief. The combination of poststructural approaches to the study of language and the development of manuscript studies combined to challenge Kane’s editions in a manner that savaged their most basic assumptions. For poststructural literary theory, each time an editor of a critical edition stands for a given set of decisions which culminates in a text, she or he assumes a fixity that is suspect on two points – in its assumption of a unified subject in the person of the author and of a single expression in the form of the work. On the opposite side, socio-historical and material critics have developed theories of the text based on paleographic

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<sup>193</sup> For an overview of classical editing methods see Mervin R. Dilts’ “Greek Literature: Antiquity to the Renaissance,” in *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. D.C. Greetham, Ed. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995. (75-94) From the same collection, see also R. J. Tarrant’s “Classical Latin Literature.” (95-148).

and print evidence, which argue that it is unnecessarily reductive to attempt to collapse the various traditions into even three discreet lines.<sup>194</sup>

Wherever the criticism is coming from, for George Kane, the principle which has come back to haunt him comes in the form of a commitment to a particular form of eclectic editing.<sup>195</sup> He developed this practice, with its stringent arguments against recension, in his graduate work, which was the basis upon which he was given the editorship of the A text.<sup>196</sup> Following that first edition, *Piers Plowman: The Evidence for Authorship* appeared in order to cement his position.<sup>197</sup> Following his first foray into chief editorship, his A text, which used the process of so-called deep editing, received reviews which were almost exclusively positive.<sup>198</sup> However, by the time the B text arrived, difficulties were becoming apparent. Kane's methodology was not proving as portable as he had hoped, and some of the early reviewers of the second edition, such as Derek Pearsall, raised questions about specific emendations, as well as methodology.<sup>199</sup>

<sup>194</sup> See for example the argument put forth by A.G. Rigg and Charlotte Brewer in their edition *William Langland, Piers Plowman: The Z Version*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983.

<sup>195</sup> Eclectic editing attempts to present a text that has no extant MSS, but is gleaned from careful readings of corrupt manuscripts in order to create what critics would call a conflated text. Kane's particular form of eclecticism does not go so far as to collapse the A, B and C versions into one, but it does attempt to create three unified texts.

<sup>196</sup> Brewer, 284-89.

<sup>197</sup> Kane, George. *Piers Plowman: The Evidence for Authorship*. London: Athlone P, 1965.

<sup>198</sup> For example, reviews by Morton Bloomfield in *Speculum* 36 (1961): 133-37; J.A.W. Bennett in *RES* 14 (1963): 68-71; Gervase Mathew in *Medium Aevum* 30 (1961): 126-28; David C. Fowler in *Modern Philology* 58 (1960-61): 212-14; and P.M. Kean in *Library* 16 (1962): 218-24.

<sup>199</sup> Pearsall, for example, argues that "the editorial method adopted, that is, one which relies upon the scanning of variants for the best and most readily corruptible reading rather than upon elaborately constructed genealogies, does lay open each emendation to individual scrutiny and subjective judgment" and, further, that "the text arrived at by this method is not a safe and conservative compromise, but a bold and radical restoration which challenges criticism and will certainly provoke the liveliest debate." Derek Pearsall. Rev. of *Piers Plowman: The B Version*. George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, eds. *Medium Aevum* 46.2 (1977): 278. E. G. Stanley, despite thinking the edition "brilliant" (446) and "masterly" (447), found various emendations to be "troublesome" and took issue with crucial aspects of the volume's methodology. For example, Stanley argues, with regard to the strategies used for conjectural emendation, that he is "far from sure how to distinguish 'scribal censorship' or scribal bowdlerizing from authorial toning down" (437). Stanley, E. G. Rev. of "The B Version of 'Piers Plowman': A New Edition." George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, eds. *Notes and Queries* 23.10 (Oct 1976): 435-447. See also later

Over time, this debate drew lines between Kane and the eclectic tradition on one side, and those like Pearsall who favoured a socio-historical approach. At approximately the same time, computer technology began to change the way scholars edited texts. This, combined with poststructural theory, started a shift toward the next phase of editing *Piers Plowman* and of editorial theory in general.

With the critics at the gates, Kane stood behind his famous call from the labyrinthine introduction to the B text – that whosoever would like to criticize his work would have to repeat his task: “Whether we have carried out our task efficiently must be assessed by reenacting it.”<sup>200</sup> Kane was, in effect, throwing down a gauntlet that would be nearly impossible to take up. His position was that the edition could not be brought down by a series of attacks on individual readings – that instead what must be critiqued is the project as a whole. It is not surprising that we find the same type of thinking in the work of Kane’s mentor, R.W. Chambers. Consider this passage taken from a letter that Chambers published as an introduction to A.H. Bright’s *New Light on ‘Piers Plowman’*:

the point which I first wish to emphasize is that, unlike so much modern research, it is not a string of hypotheses each resting upon the other. It seems to me that people often did not sufficiently distinguish between two types of argument. The one type is based on a group of probabilities each of which depends for its support upon a preceding one; the other type is based on a group of probabilities of which stand by themselves, albeit together they give each other mutual support.

Even with the second type we must be cautious. ‘The similarity of the two hypotheses does not prove both.’ But the first type is much more perilous. I have often thought that scholarships ought to be founded to send professors to Monte Carlo, and compel them to study the laws of chance around the gaming table. Possibly I shall betray my own innocence in what I say; but it seems to me that even when the odds are three to one

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responses to the Athlone B text: Derek Pearsall, “Theory and Practice in Middle English Editing,” *TEXT* 7 (1994): 107-126, and Charlotte Brewer, “Authorial vs. Scribal Writing in *Piers Plowman*,” *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretation*. Tim William Machan, ed. Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991. 59-89.

<sup>200</sup> Kane and Donaldson *Piers Plowman: The B Version*. (220).

in favour of certain theories, it is perilous to make two such odds depend upon one another. Two three-out-of-four chances are only just more than even odds ( $3/4 \times 3/4 = 9/16$ ). If you add yet another three out of four chance depending upon the preceding two, the odds have definitely turned against you ( $3/4 \times 3/4 \times 3/4 = 27/64$ ). Yet how many probable arguments depend upon the exponent getting our consent to one position as probably true, and then proceeding to further steps, and demanding our final assent to the whole concatenation, because at no one stage can we prove probability against him. (9-11)<sup>201</sup>

Clearly, the time has come for scholars to take up Chamber's brilliant notion of scholarships to Monte Carlo. In the meantime, it is worth noticing that this type of position which renders any notion of a text as an attainable algorithm, dovetails with Kane's position, that individual objections to an edition cannot add up to a real critique. The only way to create a "whole" criticism is to *edit the text*.

While a number of critics have challenged the B text – and even more the C version released by George Russell and Kane – the criticism has remained focused on individual readings.<sup>202</sup> As Lee Patterson points out, this does not do justice to the manner in which this text was edited.<sup>203</sup> I tend to agree. Moreover, I believe that what will eventually happen is that Langlandians will require some brave scholar or scholars to do again what Kane attempted – to construct a critical interpretation of the *Piers* tradition – based on the new paleographic evidence and developments in editorial theory and digital technology.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> R. W. Chambers. "Preface" in Alan Bright's *New Light on 'Piers Plowman.'* London: Humphrey Milford, 1928. (9-15).

<sup>202</sup> For reviews of the B text, see Pearsall's *Annotated Critical Bibliography*, page 18. For reviews of the C text, see same, pages 21-22.

<sup>203</sup> Patterson *Negotiating*, 92. D. C. Greetham argues for the "paradox" in Lee's "defense" of the Athlone B text, suggesting that "any criticism (and change) of an individual reading will *ipso facto* change the 'work' that it supports." "Reading in and around *Piers Plowman*." 45.

<sup>204</sup> For an interesting look at some of Kane's responses to criticism of his work – including that of the poststructural theory set – see his "Reading *Piers Plowman*." *YLS* 8 (1994). (1-20)

In order to get to that point, two crucial things must occur. The first is already well underway. The re-examination and evaluation of all extant manuscripts, including the four printed editions from the early Renaissance period, will set the stage for a new edition or set of editions.<sup>205</sup> The most significant marker of this move in strictly editorial terms is *The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive Project*, to which I will turn below. The second aspect, to which I will devote the next few pages, is the development of an answer to Kane's challenge as supported, or at least reiterated, by Lee Patterson.

Given Kane's commitment to a notion of a single authorial voice that could be found in a unified work, it is not surprising that he fortified his study of *Piers Plowman* with a text on authorship. Once this argument for authorship had been established, an attempt to unearth the original text would follow naturally. With transmission blocked by a garbled manuscript tradition, Kane applied the notions of *lectio brevior* and *lectio difficilior*, which previously were most often used in the editing of classical texts, in order to remove what he viewed as the detritus of scribal writing.<sup>206</sup> These two principles became for him the foundation of the theory of the "logic of error," which underwrote an identifiable *usus scribendi* that he would locate and excise in order to reconstruct texts of the A, B and C instantiations of *Piers*.<sup>207</sup> Thus the Kane, Kane and Donaldson, and Russell and Kane projects for Athlone Press were to be editions washed clean of the vicissitudes of age and transcriptional error.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> The two dimensions of this type of study are exemplified by the work of Charlotte Brewer and A.G. Rigg in their *Piers Plowman: a facsimile of the Z-Text in Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Bodley 851* / Rochester, N.Y: D.S. Brewer, 1994 and in the MS-specific studies in Hoyt Duggan's *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* project <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/seenet/piers/index.html>.

<sup>206</sup> Lee Patterson calls these *brevior lectio potior* and *difficilior* or *durior* 84.

<sup>207</sup> Lee Patterson summarizes this methodology. *Negotiating the Past* 82-5.

<sup>208</sup> Writing in the introduction to the B text, Kane argues that "the necessarily first editorial operation must be to recover...the archetypal text of the surviving manuscripts," that the second step "must of equal

With the dubious relations and examples of what seemed to be convergent variation between the eighteen copies plus one fragment in the A tradition, the sixteen copies plus one print edition of a now lost MS in B, and the eighteen MSS in C (some of which stand partly as A-text MSS as well), if there was to be editing, it seemed that notions of stemmatics and recension could be usefully abandoned. Thus Kane begins the section "Editorial Resources and Methods" of his A text:

Recension is not a practicable method for the editor of the A manuscripts. Nor is the creation of a hierarchy, with some one copy elevated to a role of authority: while some of these manuscripts are certainly more corrupt than others, all are corrupt to an indeterminate but evidently considerable extent. The sole source of authority is the variants themselves, and among them, authority, that is originality, will probably be determined most often by identification of the variants likeliest to have given rise to the others.  
(115)

Kane goes on to detail the impossibility of creating a stemma, owing to the inevitability of convergent variation, a form of corruption that leaps inexplicably across branches of the "family tree" created by the stemma, rendering its predictive potential null.

The result of the Kane project seemed to show in the A version that his decision to avoid stemmatics had worked. It seems clear now that the central problem of the project as a whole lies in the determination to edit the text through the process of excising error based on a profiled, logical pattern without using all possible samples in the development of the original formula. Rather than developing the *usus scribendi* based on the A MSS tradition and believing that it would be consistent across all later work, Kane should have created his psychological profile of scribes from all available MSS first. This approach would have helped the editions remain more organically true to themselves and would have avoided the problems of having the larger and more complex challenges of

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necessity be to compare that text with corresponding archetypal texts of A and C," and that "[t]he aim of these two operations is identical: to distinguish between authorial and scribal readings." (128).

*Piers B* follow the dictates of the smaller and clearer *A*. Moreover, Kane needed to consider what has only recently come to be accepted; the idea that an author might be a different person at different times in her or his career, if not at different times during the day.<sup>209</sup>

The loss of appreciation for authorial change over time came as part of the cost of the way in which the three texts were delineated. While seeking to produce separate, bound versions that would replace Skeat's parallel text as the definitive edition, Kane committed an unintended error by placing his notion of the unified text above that of the unified author. If, as Kane argues, *A*, *B* and *C* were written by the same person, then a continuous application of exactly the same "logic of error" disallows the possibility of authorial emendations or development. In establishing the "logic of error," the consistency of the author was held to be stable. Skeat avoided the need to define the author in such rigid terms, not as a result of decisions made, but of decisions not made when he worked with a parallel text, allowing publishers to do his separating for him.

In many ways, Kane used a generous application of the author formula. In traditional editing projects, when scholars are to uncover genius, they elevate themselves to the position of persons who can at the very least detect the author's lofty thoughts in order to reconstruct them. In Kane's case, he followed a much humbler path. He focused not on the ability to glean a transcendent talent that was resident in William Langland, but rather counted on his ability to identify the mistakes of lowly scribes that were blocking that brilliance. By erasing the errors of these figures, he could be relatively certain that what remained was authorial.

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<sup>209</sup> For a short discussion of the changeability of the author over time, see John M. Bowers, "*Piers Plowman's* William Langland: Editing the Text, Writing the Author's Life." *YLS* 9 (1995). (73).

Because the Athlone project begins from a perspective rooted in the Greg-Bowers Anglo-American empiricist tradition – that is, one that generally seeks to find or create an ideal text based on authorial intention – it came immediately into conflict with critics such as Derek Pearsall who advocate a more historically placed text. Much of what Kane calls error, Pearsall unearths as participation. The debate soon entered a period that heightened awareness of the bifurcation in editorial policies – where critics such as David Fowler complained of Kane and Donaldson’s use of circular reasoning, with Lee Patterson, in his now famous “Logic of Textual Criticism and the Way of Genius,” remaining one of the few voices who celebrated Kane’s contribution.<sup>210</sup>

The surge in literary theory that was based to a great extent on the work of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan exerted a telling influence on the debate over editorial theory at precisely this time. As Peter Shillingsburg, D.C. Greetham, Jerome McGann and others began to explore the intersection of literary and editorial theory, the notion of a centralized speaking voice and resultant text came under fire.<sup>211</sup>

Yet, while Kane was more committed to a unified text than poststructural theorists might endorse, he was also derelict in the eyes of the more ardent followers of the Anglo-American school. The move to group the manuscripts of the writing ascribed to William Langland sought not only to exercise a theory, or explore an option, but to offer a set of three editions rather than positing a single, definitive edition. To editors

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<sup>210</sup> Patterson defends the circularity of the Kane-Donaldson editorial theory, writing that “[t]he process by which any edited text is achieved is inevitably and appropriately circular, in which hypothetical reconstructions are subjected to a series of testing against various kinds of evidence until a final version that most persuasively and efficiently answers the evidential questions is achieved.” *Negotiating the Past* 83.

<sup>211</sup> Readers learned that rather than being a debate over different forms of textual editing, with an editor looking for an original authorial text purged of scribal interaction, instead George Kane was caught in search of deconstruction’s transcendental signifier, a constructivist’s discursive power and a psychoanalytic, veiled phallus.

such as A.E. Housman, to whom Kane is partially heir, settling for a parallel text such as Skeat's when a critical text can be created, is not only a poor choice, but also a dereliction of duty – it shows a type of intellectual cowardice that negates the editor's purpose and denies an editorial Darwinism that can only benefit research.<sup>212</sup> While Kane took one step closer to definitive editions by creating three texts – and at least partially elevating the B text as Skeat had done – he remained in a murky, middle ground.

Against any attempts at creating the centrality necessary for a definitive critical edition, poststructural theory questioned the very notion of centres, which might allow for such constructions. While the fervency of this theory has calmed, it seems doubtful that we will return to a pre-Derridean state any time in the near future. It seems we are, along with the codex, unbound into the joyous freeplay of Jean-François Lyotard's postmodern "loss of meaning."<sup>213</sup> Yet, what have we gained for our trouble? In this new context, the future of the manuscript may include communication that is freer, and lost voices may find a little room, at least in the textual sense, since without meaning there can be no foreclosing postulates such as the "logic of error." But these inclusions are not solely the purview of antifoundationalist rhetoric; rather they are the result of more focused research on the lives of texts and works.

For Jerome McGann and the socio-historical critics, the problems of eclectic editing predate the difficulties highlighted by the various *post*-theories. Their argument

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<sup>212</sup> For a wonderfully entertaining and concise representation of Housman's views on editing, see his short "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism," in *The Classical Papers of A.E. Housman, Volume III 1915-36*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972. (1058-1069).

<sup>213</sup> Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Brian Massumi. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984 discusses the loss of meta-narratives which legitimize language and meaning in our world. Rather than protesting this loss, Lyotard would have us enjoy the newfound freedom that it creates. As such he comments, "All we can do is gaze in wonderment at the diversity of discursive species, just as we do at the diversity of plant or animal species. Lamenting the 'loss of meaning' in postmodernity boils down to mourning the fact that knowledge is no longer principally narrative." (26).

began from the position that the material that is excluded by theories such as Kane's "logic of error" may be as valid as what is left behind, and perhaps more so than any emendations not strictly justified by extant documents. Following this type of argument, Derek Pearsall has suggested that unbound versions of Chaucer facsimiles could restore a more authentic presentation that has been covered up and recast within the bindings of books such as the *Riverside Chaucer*.<sup>214</sup> As mentioned above, this is one viable response, but in many ways digital technology has challenged the either/or situation bound up with traditional book publishing.

Developments in computer technology have created the possibility of a very different way of presenting editions. Now, rather than having to create stand-alone parallel texts one can represent a much more diverse ranges of materials, including all available manuscripts, along with secondary readings related to *Piers Plowman*, to William Langland and to the world around, before, behind, and in front of them... off into a potentially or theoretically infinite realm of signification pursued by a growing network of connections and links. Theoretically, the move toward availability through digitization flies past the limitations inherent in unified critical texts from the past while placing the emphasis on access, functionality and interaction. While early proponents of electronic texts tended toward, in the words of Paul Duguid, "ideas of supersession and liberation," more recent information networks are attempting to offer more effective sites and materials with well-reasoned methodologies.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> "Editing Medieval Texts: Some Developments and Problems," in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*. Jerome McGann, Ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. (55-91).

<sup>215</sup> Duguid, Paul. "Material Matters: The Past and Futurology of the Book," in *The Future of the Book*. Geoffrey Nunberg, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. (65).

It is in this period of change, this *second* incunabulum at the transition between Manuscript/Print and Electronic texts that editors are now at work. It seems that the future of editing or un-editing texts lies not only in the analysis of texts and artifacts but in data representation. Humanities computing is leading to new methods for editing. For example, there is no longer a need to commit to single works, whether that singularity is authorial or editorial. Instead, a number of editions can potentially exist without the need to privilege any one approach. Of course, we are still at the early stages of this potential, and a variety of material considerations in physical, political and economic manifestations that are bound to the implementation of electronic texts must be taken into consideration. In the next section, I will look at these issues in connection with Hoyt Duggan's *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*. But for now, what of George Kane? What does the twenty-first century hold for his work? To answer this question, and to finish this section, I will return for a moment to Orson Welles.

The tale that frames the scene I described earlier is a search for the meaning of Charles Foster Kane's life and work and its greater relevance to the society of which they were a part. The film begins in a screening room where a group of reporters are attempting to create a newsreel that will capture the meaning of Kane's life. They examine all possible sources, conducting interviews and visiting special library collections. In the final scene, the reporters meet among the treasures that Kane had collected – in the archive that Kane built and named Xanadu. They compare notes as all the materials about them are catalogued. By the end of the film, they are no further ahead than when they began, because the investigators succeed only in gaining access to artifacts. The individual pieces of information, the sound bites and records, mean nothing

in the context of the search to explore the relevance of Charles Foster Kane. They amount to what Heidegger would call a descriptive rather than a referential totality.<sup>216</sup> Even if the small sleigh upon which the final word Kane uttered had been preserved, it could not have provided all the answers the reporters desired. It might have improved the description of the socio-historical impact of the newspaper baron, but it could never account for all possible information.

From this, I believe we can take an example for a way forward for Manuscript Studies and Editorial Theory in the twenty-first century. Access to all available information is, as always, essential. The digital revolution has an important role to play in a new level of accessibility. However, information alone, no matter how accurately presented, is simply not enough.

Whether editors decide to speak in terms of the new erudition, the new formalism, the post-information relationship age, or cultural history, scholars in the future should consider a combination of the types of work done by editors like George Kane and Derek Pearsall, and the challenges posed by McGann rather than supporting one or another successionist revolution. Fortunately, humanities computing provides a way forward that allows for simultaneous editions that can grow over time. The checks and balances that exist between the eclectic and the socio-historical editors allow for an examination of the

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<sup>216</sup> Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time*. San Francisco: Harper's, 1962. See in particular Division 3 "The Worldhood of World," (91-145) and the pages referring to the totality entities (9, 14, 64, 241 and 248). Heidegger discusses this concept in a number of his writings; however the *Being and Time* component offers one of the most direct descriptions of the distinctions. A descriptive totality can be thought of as a complete list of entities that make up an ontological whole. A referential totality is a whole set of entities, plus all of the necessary elements that account for the entities' relations to one another. Thus, the world in which we live is a referential totality; any attempt to describe it merely in mathematical or computational terms will miss what is really "worldly" about the world. In terms of my argument here, a set of CDs representing the tradition of *Piers Plowman* can only ever amount to a descriptive totality. It takes a more humanized (read humanities-based) approach to editing to approach the reality of referential totality. For a comprehensive guide to these issues, see the 2002/03 lecture series on *Being and Time* by Berkeley philosopher Hubert Dreyfus available in downloadable audio online at [http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~Ehdreyfus/185\\_f02/html/lectures\\_185\\_f02.html](http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~Ehdreyfus/185_f02/html/lectures_185_f02.html).

strengths and weaknesses of both projects, though at times even the oppositional nature of this debate seems out of place in the post-everything digital age.

With greater access to information, the work of editors who seek to present all available evidence is naturally made easier. Our current atmosphere of diplomatic editions with scanned images and portable document format (PDF) should not be seen as an endpoint, but rather a return to a mode similar to that of the Antiquarians of the late nineteenth century. We are once again building archives and collecting the treasures of the earth. But if we hope to find anything within the labyrinths we are now constructing, we will require pathways through the information. Creating effective pathways through networks of data is becoming increasingly difficult. We will need, amongst others, a new generation of editors to posit pathways. In those pathways, we will be able to provide dynamic links to methodologies and thereby readily test hypotheses – making the critique of work such as the Athlone editions more timely and thorough. We will not, however, move past the need for fixed print or electronic editions, even if the period of fixity for those editions is brief. What we will find is that we need to take up George Kane’s challenge and actually edit texts.

**Breadcrumbs in the Labyrinth:**

***The Electronic Archive and The Readers’ Piers Plowman***<sup>217</sup>

In a recent essay entitled “The Langland Myth,” C. David Benson explores the various aspects of the scholarly drive toward establishing the identity of William

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<sup>217</sup> In this section, I look at only one small area involving the autobiographical elements of *Piers Plowman* in order to develop my argument. For a detailed representation, see John M. Bowers’ “*Piers Plowman’s* William Langland: Editing the Text, Writing the Author’s Life,” in *YLS* (9) 1995. (65-102). The article contains a short response by Charlotte Brewer. For a more recent and more overtly theoretical view see James Simpson’s chapter “The Power of Impropriety: Authorial Naming in *Piers Plowman*,” in *William Langland’s Piers Plowman: A Book of Essays*. Kathleen M. Hewett-Smith, Ed. New York: Routledge, 2001. (145-65).

Langland as the chief – if not only – creator of *Piers Plowman*.<sup>218</sup> Benson points out a number of fault lines commonly explored by theorists who take a position against the notion of fixed authorship. The argument rests on the idea that most contemporary scholars now believe to varying degrees in a Langland myth. Benson argues that with a little tugging this position can be shown to be untenable.<sup>219</sup> For my part, I would like to use this section, in which I will explore Hoyt Duggan's *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*,<sup>220</sup> to argue for the utility of the Langland myth. Further, I will suggest that the scholarly community should consciously develop the myth, and use it to create a new, more accessible text of *Piers Plowman*. After all, as Benson points out, myths “can be very productive.”<sup>221</sup> My working title for this proposed edition is *The Readers' Langland* – a hypothetical edition that I have fashioned out of lessons from other myth-based editions of authors such as Shakespeare in *The Riverside Shakespeare*.

Hoyt Duggan's *Piers Plowman* project is an exciting example of what humanities computing can offer the world of medieval scholarship.<sup>222</sup> At the date of this writing, two of the proposed 54 manuscripts have been released on CD [The "Piers Plowman" Electronic Archive, Vol. 1 *Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 201 (F)* and The "Piers Plowman" Electronic Archive, Vol. 2 *Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.17 (W)*]. In both cases, the manuscript in question is scanned and stored to a CD, which includes a

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<sup>218</sup> Benson, David. "The Langland Myth," in *William Langland's Piers Plowman: A Book of Essays*. Kathleen M. Hewitt Smith, ed. New York and London: Routledge, 2001. 83-99. For another description of his position see C. David Benson, "What Does Langland Mean? Authorial and Textual Voices in Piers Plowman." *YLS* 15 (2001). (3-14).

<sup>219</sup> Benson 95-99.

<sup>220</sup> *The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*. Hoyt Duggan, Ed. <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/seenet/piers/index.html>.

<sup>221</sup> Benson "The Langland Myth" (84).

<sup>222</sup> For an early introduction to the project see Hoyt Duggan. "The Electronic *Piers Plowman* B: A New Diplomatic-Critical Edition." *Aestel* (1993) 55-75.

linked transcription that allows the user to go from the transcribed text immediately to the colour facsimile portion of the manuscript where it originates.

The tag set used is a TEI3<sup>223</sup> compliant set of SGML<sup>224</sup> tags that are manipulated by the *Multidoc Pro* SGML<sup>225</sup> viewer that ships on each disk. The second disk also ships with an animated Flash introduction and user interface.<sup>226</sup> An additional option allows users to switch to an ASCII<sup>227</sup> version of the text in order to facilitate word searches. A detailed introduction provides a bibliographic description of the manuscript under study, an examination of the language and a useful series of further readings. The user is able to access any one of four style sheets that interpret and display the recorded information in different ways. These four options are: *The Scribal Style Sheet*, which “represents as closely as possible the readings and features of the manuscript text,” *The Critical Style Sheet*, which interprets what the editors believe the scribe intended to write, *The Diplomatic Style Sheet*, which suppresses all tags, and the *AllTags Style Sheet*, which, as its name suggests, allows users to view all of the classificatory markup that has been added to the text.<sup>228</sup> Finally, there is a font set that can be loaded to help users’ computers

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<sup>223</sup> The TEI3 standard was established by the Text Encoding Initiative, a group of scholars and information technology experts. For more information on the TEI see: <http://www.tei-c.org/>.

<sup>224</sup> Standard Generalized Markup Language was the first language used to mark texts for linking. A simplified version known as HTML or Hypertext Markup Language is the most used form of markup on the World Wide Web.

<sup>225</sup> Multidoc Pro is a now-defunct SGML browser that interprets texts and images marked-up in SGML.

<sup>226</sup> Flash is a vector-based animation program designed and distributed by Macromedia, the world’s leading web design company. For more information on Flash, see: <http://www.macromedia.com/software/flash/>.

<sup>227</sup> Short of American Standard Code for Information Exchange, this is the earliest and simplest representation of actions and letters encoded for machine reading. The code uses numerical representations for letters and actions that are machine readable.

<sup>228</sup> The "Piers Plowman" Electronic Archive, Vol. 1 *Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 201 (F)* Robert Adams, Hoyt N. Duggan, Eric Eliason, Ralph Hanna, III, John Price-Wilkin, and Thorlac Turville-Petre, Eds. Charlottesville, Virginia: SEENET: Society for Early English and Norse Electronic Texts, 2000 and The "Piers Plowman" Electronic Archive, Vol. 2 *Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.17 (W)* Thorlac Turville-Petre and Hoyt N. Duggan, Eds. Charlottesville, Virginia: SEENET: Society for Early English and Norse Electronic Texts, 2001.

display the characters used in the transcription. A related web site is maintained in order to provide additional information, such as an ongoing errata sheet.<sup>229</sup>

As a result of the developments in technology and – one would assume – the lessons learned by the editing team, the second CD contains additional features (the Flash introduction and expansion of the style sheet options chief among them). What interests me in this section is what the second volume leaves out. The first CD, though smaller by half in terms of storage size, is longer in terms of methodological description. This is not unusual; as the first in a series, Volume 1 includes a detailed Preface that outlines the project's long-term goals. These goals are absent from the same section of the second disk. The opening paragraph from the first volume is worth giving in full:

*The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* is a collaborative project devoted to publishing in electronic form documentary and color facsimile texts of all the relevant medieval and renaissance witnesses to William Langland's *Piers Plowman*. In addition, we intend to construct the archetypal (and where necessary, hyper-archetypal) texts of each of the three canonic versions, and eventually, to create critical editions. The initial stage of the project consists of close transcriptions of the primary documents. In this, the first volume of the Archive, we offer three editions in one. The first is a diplomatic transcription—almost a type facsimile—of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 201 (henceforth F), in which we attempt to represent as literally as possible in modern type the readings and significant physical features of the manuscript. We offer at the same time a color facsimile edition of the entire manuscript, hypertextually linked to the diplomatic transcription and critical text. Finally, as a kind of textual experiment, we attempt here to edit critically the work of an editorial scribe between the final copying represented in F and the scribe whose efforts created the alpha recension of the B text.<sup>230</sup>

Whether by accident, or by design, the second edition no longer makes any move toward the establishment of hyper-archetypes or of editions. Gone, too, are the edition

<sup>229</sup> See, <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/seenet/piers/>.

<sup>230</sup> "Piers Plowman" Electronic Archive, Vol. 1 *Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 201 (F)* Robert Adams, Hoyt N. Duggan, Eric Eliason, Ralph Hanna, III, John Price-Wilkin, and Thorlac Turville-Petre, Eds. Charlottesville, Virginia: SEENET: Society for Early English and Norse Electronic Texts, 2000. (Preface).

experiments described in the final line of the opening paragraph. One wonders if this is not a move away from the larger project in order to avoid the controversy over the creation of editions of the “three canonic versions.” If this were the case, it would be in keeping with current arguments that *Piers* exists in at least four versions (A, B, C and now Z) – if not five or more. Whatever the reason, the second edition on its own seems to be moving away from an editing project that would result in critical editions and toward the type of manuscript-as-artifact editions currently in vogue. Evidence of this approach is present in both volumes, which include extraneous – though related – texts. Volume 1 contains 2 including “Ushaw College, Durham, MS 50: Fragments of the *Prick of Conscience*, By the Same Scribe as Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 201, of the B Version of *Piers Plowman*, by Dr. A. I. Doyle,” while Volume 2 contains “Images of Booklet 2” (fols. 131-47) consisting of Richard Rolle's *Form of Living* and the lyric ‘Crist made to man a fair present.’” The first of these inclusions is made in the name of paleographic interests and clearly emphasizes the benefits for manuscript study that are afforded by digital technology. While most paleographers and codicologists working today are also experts in the manipulation of microfilm readers, these new devices promise an even greater level of access. These additional materials make one small attempt at highlighting this fact. The second edition includes a text that appears in the same manuscript as the W text (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.17).

The plan for the Duggan project involves a series of teams that propose editing individual MSS while reporting to the editorial board. In its 1994 ‘Prospectus’ the group set out this goal:

The long-range goal of the *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* is the creation of a multi-level, hyper-textually linked electronic archive of the

textual tradition of all three versions of the fourteenth-century allegorical dream vision *Piers Plowman*. Project editors Robert Adams, Eric Eliason, Ralph Hanna, III, Thorlac Turville-Petre, and I will begin by making documentary editions of B manuscripts CFGHmLMRW in the first years, by preparing color digital facsimiles of those manuscripts, by reconstructing the B archetype (the latest common copy from which all extant witnesses can be shown to descend), and by establishing a critical edition of the B version with appropriate textual, linguistic, and codicological annotation for each of the three levels of the Archive. We will continue preparing documentary editions of the remaining B manuscripts and early printed texts and begin transcribing A and C manuscripts.<sup>231</sup>

This ambitious project is complemented by a series of goals that could benefit more than just the world of *Piers* studies:

An electronic edition does not suppress editorial disagreement or impose spurious notions of authority, as printed editions often tend to do. Instead, it embraces the provisional nature of scholarly editing. We shall make permanently available the texts on which future editorial and literary study must be based, and we shall propose a set of solutions to editorial problems without suggesting that they will have final authority. Future scholars will be able to incorporate their own insights into the Archive. By tackling what is textually the most difficult work in Middle English, we hope to develop a model for computer-generated editions that will have value beyond the confines of Middle English literary studies.

It would be hard to disagree with this general statement. At its best, electronic scholarship can provide materials that can be improved upon through collaboration and can help us bypass some of the difficulties of the supercessionist aspects of earlier print volumes. For editorial theorists and textual scholars examining these disks, interest focuses on digital media's ability to provide multiple editions, thereby allowing for the co-existence of diplomatic, facsimile and critical constructions, which seems to get around "spurious notions of authority." In its attempt to approach some of these ideals, it seems that the *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* project is facing a few interesting challenges.

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<sup>231</sup> The 1994 prospectus is online at <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/seenet/piers/archivegoals.htm>.

The colour facsimiles are the defining aspect of the individual projects. Marked-up text, while very useful for purposes of searches, is much smaller in size than graphics, and the transcriptions for all fifty-four exemplars could have been included on one CD rather than separated out into individual releases. The fact that each CD is being issued separately shows the importance of the digital facsimiles of the various MSS. A clear benefit of this approach is that scholars may now move to studying CDs rather than microfilm, which is far more expensive. Yet already within the first two CDs there are discrepancies in the ways in which the manuscripts are being recorded. Consider this caveat that accompanies the W CD:

Though the quality of most of our images represents a considerable improvement over microfilm and other traditional means of photoduplication, the images presented here reflect their creation six years ago in the spring of 1994. Readers will perhaps notice some differences in size and quality of various leaves. Some of the 1994 images were less crisp than others, and we rescanned in the fall of 1999 about two dozen slides, producing in each case both crisper images with better contrast and resolution. We considered rescanning the entire set of images, but the expense of doing so is considerable, and since the original slides lacked a means of calibration — we expect with future digital images to provide both Kodak color strips and gray scale references — we have left the original images.<sup>232</sup>

This shift in the manner in which facsimiles are made is in one way understandable. Nowhere is technological development progressing faster than in the manipulation of visual materials. However, when these changes are implemented in different ways across a set of projects whose end is to be part of a cross-referenced, critical whole, a problem emerges. Scholars who work with these materials will have an added layer of doubt about

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<sup>232</sup> The "Piers Plowman" Electronic Archive, Vol. 2 *Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.17 (W)* Thorlac Turville-Petre and Hoyt N. Duggan, Eds. Charlottesville, Virginia: SEENET: Society for Early English and Norse Electronic Texts, 2001. (Introduction).

the veracity of transcriptions whose confirmation lies in differently represented materials. Consistency is king when it comes to duplication. Errors are to be expected, but a consistent body of materials allows for an easier set of working hypotheses vis-à-vis the computer's own "logic of error."

More importantly, the project's introductions for both F and W include a discussion of a centralized author – William Langland – and offer the promise of a critical text of the B tradition, with A and C versions to follow. The benefit of this, we are told, is that all texts will be interlinked. Yet, how can CD versions interlink? The images themselves are too large to fit on one CD, and the various transcriptions are supposed to link directly to the facsimiles. Certainly, the file sizes as they now exist are too large to be placed online in any useful way, and there is no possibility of these various documents being used in any functional manner on a single machine. Even with a powerful machine that has dual screens one can only view two MSS at a time. Without being able to functionally link, these CDs will not be able to live up to their description as an "electronic archive." Instead, they are more of an antiquarian set of separate collections, which will require significant additional work in order to make their interrelations useful to readers. There is a simultaneity inherent in archives that these CDs simply cannot capture. They are useful on their own for minor forays into individual manuscripts, but by their own admission, their standards of representation are inconsistent, which must lead scholars to the same situation as before; they must attend to the original documents after using intermediary sources such as microfilm or CDs to help them formulate questions to take to the reading room.

For the general reader this series offers little beyond the attraction of looking at pictures of manuscripts.<sup>233</sup> As far as digital technology has come, it is still not a primary reading source, and even if it were it is hard to imagine that first time readers would come to *Piers Plowman* via a digital facsimile of a single manuscript. For the scholar, however, there are many benefits to this project – a form of accessibility that was not previously available, and a detailed account of how markup occurred. However, the lack of consistency for digital viewing is hard to overcome. That different computer displays vary widely in terms of size and colour reproduction is a truism. Given this, close paleographic analysis is problematic. Similar to microfilm, these editions can provide a useful starting point for a scholar who will eventually visit the reading room where the individual manuscripts are held. However, microfilms are generally consistent from viewing machine to viewing machine (old bulbs and dirty lenses aside), while computer monitors and their driving graphics cards vary widely. Moreover, we might ask, what does this project do to foster greater accessibility to *Piers Plowman*? Seemingly, the critical edition, which could provide a useful teaching or reading text, will not sufficiently connect to the digital reproductions produced by the *Archive*. Here, a series of print facsimiles would certainly offer a greater level of consistency, which would allow useful discussion between scholars. Moreover, given the limitations of CDs, a large table that could accommodate three or four books at a time makes for a more interactive interface than the computer can presently provide.

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<sup>233</sup> In her mainly positive review of the first disc, Claire Sponsler points out that the project is of little use to anyone but specialists. *The Medieval Review* (12) September 2000. (1-3). Interestingly the only overt criticism that Sponsler raises comes in the form of complaints that her graduate students raised about the cumbersome nature of navigating the materials on the disc (3).

In order to make these CDs more useful, a critical text would seem to be most beneficial. By promoting broader study of the central narratives of the tradition, such an addition could serve to train more students in the central questions of the *Piers* tradition. Yet, in order for this to happen, the editors of the various projects would have to operate in a far more coherent fashion. Otherwise, the individual CDs remain just that – individual CDs. Because of this, the representations could easily fall prey to a presentation that serves to support a given position, rather than creating an archive, which would allow access to all available materials.

At the current pace (two CDs have been produced since 1994), it seems clear that we will be waiting some time before we have the promised critical edition. In the meantime, students and teachers are inadequately prepared to engage with the text of *Piers Plowman*. This situation has a historical precedent that is worth mention. After the publication of the Kane and Donaldson B text, Derek Pearsall perceived a need for an intermittent C text that would fill the gap that was supposed to be filled by the Russell and Kane C text. Pearsall's 1978 edition of *Piers Plowman C* served to introduce a new generation of readers to *Piers Plowman*. As one of that generation, I can attest to the fact that up to that time, Pearsall's edition was the most accessible scholarly form of the poem, the Athlone B included. Moreover, a revised or updated edition would follow the tradition that Pearsall established early in his selected-passages edition with Elizabeth Salter for the York Medieval Texts series. That series specifically aimed at providing useful student texts, including in the case of the *Piers Plowman* a 58-page introduction, while emphasizing both textual and historical exploration:

The present series of York Medieval Texts is designed for undergraduates and, where the text is appropriate for upper forms of schools. Its aim is to

provide editions of major pieces of Middle English writing in a form which will make them accessible without loss of historical authenticity.  
(1)<sup>234</sup>

Never intended to be a *final* version, Pearsall's text now needs to be updated and reprinted. A.V.C. Schmidt's new translation of the B-text (supported by research into his parallel-text edition) remains in circulation, but fails to satisfy the robust approach necessary for a text that would perform at the level of the *Riverside Chaucer* and *Shakespeare*.<sup>235</sup> Re-introducing or replicating a text like Pearsall's would also provide the necessary backdrop for much of the work being done by Hoyt Duggan's project. Conversely, that project's commitment to providing access to all of the available MSS should alleviate some of the pressure to produce an edition which solves the debates over the various A, B, C and Z versions, allowing us to focus on a useable text that works for the time being.<sup>236</sup> My argument here focuses on the idea that the best way to study *Piers* is in communion with the documents (or viable representations thereof) but also with other readers and/or scholars, and the only way to get others interested in the field is to catch them while they are students. The same thinking applies to the general interest reader. This type of approach has worked very well for Chaucerian and Shakespearean editors who have compiled easy-to-access editions, with detailed annotations, prefatory materials, glossaries and suggested reading lists. While many have challenged the notion of Chaucerian and Shakespearean authorship supported by this type of work, they do so after having accessed the plays in editions that do their best to introduce the material at

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<sup>234</sup> *York Medieval Texts: Piers Plowman*. Elizabeth Salter and Derek Pearsall Eds. London: Edward Arnolds (Publishers) Ltd., 1967.

hand rather than starting with an overarching commitment to a true representation of all extant materials which would leave readers with little by way of an entrance to the work.

A *Readers' Langland* could include a well written introduction – a retelling of what Benson calls “the Langland myth.” As I mentioned above in relation to *Citizen Kane*, this would allow us to “build the picture around the question.” There is no need to commit to any final notion of definitive editions or final, authorial intentions; rather there is great potential in a provisionally structured edition that would allow readers to engage with the main aspects of the *Piers* tradition. There will be plenty of time for them to pursue the intricacies of the extant manuscripts, should they so desire, but as long as we wait for perfect evidence, we will never be able to edit *Piers Plowman*. Without doing so, we do a disservice to students who will focus their time instead on readable texts that agree to meet them halfway.

Another crucial component in creating a *Reader's Langland* is attention to price. Accessibility in textual presentation would be effectively undercut by aggressive pricing. The idea of accessible texts stems from the earliest dissemination of Langland's poem. As one example of this heritage consider the introduction to Thomas Wright's 1856 revised edition of the B-text, to which Skeat would later turn, where that editor maintained his original text, but felt that a “reprint at a more moderate price would be

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<sup>235</sup> William Langland. *Piers Plowman: A New Translation of the B-Text*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. It should be mentioned that there is also a useful verse translation of the C-text available in George Economou's *William Langland's Piers Plowman: The C Version: A Verse Translation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. In both cases the translations are useful, but remain too limited in scope to serve the purpose of full, reader's edition.

<sup>236</sup> This idea is not as new as some might think. While many recent textual scholars have argued that past editions sought to be “definitive,” thorough reading of earlier editions shows that those editors were less certain of the finitude of their editions than has been convenient for recent critics to argue.

acceptable to the public."<sup>237</sup> A later form of this same sentiment appears on the jacket of Knott and Fowler's 1964 edition:

The long-recognized need for a version of *Piers the Plowman* based on modern methods of textual criticism was met by the publication of this book in 1952. The present reissue of that edition in paperbound version meets yet another need. It provides an authoritative and easily obtainable edition for the student of the work.<sup>238</sup>

In order to create this type of edition textually we need to ask different questions. Rather than focusing on how we can fully represent the complexity of the issues at hand, we need to ask how we can better serve the reader. By including images such as a sample from a manuscript, and some reproductions of the illustrations from the Douce manuscript, we would provide more access to the text of *Piers*. With a broader commitment to annotation and detailed descriptions of the time period, its readers and its language, editors of *Piers* could offer students and general readers the types of materials that have allowed generations of people to access Chaucer and Shakespeare. We would do well to remember that all of today's scholars grew up on edited versions of canonical texts and that has not prevented them from perceiving issues of complex transmission. Rather, their early exposure to general concepts and themes provide a useful set of questions with which to pursue questions of authority and audience. Perhaps most important is the idea that the vast majority of those who read Shakespeare, or Chaucer or Langland, will only do so once in their lives. Can we say we currently have an edition that will allow them to make the most of that experience? Should we allow our editorial

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<sup>237</sup> William Langland. *The Vision and Creed of Piers Ploughman: Edited from a Contemporary Manuscript with a Historical Introduction, Notes and a Glossary: Volume 1*. Thomas Wright Ed. London: Reeves and Turner, (1842) 1856. (iii)

<sup>238</sup> William Langland. *Piers the Plowman: A Critical Edition of the A-Version*. Edited with Introduction, Notes and Glossary by Thomas A. Knott and David C. Fowler. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964 (1952).

questions – as valid as they may be – to deprive a reader of a chance to experience the tearing of the pardon, the belling of the cat, or what may be the first-ever representation in English literature of sympathy for unwed or widowed mothers?

Textual scholars tell us that there is a certain falsification in the type of conflation necessary to achieve the goals implied by these questions, but it is a level of error that is to be expected and which is acceptable given the general outcome. Our technology and our theoretical explorations have led us to an exciting place in scholarship, but they should be used in the service of readers, not to their detriment. While we often hear that digital technology is a democratizing force, I would like to argue that there is a great deal more democracy found in an edited text, than can ever be realized in all-encompassing archives. An edited text is an *agora*, a meeting place where readers can go in order to discuss different ideas. Into the agora, we may bring as many challenges as we like, but without it, there is no common ground from which to begin a discussion. How many generations should we wait before we offer our students an accessible text of *Piers*? If there is one thing upon which all Langlandians can agree it is that *Piers Plowman* is an underappreciated text. Emphasizing complexity and the pure expression of individual exemplars will only serve to ossify *Piers* as an esoteric tradition, something that is not in keeping with the poem's message. *Piers Plowman* is a public document and should shortly make its reappearance – our own loftier ambitions notwithstanding – as such. What this amounts to is a need to answer George Kane's challenge to edit. Following E.D. Hirsch, our organizing principle can be seen as a useful heuristic, with all of our recent advances serving as correctives that help us avoid any overt attempts to simplify Langland as author or auteur. In this way, a Reader's Langland would make the most of

the meticulous examinations of scholarship, the strength of narrative and the power of myth. In the end, we can only ask ourselves to *do-best* – perfection was never a part of the original equation.

#### CHAPTER 4: Editing Early Modern Texts

In this chapter, I want to begin with a quick introduction to the history of editing Renaissance texts. After that, I will move toward a more focused look at the tradition of editing Shakespearean texts in particular. This approach will allow me to open up the general challenges that face editors working in this area, and in so doing I will prepare for my discussion of the recent controversies in Shakespearean editing in Chapter 5. In both chapters, I hope it will become apparent that given the centrality of the plays of Shakespeare, editorial controversies are both more heated and yet less in need of immediate attention for their own sake than in either of the other two cases I am examining in this document.

Any history of editing early modern texts in English is haunted by one positive and two negative identifications.<sup>239</sup> Both negations – “non-dramatic” and “non-Shakespearean” – involve degrees of separation from their positive counterpoint: Shakespearean, dramatic texts. Thus, textual editing that focuses on early modern or Renaissance texts is usually defined in terms of three categories, non-dramatic texts, non-Shakespearean dramatic texts, and those that fall under the name Shakespeare. Further, given the preeminence of Shakespeare and the volume of work devoted to the texts,

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<sup>239</sup> W. Speed Hill draws attention to one aspect of this negative association – that of the *non-dramatic* in his chapter “English Renaissance: Non Dramatic Literature,” in D.C. Greetham’s 1995 collection *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. The opening sections of this chapter owe a great deal to that article as well as to Paul Werstine’s “Shakespeare” in same, and the introductory passages to the major works currently available, being *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Blakemore Evans, Ed., *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, David Bevington, Ed. *The Norton Shakespeare*, Stephen Greenblatt Ed., *The Oxford Shakespeare*, Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor Eds. and *The Arden Shakespeare*, Richard Proudfoot, Ed. and to Barbara A. Mowat’s “The Reproduction of Shakespeare’s Plays,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells, Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. (13-29) and MacD. P. Jackson’s “The Transmission of Shakespeare’s Text,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*. Stanley Wells, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (1986). (163-185).

documents and traditions associated with that name, the scholarship in this area holds a foundational position in the development of methods for editing all other texts in English.

The editing of English Renaissance texts is fundamentally concerned with the incunabular period – or at least its echoes – with the expansion of print in England, from its centre in London. The current proliferation of books and articles dealing with this subject provides an interesting background for the study of technologies that facilitate communication. These *histories-of-the-book* are being conducted by large, well-funded research groups across the globe and are making widespread use of current information technology in order to build new archives out of old.<sup>240</sup>

Though print arrived in England in the late fifteenth century, it was not until the next century that widespread distribution of the newly formatted texts occurred. Among these items were a variety of scientific documents, political and religious treatises and texts (i.e. those originating in the various pamphleteering movements) and finally works of fable and fiction. Influencing this final mix were texts created in continental Europe that recorded classical works, which would later serve as sourcebooks for English writers. At that time, the availability of texts and the corresponding increase in appetite for them resulted in part from the Reformation notion that lay people should be able to read the Bible for themselves. Compounding the drive toward greater production and distribution of printed materials was the general increase in leisure time that the average person could devote to reading or listening to someone else read.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> In Canada, studies in this area are centred at the University of Toronto. See the web site for *History of the Book in Canada/Histoire du livre et de l'imprimé au Canada* at: [http://www.hbic.library.utoronto.ca/home\\_en.htm](http://www.hbic.library.utoronto.ca/home_en.htm). There is also a major centre for the study of the history of the book at Edinburgh University. That institution's Scottish Centre for the History of the Book is currently producing *A History of the Book Reader* for Routledge Books.

<sup>241</sup> The central studies in this area are Brian Stock's *Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press,

My present concern is to examine the development of what would come to be known as “literary” texts. In general, literary texts produced from non-dramatic sources were more refined both in treatment and in presentation. Play texts appeared in rough quarto versions while poetry could appear in folio. The first attempt to tap into the greater aesthetic authority associated with the folio form for theatrical works came with Ben Jonson’s self-published collection *Workes* from 1616. Jonson was famously attacked for this act of bibliographic hubris.

The distinction between the refined folio and the more generally available quarto remains a central determinant in the editing of texts of the Renaissance period to this day. One caveat before I move on – while the Renaissance period is usually assessed in terms of the development of print, publication in manuscript form continued throughout the period. This point made, my examination of the Shakespearean editing tradition will focus on the printed page since that is where Shakespeare’s work survives.

Due to the nature of the relevant composition processes, the breakdown between dramatic and non-dramatic works is significant beyond the cultural value associated with the quarto and folio distinctions. As W. Speed Hill asserts, non-dramatic texts were usually set from better copy than their dramatic counterparts, which were often made from messy authorial drafts rather than neat, revised transcriptions.<sup>242</sup> This point, coupled with the notion that dramatic texts were not as culturally valuable as their non-dramatic counterparts, led to an environment of noticeable textual difference. The Shakespearean example here is useful. While his long poems *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of*

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1983 and Elizabeth Eisenstein’s *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

<sup>242</sup> W. Speed Hill. “English Renaissance: Nondramatic Literature,” in *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. D. C. Greetham, Ed. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995. (203-06).

*Lucrece* (1594) seem to have been published with great textual care, the same cannot be said for any of the plays.

There are of course a number of other influences that need to be taken into account when studying materials from the period, not least of which was the political environment that fostered and regulated creative production. Queen Elizabeth and her successor James played a significant role in the development of the culture industry. They (through their administrators) sanctioned plays and held at least semi-direct supervisory power over issues of censorship through the bishops and later the office of the master of revels.<sup>243</sup>

Currently accepted wisdom tells us that the plays of the time were hastily written collaborations, often between two or more authors attempting to feed the demands of the expanding theatre market. For many, this situation creates contradictions with notions of authorship that were to become more accepted in the eighteenth century, when the intersection of legal copyright and epistemological moves toward the concept of genius caught up in Enlightenment notions of the self led many to see Shakespeare as the pinnacle of individual talent. Textual conditions were further complicated because of the intricate system of borrowing or cross-referencing. This borrowing was one step removed from actual collaboration, and it appears that almost all Renaissance authors freely adapted or blatantly copied scenes and ideas from other manuscripts. When someone writes hundreds of plays during his lifetime, as Thomas Heywood did for example, there

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<sup>243</sup> See Richard Dutton's "Censorship" in *A New History of Early English Drama*. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, Eds. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. (287-304).

is little possibility that every one would be completely original in every thought and word.<sup>244</sup>

It is from these patchwork scripts that we receive our published plays. The realities of Renaissance publishing add an additional challenge to those on a quest for marks from an author's pen. The modes of textual transmission during the sixteenth and seventeenth century were labour intensive, relying on diligence at many stages, and were as such prone to error. If the work in question were being transcribed, the scribe could, for example, alter the manuscript he copied according to his own linguistic preferences. This could change the words and the mood and meaning of a passage or a whole work. If the work was being printed for distribution, compositors in the printing houses could misalign whole passages, misread words, or leave words out completely, set verse as prose or vice versa.<sup>245</sup> Recent positions on the role of the compositor have challenged the idea that all of these interventions can be excised as interference, and proposed they must instead be seen as part of a collaborative field.<sup>246</sup> In either case, their participation is a factor for which we must account.

In practical terms, the limitations of the press meant only a certain number of pages could be set at one time; therefore, even copies printed by the same people in the same house could vary greatly from one another in their accuracy. These variations within an edition as well as other divergences could cause editions of a work to vary from one another as well as from what was originally written or transcribed. Variations of this

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<sup>244</sup> Karl J Holzkecht. *The Backgrounds of Shakespeare's Plays*. New York: American Book Company, 1950. (345).

<sup>245</sup> See Gary Taylor's "From Plot to Promptbook," in *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Eds. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997 (1987). (9-10)

<sup>246</sup> See Paul Werstine's "Scribe or Compositor: Ralph Crane, Compositors D and F, and the First Four Plays of Shakespeare's *First Folio*. *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*. 95 (3), 2001. (315-39).

type leave us with no logical path to trace back in order to arrive at the original, since many can be assumed to be completely random.<sup>247</sup> As a work gained popularity, and more editions were printed, the numbers of these errors were multiplied with each reprinting. Old mistakes would remain; new errors appeared via the same means. For a time, editing Shakespeare meant an attempt to correct these corruptions. This is no longer necessarily the case.

Pirated versions of plays are also a challenge for those working on materials stemming from the period. These situations are usually described in terms of one or more audience members recounting what they remembered of a play to a scribe for the purpose of selling the script as a complete work on the street. Similarly, actors employed on a temporary basis by theater companies, but unassociated with any, might recite their parts to a scribe, adding what they could remember of every other part in the play, or even portions of other plays in which they had previously acted. Their memories might even recount an “acting version” of the play, with cuts to allow for intermission entertainments, simplification of lines, and unauthorized jests of individual actors.<sup>248</sup>

Shakespeare’s first eight published plays did not have his name attached to them, but this was not unusual for the time. What is remarkable, however, is that after 1598 Shakespeare’s name commonly appears on plays, many of which are not his. We may assume that his name alone was a popular draw for audiences and patrons. Starting from those early publications, we now assume that a total of thirty-seven plays as well as some

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<sup>247</sup> Werstine “Shakespeare” 253.

<sup>248</sup> For a recent critique of the notion of memorial construction and its link to performance scripts, see Paul Werstine’s “Touring and the Construction of Shakespeare Textual Criticism” in *Textual Formations and Reformations*. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger, Eds. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998.

non-dramatic poems constitute the Shakespeare canon.<sup>249</sup> Along the way, theater producers and/or actors almost certainly changed the manuscripts they met. The performance influence shows itself in variations in the naming of particular characters, and within stage directions and speech prefixes contained in some of the early printed plays. Some feel that printed plays in which the variations occur may have been set into type from Shakespeare's own manuscripts, while printed plays which are free of such variation are assumed to be based on scribal transcripts, created for theatrical use.<sup>250</sup> The actors using these would be less likely to be confused as to the flow of their lines since the directions and naming are consistent. The theory here is that playwrights can be messy, but theater producers who must oversee the staging of plays would need a consistent text from which to work.

Shakespearean difference provides a distinct challenge for the editing of all other Elizabethan drama owing to the fact that, with the exception of a few minor interventions, the editing of Shakespeare's fellows occurred in a manner that saw the reapplication of editorial practice derived originally from Shakespearean studies back onto the presentation of his contemporaries.<sup>251</sup> Further, these same approaches would later be expanded to the study of all texts in the English language tradition.<sup>252</sup>

Repeatedly scholars ask whether Shakespeare needs to be treated differently than his contemporaries. As the most popular of the era's dramatists, Shakespeare had an audience that was likely different from that of other playwrights. Playhouses themselves

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<sup>249</sup> These numbers are subject to a number of small border squabbles, for which see any of the recent editions of the plays for different approaches and/or opinions.

<sup>250</sup> Paul Werstine. "Copy-text Editing: the Author-izing of Shakespeare." *English Studies in Canada* 27 (2001). (33-5).

<sup>251</sup> T.H. Howard-Hill. "English Renaissance: Non-Shakespearean Drama," in *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. D.C. Greetham, Ed. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995. 232

<sup>252</sup> For a critique of this process, see Jerome McGann's *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992 (1983). (1-11).

were variable, shifting in their appeal; they flourished and declined in popularity, gained bad reputations, or became known for a particular style of acting. During Shakespeare's career, The Red Bull became the resort of the rougher crowd; The Theatre and The Curtain declined when competing new houses in Southwark drew growing audiences.<sup>253</sup> In the realm of publishing, the use of Shakespeare's name to drive up sales, followed by the success of the First Folio in a market where Jonson's folio had failed, indicates that his plays did very well in this competitive environment.

If his audiences were different, so was his language. His deliberate use of archaic words manipulated language for dramatic and poetic effect. The specific terms he used would be commonly recognized as "different" from the standard vocabulary but retrievable from within that standard.<sup>254</sup> This provided his audience with a feeling that this word was "other" and thus must be poetic – evocative of mythical or historical storytelling traditions.<sup>255</sup> It provides his editors and interpreters with a series of compelling challenges.

Complementing his quasi-historical diction was the incorporation of Latin, or "hard words" in Edmund Coote's definition.<sup>256</sup> With the growth of the vernacular as a vehicle for art and instruction, Shakespeare appears to be playing with the contemporary shifts in language and learning. He used this to great effect in the person of Holofernes, the schoolmaster in *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594-5), who is the epitome of the foolish educator. His language is replete with Latinate expressions. Thus, Holofernes uses a

<sup>253</sup> John Orrell. "The Theatres," in *A New History of Early English Drama*. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, Eds. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. (102-07).

<sup>254</sup> Margreta De Grazia. "Shakespeare and the Craft of Language," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Stanley Wells, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. (50).

<sup>255</sup> De Grazia "Craft" (62-63).

<sup>256</sup> Coote was the famous English schoolmaster who helped establish the system of classical education in English. For more on Coote see the University of Toronto's site devoted to him at: <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/ret/coote/ret2.html>.

number of “hard words,” favoring Latin models, extensive synonyms, and an expansive vocabulary. However, despite his verbal acrobatics, Holofernes cannot correctly name those common things he comes across. In this way, he serves to highlight the difference between language as an academic vehicle and as a practical engagement with reality.<sup>257</sup>

Scholars have suggested for years that this was Shakespeare’s way of getting back at the regulators of language in his life, his teachers and those with higher social standing.

Whatever the reason, the eccentric use of Latinate words adds to the editor’s task.

The long history of repackaging and selling Shakespeare’s texts began with their unauthorized appearance during his lifetime. The quarto versions of the plays that appeared under his name were creations of mediators who sought – we imagine – to profit by distributing the texts of plays that were popular among the London play-going public. Difficulty arises when we realize that he supervised none of the play materials that appear under his name, regardless of whether they first appeared in quarto or folio. Speculation over the proximity of either folio or quarto publications to the pen of the author has remained the centre of the textual debate for more than four hundred years.<sup>258</sup> Recently however, a greater emphasis has been placed on recording the plays’ theatrical or social ties, rather than their connection to individual composition.<sup>259</sup>

Current scholarship tells us that nineteen plays were published in quarto form during Shakespeare’s lifetime. He seemed to take little interest in this practice and it was not until seven years after his death with the publication of the *First Folio* by his friends

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<sup>257</sup> De Grazia, “Craft” (50-4).

<sup>258</sup> See MacD. P. Jackson. “The Transmission of Shakespeare’s Text,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*. Stanley Wells, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (1986). (163-5).

<sup>259</sup> Perhaps the central figure in Shakespearean performance studies is William Worthen. For an excellent summary of the text/performance debate in the context of editorial theory see the chapter entitled “Authority and Performance” in his *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. (1-43).

John Heminge and Henry Condell that the work would be compiled as a canon of texts.

Yet, even before this period, the debate over editorial issues was well underway. Thus, the second quarto of *Hamlet*, published in 1604/5, contains the following statement:

“Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.” And from the “To the Great Variety of Readers” section of the *First Folio*

*It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to haue bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to haue collected & publish'd them; and so to haue publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued them.*

This early debate over the texts of Shakespeare's plays can be seen as part of a long development bringing us to our current situation. The first phase saw the collection by various editor/publishers who combined the dramas in ways that helped to establish the list of the plays, which should be grouped under Shakespeare's name. Close behind were those that sought to polish the texts for aesthetic reasons. Most – we are told – edited the plays after taste or fashion; though one might wonder if there is any other way to edit. Others, starting with Edward Capell, began the long process of attempting to create scholarly editions through principles of collation and bibliographic comparison. Central to all of these studies has been a series of closely articulated analyses of the source materials – and as part of the process, a rigid set of comparisons of the quarto and folio publications. Our current phase shows a love for the rough-edged, socially vibrant

quartos. The scholarly tradition, however, was founded on the primacy of the Folio publications.

The First Folio records the tension over the early-published works by pointing to “divers stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious imposters, that exposed them” as quoted above. That book contains thirty-six plays, eleven of which may have been based on earlier, quarto publications. While it seems clear that some real editorial work took place between the earlier materials and that published in the Folio, it is difficult to know just how much Heminge and Condell (the original editors) actually contributed.<sup>260</sup> These changes may have come from the stage, through the use of promptbooks, or could have been the contribution of the scrivener Ralph Crane.<sup>261</sup>

What is clear is that over time, the quarto publications came to be roughly associated with the tradition of performance, while the Folio became the purview of the literary or textual Shakespeare.<sup>262</sup> At times, the two traditions were combined to create conflated editions. In these cases, even if one text was seen as inferior it was still given enough credibility that it could be used as a valid resource to solve local, textual difficulties. The debate over the position of quarto versus folio remains at the fore of today’s study of the texts.

After the appearance of the First Folio, there were three more edited versions of that text (1632, 1663-4, and 1685) commonly referred to by scholars as the second, third

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<sup>260</sup> For more on Heminge and Condell and the production of the First Folio, see Peter Blayney’s pamphlet *The First Folio of Shakespeare*. Washington, DC: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1991.

<sup>261</sup> See Paul Werstine’s “Scribe or Compositor: Ralph Crane, Compositors D and F, and the First Four Plays of Shakespeare’s *First Folio*,” *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, 95 (3), 2001. (315-39).

<sup>262</sup> See “Bad Taste and Bad *Hamlet*,” in Leah S. Marcus’ book *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe and Milton*. New York: Routledge, 1996. (132-8).

and fourth folios. Each of these texts was edited from its predecessor and as such is seen to contain errors of transmission not caught until editors – beginning with Samuel Johnson – began to question the validity of this line. Trepidation over the analyses of those texts led editors to reach back to the First Folio and early quartos in order to find whatever more trustworthy sources existed. This commitment to source texts would play a major role in the development of what is now known as the New Bibliography. I will provide more on that after a short review of the intervening scholarship.

There were a number of editions created following the procedure of re-editing previously edited texts in the eighteenth century. In fact, every major edition, was so produced with the exception of Capell's 1768 text, did so. The major texts of the period were those of Nicholas Rowe (1709, 1714), Alexander Pope (1723-5, 1728), Lewis Theobald (1733, 1740), Thomas Hanmer (1743-4), William Warburton (1747), Samuel Johnson (2 editions in 1765), Edward Capell (1768), Samuel Johnson and George Steevens (1773, the first variorum edition), George Steevens and Isaac Reid (1793) and Edward Malone (1790).

A number of controversial changes made their way into the Shakespearean canon during this time. Nicholas Rowe, who is currently in disfavour with Shakespearean textual critics, introduced descriptive scene locations and act and scene divisions to the text as well as including a biography of Shakespeare. During that same period, what is perhaps the most famous battle over textual editing in the Shakespearean tradition took place between Alexander Pope and Lewis Theobald.

In 1726, when Theobald published his edition of the plays, he prefaced his collection with the assertion that he was restoring Shakespeare after the 1723-5 edition

produced by Pope. The position earned him centre stage in Pope's *Dunciad* in 1728.

When Theobald released another edition in 1733, there were direct attacks on Pope in the notes to the text. In hindsight, most would agree that Theobald was largely in the right, but Pope, who was the superior rhetorician, fared better in the contemporary press.

For all of the problems in Pope's work, he made a number of positive contributions to the debate. Beginning with the Third Folio, various other plays began creeping into editions of Shakespeare. Most of these were included for dubious reasons and Pope was the first to cull the seven additional plays (*Pericles*, *The London Prodigal*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *The Puritan*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy* and *Lochrine*).<sup>263</sup> In his second edition, he resuscitated these plays, but only for inclusion in a separate volume of apocryphal plays. Malone would bring back *Pericles* as a full member of the canon in his updated variorum version of 1780. Further developments of the period included Theobald's introduction of a series of references to outside texts (both Shakespearean and non) in order to support emendation as well as Johnson's inclusion of prefatory materials and critical notes.

Capell was one of the first to deal with the tension between the desire to annotate and the wish to maintain a clean page. By placing his notes in a separate volume, he prefigured contemporary editions such as the controversial Wells and Taylor *Oxford Edition* and the Arden collection of the complete works. Capell's greatest contribution was in his collation, which he used to create the famous 1768 edition. He donated that collection to Trinity College, and the editors who produced the edition that replaced his, went on to use his material to do so. For the first time with Capell, the editor brought together as much extant material as possible, collated, and then edited using a copy-text,

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<sup>263</sup> *Pericles* alone among these is now seen as a canonical text.

which had been suggested by the collation. This form of editing produced the earliest form of conflated text, a form that came to dominate the market.

Johnson and Stevens, Reid and Malone all based their editions on Capell's earlier text (1773, 1778, 1790 respectively), and it was not until the scholarly community came to embrace the 1863-6 Cambridge editions – and that well after their initial publication – that Capell's text was truly replaced. In the final large-scale embodiment of that text, Malone included a wide variety of historical and literary-historical materials in order to create a variorum edition, which was completed by the younger Boswell after Malone's death. These additions included a new biographical sketch, an account of British theatrical history, transcriptions of key documents and, following Capell, a chronology of the plays. While Capell's text was the foundation of the volume, it was also, as Barbara Mowat notes, Malone's inclusion of supporting materials that gave us the type of Shakespearean edition that most students today encounter in publications such as *The Riverside Shakespeare* and *The Norton Shakespeare*.<sup>264</sup>

The nineteenth century saw numerous editions of Shakespeare's works. Paul Werstine catalogues editions by Henry N. Hudson, James O. Halliwell, Samuel W. Singer, Alexander Dyce, Richard Grant White, John Payne Collier, Howard Staunton, Thomas Knightly, Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke and Charles Knight.<sup>265</sup> Particular attention is due Collier's 1842-44 edition, which posited a pre-*First Folio* text that had been marked up by "the old corrector." Collier's discovery garnered a great deal of

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<sup>264</sup> Barbara A. Mowat. "The Reproduction of Shakespeare's Texts," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Stanley Wells, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. (17-18).

<sup>265</sup> Paul Werstine. "Shakespeare," in *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. D. C. Greetham, Ed. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995. (256).

attention, the tone of which changed after it was discovered that the text that he highlighted was an F2 manuscript and that he himself was “the old corrector.”

The most enduringly influential edition of the period was William George Clark and William A. W. Wright’s *Cambridge Shakespeare* (1863-66),<sup>266</sup> a scholarly edition that was reproduced for the 1864 Globe edition. Clark and Wright’s edition was later challenged by John Dover Wilson and Arthur Quiller-Couch’s *New Cambridge Shakespeare*, though the newer of the texts was not sufficiently different from its immediate predecessor to stake a claim as the definitive text. What is significant about the Cambridge editions is what Paul Werstine points to as the overt emphasis on textual matters.<sup>267</sup> For Werstine, this move away from contextual materials serves as the precursor to the work of W. W. Greg, A. W. Pollard and Fredson Bowers. For Werstine, the counter to this movement is the “more liberal” work of H. H. Furness, who, with the help of his son, created nineteen separate variorum editions by 1928, at which point their editions were taken over by the Modern Language Association of America.

Twentieth-century editions of Shakespeare, like most scholarly editions of the era, were dominated by the scholarship of A. W. Pollard and W. W. Greg in England and Fredson Bowers in the United States. Their so-called “copy-text” editing focused on detailed analysis of extant textual materials, ranking each in terms of its proximity to the author and then emending according to an established formula. The development of their work would coincide with the expansion of the study of English Literature in universities and the development of the *New English Dictionary* (later the *Oxford English Dictionary*), and the growth of the Early English Text Society (as discussed above),

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<sup>266</sup> Wright would go on to revise the work for the 1891-92 *Cambridge Shakespeare*.

<sup>267</sup> Paul Werstine. “Shakespeare,” in *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. D. C. Greetham, Ed. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995. (264).

which also meant the incorporation of developments from German philology.<sup>268</sup> The work of A. W. Pollard (1859 - 1944), R. B. McKerrow (1872 - 1940), W. W. Greg (1875 -1959) and Peter Alexander (1893 - 1969) established the “New Bibliography” and would directly inform the work of Fredson Bowers (1906-1991), who took these procedures and single-handedly began the process of establishing the drive for scholarly editions of American authors. Bowers, who earned the nickname “the King of Bibliography,” besides contributing to the general study of English literature, was instrumental in creating the founding texts of what we now know as American literature. He remains the most significant textual scholar in the English language tradition.

These same elements were also co-extensive with the Anglo-American language theory centred at Cambridge and connected at least indirectly with the theoretical drive known as “The New Criticism,” which developed in Britain and the United States. It was the largest period of educational expansion in the study of English to this time. It is for these reasons that any study of editorial theory must take account of the developments in Shakespearean editing and its connections to the New Bibliography. Whatever its faults, the New Bibliography proved very effective at producing edited texts.

During the period from 1908 to 1910, Greg and Pollard, with the assistance of William J. Neidig, came up with a new assessment of the quarto texts of certain of Shakespeare’s plays that would change the way in which those plays were edited, and which also ushered in the belief that information obtainable directly from textual materials – in this case stationer’s watermarks – could be determinant in editorial practice. These three scholars demonstrated through an analysis of watermarks that a

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<sup>268</sup> It is worth noting that most of the original New Bibliographers began as medievalists working in the same fashion as Walter W. Skeat, who was helping to usher in the findings of German philology while at the same time producing his famous parallel text version of *Piers Plowman*.

number of quarto texts which had initially been dated as 1608-09 products, were in fact part of the series of texts produced by the Pavier Stationers shop in 1619.<sup>269</sup> The findings demonstrated the potency of a more scientific approach to the study of physical materials, while also supporting the position that these quartos were at a greater temporal distance from the original publication of the plays they carried.

Stemming from this work, Pollard put forth the idea that there were two kinds of quarto texts, good and bad. Bad quartos were texts that had a faulty provenance as evidenced by their absence from the Stationers' Register of published plays. The plays that earned this dubious distinction were the first quarto of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the first quartos of *Hamlet* and *Pericles*.<sup>270</sup> Pollard argued that the reason these publications did not appear in the register was that the publishers failed to provide a true printer's copy from the actor's companies who owned the texts of the plays. Thus, bad quartos were most likely pirated copies. Upon further evidence it appears that Pollard was incorrect on both a practical and a theoretical level, given that the register does not reflect his assertions and that the actors turn out not to have been the

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<sup>269</sup> For detailed examinations of the Pavier quarto and the behaviors of "Compositor B" see William S. Kable's *A Comprehensive Analysis of the Spellings of Jaggard's Compositor B in the Pavier Quartos*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1966 and William S. Kable and J. Leeds Barroll's *Studies in the Bibliography of Renaissance Dramatic Texts: The Pavier Quartos and the First Folio of Shakespeare*. Dubuque, Iowa, Wm. C. Brown, 1970.

<sup>270</sup> For an excellent analysis of the roles that the expanding rare book trade played in Pollard's decisions, see Joseph Lowenstein's "Authentic Reproductions: The Material Origins of the New Bibliography," in *Textual Formations and Reformations*. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger, Eds. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998. (23-44). Lowenstein expands this argument in his *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002. His views are by no means universally accepted. For an alternate view see just about anything Paul Werstine has written in the past ten years. Werstine supports some of the work of the New Bibliographers, as does Jerome McGann, whose *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992 (1983) offers what is often seen as the most forceful attack on the assumptions of the New Bibliographers with the exception of the more general attacks that one might assume from antifoundationalist literary theorists.

holder's of copyright at the time.<sup>271</sup> Stationers held the copyright and were not subject to the same potential for thievery as the troupes of actors.

As an extension of the bad quarto theory, Pollard claimed that many of the plays that were recorded in the Stationers' Register – and according to his theory were as such supported by genuine copies from the acting troupe – might be assumed to have come from pages written in Shakespeare's hand. The most tangible demonstration of these connections came about in Pollard and John Dover Wilson's claim that Shakespeare was responsible for writing associated with "Hand D" in the play *Sir Thomas More*. Though Pollard later moved away from his assertions about this brief passage, the text is still included in many editions, including the most recent *Oxford Shakespeare*.<sup>272</sup>

Concurrent with Pollard's developments came the question of how one might determine which of the folio texts were closer to Shakespeare's hand. In 1935, R.B. McKerrow came up with the idea that certain copies of the plays showed inconsistencies naming characters – that is, they were spelt or named differently within the text – which he argued would have been unacceptable to anyone attempting, as Shakespeare was, to stage a play. W.W. Greg took this a step further and came up with two influential categories for supposed source texts. "Foul Papers" were Shakespeare's holograph copies and as such had a pre-eminent place in any analysis of documents that sought to establish a copy-text that was closest to the author's hand. "Prompt Books" were playhouse copies that contained modifications for given performances. It followed that plays which were seen as originating from foul papers were closer to Shakespeare's intention – a point of

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<sup>271</sup> See Paul Werstine. "Copy-text Editing: the Author-izing of Shakespeare. *English Studies in Canada* 27 (2001). (29-35).

<sup>272</sup> For a discussion of their rationale for including the piece see, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Eds. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997 (1987). (124-25).

privileging the overtly textual over the role of performance which would be directly challenged in the *Oxford Edition*, and remains controversial today.

Pollard added to Greg's categories with the notion of "memorial construction." Under this conception, bad quartos were the copies of Shakespeare's plays written down as recalled by individual actors. Further, these actors, it might be assumed, were involved not in the polished London presentation of the plays but in adumbrated versions which were put on in the provinces during times when the London theatres were closed due to plague. The theory could be tested by demonstrating that a given play text – *Q1 Hamlet* for instance, was closer to its betters only around one or two parts, for example that of Marcellus in the case of the bad quarto of *Hamlet*. For Paul Werstine these "narratives," ill-founded though they are, have proven surprisingly resilient.<sup>273</sup> For others such as Joseph Lowenstein, the work of Pollard and Greg and their New Bibliographic principles need modification not replacement. Lowenstein's case argues that we must recognize that in order to account for their policies, we must examine the motivations that led them to reach some of their conclusions.<sup>274</sup>

After the initial development of the New Bibliography and its focus on copy-text editing, the next major development that the group ushered into Shakespearean editing was the analysis of printing house practices. Adding to the original group's work was R. B. McKerrow's successor Alice Walker, whose work in the middle of the last century is pertinent. Walker studied variants that came about because of the printing process itself,

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<sup>273</sup> See Paul Werstine. "Copy-text Editing: the Author-izing of Shakespeare. *English Studies in Canada* 27 (2001). (29-30).

<sup>274</sup> Lowenstein's argument places Pollard and Greg's work in the context of emerging disputes over copyright and the value of rare books. See the argument in his initial formulation in "Authentic Reproductions: The Material Origins of the New Bibliography," in *Textual Formations and Reformations*. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger, Eds. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998. (23-44) or an expanded form in his *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

making a particular study of errors that resulted from the limitations of print – for example, too few letters which could lead to abbreviation, too little or too much space requiring the elimination or extension of lines. After examining these variables, Walker showed that we could spot compositorial trends that could be traced to specific individuals working in the printing houses.<sup>275</sup> By identifying the personal traits of “Compositor B,” Walker could make calculated assumptions about variants within the resulting texts. Like George Kane’s pursuit of the “logic of error” evident in the scribal emendation of *Pies Plowman*, this process had at its heart a drive to find a work hidden behind material mediation.

The editing of Shakespeare since Walker has seen a variety of positions vying for attention. Ernst Honigmann has argued that variants that are found in various play texts may be authorial revisions and as such should be worked into edited versions of the plays, creating conflated, best-text editions. At the opposite end of this spectrum, textual theorists such as Randall McLeod feel that facsimiles that preserve and present the plays as early modern print productions are already too far from the originals though they would serve readers better than any other form of intervention.<sup>276</sup> The most controversial application of editorial theory that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century is that which underlies Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor’s *Oxford Shakespeare*.<sup>277</sup> However,

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<sup>275</sup> Alice Walker took over the Cambridge University Press job of editing McKerrow’s texts when he passed away only a year after the publication of his *Prolegomena*.

<sup>276</sup> One of the most significant texts in the changing landscape of Shakespearean editing, and one of the two that Jerome McGann points to as most influential for socio-historical editing is Ernst Honigmann’s *The Stability of Shakespeare’s Text*. London: Arnold, 1965. Randall McLeod’s positions on editing are published under a variety of pseudonyms. For a relevant example of his views on Shakespearean editing, see “Spellbound: Typography and the Concept of Old-Spelling Editions.” *Renaissance and Reformation* 3 (1979) (50-65).

<sup>277</sup> William Shakespeare. *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

before I move on to a discussion of Wells and Taylor's edition and its current rivals, there is a series of questions that need to be recognized.

In opening these questions, my interest is in exploring the heat that seems to attend the exploration of editorial method. As I mentioned in the Langland sections above, Walter Skeat distinguished himself through scholarly generosity. There seems to be little of that type of spirit in the history of Shakespearean editing. In fact, the debates were acrimonious from the beginning. From the original charges of stolen copies to the mockery in *The Dunciad* and on to the current fiery rhetoric of Wells, Taylor and Werstine, there seems to be a great deal of emotion involved in an area of study that is often assumed from the outside to be rather dry. It is telling that by the time we reach the sections on editing James Joyce's *Ulysses* below, we will be talking about a full out "war".

In *Beyond Good and Evil* Friedrich Nietzsche warns, "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look into the abyss, the abyss also looks into you."<sup>278</sup> Earlier in that same section, he wonders whether terrible experiences make those who experience them terrible. Before we move on to an examination of the most recent debates over Shakespearean editing, I would like to open a line of inquiry following Nietzsche's warnings. It seems clear that in political or historical terms these warnings make sense. One look at a screaming mother who promises to make more martyrs to strap bombs to their bodies illustrates this fact. However, can the obverse be true? Can we become better if we wrestle with angels rather than devils? Of course, these general ideas tie to the liberal concept that reading great

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<sup>278</sup> From Friedrich Nietzsche. "Part IV: Epigrams and Interludes," in *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Helen Zimmern Trans. New York: Prometheus Books, 1989. (Numbers 146 and 89).

books will make you a better person. The argument is as old as Plato's eviction of poets at the end of *The Republic* and as current as the debate over free speech issues related to contemporary song lyrics. The notion of potency related to the internalization of cultural material pervades religious and psychological analysis of the human condition, with these forms of expression becoming a supposedly manipulable force in prayer, mantra or behavior modification technique.

The question then becomes, do the texts that editors work on begin to shape the ways in which they edit? It is not a question that I plan to answer, but one that I think is worth raising and leaving open. Consider two cases that operate within literary texts, "Free Indirect Discourse" in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (among other works) and the "Uncle Charles Principle" in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as outlined by Ian Watt and Hugh Kenner respectively.<sup>279</sup> In each of these examples, the narrator is seen dissolving into the character that is their focus, often causing a shift from first to third person narration. This sliding focus speaks to an influence of character back onto observer. Can this same influence move outside the text?

It will be immediately apparent that almost any of the great Romantic thinkers would believe so – their commitment to the effects of literature are legion. Consider Hazlitt's highest form of praise for Dante and Shakespeare. These *poets* – the emphasis is crucial – "overwhelm" or take over the reader. The effect, we are told, grips the scholarly reader as well, an aspect that is understandable given that most of Hazlitt's commentary

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<sup>279</sup> Ian Watt. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001 (1957). (297) and Hugh Kenner. *Joyce's Voices*. New York: Faber and Faber, 1978. (15-38).

on poets came from his own series of academic lectures.<sup>280</sup> The second paragraph of his essay on *Hamlet* is telling:

Hamlet is a name: his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is we who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself "too much i' th' sun;" whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known "the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes;" he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady, who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought, he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to play as his best resource to shove off, to a second remove, the evils of life by a mock-representation of them--this is the true Hamlet.<sup>281</sup>

Here the reality of the play and the reader are blurred, foreshadowing Harold Bloom's all-encompassing assertion that Shakespeare has invented the human.<sup>282</sup> Compare this passage from the introduction to the section devoted to *Othello* that begins by echoing the solution Aristotle provided to Plato's prohibition on poets

IT has been said that tragedy purifies the affections by terror and pity... It makes man a partaker with his kind. It subdues and softens the stubbornness of his will. It teaches him that there are and have been others

<sup>280</sup> Almost all of Hazlitt's texts are now online, but the quality of individual texts is questionable. For a more reliable source, see William Hazlitt. *Complete Works in 21 Volumes*. London: P.P. Howe, 1930-34. In "On Poetry in General" Hazlitt links Dante's overwhelming effect to a level of excess, which the author is able to maintain through a manipulation of interest.

<sup>281</sup> The University of Toronto hosts a reliable online version of *Hazlitt's Characters of Shakespear's Plays (1817)* under the supervision of Ian Lancashire at: [http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw\\_charsp/charsp\\_titlepage.html](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw_charsp/charsp_titlepage.html). The specific page for the *Hamlet* chapter can be found at:

[http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw\\_charsp/charsp\\_ch9.html](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw_charsp/charsp_ch9.html)

<sup>282</sup> Harold Bloom. *Shakespeare and the Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1999.

like himself, by showing him as in a glass what they have felt, thought, and done. It opens the chambers of the human heart. It leaves nothing indifferent to us that can affect our common nature. It excites our sensibility by exhibiting the passions wound up to the utmost pitch by the power of imagination or the temptation of circumstances; and corrects their fatal excesses in ourselves by pointing to the greater extent of sufferings and of crimes to which they have led others. Tragedy creates a balance of the affections. It makes us thoughtful spectators in the lists of life. It is the refiner of the species; a discipline of humanity. The habitual study of poetry and works of imagination is one chief part of a well-grounded education. A taste for liberal art is necessary to complete the character of a gentleman. Science alone is hard and mechanical. It exercises the understanding upon things out of ourselves, while it leaves the affections unemployed, or engrossed with our own immediate, narrow interests.--OTHELLO furnishes an illustration of these remarks. It excites our sympathy in an extraordinary degree. The moral it conveys has a closer application to the concerns of human life than that of any other of Shakespear's plays.<sup>283</sup>

Edward Pechter's *Othello and Interpretive Traditions* picks up where Hazlitt leaves

off.<sup>284</sup> The ability of Shakespeare's plays to have a direct effect on an individual reader or

a theatre audience is something we take for granted. As Pechter has shown, the results

can be dramatic.<sup>285</sup> Given that the critic must take up and use – through direct and

indirect quotation – the words that make up the materials to which they apply themselves,

is it not possible that they are influenced by the language they use? At the very least, does

the series of words available create a horizon of limitation beyond which it would not be

reasonable to go and as such structurally influence the critic's ability to communicate?

And finally, how much more pronounced would this effect be if one were to commit

oneself to spending years working only with the words of one set of texts?

<sup>283</sup> [http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw\\_charsp/charsp\\_ch4.html](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw_charsp/charsp_ch4.html).

<sup>284</sup> Edward Pechter. *Othello and Interpretive Traditions*. Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

<sup>285</sup> Indeed Pechter cites reports of men rushing the stage, women fainting and even miscarrying babies after being exposed to the play. See "Othello in Theatrical and Critical History," in *Othello and Interpretive Traditions*. Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999. (11-29).

This line of questioning can quickly degrade into a cocktail party game, but before we leave it behind in order to take up the serious work of analyzing *The Oxford Shakespeare*, I will pose two last questions. Is it possible that if a person were to commit years to a text, imbibing its words and living its scenes and scenarios, a significant portion of their character might be taken over by that text? And if it were possible and a person were willing to make that commitment, who else would you want to edit that text? I ask these questions as a way of pointing toward something that is lost in an examination of the process of the editing – the emotional commitment of those involved in the process.

These general questions aside, as we move to a consideration of the Wells and Taylor edition, let us keep in mind that the key controversy regarding that text was the division of the kingdoms of *King Lear*, a move that echoes the procedure the elderly Lear commits to and which tears his world apart. Within that same book, the editors argued that they should also have done the same to *Hamlet*, the text seen as the centre of the Shakespearean canon and of the Western canon. The editors who so pronouncedly decided to divide Lear's kingdoms opted to mark *Hamlet's* text in distinct ways – adding italics for quarto material – but resisted dividing the play even though they asserted it should be split. This year, as the Arden 3 edition of *Hamlet* moved closer to completion and the world was told that those editors would split *Hamlet* into three parts, Stanley Wells appeared on the BBC arguing with Ann Thompson, the new edition's chief editor, that it was the wrong thing to do. Is Wells haunted by his decision?<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> There is also the text of *Othello*, whose impossibly intricate intermixing of Quarto and Folio texts mirrors that play's internal tension over miscegenation.

## Chapter 5: All the King's Horses and All the King's Men: *Un*-Editing Shakespeare

I will now turn to a brief account of the Oxford edition of Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, and poems published in 1986 by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor. I will then attempt to contextualize its entry into the field of single-text editions of the plays, notably *The Riverside Shakespeare*, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* and *The Norton Shakespeare*, the last of which substantially reproduces the Oxford text. The central component of the first section however will be an examination of what remains the most significant essay in textual scholarship, W.W. Greg's "The Rationale of Copy-Text."<sup>287</sup> Greg's article and its place within the school of New Bibliography is the measure against which Wells and Taylor and their fellow editors worked.

*The Oxford Edition of Shakespeare* is a controversial publication, which is perhaps most notable for publishing two texts (actually four if we count the two old spelling and two new spelling texts) of *King Lear*, arguing that Shakespeare had produced two distinct versions. The Oxford edition also included a "new" Shakespeare poem -- 'Shall I Die?' which had been discovered by editor Gary Taylor.<sup>288</sup> However, its role as a locus of debate over issue of authorship and editing is what is most important for the current work.

At the turn of the last century, Thomas R. Lounsbury provided a note of foreshadowing for the debates that would define twentieth-century Shakespearean textual study. In his 1906 book *The Text of Shakespeare: Its History from the Publication of the*

<sup>287</sup> Walter W. Greg. "The Rationale of Copy-Text." *Studies in Bibliography* 3: 19-36. The University of Virginia has published all of the *Studies* series in a fully searchable form from the first to the fifty-second issue (1948-1999) at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/bsuva/sb/>.

<sup>288</sup> For more the controversy surrounding this poem see Donald Foster's "Shall I Die? Post Mortem: Defining Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38:1 (1987) 58-77, and Thomas Pendleton's "The Non-Shakespearean Language in 'Shall I Die?'" *Review of English Studies* 40 (1997) 323-51.

*Quartos and Folios Down to and Including the Publication of the Editions of Pope and Theobald*, Lounsbury speaks of the modern reader's search for the best published edition of Shakespeare's works. The author gives voice to what once was the driving force behind Shakespearean editing when he asks,

where is to be found the best text of Shakespeare's works? Of the many editions before the public, which is the one to be preferred? These are questions which are pretty certain to be asked by him who is about to take up for the first time the study of that author's dramatic productions. It may and it sometimes does cause a feeling of disappointment when the answer is made – as no other answer can fairly be made – that not only is there no best edition of Shakespeare's works, but there never can be and never will be one.<sup>289</sup>

In the book *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method*, Robert B. McKerrow addresses the many published editions of Shakespeare that established the tradition he proposes to enter. He explains that the 'most authoritative text' is not necessarily the earliest in its date of printing.<sup>290</sup> This position, and the assumptions that surrounded it, would found a debate that continues to this day. McKerrow suggests that the earlier printing could very well have been written from a corrupt version, one more corrupt than a later printing. He also goes on to reveal his belief that each edition of modern Shakespeare can be made closer to an original manuscript's wording, highlighting his faith in a more scientific model of progress toward truth and understanding.<sup>291</sup> Is this notion of progress still tenable? In order to examine this question, we need to examine its roots.

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<sup>289</sup> Thomas R. Lounsbury. *The Text of Shakespeare: Its History from the Publication of the Quartos and Folios Down to and Including the Publication of the Editions of Pope and Theobald*. New York: Scribner and Sons, 1906. (1).

<sup>290</sup> R. B. McKerrow. *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939. (7).

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* (7–8).

In different ways each of G. L. Kittredge's 1936 edition, G. Blakemore Evans' *The Riverside Shakespeare* (1974, 1998), *The Oxford Shakespeare* (1986), and Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan's *Arden 3* series (1995) support the idea that editing can be made to reflect progress in the development of Shakespeare's work over time. Those opposed to the notion of textual progress, Jerome McGann for example, argue that important elements are lost when editors separated from the social circumstances that produced the text reinterpret original artifacts.

In his 1955 book *On Editing Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Dramatists*, Fredson Bowers supports the vigorous editing of Shakespeare's works, along with other Elizabethan authors. Bowers' book explores the "rights," the "wrongs," and the common mistakes made by editors who accept the challenge of editing Elizabethan texts. For Bowers "the editing of texts is one of the most important forms of modern scholarship."<sup>292</sup> He stresses the importance of taking the time to learn how to complete the task successfully. Bowers develops his procedural approach by pointing to the difficulties that can arise when the reasoning behind the editing of works grows lax and this allows them to end up being "less than" the original due to an over-mechanized approach. He argues that, "...unless an editor fully understands the reasons for these principles, and the way in which his method must logically develop to attack the particular kind of problem that confronts him, no mechanical imitation of procedures will ensure success."<sup>293</sup> Bowers is in favour of editing of texts and he supports the notion of progress, but he brings to light a problem he feels can never be satisfactorily resolved

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<sup>292</sup> Bowers, Fredson. *On Editing Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Dramatists*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Library, 1955. (3).

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* (5).

through the application of theory or procedure, namely that “all the necessary facts can never be determined on the basis of the preserved documents.”<sup>294</sup>

Here we have Bowers showing his connections to the New Bibliographers in general and to his mentor W.W. Greg in particular. Greg’s most influential essay is also the most cited essay in all of textual scholarship. In his “The Rationale of Copy-Text” Greg lays out several of the foundational elements of textual editing, particularly the editing of Renaissance dramatic texts.<sup>295</sup> The essay, though meant to focus on the editing of Elizabethan and Jacobean texts, went on to inform the editing of texts from different genres and periods. Perhaps chief among its early promoters was Fredson Bowers. Later, “The Rationale” would be the foundation of Jerome McGann’s critique of the New Bibliography and also the inspiration for the editing of American literary texts by the followers of Fredson Bowers.<sup>296</sup> Bowers’ methods were the most influential in the history of American editing, while McGann’s school of socio-historical editing is acknowledged by the Modern Language Association as the chief form of textual editing today. Given the centrality of Greg’s article, an examination of its contents is in order.

The piece begins with a reflection on the term copy-text derived from classical editing. In those practices, one manuscript source is selected as being closest to the original or authorial intention and becomes the starting point for the editing project.

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<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.* (5)

<sup>295</sup> See n287.

<sup>296</sup> McGann’s critique has been developed in many publications, chief among these are the brief book *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992 (1983) and the more recent, digitally influenced, “The Rationale of Hyper-Text” originally published in *The Electronic Text: Investigations in the Theory of Computerized Textuality*, Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland, Eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, (19-46) and now available in a revised state as Chapter 2 in McGann’s collection *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. (53-74) It should be noted that the first version of this article is more directly concerned with McGann’s *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Archive*. Online at: <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/rossetti/index.html>. Pictures accompanied the original article.

Supporting this procedure was the process known as “the genealogical approach” developed by German philologist Karl Lachmann. Lachman created a “stemma” or family tree that represented lines of textual descent and used this to help form decisions about textual variants. Greg reflects that this procedure is useful for editing Renaissance texts, but warns editors who might rely too much on “mechanical rules,” pointing out that “authority is never absolute, but only relative.”<sup>297</sup> This caveat and assertion in the article’s second paragraph point to the central problems Greg is addressing. These are the use of an over-scientific approach to editing, and the estimation of authority. Later attacks on Greg’s position make much of both of these considerations.

Pointing to poet, critic and classical textual scholar A.E. Housman, Greg next examines the fallacy that all scribal readings uncovered in a text must necessarily be wrong. The results of nullifying this fallacy are to allow for the use of other manuscripts as evidentiary sources for the emendation of the copy-text, since now any reading may be worthy of consideration. Here again, Greg warns against a purely instrumental approach: “[u]nfortunately the attractions of a mechanical method misled many who were capable of better things.”<sup>298</sup> By looking to Lachmann and Housman, Greg is establishing the similarities and differences between those that edit texts from the classical period that uniformly adopted a policy of modernized spelling and those that will edit Renaissance texts. For Greg modernization does not work for early English texts, which originate in a time when orthography was not yet normalized.<sup>299</sup> The final distinction that Greg makes between his work and that of the classical scholars is the separation between the

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<sup>297</sup> Greg “Rationale” 19.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.* 20-21, see footnote 3 on page 21 for his mention of the difficulties with Old and Middle English texts. Greg is following a contemporary trend that recognized an author’s spelling as part of his expression, as well as indicative of that writer’s time and locality.

classicist's conception of a "best" or "most authoritative" manuscript" and his own use of "copy-text."<sup>300</sup>

Next Greg presents one of his central concepts, which he introduces thus: "[i]t is therefore the modern editorial practice to choose whatever extant text may be supposed to represent most nearly what the author wrote and to follow it with the least possible alteration."<sup>301</sup> To this Greg adds the new notion of emending "substantives" and "accidentals." Substantives are items that directly participate in authorial meaning, accidentals are items such as spelling, punctuation and word-division, which do not have so large an impact on the overall expression. For Greg it seems likely that if authors were to amend, they would attend to substantive changes. Moreover, if scribes were to react to a text they would most likely do so to correct or modify accidentals – that is, "they will follow their own habits" in these matters.<sup>302</sup> Greg is then careful to point out that there are differences between those texts that began in the manuscript tradition and those which appeared after the advent of print: "[t]hus in the case of printed books, and in the absence of revision in a later edition, it is normally the first edition alone that can claim authority, and this authority naturally extends to substantive readings and accidentals alike."<sup>303</sup> In the case of printed books – Greg's express focus – one may emend substantives if there is evidence that an author returned to a book in order to revise earlier work.<sup>304</sup>

Greg clarifies his position by pointing out that by being amenable to authorial revision of substantives editors can avoid the "fallacy of the 'best' text." He further points out that while editors may update their copy-text in terms of substantives, they

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<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.* 21-2.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.* 22.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.* 22.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.* 23-24.

should leave the accidentals alone, given that authors will probably not emend accidentals and any changes will most likely be those of a scribe or compositor. In this respect, he differs from McKerrow's position in *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare*, which he references.<sup>305</sup> Again, Greg's disagreement is over what he sees as too much reliance being placed upon a rigid code. Here he develops the idea of the "tyranny of the copy-text," arguing that the selected text should only be a general guide and that since all aspects of an editing project – including the selection of the copy-text – are subjective and one must maintain a critical engagement rather than putting faith in pseudo-scientific set of procedures.<sup>306</sup> Echoing Housman, Greg suggests that the editor who relies on formal rules has abdicated the responsibility of editing. In this sense, it is better to trust the judgment of an editor than a code.<sup>307</sup> The rest of the article is spent expanding on these ideas and giving examples of how an editor can select a copy-text and make decisions about emendations. Greg's commitment to the role of the editor is captured in a playful aside given just before he begins listing examples:

I am, no doubt, presupposing an editor of reasonable competence; but if an editor is really incompetent, I doubt whether it much matters what procedure he adopts: he may indeed do less harm with some than with others, he will do little good with any. And in any case, I consider that it would be disastrous to curb the liberty of competent editors in the hope of preventing fools from behaving after their kind.<sup>308</sup>

At all points Greg elevates the editor over procedure and states repeatedly that what he is suggesting is only a general guide, finishing his essay with a statement that in many ways prefigures George Kane's closing statement from the Athlone *Piers Plowman*

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<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.* 24-25. Indeed McKerrow's argument was that editors should accept all changes in the later text once that document had been shown to have authorial legitimacy.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.* 26-8.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.* 28.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.* 28.

B: "I have done something to sort out my own ideas, others must judge for themselves. If they disagree it is up to them to maintain a different point of view. My desire is rather to provoke discussion than to lay down the law."<sup>309</sup>

I would like to pause over this last point. Greg has come in for a lot of criticism in recent years, much of it focusing on this brief article. No doubt it is obvious from my reading above that I feel there is a need to revisit his position. What one finds when returning to Greg is that he is nowhere as rigid a critic as is so often suggested by those who wish to reject his findings. Further, it is important to note that many – if not most – of the early papers of the New Bibliographers were presented in open seminars and at society meetings. They were seen as parts of a discussion. One finds repeatedly that these articles contain phrases indicating a set of developing ideas, rather than a codified set of procedures that young scholars should adopt. The New Bibliographers made their share of mistakes, but it is bad editorial practice to give them credit for ideas they did not author.

For Shakespeareans the fallout from Greg's article comes into focus when we pair it with his earlier acceptance of the possibility of the memorial reconstruction of texts and the categorization of the extant quartos proposed by Pollard. If one is to choose a copy-text in order to edit *Hamlet*, then the obvious choice following "The Rationale" is the first printed text, in this case Q1.<sup>310</sup> However, the editors that Greg speaks of must escape the "tyranny of the copy-text" and use their judgment to realize that Q1 is not acceptable as coming directly from the author since it shows evidence of both memorial reconstruction (by a character who played the part of Marcellus) and of piracy (through the admonitions

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<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.* 36.

<sup>310</sup> In n16 of the "Rationale," Greg notes that where there is more than one substantive text, you do not choose an inferior one – he refers to the bad quartos as an example – as your copy-text.

in the opening of Q2 *Hamlet* and the First Folio). Given his support for the association made between the memorial reconstructions and/or the categorization of bad and good quartos with *performance*, Greg was bound to fall afoul of performance critics. On another front, his support for the notion of a fixed author – and in particular the idea that “authorial intention” is something that we can and should pursue – along with his argument that authors demonstrate linear progress (i.e., writers get better over time) necessitating conflated or eclectic editions, runs counter to social critics like McGann, who feel that there is no “work” behind the “text,” and poststructural literary theorists who challenge the fixity of the very category of authorship itself. Yet what we find when we revisit Greg is that he was well aware of the concerns these groups voice.

The chief benefactor of the New Bibliographers was the American scholar Fredson Bowers. So significant was his contribution that when Stanley Wells (the future chief editor of *The Oxford Shakespeare*) published the book *Shakespeare: Select Bibliographies*, the entry by Norman Sanders contained a section describing “the age of Bowers.”<sup>311</sup> By applying the techniques from Greg’s “Rationale” to a wide variety of texts, Bowers was able to effect sweeping change in scholarly editing in the United States turning his considerable skills and energies to the editing of that country’s texts according to the procedures of the new bibliography. At the end of his career, he had published sixty volumes of edited works and almost one hundred essays. All of this was beside his books, which included the monumental 1949 text *Principles of Bibliographical Description*.

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<sup>311</sup> Wells, Stanley. *Shakespeare: Select Bibliographical Guides*. London: Oxford University Press, 1973.

If there is one thing that Bowers gained most from W. W. Greg, it was the notion of liberty that the elder scholar had afforded the editor. In his article “Greg’s ‘Rationale of Copy-Text’ Revisited” Bowers reflects that

[c]ombined with the reasoned emphasis he placed on the choice of copy-text for the authority of its accidentals instead of its substantives, it is this freeing of an editor from 'the tyranny of the copy-text' in his choice of substantives when more than one authority is present that has exercised ultimately the paramount influence. Indeed, it may be said that Greg seems to be more concerned with this matter of editorial freedom of judgment than he is with the narrower matter of copy-text choice, which he seems to have regarded as so well established as to require relatively less illustration and argumentation.<sup>312</sup>

The third in this scholarly line is G. Thomas Tanselle, currently Senior Vice President and Secretary of the Guggenheim Foundation. The addition of Tanselle completes the so-called Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line that has come to stand for the Anglo-American tradition of scholarly editing. It is against this line that Jerome McGann and Stanley Wells would define their editorial positions.

I have already mentioned Jerome McGann’s socio-historical critique of scholarly editing. McGann’s material approach is based on the notion that “bibliographic codes” – that is physical, non-textual elements of a text – are determinant for overall textual meaning and as such should be preserved and studied. In this light, editors should always focus their attention on reproducing the first published edition of a text and should not attempt to remove the participation of scribes, printers and editors in the process.

McGann lists two texts as central influences on his work in this area; they are Ernst Honigmann’s *The Stability of Shakespeare’s Text* (1965) and D. F. McKenzie’s 1985

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<sup>312</sup> Fredson Bowers. “Greg’s “Rationale of Copy-Text” Revisited.” *Studies in Bibliography* 31 (1978). (91-2).

Panizzi Lectures of *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*.<sup>313</sup> Following those texts, McGann challenges the idea that editors can or should allow themselves to engage in any form of conjectural emendation. That type of editing allows editors to make decisions based on their own judgment, but which would have no extant witness. The famous case here is Hamlet's "O that this too, too solid/sallied/sullied flesh would melt" line. The Folio gives "solid," the Second Quarto "sallied," and yet many editors since the nineteenth century have believed that the latter is a misspelling of sullied, a word, which implies a type of interiority that many readers/viewers of *Hamlet* associate with the melancholic prince's character. Thus, David Bevington's *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, for example, prints "sullied."<sup>314</sup> In *The New Cambridge Shakespeare's* modernized edition of the First Quarto, sallied is emended to read sullied, although the note lists that all three witnesses speak against the point.<sup>315</sup> One of the arguments against following the early quarto's "sallied" is that it would be very easy for a dirty letter "u" to appear closed at the top and show up looking like an "a." This, not at the stage of transcription from print, for the letterform is distinct in both witnesses, but in the printing house when the compositor was loading the composing stick. The problem is that while no one has an answer, most disagree with others' interpretations. For Greg, all of this would be fine, since it should be left up to the individual editor to decide.

Into this mix came *The Oxford Shakespeare*, at a time when conflated Shakespearean texts still dominated the market. In 1986, Margreta De Grazia and Peter

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<sup>313</sup> E.A.J. Honigmann. *The Stability of Shakespeare's Text*. London: E. Arnold, 1965, and D. F. McKenzie. *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. (Note in the case of the latter this is a publication of the texts of the Panizzi lectures that McKenzie gave in 1985.)

<sup>314</sup> William Shakespeare. "Hamlet: Prince of Denmark," *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, Updated Fourth Edition. David Bevington, Ed. New York: Longman, 1997. 1.2.129 (page 1070).

<sup>315</sup> William Shakespeare. *The First Quarto of Hamlet*. Kathleen O. Irace, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 2.20.55 (page 40).

Stallybrass open their article "*The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text*" with a comment on the impact of the newly edited *King Lear* contained in that volume:

For over two hundred years, *King Lear* was one text; in 1986, with *The Oxford Shakespeare*, it became two; in 1989, with *The Complete King Lear 1608 – 1623*, it became four (at least). As a result of this multiplication, Shakespeare studies will never be the same. This is not simply because we may now have more Shakespeare than before—many *Lears* instead of one; a mere enlargement of the canon requires no rethinking of how the works are to be prepared and interpreted. Shakespeare studies will never be the same because something long taken for granted has been cast into doubt: the self-identity of the work.<sup>316</sup>

De Grazia and Stallybrass believe that the existence of conflated editions of multiple texts stole the particular work's identity and that readers were forced into "a need to reconceptualize the fundamental category of a work by Shakespeare," and that editors "had been passing off an artificial Shakespeare for the real."<sup>317</sup> It seems that *The Oxford Edition* had managed to displace false authority.

For Hugh Grady, the notion of authority is central to his metacritical, postmodern stance: "Shakespearian criticism has long been in search of the authentic, Shakespearian meaning, and almost every critic, including this one, writes as if she had come to be in possession of it."<sup>318</sup> In his book, *The Modernist Shakespeare: Critical Texts in a Material World*, Grady takes aim at the constant recreation of what he calls the Shakespearean "book world." He posits a "paper battlefield where armies of both ignorant and learned tilt and joust at each other in an ineffectual but never-ending contest of

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<sup>316</sup> Margreta De Grazia and Peter Stallybrass. "The Materiality of Shakespeare's Text." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (3). 255.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.* 255

<sup>318</sup> Hugh Grady. *The Modernist Shakespeare: Critical Texts in a Material World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. (1).

interpretations.”<sup>319</sup> There is perhaps no better demonstration of the dangers uncovered in Grady’s accusations of critical relativism than that found in his own assertion that “the major line of interpretation of Shakespeare in the twentieth century, we will see, is resolutely 'Modernist', that is, shaped and structured by the new movements in literature and art that came into prominence in the period after World War I.”<sup>320</sup> Following his own assertions, Grady, a specialist in modernism and Shakespeare, found just what he set out to find, his own relevance. The difficulty of listening to ourselves rather than to each other – whether through texts or not – is that as critics we lose our shared point of reference. Solipsism of this sort leads to the type of question that would go something like, ‘what if a tree fell in the forest and there was nobody there to hear it? And there is no forest.’ As Edward Pechter points out in his “In Defense of Jargon,” “If like Hamlet we have learned to do without a framing totality such as essential human nature, we have to put up with a constant sound of jargon in our ears, including not least the echo of our own.”<sup>321</sup>

The *Oxford Shakespeare* series remains controversial, as it was intended to be. Stanley Wells, co-editor of the 1986 *Oxford Complete Works* and principal editor of the *Oxford Shakespeare Series*, when speaking of the *Works*’ development, said, “I found

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<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.* (1).

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.* (2).

<sup>321</sup> The chapter that I am quoting stems from a controversial article titled “In Defense of Jargon: Criticism as a Social Practice,” in *Textual Practice* 5 (1991). (171-82) Interested readers should also see the series of response and counter-response articles in the same journal. The article has since been reworked and placed in the context of a larger study (from which I quote) in Edward Pechter. *What Was Shakespeare? Renaissance Plays and Changing Critical Practice*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995. (132).

that people often reacted with a slight curl of the lip, followed by the words ‘Oh yes. Will it be different from any other edition?’”<sup>322</sup>

Wells, after putting aside the controversy over splitting the texts of *Lear*, states that

[m]ore fundamental and pervasive, if less eye-catching, were rigorous attempts to examine afresh the principles on which spelling and punctuation — previously largely regarded as the province of printers rather than scholars — were modernized, and a concern to rethink the plays’ stage directions in terms of the theatres for which they were written.”<sup>323</sup>

With the *Oxford Edition*, readers are provided with either old or modern spelling, extended introductions and detailed notes that help define the project, if they purchase the *Textual Companion* that is, and of course a great deal of discussion in the popular press. *The Times Literary Supplement* is quoted on all of the Oxford University Press sites defining the compilation and the individual volumes as “[n]ot simply a better text but a new conception of Shakespeare... a major achievement of twentieth-century scholarship.”<sup>324</sup>

Formal supervision of the division of *King Lear* was left to Gary Taylor and was previewed in *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of King Lear*.<sup>325</sup> Reaction to the Wells and Taylor’s editions – old and new spelling – along with their *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* was balanced. Given that the edition appeared first, many had to wait before they could fully appreciate the significance of the

<sup>322</sup> Wells, Stanley. *Stanley Wells on Shaping the Oxford Shakespeare*. Mar. 2001. Oxford University Press. <[http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/humanities/literature/viewpoint/stanley\\_wells/](http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/humanities/literature/viewpoint/stanley_wells/)>.2001

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>324</sup> See <http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/humanities/literature/shakespeare/students/>.

<sup>325</sup> *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of King Lear*. Gary Taylor and Michael Warren, Eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

changes made. In many ways, their edition did all one could hope for; it created a wholly new set of texts, fostered scholarly debate and once it was picked up by W. W. Norton and Company, it produced an easily readable text.<sup>326</sup> In the process, Stanley Wells contributed a great deal to the subject of modernized spelling and Gary Taylor provided an excellent textual introduction and examination of the history and chronology of the plays and poems.<sup>327</sup>

A number of other innovations were included in the new release. Among these, a greater focus on performance aspects such as the *Dramatis Personae* and stage directions, and a shift toward creating what David Bevington calls “the phenomenon of indeterminate Shakespeare.”<sup>328</sup> In the edition, plays and characters change, and scenes appear and disappear. Throughout, Wells and Taylor endorse the notion that Shakespeare was a reviser of his own works and, consequently, that editors should accept the latest editions of the plays as the most important. This has a significant impact on a play like *Hamlet*, where the editors drop the famous “How all occasions do inform against me,” soliloquy, arguing that Shakespeare intentionally cut it from his final version.

With the mixture of newly emphasized theatrical elements and a commitment to authorial revision, Wells and Taylor seemed to be working somewhere between the traditionalists in the Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line and the radical reformers such as McGann and Ann Thompson, the editor of the forthcoming *Arden 3 Hamlet*.<sup>329</sup> Tellingly,

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<sup>326</sup> *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. Stephen Greenblatt, Ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997.

<sup>327</sup> See Gary Taylor’s “General Introduction,” and “The Canon and Chronology of Shakespeare’s Plays,” in *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Eds. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997 (1987). 1-68 and 69-144 respectively.

<sup>328</sup> David Bevington. “Determining the Indeterminate: *The Oxford Shakespeare*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38:4. 501-19. (502).

<sup>329</sup> See *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Eds. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997 (1987). (393-402).

when it came to *Lear*, where the quarto and folio editions seem to have appeared nearly simultaneously, the editors leave their theory intact and refuse to edit.<sup>330</sup> That is, they refuse to edit in the same way that they had for the other plays; they still edit the quarto and folio texts against each other using readings from each in the text of the other in a process that David Bevington compares to the Athlone *Piers Plowman* A and B texts' "logic."<sup>331</sup> Now, two decades later, Stanley Wells is fighting against the trend he started, arguing that *Hamlet*, at least the Arden 3 *Hamlet*, should remain in one piece.<sup>332</sup>

It is difficult to judge whether *The Oxford Shakespeare* has been as useful to Shakespeareans as the Athlone *Piers Plowman* editions have been to Langlandians. After all, there are a number of other texts available for those interested in exploring Shakespeare's plays, while Langlandians have fewer choices. As powerful as the rhetoric is around the editing of Shakespeare, there simply have not been changes made that are as significant as those that occurred at the turn of the last century. If, however, we are about to see the Arden 3 *Hamlet* finally convince the reading public that Shakespeare does not exist, that will be another story.<sup>333</sup> Somehow, I doubt there will be much change. What is almost certain to happen is that if someone buys the new *Hamlet*, they will simply begin to view the first volume – the one that prints Q2 – as the text, and will forget about the second volume which will print the other two texts.<sup>334</sup> The other very simple reason is

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<sup>330</sup> *A Textual Companion*. (509).

<sup>331</sup> David Bevington. "Determining the Indeterminate: *The Oxford Shakespeare*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (4). (509).

<sup>332</sup> Stanley Wells and Ann Thompson spoke recently about the new Arden 3 *Hamlet* on BBC 3 Radio. For an archive recording of that interview, see: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/>. Thompson and Wells expressed the same views in interviews for Ron Rosenbaum's "Shakespeare in Rewrite." *The New Yorker Magazine*, May 2002. (68-77).

<sup>333</sup> Tension over the upcoming edition appeared in the *New Yorker* article in the previous note. (68-77).

<sup>334</sup> Notably, the editors say they will print Q1 either in a reduced font, or will include it on CD rather than allowing it to take up too much space.

that academics have grown tired of the notion of indeterminacy. We will have to decide if this means we have gone back to, or caught up with the general public.

*The Oxford Shakespeare* may not have done much for readers, but it has been a wonderful experience for editorial theorists. These strange people resemble the characters in David Cronenberg's film *Crash*. In that film, characters find erotic excitement in the notion of car crashes. For editorial theorists – at least for this editorial theorist – there is nothing so exciting as a brilliant failure like *The Oxford Edition*. Wells and Taylor's experiments are in many ways successful, while in a few others they are absurd. Moreover, their position adds little that was not already introduced by the New Bibliographers.

I will have more to say about the materialist and anti-foundationalist attacks on Greg and Bowers below, but for now I would like to point out one fact and ask one question. In all of the major editions of Shakespeare that are available today there are direct references to the work of the New Bibliographers, and in most of those the tone is one of condescension. These attacks usually take the form of ridiculing the loftier statements that Pollard, Greg or Bowers made about their ability to find meaning in texts. The question I would like to ask is why we seem to be so ready to historicize Shakespeare, his texts and those who made them, when we in turn deny context to the editors who were most responsible for the editions of the plays we grew up with?

For now, we will leave the kingdoms divided and go on a quest like Piers, between two towers and off into an indeterminate world. Though one must wonder, what will happen if the kingdoms stay divided? What do we stand to gain? Could we rid ourselves of Shakespeare in the park, of productions at theatres large and small, on stage

and on screen? Perhaps, we can look forward to theatres with multiple stages that run Q1, Q2 and F1 *Hamlets* simultaneously so that we can have performance that matches our new texts, just as those texts try to match performance. Of course, we would then have to determine if we should charge more for seats in front of the Q2 stage, which would offer more performance than the Q1. And what about the actors playing Hamlet? Should they all be paid the same, even though some would have to learn more lines?

While we wait for those changes, I would like to look at the current state of digital editing and Shakespeare, an area where with a little less effort and a lot less heat we might be able to address a number of the problems we currently face.

### ***Hamlet* in Entropy: Hospitality and the Future of Shakespeare**

*Hamlet* currently exists in a state of textual entropy. As a theory, entropy emphasizes systems' continual movement toward the complex. The process reaches a final equilibrium, constrained by the rule that chaos can never diminish once established within a system. This notion offers an interesting correlative for textual practices that reproduce multi-version plays as the representative form of a given tradition.

Most of us are familiar with entropy through popular science. The examination of energy, heat and work that led to the second law of thermodynamics moved us toward the current theory of entropy. In the 1980's, these proofs came to be seen as representing a force that would cause our universe to expand beyond the point at which it could support life. Could a play suffer similar effects of dissipation?

Since the introduction of mechanical, reproductive technology, *Hamlet* has existed in a state of textual complexity that resists easy resolution. I predict that the play is currently near the end of its expansion and will soon settle into an "equilibrium of maximum chaos," joining *King Lear* as an encoded multi-text play that contests conflation. That is, as a play that contests conflation everywhere except with the majority of readers, actors, directors and audience members who interact with the play.

Borrowing a little thermodynamic heat, I would like to ask about the potential that can be stored in specific texts. Can this potential diminish during the process of reproduction? The answer would seem to tie directly to the type of anxiety that is currently being felt over the soon to be released Arden 3 *Hamlet*, which will divide the central text of the western literary canon into three separate parts. Growing up Catholic, I was taught that one plus one plus one can make three, but for the rest of us there may be

some concern over the segmentation of Shakespeare. I would like to spend the next few pages arguing that we might be able to mitigate some of this anxiety with the press of a few buttons.

My proposal is that we do not solve any of our problems. We should not decide in terms of an eclectic edition following Greg, Bowers and Tanselle, or a social edition following McKenzie or McGann, or a hybrid like Wells and Taylor. Rather, I believe we should pursue a truly Western solution. We should attempt to have it all.

Humanities computing is a discipline that is expanding rapidly. Just as when print first became readily available, this new technology is changing the way that we create and consume texts. As we have seen with the case of Hoyt Duggan's *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*, the path can be treacherous. In fact, it is not overstating the facts to assert that the vast majority of what has been done in the name of humanities computing to this point has failed. However, one area that seems to be a great success is the realm of information sharing. As with the print revolution before it, the proliferation of digital technology is providing greater access to more information for more people. Not only that, but it does so for very little cost on a byte-by-byte basis, after we account for access to a computer and the skill to use it.

What this means is that we can have an almost limitless number of texts available to us, should we so desire. In this way, we might decide to build a Shakespearean archive that would include transcriptions of all available texts and then allow all of the editors that I mentioned above to posit their pathways through the central archive. Interested readers could then test the materials and decide which path they want to follow. Groups such as the editors at *Shakespeare Quarterly* could examine the available materials and

note which edition or editions their journal supports for those wishing to contribute to their pages. This procedure would allow editing to continue, without the added expense and loss of life to trees up to the point at which a scholar, teacher, actor or reader decides to purchase a copy for download or printing.

The notion of the posited pathway is clear enough; it provides for easy testing of textual hypotheses without excessive cost. The posited pathway then has to do with information architecture. However, in order for it to work, it must also gain institutional support. My argument for this part of the plan involves combining two elements: the first I outlined earlier as a medieval studies approach to editing. That is, an interdisciplinary approach that includes material, historical and formal elements and fits rather neatly into the realm of philology, something that we have already seen is not far from what the new bibliographers were advocating. The work of those involved with manuscript studies is already functioning well. The interest in material aspects of print culture that relate to the study of manuscripts is also well established. Unfortunately, we are nowhere near as far along the way with the second element, humanities computing. That discipline is still one whose main functionaries operate under the assumption that, as Willard McCarty says, “the computer is an invisible medium” and as such does not require analysis in the same way that manuscript and print technologies do.<sup>335</sup> I will speak more about that question in my final chapter, but for now I will turn to the final component necessary for posited pathways and digital archives to work. In order for posited pathways and digital archives to be viable, editors need to become better hosts – we need to create hospitable editions.

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<sup>335</sup> Willard McCarty. “Knowing Things by What Their Mockeries Be: Modelling in the Humanities.” Conference presentation for a joint session of the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English and the Consortium for Computers in the Humanities/ Consortium pour ordinateurs en sciences humaines. Toronto, Ontario. May, 2002.

In its most direct form, *hospitality* refers to a kindness to visitors: a friendly welcome and a kind or generous treatment offered to guests or strangers.<sup>336</sup> As an act, this form of hospitality is evident in the scholarship of a number of the editors that I have already discussed. Walter Skeat's support of those who would overturn his own decisions, Derek Pearsall's provision of a C-Text for scholars who could not wait for the Athlone C, and Walter Greg's progressively more open attitudes to editorial procedure demonstrate the type of generosity of scholarship that is required for hospitality.

Often entailing sets of procedures or practices, different forms of hospitable engagement can be traced to the various technological forms of theatrical performance, printed reproduction and digital remediation. Shakespeare, it can be argued, began as a hospitable creator. With the exception of the very rich and the very poor, audiences for Shakespearean plays – at least those performed at the Globe – were broad ranging. Apparently, Shakespeare knew how to be a good host.

The global accessibility afforded Shakespeare's more immediate audience did not carry over to the codified world of print as readily. While quarto publications were within the reach of many of London's merchant class, the publication of the First Folio placed the authoritative works of Shakespeare in the hands of the few. This move was only one form of removal; another came with the institutional aggrandizement afforded Shakespeare's plays during the long development of the study of English letters, as editors convinced the public that *The Bard* was no longer a progenitor of pop culture, but

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<sup>336</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines hospitality as: 1. a. The act or practice of being hospitable; the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill. b. with *pl.* An instance of this. c. Applied in conventional phr. to the admission of correspondence, etc., to a newspaper. d. *to partake of (or enjoy) His (or Her) Majesty's hospitality*: to be in prison. *jocular.* 2. Hospitableness. *Obs.* 3. A hospitable institution or foundation; a hospital (sense 2). In quot. 1571, ? Hospitable institutions generally. *Obs. rare.* 4. *attrib.* and *Comb.* Now commonly used of a room, suite of rooms, etc., in a hotel, TV studio, etc., set aside for the entertainment of guests with drinks. *OED Online.* Oxford University Press. 15 July. 2003. <http://80-dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/>.

was instead the greatest English writer of all time. If there were popular versions of the plays – and there were – they most often came in the form of intentionally popularized productions designed with the market in mind. Not that versioning is culturally insignificant, but the split in accessibility recast lines between editors and readers in important ways.

We are often told that through the application of theoretical self-awareness and digital responses to bibliographic challenges these separations are something we have overcome. Yet, I would like to argue that without vigilant methodological work, ready theories and reader communications can be as exclusionary as any impasse currently regarded as historical malfeasance. One way out of this – at least the way I will advocate – is what I call hospitable editing.

Hospitality is ever-present in Shakespearean studies. From the moment when the Globe began to attract people to a play, through to the decision between digital links in a transcription of *Henry IV Part 2* to historical materials in the *Life and Times* section of the *Internet Shakespeare Editions*, the invitation to communicate – to hear and to be heard, is a procedure embedded in the responsibilities and possibilities of hospitality. To twist a line from a recent film, “if you make it, they will not necessarily come,” though if you invite them they might. The making itself must either involve a form of attraction and welcoming or rely on some form of coercive social obligation.

The concept of hospitality in these terms is not without its history. As Felicity Heal has shown in her book *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, hospitality at that time was a form of political exchange that rivaled the politico-judicial forms of governance

with which we are familiar today.<sup>337</sup> Through an examination of the social history of giving and obligation, Heal highlights the cultural codes that surrounded the giving of gifts and the offering of hospitable respite. Thus, the notion of hospitable obligation was well established by the time Shakespeare showed audiences the welcoming of the players to Elsinore, the murder of Duncan in Macbeth's castle, and the driving of Polixenes from Sicilia.

Heal's book argues that there was a move toward a more secularized view of hospitality from the late Middle Ages to the early seventeenth century, while it also provides a critique of the complex social matrix that saw the household as the centre of hospitality, but the judgment of its operations as rooted firmly in the public sphere. Scholarly work on hospitality by Marcel Mauss, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida argues that this form of interaction offers a return to earlier ethical, spiritual or theological representations. In doing so it seeks to address some of the same sociopolitical concerns that Heal records.

Marcel Mauss' book *The Gift* offers an anthropological account of rituals of exchange in a number of communities.<sup>338</sup> The book has given rise to a variety of new studies of the gift and of hospitality. For Levinas, giving can become an essentially ethical practice, but only once it tears itself free from injurious or inequitable obligation. He speaks of responsibility that is determined by the root *response* – the opening or offering that provides space for the reply of the other.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Felicity Heal. *Hospitality in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

<sup>338</sup> Marcel Mauss. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Communities*. W.D. Halls, Trans. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990 (1950).

<sup>339</sup> Emmanuel Levinas. *Alterity and Transcendence*. Michael B. Smith Trans. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999 (1983). See in particular, 97-110 and 131-144.

Jacques Derrida takes this one step further in his book *The Gift of Death* and *Of Hospitality*.<sup>340</sup> As Scott Foutz points out: “Derrida’s aim is to establish the priority of self sacrifice as grounded not upon utilitarian grounds but upon its status as radically individualistic gift. This makes the gift of death ... responsibility toward mortal others.”<sup>341</sup> Derrida is speaking of a system of practical ethics, of social responsibility embedded in the act of welcoming that functions as a central tenet of what he terms *The New Enlightenment*.<sup>342</sup> He goes on to demonstrate one application of this in his co-authored book *Of Hospitality*, where he responds to the voice of another in order to demonstrate the way in which the valences of hospitality can be used as principles of organization and exchange.<sup>343</sup>

Derrida’s revisionist approach is echoed in a recent article by John B. Bennett, who brings the notion of hospitality home to the academy. In “The Academy and Hospitality,” Bennett argues that hospitable scholars must find a balance between the tripartite functions of teaching, research and service. Academic hospitality, says Bennett, “[is] the extension of self in order to welcome the other by sharing intellectual resources and insights... [its] intellectual and moral virtue is essential for the academy.”<sup>344</sup> For my purposes, Bennett’s notion of the hospitable scholar, and in particular the intellectual who

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<sup>340</sup> Jacques Derrida. *The Gift of Death*. David Wills, Trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995 and Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality: Jacques Derrida Responds to Anne Dufourmantelle*. Rachel Bowlby, Trans. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

<sup>341</sup> Scott Foutz. Review of Jacques Derrida’s *The Gift of Death*. *Quodlibet: The Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy*. <http://www.quodlibet.net/gift.shtml>.

<sup>342</sup> Derrida. *The Gift of Death*. For a cogent summary of the Kantian roots of Derrida’s position, see Clayton Crockett. “Post-Modernism and Its Secrets.” *Cross Currents* 52 (4). (2003). Article is available online at: <http://www.crosscurrents.org/Crockettwinter2003.htm>.

<sup>343</sup> Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*. The book is written with each other taking a facing page in order to highlight the equality of exchange.

<sup>344</sup> John B. Bennett. “The Academy and Hospitality.” *Cross Currents* 50 (1/2). 2000. (23).

commits herself or himself to service, provides a useful model for the contemporary editor.

The study of editing in the Shakespearean tradition is central to editorial theory as a whole and as such could act as an exciting model for hospitable editing. As Susan Wofford has indicated in the case of *Hamlet*, the history of editing Shakespearean texts can be a useful means by which to study the development of all intellectual culture in the West.<sup>345</sup> Within this tradition, the degree to which various editing projects might be judged hospitable depends on their cultural context. The accessibility of Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, for example, might remind us of family reunions when we were condescended to and forced to sit at the children's table. If the Lambs proffered an invitation one might rather not receive, then R.B. McKerrow's *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare* might be considered an elaborate invitation to a party that never happened. The introductory sections in *The Norton Shakespeare* offer another instance, in this case a theme party that affords a glimpse into the theory-intense world of 1980's New Historicism.

In our current context, the scholarly editor's task – that of delivering culture in usable forms – is inherently caught up in hospitality. I would argue that one way we can create editions that are both accessible and useful is to practice a form of “hospitable editing” which creates editions and/or interfaces that foreground the interests of guests, thereby ensuring not only that readers and viewers are invited to the table of the great, but that they are given the tools to enjoy themselves while in attendance. Following Stephen Greenblatt's creative reading of the life of Thomas More in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*

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<sup>345</sup> Susan Wofford. “Introduction” *Hamlet*, Susan Wofford, Ed. Bedford-St. Martins Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism, 2000. (2-4).

– the editor is close to, but not in, the authorial seat of power and must create and undo her or himself through language in a fashion that must end in a form self-annihilation that allows guests to take the fore.<sup>346</sup>

As examples of hospitable printed scholarship, we could, for example, debate the levels of welcome in *The Riverside* or *Norton* editions of Shakespeare's complete works, both of which make attempts at providing the equipment necessary to participate in the tradition. Running counter to this, though admittedly in a deliberate, theoretical move by the author, Harold Bloom's *Shakespeare and the Invention of the Human* offers an example of less-hospitable, or more exclusive, engagement. This book, which contains no notes or bibliography that would allow the reader some flexibility in their interaction, seems to fall into the category of obligation that Michel Foucault highlighted in the history of western pedagogy.<sup>347</sup> Under that model, the teacher instills a sense of guilt in the student by demonstrating superior knowledge while limiting access to the means of attaining the same level of erudition.

In the terms that I am discussing, we might legitimately ask, Is hospitality merely a function of access-to-information? As I mentioned in my opening chapter, I believe that it is the responsibility of editors to provide access to culture, or at the very least not to

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<sup>346</sup> Stephen Greenblatt. "At the Table of the Great," in that author's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. (11-73).

<sup>347</sup> Foucault discusses this in a lecture entitled "Technologies of the Self." The lecture which he gave while on his final trip to America is printed in transcript from an early presentation of it at the University of Vermont in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton, Eds. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998. (16-49) However, the early version was substantially revised after Foucault worked through some of the ideas during his trip. His final visit on that tour was to the University of California at Berkeley, where he gave a more polished version of the talk. The latter stages of the argument are not in print, but can be found in digital audio format at the University of California at Berkeley Speech Archives at: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/audiofiles.html#foucault>.

inhibit it. In this way, we might see hospitality as a form of ethical obligation. However, access is not enough. The host must provide some information about the house rules.

Recent discussions concerning the influence of digital technology make much of the democratizing power of the accessibility fostered by the World Wide Web, but I ask again, is more information necessarily better? Can information delivered without regard for its consumption be useful? In much the same way that early modern printers negotiated an expanding field of information in a climate of radical technological change, today's web editors are testing new ground trying to find ways to create useful interactions for readers and viewers. They are trying to attract and keep guests. I do not believe that it is ungenerous of me to point to Jerome McGann's *Rossetti Archives* project as a failure of hospitality. McGann has already discussed the failures of the project on a number of occasions.<sup>348</sup> John Unsworth, the head of the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at The University of Virginia, sums this position up when he says, "If an electronic scholarly project can't fail and doesn't produce new ignorance, then it isn't worth a damn."<sup>349</sup>

As a leading figure in the world of electronic editing, Unsworth feels that these mistakes are a part of a field of experimentation that will lead to new ways to practice editing and to engage with our culture. It would be hard to disagree with this position. In the interim, however, this means that the *Rossetti* project has a great deal of information hidden behind an inadequate interface.<sup>350</sup> A pop-up window that appears as you arrive at the site warns visitors that the current instantiation is insufficient and will be so for some

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<sup>348</sup> Jerome McGann. "Editing as a Theoretical Pursuit," in his own *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. (82-87).

<sup>349</sup> John Unsworth. "The Importance of Failure." *The Journal of Electronic Publishing*. 3 (2). Available online at <http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/03-02/unswordh.html>.

<sup>350</sup> See *The Rossetti Archive*. Jerome McGann, Ed. at: <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/rossetti/index.html>.

time. Perhaps a clue can be found in the use of the term “Archive” in the project’s title. Like so many other archives, the *Rossetti* suffers from a form of clutter that may reward committed or lucky souls, but is forbidding to the majority of guests.

*The Internet Shakespeare Editions (ISE)* is trying to take a different approach.<sup>351</sup> It provides free access to a body of information – namely texts and transcriptions of Shakespeare’s plays – that appear in clear and easy to use interfaces. It also presents a detailed set of contextual information to support reading and studying in its *Life and Times* section. Critical editions complement textual transcriptions, while a performance database and an archive of the *Shakespeare Theatre Association of America* provide elements of multimedia, performance and community representation.<sup>352</sup>

If hospitality is useful as a general concept for digital editing, it must also be practically applicable or it becomes merely a diluted version of ‘the golden rule,’ a position, which leads us to the diminished state of which John B. Bennett warns. However, it is in these practical applications that the *ISE* most strongly demonstrates its form of welcome. Visitors are greeted by an image of Hamlet contemplating a mouse.<sup>353</sup> To click or not to click is apparently the question, but of more concern is whether the mouse is a trap that will leave us wanting light. Fortunately, the introductory interface makes our decisions clearer than those the young prince must face.

In order to describe the modes in which hospitality functions, I would like to discuss three ways in which I have used the *ISE* in the past year. While teaching first year English survey and senior undergraduate Shakespeare courses, I was able to count on the

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<sup>351</sup> See *The Internet Shakespeare Editions*. Michael Best, Ed. at <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/>.

<sup>352</sup> Its commitment to hospitality is also present in what it does not include. There is for example, no direct link to a discussion of the Oxfordian debate, clearly indicating that the host is aware that some of his guests may have a nut allergy.

<sup>353</sup> See *The Internet Shakespeare Editions*. Michael Best, Ed. at <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/>.

*ISE* to deliver useful information for my students. While many in my classes had difficulties with sites such as *The Blake Archive* and the *Perseus Digital Library*,<sup>354</sup> none had difficulty with *The Internet Shakespeare Editions*. In terms of performance, this past year when I agreed to act as dramaturge for a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I was able to use the site again when I had to cut the script to keep our production under two hours as per the director's orders. As I worked through my first drafts, the searchable transcriptions of the play helped me to plot paths through the dramas as I examined folio and quarto texts in split screen. Finally, the clearly articulated editorial methodologies, along with support and useful commentary from the editorial board, help textual enthusiasts through the various stages of the editorial process. Further, the body of carefully transcribed texts affords editors a useful starting point from which to begin their research.

Freely accessible transcriptions with coherent descriptions of editorial methodologies and tagging procedures are all components of a promising opening for hospitable editing. While the *ISE's* policy does allow individual editors to introduce their own approaches to their specific projects, consistency is maintained through the project's own tag set and output protocols. These more general guides are reinforced by a strong commitment to accessibility and to transcriptional accuracy. In this last case, the *ISE*, as has been demonstrated at length by Eric Rasmussen, has shown itself to be far more

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<sup>354</sup> Both are interesting sites, but require some time in order for users to learn their functions. This is particularly so with *Perseus*, which is a very powerful resource that will reward the committed researcher. See *The William Blake Archive*. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi, Eds. <http://www.blakearchive.org/>, and *The Perseus Digital Library*. Gregory Crane, Ed. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>.

textually accurate than *The Oxford Shakespeare*.<sup>355</sup> This last item is of particular importance as electronic editions attempt to gain legitimacy in the academy.

As McGann learned, editing that uses prefabricated documentary definitions seems doomed to fail. Still this tyranny of the DTD (document type definition) is the most common feature of digital editing today.<sup>356</sup> I would like to argue – following the advice of Greg and Bowers, that it is far better to edit from project-specific positions, which maintain the research modes of humanities-based intellectual work, rather than surrendering control to a formula, a theory or a machine. The humanities model of scholarship has always been one that allows itself to change as new information emerges during the research process. Humanists are not bound by predetermined hypotheses or statistical formulae. Or at least they have not been until now.

New technologies can be particularly useful for supporting mechanical practices, but they can also lead to short cuts that endorse an instrumental use of language that dissects texts into lifeless data objects. Reliance on machine magic goes against the warnings of Greg and Bowers and causes us to produce examples of what Heidegger called “descriptive totality” – linguistic autopsies that include everything but the human in the text. For Heidegger this means the loss of authenticity,<sup>357</sup> not authenticity in the

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<sup>355</sup> Eric Rasmussen. " 'Tis most credible: Textual fidelity in print and online." Presented at the Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society Conference in Nanaimo, British Columbia, May 2003 and forthcoming in a special issue of *Early Modern Literary Studies* at: <http://www.shu.ac.uk/emls/emlshome.html>.

<sup>356</sup> A DTD or Document Type Definition is a set of guidelines that can be applied to a marked up text. In recent years, groups such as the Text Encoding Initiative have made attempts to find uniform DTDs in order to simplify the editing process. While this can be an effective starting point, the adoption of a prefabricated set of document descriptions runs afoul of Greg and Bowers' warning about placing too much faith in mechanical means. DTDs are very useful; however, a true DTD can only be established in conjunction with the editing project to which it applies. For more on DTDs see the Text Encoding Initiative's site at: <http://www.tei-c.org/P4X/ST.html>. For more on general standards in markup governing DTDs see the World Wide Web Consortium's site at: <http://www.w3.org/>.

<sup>357</sup> Heidegger's ideas on authenticity start in Division One of *Being and Time* and are expanded in Division Two. However, his most concentrated examination of the loss of authenticity as a direct result of an obsession with technology and the instrumental use of language is in his late essay "The Question

terms of a root connected to transcendental truth, but as it relates to the ontological totality of the world – of *worldness* that accounts for the process of unconcealment that we must engage in if we are to be true to an analysis of a worldly creation. Editors of Shakespeare, and in particular digital editors, will be tempted to stop at the point of labeling all available evidence, but like the cataloguers in *Citizen Kane* that I mentioned in Chapter Two, without a view of the referential totality, the list is an empty set. Hospitality suggests we choose a different path.

There are a number of other projects currently engaging with Shakespeare's texts in digital form. Bernice Kliman's *Enfolded Hamlet* is one of the most interesting.<sup>358</sup> The *Enfolded Hamlet* stems from Kliman's participation in the *New Variorum Hamlet* project, that is sponsored by the Modern Language Association and which began in 1987.<sup>359</sup> Kliman is also known for her parallel-text edition, the *Three-Text Hamlet*, which she first published in 1991 and which is due to be released in a revised edition within the next year.<sup>360</sup> The *Enfolded* site offers three views of the text of *Hamlet*, a transcription of Q2 in green, a transcription of F1 in purple, and an enfolded text where all words which are in agreement appear in blue, with variants appearing in the colours of their corresponding transcriptions. Separate brackets, using "curly" for Q2 and "pointed" for F1, further set off variants. The entire site is searchable and includes an option for including variant spellings, so that one can catch "sallied" by searching for "solid." There are also two additional views that show all items that appear only in Q2 or F1. All texts appear with

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Concerning Technology," in *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings, Revised and Expanded Edition*. David Farrell Krell, Ed. and Trans. New York: Harper Collins, 1993. (311-341). See also, Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time*. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Trans. San Francisco: Harpers, 1962.

<sup>358</sup> Bernice Kliman. *Enfolded Hamlet: Enfolded Texts of the Second Quarto and First Folio*. <http://global-language.com/enfolded.html>.

<sup>359</sup> Other editors on that project are Hardin Aasand, Frank N. Clary, Jr., and Eric Rasmussen.

<sup>360</sup> William Shakespeare. *The Three-Text Hamlet: Parallel Texts of the First and Second Quartos and First Folio*. Paul Bertram and Bernice Kliman, Eds. New York: AMS Studies in the Renaissance, No 30. 1991.

Through Line Numbering (TLN).<sup>361</sup> Kliman explains the development and use of the site in her introduction:

Out of the need to reach consensus, in 1989 the enfolded text was born, a compromise that has, after some years of collating, shown itself to be superior to either single text as a working document for the new variorum project. Q2 is the copy-text, but wherever a material variant occurs in the folio, it appears in the line. Curly brackets distinguish Q2-only elements and pointed brackets F1-only elements. Thus, in lines

586 . . . {from} <For> this time <Daughter,>  
 587 Be {something} <somewhat> scanter of your maiden  
 presence

to unfold Q2, read all the words with no brackets and the words with curly brackets. The Q2 reading - "from this time Be something scanter of your maiden presence" - is preferred even by editors who use F1 as copy-text. To unfold F1, read all the words with no brackets and the words in pointed brackets.<sup>362</sup>

Kliman's project is not intended to be a final edition, but offers an interesting example of how hospitable editing can function online. Her publication of this material, which shares research from the *New Variorum* project, allows others to benefit from her work while providing her with feedback from scholars around the globe.<sup>363</sup> The type of accessibility fostered here, in conjunction with the malleability of an online edition, makes possible a more participatory engagement with the text at hand. As an active invitation, the *Enfolded Hamlet* offers a useful model for online editors.

The University of Virginia is one of the world's great centres for textual studies. Starting in an English department nicknamed "The House that Fredson Built" after

<sup>361</sup> Through Line Numbering (TLN) was first developed by Charlton Hinman in his production of the facsimile version of the First Folio, where he numbers each line continuously, including items such as stage directions, rather than starting over at the beginning of speeches or other forms of separation in the text.

<sup>362</sup> Bernice Kliman "Introduction" *The Enfolded Hamlet*. <http://global-language.com/enfolded.intro.html>.

<sup>363</sup> Email conversation with Bernice Kliman, 2002.

Bowers' influential time as Chair, the University has continued its pursuit of textual studies and now leads the field in electronic textual work. It is the host of the influential journal *Studies in Bibliography*, which now makes all of its past issues available online. It is also home to Jerome McGann, Hoyt Duggan and a number of other textual scholars of note.<sup>364</sup>

*The Electronic Text Center* at the University of Virginia has a substantial section devoted to Shakespeare. Its *Shakespeare Resources* site includes a public and a private designation. In the public section, readers can access the *Globe Edition* of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (an edition based on the famous 1866 Cambridge edition), strict transcriptions of First Folio and texts of forty-six quarto source texts, a “frames” side-by-side interface that meshes the *Globe Edition* and the transcriptions, a database of transcriptions and scanned facsimiles of Shakespearean prompt books with commentary by G. Blakemore Evans, and a section devoted to *Edward III*, which the site lists as “now authenticated as the work of William Shakespeare, by the Arden Shakespeare Series.” The private section includes the *Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare* section from Chadwyk-Healy (a link to another site) and an electronic version of *The Riverside Shakespeare*.<sup>365</sup>

*The Shakespeare Resources* site clearly indicates the power of digital media as a reference tool. While much of the material one would want to access is off-limits to the public, the site offers a good example of an electronic archive. It is cumbersome to navigate, has little cross-database integration, and operates with a number of different interfaces (including its reliance on Chadwyk-Healy, which makes the Resource Center a

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<sup>364</sup> *Studies in Bibliography*. <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/bsuva/sb/>.

<sup>365</sup> The private section is accessible only to University of Virginia staff and students.

portal and to a certain extent undercuts its power as an archive). In its current state, it offers itself as an updated version of a standard library or archive, but without the presence of a helpful librarian or docent. It is an example of how collecting and archiving can be exciting uses for online media, and how they could benefit from greater support mechanisms.

The final site I want to look at is MIT's *Hamlet on the Ramparts*.<sup>366</sup> This section is part of MIT's larger project, the *Shakespeare Electronic Archive*.<sup>367</sup> That project, much like the University of Virginia's, is an early attempt at providing access to archival materials online. Similarly, it acts as a portal site as well as an archive, connecting to other sites and posting materials from Bernice Kliman's *Enfolded Hamlet* and the *Arden Shakespeare* among others. What is unique about the Ramparts section is its emphasis on developing as a research project that unites libraries, universities and researches from across the globe. The site's opening page explains that:

*Hamlet on the Ramparts* is an attempt to involve a wide range of libraries, publishers, and scholars in a joint project in which all possible resources for a single scene of *Hamlet* are freely available on the Web in an archival system designed to make all resources easily accessible. It is an experiment in bringing together in digital form resources which are held in geographically distant locations and making them available for use by students and scholars at all levels, and by anyone with an interest in Shakespeare.

*Hamlet on the Rampart*'s list of contributors contains a who's who of Shakespeare scholars and research centres. It provides lesson plans for teachers and detailed instructions for first-time visitors. It also makes extensive use of rich graphics and multimedia, including film clips of different versions of the same scene. Currently

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<sup>366</sup> *Hamlet on the Ramparts*. <http://caes.mit.edu/research/shakespeare/ramparts.html>.

<sup>367</sup> *Shakespeare Electronic Archive*. <http://caes.mit.edu/research/shakespeare/index.html>.

this final part is a strength in theory, but in practice it can cause the site to be unstable on many computers and unusable on slower machines and over low speed internet connections. This is a site, which hints at the potential power of computers as tools of engagement, but it reminds us that we are still far from usable editions in any but limited applications.

Hidden behind the *Ramparts* site is a spectre that haunts its potential and for the time being will prevent it from expanding further. This same spectre inhabits each of the projects I have examined in this section. It is the ghost of real authority: copyright law. I will focus more on copyright in the next sections, but for the time being it suffices to say that *Hamlet on the Ramparts* shows us what we cannot have given our current legal context. Intellectual property laws have to be fundamentally restructured if we hope to work in an environment where students and scholars can share research and information such as is presented on MIT's sample site.<sup>368</sup> These difficulties aside, MIT has provided an excellent example of what the multimedia aspects of digital technology could provide to scholars, students and the public.

Each of the projects I have examined – *The Enfolded Hamlet, Shakespeare Resources* and *Hamlet on the Ramparts*, the *Internet Shakespeare Editions* – shows promise of its own. Like the *Enfolded Hamlet*, the *ISE* shares its ongoing work with the public. Editors are encouraged to submit work in advance and to develop it in

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<sup>368</sup> Within the academy, scholars in the sciences are leading the way in the area of shared research and have been fighting for the last several years to overcome the restrictions of copyright and the expense of print journals and the groups that control their distribution. Humanities scholars are well behind this group, though the call to join the charge has been announced in a number of arenas, including Stephen Greenblatt's open letter calling for changes to the publication system to members of the MLA during his time as president of that body.

conjunction with the commentary provided through the site.<sup>369</sup> Similar to *Shakespeare Resources*, the *Internet Shakespeare Editions* contain supplementary materials intended to deepen readers' interaction with Shakespeare. Moreover, rather than merely acting as a portal, the *ISE* includes not only links but also its own fully developed section of secondary materials including biographical, historical and critical publications.<sup>370</sup> As in *Hamlet on the Ramparts*, there is also a section devoted to multimedia engagement with the works at hand. *Scenario* is a program that combines blocking with computer games, in which students receive points for staging a Shakespearean play. Added to this is the performance database, which is currently under development with the assistance of Oracle Corporation.<sup>371</sup> The latter contains a section on copyright that addresses some of the issues that I hinted at earlier.<sup>372</sup> Of course, there will be many challenges ahead and as with any new development mistakes will be made. For now, the *ISE* shows a great deal of potential as a hospitable, online editing project.

Even with all of these benefits, the greatest strength of the *ISE* is its texts. All of the site's resource materials are linked to a growing set of transcriptions and editions that allow visitors to test hypotheses and follow arguments. Moreover, this can be done across the various plays, since all of the materials are represented in a single site. Unlike the texts on the *Electronic Piers Plowman Archive*, the plays on the *ISE* are not bound to individual CDs. There are two key differences that distinguish the projects. The first is that the *Piers* project has to deal with manuscripts, which must be scanned and presented

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<sup>369</sup> See the section entitled "The Internet as Medium" at: <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Foyer/Prospectus1.html>.

<sup>370</sup> For useful links see "The Annex" at: <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Annex/index.html>, for biographical and historical materials see: *Shakespeare's Life and Times* at: <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Library/SLT/index.html>, for criticism and references, see "The Library" at: <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Library/index.html>.

<sup>371</sup> See "The Theatre" at: <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Theater/index.html>.

<sup>372</sup> See "Copyright" at: <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Foyer/PerfGuide.html#toc7>.

individually. It is a daunting task, but one that cannot be avoided. Since Shakespeare's plays appear only in print documents, transcriptions are often enough and at the very most editors require scanned copies of quarto and folio texts, which present only minor trouble in terms of colour and legibility when compared with the *Piers* MSS. Secondly, the *ISE* has its editions acting as a foundation for its information architecture. Since the *Internet Shakespeare Editions* begins with transcriptions and editions, it provides a unifying set of materials providing a coherent vision for the project, which attracts and keeps users.<sup>373</sup> Moreover, as General Editor Michael Best recently announced, the site is in negotiations with a major academic publisher to create print based editions, to be made after their electronic counterparts have been through extensive testing.

But what of the theoretical problems raised between the followers of the Greg-Bower-Tanselle line, McKenzie and McGann, Wells and Taylor and the editors of the new *Arden Hamlet*? The greatest area of promise for an online editing project is in maintaining rather than solving these issues. For as much as these debates may be problematic for the publishers of stand-alone editions, the controversies in the world of textual studies have been vibrant sources of debate for scholars. By creating online editing projects which can easily incorporate a variety of paths, all of which can be linked to scanned and transcribed source materials, readers of the future can benefit from these debates and make their own informed decisions about which text to follow. In a free exchange of ideas it is the reader who stands to benefit. There is no longer a need to replace or defeat previous editions; we only need to decide whether or not to accept the invitation to join an ongoing discussion.

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<sup>373</sup> It is important to recall that Hoyt Duggan's *Electronic Piers Plowman Archive* is not an editing project, but an archival one as its title suggests. However, as I mentioned above, the editors of the *Piers* group promised readers an ongoing, critical edition as a way to promote cohesion.

Hospitable editions should be based on the notion of equitable exchange. In order to be a good host, we need to send out invitations, provide a location in which to meet, and make sure that the house rules are understood by all. After that, the host must step back and allow the guests to bring the event to life. Hospitable editions require that all visitors are treated charitably. After all, if we treated everyone after their deserts, who'd scape whipping?

## Chapter 6: Editing Modernist Texts

The first two textual traditions that I examined arise from periods that nicely bracket the incunabular period – that time when print technology was introduced to the English-speaking world and became a driving force behind the creation and distribution of creative works in English. I am now fast-forwarding to the period that surrounds the next major phase of technological development, the electronic or digital age. These two titles – electronic and digital – capture a number of recent advances in reproductive technology, though they miss an earlier form that is of great importance, although falling somewhat outside the scope of the current study. This consists of the advances in film production, which would allow for photo-lithographic printing, and for personal cameras among other applications. For my purposes, I am interested in the developments in photography only as they pertain to the development of copyright law in the West. My concern being with textual matters, items such as photocopiers and electronic text-processing devices are of more direct import. I will turn to these issues in the second section of this chapter, but first I want to examine the background of the editing of modernist texts in English.<sup>374</sup>

When we look to the history of the editing of modernist authors, a number of items stand out in contrast to the situations that scholars faced in the earlier traditions that I have examined. Where scholars of Langland and Shakespeare might wish that they had more material to work with, modernists seem to suffer the opposite malady. Given the

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<sup>374</sup> For an introduction to the editing of modernist texts in English see James L. West III's "Twentieth-Century American and British Literature," in *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. D. C. Greetham, Ed. New York. The Modern Language Association, 1995. (365-81); *Editing British and American Literature: 1880-1920*. Eric M. Domville, Ed. New York: Garland Publishing, 1976; and *Editing Twentieth Century Texts*. Frances G. Halpenny, Ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972. The opening sections of this chapter owe a great deal to these works.

availability of writing materials and affordable printing, authors in the early part of the twentieth century often left behind a plethora of textual materials.<sup>375</sup> These could include numerous drafts, typescripts, galleys and marked up first editions, among other items. More than this, since scholarship had established the importance of all documentary evidence in academic research, authors, or at least their friends and/or executors, paid greater attention to correspondence. Now editors, rather than facing a circumstance where one might not have enough information to speculate plausibly about a given passage – consider here *Beowulf* available to scholars in one damaged MS – are faced with entire archives of competing information.<sup>376</sup> It is doubtful that any editor would complain about this abundance, but it is not hard to believe that these scholars would have some sympathy for my idea that more information is not necessarily better information.

The other great challenge facing editors of this period is copyright. Starting in the eighteenth-century, copyright laws began to have a direct impact on the role of the author and of the regard for creative or expressive materials.<sup>377</sup> I will focus more on this important issue in the second half of this chapter.

With an abundance of critical material, editors face a situation where it may be literally impossible to create a full apparatus. Even with a digital database, the information is so vast, that we must question our ability to represent it in any coherent fashion. I am not suggesting that it cannot be done, merely that it might not be possible in any acceptable time frame or within the meager budgets that constrain many – if not most – textual scholars. Still, there are rewards to be had in the ongoing examination of

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<sup>375</sup> James L. West III. "Twentieth-Century American and British Literature," in *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*. D.C. Greetham, Ed. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1995. (366)

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.* (369-70)

<sup>377</sup> For a comprehensive overview of literature and 18<sup>th</sup> century copyright law, see Mark Rose. *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

archival materials, as was shown by the discovery of three new poems in the collections at the University of Texas by Yeats editor Richard Finneran.<sup>378</sup>

One of the key components of modernist editing is the examination of letters. Correspondence can provide a variety of useful information for the textual editor. From general exchanges, we can gather important external evidence about references and dating relating to literary works. Of more direct interest are letters between writers, or between writers and their editors and publishers. Since many authors know their letters will be of interest to later readers, they often write with an eye toward posterity. This pursuit is far more important when studying early twentieth century authors, who wrote before affordable long distance telephone service began to erode the practice of letter writing.<sup>379</sup>

Besides the impact that photography had on the rules governing copyright images, it also had a large impact on literary matters when it provided a direct boost to textual scholarship through the creation of facsimiles. Scholars interested in modern authors can, for example, look at facsimiles of manuscripts for *Ulysses* by James Joyce rather than just examining the edited text created by Hans Walter Gabler.<sup>380</sup>

With all of these materials at their disposal, editors have a more difficult time deciding whether they can apply Greg's suggestions for selecting a copy-text. Moreover, with multiple stages of revision and clear evidence of textual changes made at the behest of editors or publishers, how should the editor emend changes that may have been made under duress or undue influence?

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<sup>378</sup> West. "Twentieth Century American and British Literature" (377).

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.* (367).

<sup>380</sup> James Joyce. *Ulysses: A Facsimile of the Manuscript*. Philadelphia: H. & A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1975.

This latter issue is made more complicated by the development of the role of the press house or trade editor. A number of these significant figures began to exercise close control over the texts that passed through their hands, leaving many publications with a distinct mark of their style. Editors such as Edward Garnett in England and Ripley Hitchcock in America played hands-on roles in the publication of books that came to their offices.<sup>381</sup> Should editors examine their styles and edit their influence out? In the case of James Joyce we know that Ezra Pound fought with him over changes, and we have letters from Pound to Joyce and others discussing the changes that he made. Should these items be undone?

The editor must also face the question of what to exclude. Can there be items which are either too private or too obscure to merit study? The controversy over letters – almost always posthumously published – is one of the key components of twentieth-century editing. Consider the famous problems of *Dear Scott/Dear Max: The Fitzgerald/Perkins Correspondence* edited by Kuehl and Breyer and *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters*. In these cases, the editors decided, rather than publishing transcriptions of the various letters, to employ a narrative mode that uses the letters as inspiration to tell a story. This form of publication is not without its appeal for readers, though many scholars find the approach unsettling. Consider James West's position: "[i]f, however, one emends heavily and creates a public text, one invites reviewers and critics to judge the document as finished work. Such a course of action is almost surely a disservice to the author and the text."<sup>382</sup> In the current author's work, the case of Erin Mouré and Bronwen Wallace's *Two Women Talking* presents an equally challenging example. The correspondence of

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<sup>381</sup> West. "Twentieth-Century American and British Literature" (368).

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.* (370).

these famous Canadian poets was published by the Feminist Caucus of the Canadian League of Poets as part of the *Living Archives* series. However, as is clear from the introduction to the book, the selections had been heavily edited by Mouré after Wallace's death. Complicating this issue was the latter poet's continual assertion that she did not trust the judgment of either Mouré or those in the Feminist Caucus and her own assertion that she had prepared her letters so that they were ready to print.<sup>383</sup>

Even if editors were to be able to make sense of all of the materials available to them, the complex relationship between multiple levels of intention that can be traced through the publication process of many modern authors defies easy articulation. Any edition that stems from such a process will invariably take on the flavor of the period in which it is produced, leaving future generations to revisit and re-answer the questions that faced the earlier editors. Eric Domville sums up the situation:

Future scholars need not fear unduly that no important editorial work has been left for them to undertake after the heroic labours of this and earlier generations of editors...[w]hatever else may appear uncertain in the future of editing and scholarship in general, this much is clear: new editions will become essential from time to time. Every editor will aspire to produce definitive editions, but each, happily will be destined not quite to succeed.<sup>384</sup>

What seems clear here, perhaps more so than in the other cases I have examined, is that the notion of a definitive edition is itself subject to change. Moreover, the more we familiarize ourselves with these editing projects, the more we realize that the term definitive is more often than not one that is used by publishers and marketers rather than

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<sup>383</sup> Patrick Finn. "When Editing Goes Write: Erin Mouré and Bronwen Wallace's *Two Women Talking*." *Textual Studies in Canada*. 13/14. (101-112).

<sup>384</sup> Eric Domville. "Introduction." *Editing British and American Literature: 1880-1920*. Eric M. Domville, Ed. New York: Garland Publishing, 1976. (4).

by editors themselves. New editions of authors create new interest, attract new readers, and raise new questions for scholars to examine.

Access to greater numbers of documents related to the editing of modernist texts has allowed us fascinating insights into the role that a literary executor, agent or editor could have during the initial phases of composition. One excellent example is in the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins, a poet of such recognized talent that both Victorians and Modernists are eager to claim him among their ranks.<sup>385</sup> Hopkins, who was notoriously rigorous during his compositional phase, was equally reticent when it came to sharing what he wrote. Not seeking to gain fame that would detract from his religious commitment, he allowed access to his work only to a small circle of friends. Among these, the primary sounding board was fellow poet and physician Robert Bridges.

Bridges shared a special relationship with Hopkins. While the latter was adamant that his friend should not allow his materials to reach standard publication, his friend was equally committed to defying the poet's orders. Each was well aware of the other's position. The editor of Hopkins must continually disregard Hopkins' wishes and side with Bridges if she or he decides to publish his work. We may consider that Hopkins might actually have hoped that his friend would act as a literary executor, but to do so we must ignore Hopkins' explicit wishes.<sup>386</sup>

In an interesting application of modern forensic science and textual scholarship, Norman H. MacKenzie has detailed his pursuit of the some of the interactions between

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<sup>385</sup> See, Norman H. MacKenzie's "Hopkins, Robert Bridges and the Modern Editor," in *Editing British and American Literature: 1880-1920*. Eric M. Domville, Ed. New York: Garland Publishing, 1976. (9-30).

<sup>386</sup> The Bridges/Hopkins relationship is sufficiently well known to be mentioned in many general anthologies. For Norman MacKenzie's summary of the relationship see pages 9-19 of his aforementioned article. The earliest major study of the pair and one which MacKenzie also references is J.G. Ritz's *Robert Bridges and Gerard Hopkins, 1863-1889: A Literary Friendship*. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Bridges and Hopkins involving the latter poet's work. By utilizing the infrared scanning and binocular microscope machines available at Scotland Yard, MacKenzie unearthed changes that Bridges suggested. Hopkins later adopted the changes, which are recorded in the notebooks left by the doctor.<sup>387</sup> Fortunately for readers, Bridges maintained notebooks in which he transcribed poems in Hopkins' hand before he had to return the documents to him. By examining these documents as well as some of the available manuscripts, the editor is able to pursue the interaction of poet and editor. In different ways, editors of Yeats and Joyce would also have to face these issues.

The editor of Yeats finds both a blessing and a curse in the carefully maintained papers of the poet. When a young Richard Ellmann had newly completed his tour of duty as a soldier in the Second World War, he wrote to Yeats's widow and asked if he might have access to the poet's papers in order to write a book that would serve as a submission for graduate school. Though a number of scholars had applied for this opportunity, something about the young soldier impressed Georgina "George" Yeats. When Ellmann arrived at the Yeats home, he found that all of the poet's papers were waiting for him, having been arranged in files, alphabetized, and furnished with detailed indices.<sup>388</sup> The collection was of incredible value to Ellmann, who went on to write the critical biographical study *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* and to follow it up with *The Identity of Yeats*.<sup>389</sup> However, for the editor of Yeats, the challenge of seeing through the good intentions of a loving spouse presents a challenge that can at times prove daunting.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> MacKenzie. "Hopkins" 19-20.

<sup>388</sup> Private conversation and class lecture with/from Joseph Ronsley, a graduate student of Ellmann's who taught Anglo-Irish literature at McGill university, where he hosted Richard Ellmann as a visiting lecturer. (September 1987).

<sup>389</sup> Richard Ellmann. *Yeats: The Man and the Masks*. London: Macmillan, 1949 and *The Identity of Yeats*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.

<sup>390</sup> West. "Twentieth-Century American and British Literature" (377).

For editors of Joyce's *Ulysses* the intercession of Ezra Pound, who edited and/or made suggestions on chapters which were to be sent to *The Little Review* and *The Egoist*, can be difficult, particularly given the fact that Pound made different suggestions for each publication. Some of the debates are recorded in letters; others can be traced through the correspondence or records of Joyce's acquaintances.<sup>391</sup>

The participatory role of the editor of modern texts is nowhere better demonstrated than in the task of house editor. Many scholarly editors today operate from the notion that all authors create from within a social matrix. For the editor of modern texts who has access to the correspondence and intermediary documents in the publication process, this exchange is a given. Consider Francis G. Halpenny's description of the relationship between author, editor and reader: "[t]he house editor enters upon a collaboration with the author in the interests of readers, and trustworthy collaboration should produce a text which the author approves as representing what he wants to say and how it is to be said."<sup>392</sup> Of course, each editor behaves differently, and each authors reacts to an editor in her or his own way. Nonetheless, Halpenny's point indicates the important role that the house editor plays. Moreover, the nature of the author/editor relationship seems to echo a long-standing tradition of creative engagement on the part of small reading circles which has an affinity to the Hopkins/Bridges dialogues and would not seem out of place when we consider the actors that read Shakespeare's plays, or the readers who eagerly received passages of Langland's developing tales of *Piers Plowman*.

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<sup>391</sup> See in particular, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, with Pound's Essays on Joyce*. Forrest Read, Ed. London: Faber, 1968.

<sup>392</sup> *Editing Twentieth Century Texts*. Frances G. Halpenny, Ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972. (9).

If an overabundance of extant materials is one challenge for the editor of modern texts, it is by no means the greatest. The editing of early twentieth-century texts is inextricably bound to questions of copyright and the unique barriers that it can erect between authors and scholars, not to say between authors and readers.<sup>393</sup> While the earliest forms of copyright are usually thought to originate in the fifteenth century, a concern over the control of creative production has precursors that date to antiquity. However, it is with copyright's entrance into the legal system that we must be concerned. Beginning in the fifteenth century in England, artists petitioned the government for legal controls over their intellectual property. Timed to meet the changing demands of newly introduced print technology and its proclivity for creating cheap copies of work, these actions were the starting point for our current set of laws.

Once Gutenberg introduced the printing press in 1456, the battle to control illicit reproduction was intensified. While similar problems existed with the circulation of manuscripts, their copying was sufficiently time-consuming to regulate the trade in documents. With each new medium these arguments are reignited. The development of cassette and video tapes, CD ROMs, DVDs and high capacity hard drives has fostered some of the same challenges that artists have been making since the fifteenth century. Current court cases attest to the fact that copyright marches in lockstep with the development of new forms of duplication, storage and transmission.

As we will see, James Joyce's *Ulysses* inhabits a particularly controversial position in the development of copyright. From its earliest publication and its troubles with different international copyright standards, to its current position somewhere on the borders of legal protection after the recently upheld Bono Copyright Extension Act,

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<sup>393</sup> West. "Twentieth-Century American and British Literature" (365).

*Ulysses* presents a unique case. Before moving to an in-depth examination of the editing specifics of *Ulysses* in Chapter 7, I will set the stage by establishing the history of copyright law in order to demonstrate its influence on literary production and the practice of editing. As James L. West III says, any history of the editing of modern texts must take account of copyright.<sup>394</sup> I intend to follow this directive for both its proscriptive merits which invoke representative accuracy and for its prescriptive strengths which allow us to look forward to our current situation where copyright law is being rewritten on a number of fronts in order to address the challenges of digital technology.

At its inception, copyright law came about as a result of artists groups' complaints about the theft of their work. As such, early laws were established in order to protect a form of property in much the same way that one would protect land. Only later would states recognize that copyright could offer a means of promoting intellectual and artistic innovation through the protection of ideational material. In this latter formulation we begin to approach the idea of Intellectual Property. Intellectual Property (IP) refers to creative works that have some value or merit for a given society. The most common formulation holds that IP is comprised of three chief components: patents, trademarks and copyright. Patents protect technological advance, trademarks the rights to a recognizable image or style, and copyright the presentation or reproduction of a wide variety of artistic works. While the latter is of greatest concern for the present work, each of these items reflects the belief that societies benefit *in toto* from the promotion and protection of creative work.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> West. "Twentieth-Century American and British Literature" (365).

<sup>395</sup> It should be noted that Intellectual Property law is a development of the twentieth century. While patent, trademark and copyright law existed for many years earlier, it was only recently that lawmakers began to

One final issue must be addressed before we survey the development of copyright as it relates to the editing of modern authors in general and *Ulysses* in particular. There are two main components of Intellectual Property that need to remain in the foreground during this examination. As is mentioned above, copyright law began as a response from the British Crown to the complaints of artists. Those complaints were based on – and replied to as – simple issues of ownership. However, the regulatory process is complicated when we consider the nature of the material that is to fall under our consideration. Creative material is intangible – that is, it is not material at all. Early regulators had to see past this murkiness to begin a process of legislation, but we now can perceive that the definition of property remains at the heart of the copyright debate. Also important in this process is the determination of the duration of copyright. Throughout the long history of debate there has been a concern that it should not be indefinite. Here the argument is that while society does benefit from the creation and protection of creative work, it will receive an even greater benefit when the products of this labour enter the public domain. The protections, then, are instituted to ensure that creators are sufficiently compensated to provide incentives to elicit their positive contributions to the populace. The notions of intangibility and term-limited regulation remain the two most significant considerations in the process of creation, maintenance and enforcement of copyright law.

The Licensing Act of 1662 saw the British Crown grant a patent to the expression of ideas and writing by individuals.<sup>396</sup> The act itself was the result of concerns about

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group the three. The rationale behind the grouping involves the notion that each of these areas deals with the production of creative materials of value.

<sup>396</sup> For an overview of the development of copyright in Britain, see the British Government's site *Copyright History*. 2002. The Patent Office. <<http://www.patent.gov.uk/copy/histor/>>. 2002. The standard book in the

piracy and plagiarism. Here technology met history as increased demand for written materials was matched by the arrival of print and, perhaps equally importantly, the increased availability of paper upon which to print. Whether society changed as a result of print or print arrived to satisfy a pre-existing desire is of little importance for the debate over copyright. What is clear is that the interests of creators and of the public were in need of clarification.

With the newfound popularity of printed codices, more print shops were built. As trade expanded, the Crown decided to step in and regulate creative works and the book trade. In this first move toward an established copyright law, regulations were instituted for the protection of printers, but not for authors or creators.<sup>397</sup> This move allowed the printers to dominate the trade while enabling the Crown to regulate something more tangible – codices and plates – rather than confront the challenge of regulating thought or ideas. The act provided for a two-year term protecting an author’s work. That term could be renewed for an additional two years after the original time expired.<sup>398</sup> The way in which the act was set up however, led directly to the Crown’s ability to monopolize the industry.<sup>399</sup>

The Crown created the Stationers’ Company, which was considered a house for registered or licensed books.<sup>400</sup> In order for a book to gain a license and be protected by the law, it had to be licensed to a “wader of the company,” and a reproduction of the printed or hand-copied work had to be deposited at the Stationers’. The company, which

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field remains John Feather’s *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*. London: Mansell, 1994.

<sup>397</sup> *Copyright History*. 2002. The Patent Office. <<http://www.patent.gov.uk/copy/histor/>>. 2002.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>399</sup> Lyman Ray Patterson. *Copyright in Historical Perspective*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968. (134-38) This text provides an excellent historical analysis of the development of copyright in both England and the United States.

<sup>400</sup> *Copyright History*. 2002. The Patent Office. <http://www.patent.gov.uk/copy/histor/>. 2002.

was closely tied to the monarchy, was a trade guild of stationers, which oversaw all aspects of publication. One element, important for literary concerns and in particular for *Joycean* literary concerns, was the authority's participation in the tradition of English censorship. The Stationers' Guild was granted the right to quash any publication seen as a threat to the Church of England or the monarchy, or which had infringed on another copyrighted work in their possession.<sup>401</sup> Each work deposited with the guild was recorded in the "entry book of copies" or the Stationers' Company Register. The relationship between copyright and censorship that was established in the body of the Stationer's Company would come, after a series of modifications, to a point at which it was within the government's power to censor works such as Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Of particular interest for early censors was the developing form of commentary in magazines and newspapers. In the eighteenth-century, *Gentleman's Magazine* developed a creative approach to cultural commentary. After reporting on parliamentary debates was made illegal, Samuel Johnson created and then recorded parliamentary exchanges that reflected current issues, but which were said to come from the "Senate of Magna Lilliputia."<sup>402</sup> Each so-called debate was based on the general facts of the actual exchanges, but Johnson created the dialogue without having heard the discussions that had occurred. Surprisingly, parliamentarians did not challenge these reports, and the public took them to be factual. The practice gained status when it was discovered that one of the speeches published in a collection of British Prime Minister William Pitt's (1708-1778) greatest oratorical achievements was in fact written by Johnson. By interpreting

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<sup>401</sup> See *Stationers' Company*. 2002. Stationers' Company. <http://www.stationers.org/hist.asp>, this is the web site of the current Stationers' Company, which still resides in Stationers' Hall.

<sup>402</sup> Johnson was involved in a number of the period's most interesting cases concerning writing as property. For a comprehensive study of his role, see Kevin Hart's *Samuel Johnson and the Culture of Property*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

debate in this manner, *Gentleman's Magazine* was able to ensure timely publication.

Years later, Joyce would distinguish himself by falling afoul of censorship laws in both literary magazines and codex publication.

As mentioned above, early attempts made in the Licensing Act of 1662 encoded copyright in terms of existing property laws. After being petitioned by concerned artists the Crown responded by effectively granting materiality to thought. The next stage in the process of establishing copyright was the 1709 Statute of Anne. This statute, which actually came into effect in 1710, introduced two important new items. First, Parliament proposed that the author rather than the printer would be the holder of copyright and as such would be awarded a set term of protection for published works.<sup>403</sup> In its initial form, the Statute of Anne allowed authors to retain ownership of printed works for periods of 14 to 26 years.<sup>404</sup> The second component involved the move toward the recognition of creative works as benefits to society. While the statute referred only to books, the move toward the ideas of a public good stemming from research and of a public domain where books could exist as motivators for other creative engagements were key developments in legal history.<sup>405</sup> According to the statute, the law was created as an “act for the encouragement of learning, by vesting the copies of printed books in the authors or

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<sup>403</sup> John Feather. *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*. London: Mansell, 1994. (62-8).

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.* (62).

<sup>405</sup> See Lawrence Lessig's analysis of liberty and societal motivation in relation to the political philosophy of John Stuart Mill in Lawrence Lessig. *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. (85-99) While the title of the book may be somewhat misleading, Lessig, who is a law professor at Stanford, traces the history of copyright and its implications for society at large.

purchases of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.”<sup>406</sup> The march toward the point where writing was considered overtly material had begun.<sup>407</sup>

During the eighteenth-century literacy was on the rise.<sup>408</sup> With England’s population of literate individuals increasing, the appetite for reading materials, both fiction and non-fiction, was fed by a public that was not only expanding in numbers, but whose members were each reading more. Samuel Johnson, famous for helping to codify the study of letters in English through publications such as his *Dictionary of the English Language*, referred to the contemporary situation in Britain as “The Golden Age of Authors.”<sup>409</sup> Due to the increase in demand for reading materials and the concomitant increase in the printing of the written word, authors found themselves acquiring a newfound importance and social status. Moreover, their occupation began to take on all of the trappings of work.

Thus, during the eighteenth century, the definition of the writer began to evolve, and these creative individuals began to realize that their craft could also be considered a full time profession.<sup>410</sup> The generalized expansion in the role of the author saw the profession turn into a legitimate social pursuit and one that would inspire numerous men and women to pick up the pen. Prior to the developments in copyright, it was not

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<sup>406</sup> *Copyright History*. 2002. The Patent Office. <<http://www.patent.gov.uk/copy/histor/>>. 2002.

<sup>407</sup> For an excellent recent analysis of the intersection of the copyright and the material see Joseph Lowenstein’s *The Author’s Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. See in particular, “Chapter 4: Ingenuity and the Mercantile Muse: Authorship and the History of the Patent.” (91-131) See also Mark Rose’s “Chapter 6: Literary Property Determined,” in his own book *Author’s and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. (92-112).

<sup>408</sup> For an overview of the development of literacy and the marketplace see James Van Horn Melton’s *The Rise of the Republic in Enlightenment Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

<sup>409</sup> Kevin Hart. *Samuel Johnson and the Culture of Property*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. (74).

<sup>410</sup> Mark Rose. *Author’s and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. (90-91).

considered proper for a writer to use a pen for economic gain.<sup>411</sup> The art of writing was considered more of a hobby, like horseback riding, playing an instrument, or fencing. There were few writers who managed to make a substantial amount of money during these early stages. When writing was not considered a professional pursuit, its proponents were considered outcasts for being lazy and not pursuing real work. Prior to the legislation regarding intellectual work in written form, “authors” were workers in stationer’s shops who were not even qualified to enter the Stationers’ Guild.<sup>412</sup>

As a result of this social situation, few poets published their works and instead distributed their writing among a choice group of friends and acquaintances. This select group of individuals then distributed these works to a wider group of people, leading to the point at which certain works were able to find wider audiences.<sup>413</sup> This method of publishing was considered socially acceptable and enabled the writer to avoid the Crown’s interference as that body struggled to find a consistent means of applying copyright law. However, the forces of the expanding book and magazine market would force authors to seek refuge in the law in order to codify their relationship to their own work. This was particularly important in cases of illegal copying or forgery.

The first reported forgery of a literary document appears in 1763 and the document in question concerned Shakespeare.<sup>414</sup> The *Theatrical Review* published an essay about Edward Alleyn, supposedly written in 1600 by George Peele and addressed to Christopher Marlowe. The mystery behind the false claim was soon solved through a

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<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.* (4).

<sup>412</sup> Lyman Ray Patterson. *Copyright in Historical Perspective*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968. (64).

<sup>413</sup> James Van Horn Melton. *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. (9-17).

<sup>414</sup> K.K. Ruthven. *Faking Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. (5-6)

little detective work. The assertion that the essay was written in 1600 by Peele, conflicted with the fact that this author died of natural causes in 1596. Further Marlowe, the letter's addressee, was killed in 1593. The essay, it turned out, was forged by Shakespearean scholar George Steevens.<sup>415</sup> In an interesting twist, the forgery was supposedly incited by an earlier commission of the same crime. Shakespeare had often been accused of drawing on the work of others and it was suggested that Stevens had accused him of plagiarizing conversations when composing the speech about acting in *Hamlet*.<sup>416</sup> Increasingly, the open nature of exchange between writers would be subject to legal repercussions as writers sought to protect their creations and authorities attempted to keep track of who was responsible for individual expressions that might be inappropriate or treasonous.

The usual point at which scholars suggest these problems were crystallized was in the immediate lead up to the institution of the Statute of Anne, which is still considered the single most important development in British copyright history. Two cases that followed its institution would test its determination and scope and put the country's legal minds to work on the path that would define laws governing intellectual property. The cases were *Millar v. Taylor* and *Beckett v. Donaldson*.<sup>417</sup>

The first case, *Millar v. Taylor* took place in 1769, and was held in the Court of King's Bench. The work under consideration was James Thomson's *The Seasons*. Millar had purchased the copyright from Thomson in 1729. The copyright had been rightfully

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<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>417</sup> On *Millar V. Taylor* see John Feather. (87-90) and Mark Rose (78-83). On *Beckett v. Donaldson* see the same sources on pages 89-96 and 87-97 respectively. Readers should be aware that it often occurs in the listing of copyright cases that the names of the primary litigants are reversed. For a brief overview of both cases in question see, Lyman Ray Patterson (74-77).

handed over to Millar and registered at Stationers' Hall. Taylor's edition surfaced in 1763, long after the 28 year protection of the Statute of Anne had lapsed. The court concluded that authors possess common-law rights to their creative works and that these rights are not destroyed by publication nor can these rights be superseded by the Statute of Anne.

*Beckett v. Donaldson*, the second landmark case stemming from the Statute of Anne, was heard in 1774. This case involved another edition of Thomson's *The Seasons*. Millar's copyright to *The Seasons* had been sold upon his death in 1769. The copyright was divided among several London booksellers. A preliminary injunction was obtained against Donaldson in order to prevent him from printing the work. The temporary injunction was made permanent in 1772. Donaldson appealed the court's decision two years later. The case sparked the interest of several literary figures, and the case became so famous that many in the crowds who wished to sit in on the sessions were turned away from the court. Those arguing the case put five questions in front of the twelve lords. The original decision was upheld on the first two points but overturned on the third. It was determined that the Statute of Anne replaced all common-law rights after publication and that after the expiration of the statute protection, the creative work enters the public domain and therefore is not protected by the law.

While the Statute of Anne was being developed in England, English colonists in America were following the news of the new protections under consideration and they in turn managed to influence the legal minds in the United States of America. The first American copyright law was signed into effect on May 31, 1790 by George Washington. The Founding Fathers introduced this law into Article 1 of the US Constitution and were

extremely careful to specify that the copyright would last only a limited time. Identical to the Statute of Anne, the US Copyright law of 1790 guaranteed an author 14 years of protection with a 14 year renewal.<sup>418</sup>

Piracy remained a problem even after the incorporation of the Statute of Anne. Popular novels were an obvious target for pirates, but poets were also vulnerable. As Martha Woodmansee points out, William Wordsworth, one of the first writers made wealthy through the writing of verse, went through a series of battles over the illegal reproduction of his work. During this process the poet would become an ardent supporter of the copyright reformer Thomas Talfourd.<sup>419</sup>

In 1837, Sergeant Thomas Noon Talfourd proposed an Act of Reform to Parliament and the bill received very little interest or consideration.<sup>420</sup> The bill took quite some time to gain attention and was brought forward yearly until in 1842 Parliament began deliberations on the matter. Sergeant Talfourd's case caused a great deal of controversy and sparked considerable public interest. Several people began taking sides and heavy petitioning appeared in support of the opposing positions. Those opposed to the law's reformation allied themselves with print workers and publishers and those in favor with the plight of the writers and creators of literary works.<sup>421</sup>

The assembly of authors was at a distinct disadvantage. The select group did not have the strong organizational structure that the various guilds involved in the printing industry had and therefore relied heavily upon those who were willing to campaign

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<sup>418</sup> For information regarding the development of and current regulations relating to US copyright law, see The Library of Congress's copyright web site at: <http://www.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ1.html>.

<sup>419</sup> Martha Woodmansee. "The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the "Author." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17 (1984). (428-51).

<sup>420</sup> Feather. *Publishing* (125-46).

<sup>421</sup> Rose. *Authors* (110-11).

personally in favor of their efforts. The genteel literary population had a distaste for the idea of public petitions and preferred that their lobbying efforts be exerted in the direction of a select group of influential individuals.<sup>422</sup>

The lobbying efforts from both the groups were intense. Although the authors supporting the bill's passage preferred private lobbying efforts, their opinions began to change during the process. The group of activists began to take advantage of their creative skills and used the printed word to disseminate information about the deliberations. As time passed, the idea of public petitions became a bit more appealing to the bill's supporters, and the artists supplied Talfourd with numerous petitions to support his case. Thomas Talfourd's attempts to rework the copyright law eventually proved successful and in the process, the literary world found a political cohesion that it had not possessed earlier.<sup>423</sup>

Charles Dickens also took a significant stand on copyright. While outside of his native England on one of his many speaking tours, the author became aware of the presence of piracy and realized that he was losing a large amount of money due to the plagiarism of his work.<sup>424</sup> In fact, his work was being reproduced both at home and abroad.<sup>425</sup> From 1831 to 1833, while employed as a shorthand reporter for *The Mirror of Parliament* and the *True Sun*, Dickens kept himself up to date on the copyright debates and became a devoted supporter of Thomas Noon Talfourd's case.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Feather, *Publishing*. (125-46).

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.* (125-46).

<sup>424</sup> Siva Vaidhyanathan. *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity*. New York: New York University Press, 2003 (2001). (50-52).

<sup>425</sup> Allingham, 2001.

<sup>426</sup> See Feather, *Publishing*. 14-50, 158-9, 167-8.

Delighted about Parliament's decision to support Talfourd's formal request to amend existing copyright laws, Dickens decided to plead with the United States Congress during his reading tours in 1842 and 1867-68. Dickens's concerns lay with the United States' lack of an enforced copyright law that would allow international authors protection for their printed works. The author appealed to the government and asked the governing body to recognize the copyright of British authors. Dickens made little progress because the Americans felt as if their publishing industry was too young to withstand direct competition with the well-established British system. More than a little suspicion about their former ruler's bureaucracy remained. Moreover, American lawmakers felt they had a right to capitalize on the works of British and continental authors in order to develop the fledgling US printing and publishing industries. Dickens' opinions caused certain political circles to turn against him, and the American Press went on the offensive. His attempts to persuade the US to uphold English law failed miserably, and his protest remained a bitter topic in some circles.<sup>427</sup>

In 1875, Dickens's efforts, though shunned years earlier, were taken into consideration by several countries.<sup>428</sup> A Royal Commission suggested that the present British Acts should be modified and England should enter into a bilateral contract with the United States. This particular contract would then offer equal international protection to authors in the US and Britain. After the groundwork was laid for the upcoming meeting, the International Copyright Act of 1886 was approved.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> See David G. Post. "His Napster's Voice," in *Copy Fights: The Future of Intellectual Property in the Information Age*. Adam Thierer and Clyde Wayne Crews Jr. Eds. Washington: The Cato Institute, 2002. (119-21).

<sup>428</sup> *Copyright History*, 2002. See also Patterson, 180-202.

<sup>429</sup> *Copyright History*, 2002. For more on the Berne Convention see Feathers, 163-5 and 195-9.

The Berne Convention of 1886 established a multiparty copyright treaty with the goal of setting detailed standards of copyright protection that member states would then implement within their local legislation. The legal protection allowed for the majority of its works a period of copyright to be established for the lifetime of the author plus fifty years after the author's death.<sup>430</sup> At the time of the Berne Convention's inception, the United States was ineligible to enter into the treaty. The current copyright laws of the United States still required the author to perform a formal copyright registration procedure; therefore, the country failed to meet the eligibility criteria.

As time progressed, copyright laws were changed in order to accommodate historical and juridical developments. The Copyright Act of 1911 came into effect in England on July 1, 1912.<sup>431</sup> This act introduced several new provisions and reshaped the previous copyright acts completely. It called for provisions such as the "introduction of a further extension of the term of protection, together with a new arrangement for calculating the term of copyright."<sup>432</sup> New items were deemed eligible for copyright protection such as preformatted rolls, sound recordings, and architectural works. The act also removed the requirement that any material that was submitted for copyright be registered at Stationers' Hall, and common-law copyright protection was erased as well.<sup>433</sup>

The Universal Copyright Convention (UCC) was established in 1952 and was based on the tenets of the Berne Convention.<sup>434</sup> The newer Convention's main feature is a move to codify procedural elements of the agreement. Components such as registration,

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<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>431</sup> Feather 199-204.

<sup>432</sup> *Copyright History*, 2002

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>434</sup> Feather 204-8.

protection periods, the use of the UCC symbol ©, and clarifications about the timing of the beginning of protection were introduced.

After being excluded from the Berne Convention, the United States consented to the Universal Copyright Convention in 1952, and for the first time in the country's history, acknowledged the copyright regulations of other countries.<sup>435</sup> In 1988, the US modified its mandatory copyright procedures and became eligible to unite with those who were a part of the original Berne Convention. The United States joined the members of the Berne Convention on March 1, 1989.<sup>436</sup>

The dual challenges that confront editors of modern texts – the sometimes overabundant amount of primary materials, and the intricacies of copyright law – are both acutely important in the case of James Joyce. However, before moving on to a close examination of the controversy surrounding the editing of *Ulysses*, I want to point out the current problems that are involved in copyright law in the context of digital information technology, since, as I will point out, those laws have a direct impact on Joyce's interwar novel.

As has been the case since its inception, copyright law continues to focus on the issues of protecting an essentially intangible product from illegal copying as an incentive to innovation within society. In these terms, little has changed since the Statute of Anne. What has changed is the term of protection granted to copyright holders, particularly those in the most influential of markets, the United States. In any of the latest books on copyright one needs only to look at the index in order to find the central driving force

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<sup>435</sup> *Copyright History*, 2002

<sup>436</sup> President Ronald Reagan signed the necessary documents in 1988, but they did not take effect until the next year.

between copyright extensions. Under “M” look for Mouse, Mickey. There are numerous records of this case. Stanford law professor Lawrence Lessig provides a brief overview:

The first Congress to grant copyright gave authors an initial term of 14 years, which could be renewed for 14 years if the author was living. The current term is the life of the author plus 70 years – which, for an author like Irving Berlin would mean a protection of 140 years. More disturbingly, we have come to this expanded term through an increasingly familiar practice in Congress of extending the term of copyright both prospectively (to works not yet created) and retrospectively to works created and still under copyright.

These extensions are relatively new. In the first hundred years, Congress retrospectively extended the right of copyright once. In the next fifty years, it extended the term once again. But in the last forty years, Congress has extended the term of copyright retrospectively eleven times. Each time, it is said, with only a bit of exaggeration, that Mickey Mouse is about to fall into the public domain, the term of copyright for Mickey Mouse is extended.<sup>437</sup>

In a period in which litigation in the area of copyright is at its highest point to date, the fate of *Ulysses* and other modernist texts is now intrinsically tied to the fate of Mickey Mouse and other items of intellectual property that are of such value that individuals and companies are willing to spend millions in order to lobby the US Congress for copyright term extensions. Since most countries in the world now cooperate on copyright issues, and since the US is the dominant market and thus dominant force in any such negotiations, what the US Congress decides can most often reliably predict the future of copyright protection. The most significant recent decision came with the Sonny Bono Copyright Extension Act. Bono, an out of work entertainer, became a Republican congressman representing the State of Florida. With clear sympathies for those in the entertainment industry, he presented a bill that offered a twenty-year extension to copyright protection. The bill was passed, challenged and upheld. During the

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<sup>437</sup> Lawrence Lessig. *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World*. New York: Vintage Books, 2002 (2001). 107.

last instantiation of the law, *Ulysses* temporarily came out of copyright. As we would expect, a flurry of projects emerged in order to take advantage of the accessibility afforded by the book's move into the public sector. Shortly before, the James Joyce Estate commissioned a new edition by the German scholar Hans Walter Gabler. This edition was intended to sufficiently emend the text in order that the Estate could apply for and gain a new period of copyright for a new authoritative text. The controversy that ensued is the subject of Chapter 7 below.

As the estate competed with other groups who were working on Joyce's text, the Sonny Bono Copyright Extension Act was passed and rendered the debate null. The text, it was assumed, would now not come out of copyright until at least seventy years from Joyce's death in 1941, or not until January first 2012. The fact that Joyce's original publication had not legally qualified for protection did not matter; the threat of litigation alone made it too expensive a prospect for the US publishers who were most important to all those concerned.

One final note before we move on to a more detailed look at the Joyce case. The continuing move by lawmakers to extend copyright is only one of three major difficulties that current copyright law legislation is causing for scholars of literature. The second involves the global move to privately controlled Internet technology. As Lawrence Lessig and others point out, the current shift to broadband technology is seeing the introduction of computer code that privileges some material over others and controls and monitors the use of any information that travels on its lines. Though a seemingly invisible problem, this issue should be of central concern to any scholars who support the idea of free academic enquiry and who plan on using digital technology. This is a complex debate,

but one that is easily brought into focus if we pay attention to the bibliographic codes of the Internet, remembering that computers, like codices, carry more information than just text and images that mark their surfaces.

The last concern is an issue that I will address briefly in my final chapter. One of the central components to the development of copyright law has been the right of individuals to benefit from their labour. Authors, however much their fellows inspired them, are not a group that has always enjoyed direct financial support. Many have had to suffer as a result of their decision to pursue a life of letters. The original protections that emerged as a result of the Statute of Anne were instituted in order to recognize that their work mattered, and that they should be allowed to make a living through their efforts if the market allowed. It also freed them from patronage appointments that may well have constrained their ability to speak.

Critics such as Mark Rose propose that the institution of copyright was in fact the birth of authors as a group. Rose's book *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*, makes a compelling argument about the creation of the author in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>438</sup> Most scholars working in the field agree with this position and Rose's book is the central text for academic study of the intersection of copyright and literature. The acclaim is earned, since it is a well researched and strongly argued thesis. However, I feel that it is important that we take issue with Rose's use of the theory of Michel Foucault in the grounding of his position.

If Greg's "Rationale of Copy-Text" is the most misunderstood article in textual studies, Michel Foucault's "What is an Author" may be its parallel in literary theory. As I mentioned above, I will have more to say on this issue in Chapter 8. For now, it is enough

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<sup>438</sup> Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

to observe that the recent trend toward socializing the role of the author seems like an eerie parallel the move of copyright protection away from authors and back to publishers and holding companies. Whatever our position on the subject-construction of authors, as we engage with digital technology, we scholars in the humanities should remain involved in the debate over what an author is, not only because it has been part of our discipline since its inception, but because without authors we lose a significant part of the human in humanities.

**Chapter 7: The Word Known to All Men, or,  
IP\_UP: Intellectual Property, *Ulysses* and Pornography**

After decades of headline stories, a film, a book,<sup>439</sup> and a host of articles (including full issues of both the *James Joyce Quarterly*<sup>440</sup> and *Studies in the Novel*<sup>441</sup>) the debate over James Joyce's *Ulysses* remains unresolved. Copyright on the famed book ran out, or is running out in all of the countries where there is interest in the work.<sup>442</sup> It is also coming back under copyright as laws have changed to extend initial timelines. Litigation is still pending over an edition released in 1997<sup>443</sup> in England, and since 1998 there have been unrealized plans for no fewer than three versions in the United States<sup>444</sup> with three major projects devoted to solving the textual problems in a multimedia environment.<sup>445</sup> Added to this are a growing number of Internet based materials purporting to address the issues at stake. Underneath all of these concerns is a basic tension created around access to the work of James Joyce. It is time to take another look at the intellectual property known as James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

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<sup>439</sup> Bruce Arnold. *The Scandal of Ulysses: The Sensational Life of a Twentieth-Century Masterpiece*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.

<sup>440</sup> *James Joyce Quarterly* 28:1 (1990).

<sup>441</sup> *Studies in the Novel* 22:2 (1990).

<sup>442</sup> The debate over copyright is complicated to say the least. After revised copyright laws (agreed to under the terms of the General Agreement on Trade and tariffs), authors in the signatory countries can expect their work to be protected for 75 years from the date of publication. For *Ulysses*, which was published first serially (and this only partially) in the United States, the issue of when publication was achieved is under debate. In most countries in Europe and (what was/is) the Commonwealth, the copyright ran out in 1997, though arguments have since surfaced that have locked copyright on *Ulysses* down again.

<sup>443</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses: A Reader's Edition*. Danis Rose, Ed. London: Picador, 1997.

<sup>444</sup> These are John Kidd's long-awaited edition for W.W. Norton & Company, one from Oxford University press and one from Penguin Putman (Hugh Kenner is rumored to be the editor). Random House has already issued warnings to all other would-be publishers. For more on the details of the contest between the American publishing houses, see Warren St. John's "Can He Publish His Own *Ulysses*? Yes I will Yes, Says Joyce Scholar." *New York Observer* 29 December 1997 and January 1998: 1, 23.

<sup>445</sup> Michael Groden's *Ulysses in Hypermedia*, Sam Slote's Digitization Project and John Kidd's *Ulysses* CD ROM.

Any examination of the textual history of *Ulysses* must begin with an examination of the way in which the book was written.<sup>446</sup> Joyce wrote the book in such a fashion that a definitive edition will almost certainly never exist.<sup>447</sup> The history of the text, its printing, distribution and censorship further complicate the issue.<sup>448</sup> After *Ulysses*' fame created a demand for an accepted text, and as the end of original copyrights approached, the James Joyce Estate tried to reassert control over the text by backing a new edition that would establish worldwide copyright. In order to do this the estate needed a text with enough change to justify this new copyright.<sup>449</sup> Hans Walter Gabler was hired to produce the text. An academic committee appointed to oversee the project had Richard Ellmann chairing, with editing specialists Phillip Gaskell and Clive Hart, who were to work in close contact with Gabler.<sup>450</sup> Ellmann, who knew little about editing, would prove ill equipped to offer Gabler a useful set of checks and balances.<sup>451</sup> The project was plagued

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<sup>446</sup> There are several sources for information on how the book was written (Ellmann, Kenner, Burgess and Budgen all provide solid generalist readings in books familiar to students of Joyce). In the area of textual issues the best sources are Jeri Jonson's "Introduction," and "Composition and Publication History," in Joyce, James. *Ulysses*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1993) ix-lxii; Charles Rossman's, "The Gabler *Ulysses*: A Selectively Annotated Bibliography," *James Joyce Quarterly* 22:2 (1990) 257-269; and, Robert Spoo's "Copyright and the Ends of Ownership: the Case for a Public-domain *Ulysses* in America." *Joyce Studies Annual* 1999. Thomas F. Staley ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. This last article is a substantially revised and updated version of an article that first appeared in *The Yale Law Journal* 108:3.

<sup>447</sup> Joyce creates several problems for textual editors. The most important of these involves his creation of three sets of different proofs in the original corrections for *Ulysses*. For an editor, none of these copies can be privileged so the door is open for multiple starting points.

<sup>448</sup> The greatest of these difficulties involved the text's history in the United States. Partial serialization, censorship and early piracy by Samuel Roth make the crucial dating of initial publication challenging (for example the questionable authority of the 1934, first American edition, which was actually based on a Roth forgery) that persist today in the book's uncertain copyright status.

<sup>449</sup> This is owing to the fact that the estate was trying to copyright a new text before their old copyrights ran out. In order to do this, the new version would have to prove itself "sufficiently different" to qualify for copyright as a new edition.

<sup>450</sup> Gabler also had two assistants, Claus Melchior and Wolfhard Steppe. The entire project was put together under the tutelage of Peter de Sautoy who was a director at Faber and Faber and principal trustee of the James Joyce Estate. For an account of the project team, see Arnold, 102-126.

<sup>451</sup> For Joyceans, Ellmann needs no introduction. His reputation is such that even after his errors in dealing with the Gabler edition, no one has directly pointed to his level of responsibility. Rather, critics tend to suggest that scurrilous publishers and money-hungry academics used him. However we choose to see the issue, Ellmann's involvement is central to the difficulties involved in the 1984 and 1986 editions.

with difficulties, and both Gaskell and Hart resigned after disputes with Gabler. Both would later return, in a reduced role, after mollification by Ellmann.<sup>452</sup>

Shortly after the edition was published, textual scholar John Kidd spoke to the press and promised to “blow the whole Joyce establishment wide open” with a paper he was about to present.<sup>453</sup> Kidd’s original paper raised doubts about certain aspects of the Gabler edition, while conceding that much of the work was sound.<sup>454</sup> The remarks had only a minor effect on the Joyce community, but the story in the press succeeded in antagonizing Hans Walter Gabler, who, with a copy of Kidd’s paper in hand (Kidd himself provided the paper to conference participants), stood up after its presentation and delivered a scathing attack on the junior scholar. The media became increasingly involved in the debate and it was clear that the edition was in trouble.<sup>455</sup> Within three years, John Kidd was seemingly rewarded for his efforts with a lucrative contract from Boston University. He was appointed the head of the specially created James Joyce Research Center, which included full funding, a staff and freedom from teaching responsibilities in the beginning year.<sup>456</sup> Now, more than a dozen years later, Kidd has left Boston University, amid a swirl of minor controversies and without having published a trade version of his text.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> During the period when Hart and Gaskell were off the team, Gabler brought in two new editors, A. Walton Litz and Michael Groden. These two would remain on the team after the return of Gaskell and Hart.

<sup>453</sup> David Remnick, “Jolting the Joyceans,” *The Washington Post* 2 April 1985.

<sup>454</sup> Kidd’s paper “Errors of Execution in the 1984 *Ulysses*,” was presented to the Society for Textual Scholarship in New York on 26 April 1985.

<sup>455</sup> Two scholars who vouched for Kidd’s work were Decherd Turner and the influential textual scholar Jerome McGann (Arnold, 157). With the ensuing series of articles full of *ad hominem* attacks, there seemed to be little hope that the debate over the text could produce an “improved” version of Gabler’s work. It was only a matter of time before the text would have to be pulled in order for the publisher to save face.

<sup>456</sup> The Center officially opened in July 1988.

<sup>457</sup> In the article “Boston University’s *Ulysses*’ Scholar To Embark on Job Odyssey?” reporter Alex Beam details Kidd’s reputation as defender of lost squirrels and birds on campus and as a teacher who failed students against the general wishes of his department. He was at first rumoured to be leaving Boston University to accept what Kidd himself alluded to as a “seven figure salary.” Along with Kidd would go his

As compelling as these events seem, it is important to place the “scandal” in perspective. By far the majority of Joyceans have stayed out of the battle in the press. While this reserved response continues to this day, there is a certain urgency due to what some see as an increasingly litigious spirit at the James Joyce Estate. These debates cannot help but impact potential readers, particularly given the history of negative press surrounding the ownership of the work. After repeated editing, *Ulysses* has failed to appear in an accepted text. If each successive edition does no more than continue this history, the strategy being followed needs to be rethought. In my opinion, an answer to this problem may be manifesting itself along the cable and phone lines that run across the borders that have played such a definitive role in the history of this work.

Some suggest that the text reached its high point with the 1934 edition.<sup>458</sup> After it had been reproduced several times, the eccentric scholar Jack Dalton produced a revised version of the text to treat errors that he alleged had crept into it over the years.<sup>459</sup> Unfortunately, Dalton died before the book saw the light. Hans Gabler was able to secure all of Dalton’s original work and incorporated it into the large-scale project that he was running. This research was to lead to the book’s most famous version, the 1984 Garland text edited by Gabler.<sup>460</sup>

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6,000 volume Joyce collection, effectively shutting down Boston University’s Joyce Centre. *Boston Globe* 28 May 1999. D1. Since that time Kidd’s new position has failed to materialize and the scholar is now suffering from illness and is unable to work.

<sup>458</sup> (Johnson xxxviii-lvi.) Johnson follows her mentor Richard Ellmann in this assumption, which has more challengers than she suggests.

<sup>459</sup> Dalton enjoys mythic fame for his late-night phone calls and public outbursts regarding textual cruxes in the text.

<sup>460</sup> A few have considered Gabler’s use of Dalton’s work inappropriate. See Arnold, 113-126. Dalton is famous as a rather interesting editor. When he began correcting the 1971 text he quipped, “It was the kind of book you could use only a few minute in a chemistry lab before blowing the place up.” From, “The Text of *Ulysses*,” in *New Light on Joyce from the Dublin Symposium*. Fritz Senn ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972. 2.

Increasingly it seems that Gabler was not wholly to blame for the problems with the edition. For one, the Joyce Estate was pushing for the new edition, and pressure never produces good editing. Coupled with this, Richard Ellmann simply could not do his job of keeping Gabler on track.<sup>461</sup> In fact, his fatherly diplomacy was one of the key elements that united increasingly reluctant scholars who might otherwise have provided necessary dissent behind the text. Ellmann's eventual glowing review of the project afforded him the chance to settle an old score against his rival Hugh Kenner, while at the same time using his position in the Joyce community to ensure the wholesale acceptance of the edition.<sup>462</sup> Ellmann's shot at Kenner was over the apparent solution offered by the Gabler edition involving an answer to the question asked by Stephen about the "word known to all men."<sup>463</sup> Kenner, in turn, as an early and vocal advocate of computer-assisted

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<sup>461</sup> Ellmann's position was a curious one. He spoke openly of being on the "Holy Seat" of Joycean criticism (Arnold, 147-8), but he was decidedly not a textual scholar. Declining health due to his battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (a motor-neuron condition which would claim his life in 1987) created a further barrier to his full participation.

<sup>462</sup> For an account of the debate over the "word known to all men" see Jean Kimball, "Love and Death in *Ulysses*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 24:2 (1990) 143-160. Ellmann held that the answer to Stephen's question to his mother's apparition "what is the word known to all men?" was "love," for Kenner the answer was "death." In each case these scholars believed this word to be not only the answer to this question but the central theme of the whole book. When Gabler offered a new text that included the answer as "love" Ellmann incorporated this in his write up on the new edition. For editors, the immediate concern here involves the potential bias that this line would play to with respect to Ellmann, who was in charge of overseeing the editing of the text.

<sup>463</sup> Ellmann's review "The Big Word in *Ulysses*," appeared in the *New York Review of Books* on 25 October 1984. The review was later used as the preface to the 1986 Gabler Edition. Ellmann would eventually withdraw his support of Gabler's decision to include the famous "love" passage from episode nine of the book.

editing,<sup>464</sup> joined Ellmann in backing the edition, which was created using the newly developed TUSTEP program.<sup>465</sup>

The vast majority of teaching Joyceans accepted the new version. Their interests were not greatly affected by the editorial changes. Moreover, the addition of line numbers in the 1986 student's edition made teaching the book a good deal easier.<sup>466</sup>

During this time, John Kidd entered the fray. Given the widespread appeal of the new text, it is unlikely that Kidd would have gained much attention without his use of incendiary language and the appeal to the mainstream media. Before the "scandal," Kidd was a relative unknown, but his fame grew quickly.<sup>467</sup> Using close reading talents developed from his studies of the numerological elements of Joyce's texts, Kidd scoured the new edition for errors and compiled a long list of difficulties.<sup>468</sup>

An examination of the basic opposition that runs between the Gabler and Kidd camps is essential at this point. One of the central works in textual scholarship, and the only one referred to by both Gabler and Kidd, is W.W. Greg's "The Rationale of Copy-

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<sup>464</sup> Many view Kenner's 1980 article as the first major step in the campaign for the Gabler edition. Entitled, "The Computerized *Ulysses*," the article appeared in the April 1980 edition of *Harper's*. This article, which passionately supported the computerized editing of *Ulysses*, had an impact that is difficult for us to judge, given the change in computer use since. Charles Rossman has argued that the article was, "The single most influential essay in establishing the initial reputation of Gabler's work," *Studies in the Novel* 22:2. (1990) 262. Arnold devotes several pages in his book to painting Kenner as an overenthusiastic computer buff. (Arnold, 140-146).

<sup>465</sup> Gabler's assistants, Steppe and Melchior oversaw the running of the program. For an explanation of its use, see James Joyce. *Ulysses: A Critical Synoptic Edition, Volume III*. Hans Walter Gabler ed. (New York: Garland Press, 1984). 1905-1907.

<sup>466</sup> For example Trevor Williams wrote to the James Joyce listserv, "I wonder how many Joyceans are like myself: when we teach *Ulysses*, we find the Gabler easiest to use in class, simply because it shows every tenth line (decimating??) and has the chapter number at the foot of the page. Is it possible that if \*any\* of the rival versions of *Ulysses* were to adopt this numbering lay-out, we would simply order the cheapest for our campus bookstores?" Trevor L. Williams, "RE: Gablerian Citation at *JJQ*," 29 October 1997, online posting, j-joyce@lists.utah.edu, 30 October, 1997.

<sup>467</sup> Curiously, Gabler was the only Joycean scholar of any influence who had materially helped Kidd in the past. The elder scholar attempted to secure a research fellowship for his junior colleague.

<sup>468</sup> We should be aware that central to Kidd's numerological study of *Ulysses* was his belief that Joyce wanted certain segments of the text to appear on preordained pages. Thus, any edition that involved repagination goes against authorial intention. See, Daniel Klyn, "Re: *Ulysses* Edition Choice," 29 October 1997, online posting, j-joyce@lists.utah.edu, 29 October 1997.

Text.”<sup>469</sup> The article’s argument focuses on an editor’s choice of a base text (the copy-text) upon which to found an editing project. The article affords editors a great deal of latitude, and its interpretation is particularly important. For Gabler, the extant *Ulysses* materials did not qualify to establish a copy-text by Greg’s formulations. Accordingly, he created a “continuous manuscript text,” which he then used instead of a copy-text. This was a bold move, but one developed from precedents established within the school of genetic editing primarily in Germany and France.<sup>470</sup>

Greg had been the mentor of Fredson Bowers, who even after his death in 1991 remains America’s most influential textual scholar. It was Bowers that Ellmann would turn to after the defection of editors Gaskell and Hart. Bowers told Ellmann that he could not approve of the way in which the edition was being constructed.<sup>471</sup> G. Thomas Tanselle, who would later head the committee of inquiry appointed by Penguin into the Gabler controversy, is the final member of what is known as the Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line. This “line” constitutes the corner stone of Anglo-American editing, which focuses on authorial intention and not on the notion of writing as process commonly found in genetic editing. The centre for Anglo-American editing has been the University of Virginia and its journal *Studies in Bibliography*. As I discussed above, Bowers taught in Virginia most of his life and is credited with building both its English Department and the journal into world leaders. At the time when he revealed his findings about Gabler’s

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<sup>469</sup> *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1950-1951).

<sup>470</sup> There has been some attempt to highlight the differences German editorial theory and its Anglo-American counterpart such in Geert Lernout’s “Anglo-American Criticism in the Case of Hans Walter Gabler’s Edition of *Ulysses*.” *Genesis 9*: 1996. However pertinent these claims are, and they contain a great deal of validity, they do not answer the central questions about Gabler’s handling of variants in the synoptic portion of his text.

<sup>471</sup> Arnold 218-220.

edition, John Kidd was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Virginia following the procedures established by Greg, Bowers and Tanselle.

Not surprisingly, scholars were interested in what Kidd had to say but were concerned with his tactics. It is not common for questions concerning textual editing to be addressed in the mainstream press. When the debate became important enough to warrant a full scale Joyce conference, the event was recorded on film. The film then became a book, both film and book were created by Irish producer Bruce Arnold.<sup>472</sup> Entitled *The Scandal of Ulysses*,<sup>473</sup> Arnold's book galvanized the popular idea that the editing of *Ulysses* did indeed involve a capital "S" scandal.

The majority of the scholarly community continued to work much as they had in the past. Editors Gaskell and Hart produced *Ulysses: A Review of Three Texts*,<sup>474</sup> a toolkit that allow readers of the 1922, 1961 and 1984 editions to have access to the textual variants that they determined were relevant. Several other scholars weighed in with opinions on the text and its editing history.<sup>475</sup> There was, however, a decided gap between the fervor found in articles in the *New York Review of Books* and the *Times Literary Supplement* and the interest evident in the scholarly community. Almost certainly as a result of the pressure from the popular press, Random House Editor-in-Chief, Jason Epstein appointed G. Thomas Tanselle head of a commission charged with

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<sup>472</sup> Arnold outlines the beginnings of the two projects (vi-x). The conference in question was an invitational symposium on the topic "A *Finnegans Wake* Approach to *Ulysses*" and was held in May of 1985. The Princess Grace Irish Library in Monaco organized the conference. The papers from this meeting were subsequently gathered in the book, *Assessing the 1984 Ulysses*. C. George Sandulescu and Clive Hart, Eds. Gerards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1986.

<sup>473</sup> See note 439 above.

<sup>474</sup> Philip Gaskell and Clive Hart Gerards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1989. The book, which carried the subtitle, *Proposals for Alterations to the Texts of 1922, 1961, and 1984*, compiled variants that Gaskell and Hart felt were either ignored or hidden in the Gabler text. The book is all the more compelling for the fact that both scholars were part of the original team who left for a time, over just the issues described in their compilation.

<sup>475</sup> See for example the collections in *James Joyce Quarterly* and *Studies in the Novel* mentioned earlier.

looking into the text. Plagued by infighting, this commission never met, but Random House eventually pulled Gabler's text in an attempt to protect their reputation.

Meanwhile, when John Kidd became head of the James Joyce Research Center, Boston University acquired not only Kidd, but also his Joyce collection, which include the world's largest set of editions of *Ulysses*.<sup>476</sup> Kidd, who received a personal advance from Norton of \$100,000, spent over \$500,000 on his edition, and had a further \$350,000 with which to work.<sup>477</sup> However, things got off track. Money was frozen and Kidd left Boston University without finding another position. Since 1992, scholars have been waiting for the appearance of Kidd's W.W. Norton & Company edition.<sup>478</sup>

During this time, copyright in Britain ran out.<sup>479</sup> On June 16 1997, a new edition, billed as a "Reader's Edition," appeared to fill the gap.<sup>480</sup> *Newsweek* magazine reported on the version and continued the tradition of violent rhetoric in an article entitled, "The Bloomsday Massacre."<sup>481</sup> By now the debate had earned the nickname "The Joyce Wars," which became the title of a web site dedicated entirely to the subject.<sup>482</sup> Shortly after the appearance of the "Reader's Edition," a letter appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* from Stephen James Joyce, the grandson of the author.<sup>483</sup> The younger Joyce announced that the estate was suing editor Danis Rose and his publisher, Picador. The estate argued that the book was so completely altered that James Joyce should not be

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<sup>476</sup> Kidd rather famously asserts that he always spent half his income to build his Joyce collection.

<sup>477</sup> 1998 figures. St. John, 32.

<sup>478</sup> Kidd explains that all of the difficulties stem from American copyright issues and the hostile reception his work has received from the Joyce Estate.

<sup>479</sup> This, based on the copyright of 75 years from original publication which started with the French 1922 edition. This applied to Europe and Canada, but copyright has been reestablished through an extension. For more on this see Spoo, 60ff.

<sup>480</sup> Danis Rose's *Reader's Edition*, see note 4 above.

<sup>481</sup> 23 June 1997.

<sup>482</sup> Daniel Klyn. *The Joyce Wars*. <http://members.tripod.com/~fn0rd/Joyce.htm>.

<sup>483</sup> Stephen James Joyce, letter, *Times Literary Supplement*. 27 June 1997.

listed as its author. In the letter, Stephen Joyce refers at one point to Rose's editing as "the rape of *Ulysses*."<sup>484</sup>

The Rose edition, which claims to make the text more accessible to the general public,<sup>485</sup> contains a seventy-two page introduction and two versions of the final episode, both of which have been substantially restructured by Rose.<sup>486</sup> Many scholars remember Rose for announcing, "[t]he greatest literary find of this century," in reference to a series of previously undiscovered short stories by James Joyce, which he and Penguin put together as *Finn's Hotel*. The book was pulled when it was discovered that the stories were actually early drafts from *Finnegans Wake*, which had already been published in 1963.<sup>487</sup> In case anyone had forgotten this fact, John Kidd reminded them in his review of the Rose book, while at the same time being sure to point out that Rose is "not an academic" but "an enthusiast" who "enjoys his new role as entrepreneur."<sup>488</sup>

I started looking into the scandal in the midst of this debate. My interest in Joyce had until that time focused generally on uses of *Hamlet* in the book and in particular on the Stephen character and the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode. Since this section contains the famous "word known to all men" passage that became the locus point of the debate, I

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<sup>484</sup> Reviewer Eric Korn picked up on Stephen Joyce's rhetoric in a an article entitled "Words Known to All Men," *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 September 1997: "She did it before, in manuscript; she was asking for it, your worship, going about in that disheveled prose, with not a comma on."

<sup>485</sup> Rose through his publisher Picador claims, "This is a people's *Ulysses*, a text which, while grounded in the most comprehensive analysis of the manuscript ever undertaken, has been smuggled out of the ivory tower of the academics and put squarely into the marketplace."

<sup>486</sup> Rose rejected past editing practice and created what he calls an "isotext," which he then used as a copy-text. He changes compound words, punctuation and layout that Joyce specifically requested, doing so in order to make the book more readable and less like the original, which he says was "annoying" to the reader. When confronted with the idea of a "Reader's Edition," reviewer Eric Korn asks, "as opposed to what...[a]n illiterate's edition? A fishmonger's edition?"

<sup>487</sup> David Hayman, *A First Draft Version of Finnegans Wake*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963.

<sup>488</sup> John Kidd. "Making the Wrong Joyce." *New York Review of Books* 25 September 1997.

was dragged reluctantly into the textual discussions.<sup>489</sup> I began putting together a thesis on the Joyce Wars and spent months examining variant readings, facsimiles of the *Rosenbach Manuscript*<sup>490</sup> and all of the various critical materials. I contacted the James Joyce Research Center at Boston, the *Ulysses in Hypermedia Project* at the University of Western Ontario, Sam Slote at the State University of New York at Buffalo and Daniel Klyn, Webmaster of the *Joyce Wars* site.

What I found was truly much as you would expect. Behind the words and the rhetoric, there was no real controversy to live up to the impassioned verbiage. Where I expected to find enraged Joyceans committed to one or another camp, I found a group of people who seemed either tired of the “Scandal” or genuinely indifferent to the whole process. Most scholars avoided the debate over editions entirely. While there may be a desire to settle the editing issue, it seems not to involve a devoted commitment to one text over another. So, where was the “Scandal?” After the heat died down, everyone seemed to return to work. Michael Groden, an original participant in the Gabler edition and one of its strongest proponents, continued work on *Ulysses in Hypermedia*<sup>491</sup> and John Kidd focused on his work at the James Joyce Centre. Both were very generous to me whenever I inquired about their work. At the time of this writing, it seems that Groden may offer the best hope for a new edition of the text. He has the experience and the talents, but it would be hard to imagine why he would wish to take on the job. For his part, Kidd seems unlikely to return to the fray any time soon.

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<sup>489</sup> One of my earliest mentor’s in Joyce studies was Joseph Ronsley, who had been one of Ellmann’s doctoral students at Northwestern and who instilled in me a distaste for the textual controversy.

<sup>490</sup> James Joyce. *Ulysses: A Facsimile of the Manuscript*. Philadelphia: H. & A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1975.

<sup>491</sup> See Groden, Michael. James Joyce’s *Ulysses in Hypermedia* at: <http://publish.uwo.ca/~mgroden/ulysses/>.

It was clear that the sensational language used in the debate was rejected by the scholarly community. Not even Hans Gabler, who at first seemed very angry over Kidd's approach, remained active in the discussions.<sup>492</sup> John Kidd did stay vocal in the popular press, but as an interviewee subject to routine "follow up" stories. He is clearly a talented scholar but seems to be paying the price for receiving immediate fame and financial compensation as a result of his fiery rhetoric in the popular media. He has at times openly lamented this position:

If I had just written some mediocre trash about Derrida! If I had just kept my nose clean! But, instead, by being a freelance Joycean, I've got to suffer. Here's some advice: Don't discover anything that's too big. Do not do anything too important, or you will pay the price.<sup>493</sup>

It is not hard to imagine why he remains a point of interest in the press. One wonders about the repercussions he is suffering and what the overall effects will be on his scholarly work.

The plight of John Kidd aside, the true scandal, if there is one, and I believe there is, involves issues of access. This aspect of the text's history began with issues of censorship and copyright, and continues today as the book remains without an acceptable edition. The trustees of the Joyce Estate have a short reprieve from copyright challenges since the Sonny Bono Copyright extension came into effect. Though it is not clear that *Ulysses* should qualify for protection, no publisher yet has been willing to risk an unapproved edition.

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<sup>492</sup> Gabler has been relatively quiet since his article "A Response to John Kidd's, 'Errors of Execution in the 1984 *Ulysses*,'" *Studies in the Novel*. 22:2 (1990).

<sup>493</sup> St. John, 32. In an even more passionate tone, he finishes his review of Rose's text with a separate section alleging a conspiracy of Joyceans centred around that group's main journal, the *James Joyce Quarterly*, on whose board Hans Gabler sits. *New York Review of Books* 25 September 1997.

The author's grandson, who is the key person in charge, and who aptly reminds the public, that he is "a Joyce and not a Joycean,"<sup>494</sup> seems for the time to be keeping the issue quiet. Reflecting back on the period of "scandal," "war," "massacre," and rape," we can find it easy to understand why he may wish to insert a cooling off period. The debate seemed to degrade into what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson describe as "argument as war." In the battle for rhetorical dominance, scholars seem to have gone beyond all discretion.<sup>495</sup> Metaphors of war surrounding the text that play off the memories of the Irish Troubles are particularly appalling. More importantly, one falters when trying to come up with words strong enough to denounce the evocation of the spectre of "rape" in reference to the editing of a book.

With Gabler's text all but removed from view and John Kidd's edition lost to copyright challenges, the textual work going all the way back to Jack Dalton stands to be lost. Should we really have to begin again at the cost of so much scholarship purely for the sake of ego? Talk about a predetermined reception for any edition with Professor Kidd's name on it seems to argue that all is lost.<sup>496</sup>

We must be aware that there are serious socio-economic consequences involved in repeatedly revising a book that resists a definitive edition, not the least of which involves the transfer of the costs of these repeated projects to students and the reading public, and the propagation of a message of prohibition surrounding the text itself. Behind the vicious language runs a message that *Ulysses* is a difficult, inherently inaccessible text. With the imposition of all of the prefaces, indexes, and line numbers

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<sup>494</sup> Letter, 27 June 1997.

<sup>495</sup> *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. 77-82.

<sup>496</sup> Eric Korn writes for example, "you can hear the grinding of teeth and knives." *Times Literary Supplement* 5 September 1997.

amidst a climate of coterie politics, we run the risk of removing the book from a viable readership in order to elevate its status by removing it from public view – thereby adding a special status to those who seek to gain from its increased scarcity.<sup>497</sup>

Readers, scholars and the text itself can best be served by rediscovering the fundamentals of sound editing practice. While the meticulous nature of this work rarely earns exciting headlines, it provides better texts and it costs considerably less. Commentators, who assume that Joyce would love the publicity of the “scandal,” should consider that the erection of barriers between the readers and writing would excite few authors. Besides, just looking at the language of the debate we might guess that Joyce would abhor such poor usage.

We should of course know better than to think that we could contain *Ulysses*. Just as this text first found its way around censorship and across borders smuggled under the coats of devotees in the interwar period at the beginning of the twentieth century, so now it finds new avenues in the digital pathways of the twenty-first century. When Danis Rose first published his *Reader's Edition*, American scholars could not get access to the text. Not a problem; Joyce legend Fritz Senn posted his collation of various segments to the Joyce listserv<sup>498</sup> while various scholars in Canada typed<sup>498</sup> passages into hastily dispatched emails. As more scholars began working in the digital medium, electronic versions of all of the texts began to appear. Just when Robert Spoo was publishing his thorough analysis of the Joycean copyright situation<sup>499</sup> calling for publishers to have the courage to put

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<sup>497</sup> The notion of cultural capital developed by John Guillory is instructive in this situation. The debate may in fact no longer be about the text, but about sequestering it in order to drive up its value. See John Guillory *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

<sup>498</sup> Senn's collations can still be found on Daniel Klyn's web site at

<http://home.att.net/~joycewars/senn.html>

<sup>499</sup> See note 446 above.

*Ulysses* into the public domain, the text was becoming increasingly public over the Internet. Such is the state of exchange that several scholars have distributed disks containing huge data files of Joycean texts. In each of these cases, the exchanges have been entirely scholarly, in that no money changed hands, only research data. This, perhaps more than anything else in the debate, war or scandal so far, shows the underlying commitment of scholars to participate in a free exchange of ideas.

More recently, independent Joyce aficionado Jorn Barger has gained notice for his work on the World Wide Web. In answer to the textual debate, he has provided what he calls the text closest to Joyce's wishes. In an email posted to the Joyce list on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2000 in response to one of the occasional requests for information on which version is the best for a new reader, Barger says:

My edition takes into account both the factors that Gabler skipped (distinguishing French polish from typist error), and the ones Gabler considered but Gilbert skipped (manuscripts and proofs), so mine is currently, arguably, the closest to Joyce's intent.<sup>500</sup>

Barger, who frequents the James Joyce listservs distributing such arcane contributions as textual catalogues and ASCII maps of Dublin, has been steadily creating an online editorial project that challenges traditional copyright law. While that law latterly has been used to sue university presses,<sup>501</sup> constrain academics<sup>502</sup> and act as a general barrier to interaction with Joycean materials, Barger has quietly become a potent foil.

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<sup>500</sup> 30 September 2000. j-joyce@list.utah.edu.

<sup>501</sup> In a recent debate over a compilation of Irish writing for Cork University Press edited by David Pierce, the Estate first attempted to charge a prohibitively high price for use of Joyce's writing and then pursued legal action when Pierce considered using excerpts from Danis Rose's edition. Interestingly, the younger Joyce seems to have waffled on the notion that Rose's book is not that of James Joyce.

<sup>502</sup> The James Joyce Estate's reputation for charging fees that are tens of times higher than those for other authors of the period is legendary. Moreover, fees charged for what should amount to fair use unduly punish scholars who wish to publish work on Joyce's writing.

This is not to say that Barger is without his flaws. Though he has recently been garnering a great deal of positive press in the media and from several Joyce scholars, I find, for example, the fact that his site [www.robotwisdom.com](http://www.robotwisdom.com) contains links to pornography under the title of “nudes” and “naked celebs” to be more than a little disturbing. Perhaps I am being prudish, but this is at least a noteworthy change in the way in which textual editors present their work. Still, I wish those links were not part of the message.

A recent article in the *Irish Times* comments on Barger’s Web log:

Consider *Robot Wisdom*, the original of the species. Herein, author Jorn Barger dissects popular culture with a brutal, breathtaking minimalism that elevates the site beyond a mere trawl of handy Web links. Barger’s Big Idea, a sprawling, hyperlinked annotation of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, has been proclaimed a watershed in Web culture, the birthplace of a new literature rooted in the medium’s multi-layered essence. This is almost - almost - just like they used to say the Net would be. Free, democratic, unsullied by corporate covetousness.<sup>503</sup>

All credit to Mr. Barger and the glories of Internet aside, I take some delight in the fact that after all these years with so many attempts at containing it, from the burning of handwritten copy to the seizing of books and the piracy of the banned American text, *Ulysses* still manages to slip through the cracks. It seems that Jorn Barger and several of the scholars on the [j-joyce@lists.utah.edu](mailto:j-joyce@lists.utah.edu) listserv are answering Robert Spoo’s call to make *Ulysses* public. Indeed Barger’s site has a catalogue of online versions of the text.

For years, Joyceans have read with relish the accounts of Sylvia Beach and Harriet Shaw Weaver defying authority to make sure that Joyce’s text saw the light of day. Perhaps it is time we followed their example. Whose interest is served if none of us

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<sup>503</sup> Edward Power’s “Web Diary,” *The Irish Times* 28 October 2000.

live to see John Kidd's edition? What is gained if artists are not allowed to perform pieces containing words by Joyce unless they suit the tastes of Stephen James Joyce?

In the summer of 2000, the younger Joyce denied use of 18 words of *Finnegans Wake* to David Fennessy, a 23 year old Irish composer studying in Scotland saying, "my wife and I don't like your music." To which Fennessy replied

I don't mind if they hate my music, but how can the personal taste of Stephen Joyce and his wife be the right criteria to use? I thought of James Joyce throwing his Feis Ceol bronze medal into the Liffey in disgust at the judges...He was such a progressive artist and he had to put up with this stuff all his life. Now the whole thing is gone: it's not so much losing the commission fee, which I sorely needed, or the European broadcast. My piece can't ever exist because it can't be performed.<sup>504</sup>

Fennessy's case would be upsetting if it was isolated, but it has become the norm. This is simply unacceptable. It is clear that both scholars and the estate are to blame for the situation, but we should not allow ourselves to go into the history books as the first generation that did not to carry on the fight for access to this modern classic.

Joyce's friend Paul Léon, before being killed by the Nazis, took a final heroic trip to rescue Joyce's papers so they would remain accessible to the people. It is time we realized the simple fact that the intellectual property rights and threats of litigation are stranding *Ulysses* in an empty debate. Poor Oolissays has been at sea many times longer than the hero for whom he was named, and it is time we brought the exile home.

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<sup>504</sup> Medb Ruane. "The War of Words over Joyce's Literary Legacy," *The Irish Times* 10 June 2000.

## Chapter 8: Author, Author!: Final Considerations and Conclusion

History may not repeat itself, but it very often rhymes.  
Samuel Clemens

Not to be a textual critic is no reproach to anyone, unless he pretends to be what he is not. To *be* a textual critic requires aptitude for thinking and willingness to think; and though it also requires other things, those things are supplements and cannot be substitutes. Knowledge is good, method is good, but one thing beyond all others is necessary; and that is to have a head, not a pumpkin, on your shoulders, and brains, not pudding, in your head.

A. E. Housman

Over the last several chapters I have taken a brief look at three of the most controversial cases in textual scholarship. More than just challenging individual projects, these three areas have wide-reaching influence on the world of textual scholarship. In the section on William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, I traced the development of the editing of medieval English works and showed that the current trend toward manuscript-focused research can help feed into the production of a much-needed Reader's Edition of *Piers Plowman*.

Looking at *The Oxford Shakespeare* I highlighted the fact that there really is no crisis in Shakespeare editing, though there are those that are trying to create one. It is perhaps Shakespeare's own popularity that makes it so difficult to cause dramatic change in an expeditious fashion. I also pointed out that the *Internet Shakespeare Editions* has a real chance to become a pre-eminent force in Shakespearean editing as long as the compilers stick to editing, rather than succumbing to the un-editing trends that are currently influencing the editors of the Arden 3 series *Hamlet*. In order to ground this examination, I provided a history of the New Bibliography, the most influential strain of

textual scholarship in the twentieth century. That group, as it turns out, had its roots in the very same place as those doing early work on *Piers Plowman*.

Finally, I looked at the so-called *Joyce Wars*, the controversy surrounding the publication of Hans Walter Gabler's edition of *Ulysses* for Garland. In that instance, it seems clear that the real controversy lies in the behaviour of a litigious Joyce Estate that is quashing debate over the text while at the same time limiting the public's access to it. This is a particularly tricky problem since James Joyce made an overt sacrifice – entering matrimony, which was decidedly against his beliefs – in order to secure the very copyright protections that are now hindering scholars and readers. Interestingly, the modifications to copyright law that have allowed these problems to arise are intricately connected to the development of the same digital technology scholars are using to examine Joyce's work.

Running behind these general examinations was my assertion that the twin forces of late twentieth century literary theory and the advent of networked computing were combining to challenge the foundations of textual scholarship. My proposed solution to the questions raised by the various forms of antifoundationalism which seemed to be a product of these two powers was to stick to procedures that were already working. The example I used was the medieval studies approach, a form of study which seemed to be able to maintain its focus during the height of the theory debates by incorporating the new questions posed by literary theory, but doing so in a way that allowed scholars to retain connections to textuality. This latter achievement came about as a result of the inherent need to work with manuscripts, something that would also lead medievalists to

the forefront of computer use in humanities research as they sought more efficient ways to provide access to rare documents.

My hope is that by proposing this medieval studies approach, I am able to incorporate the proposals of the textual scholar Jerome McGann. As the preeminent force in scholarly editing today, McGann is someone with whom scholars must reckon. Indeed many of his explorations in computer editing are bound to be seen as trail blazing efforts by the scholars of the future. Yet, the greatest contribution that I can find in McGann is his early call for a greater attention to what he calls "bibliographic codes." These non-textual carriers of meaning in a given document were, in McGann's opinion, not afforded sufficient weight in the work of the New Bibliographers.

McGann's early challenge to that group's work were buoyed by the findings of literary theory and the ease with which computers have been able to serve the socio-historical approach to editing, which favours reproduction over emendation. In the first case, McGann was seen as a challenger to the notions of an older, dominant force of intellectual enquiry which was based on the pursuit of meaning in texts; in the second, McGann was a supporter of the inventive exploration of computers in the humanities by figures like Janet Murray and Willard McCarty. All of these people were right. However, it is my opinion that what Professor McGann has provided is a note of correction to a set of procedures that have proven themselves effective in the editing of texts. Given McGann's own admissions about the difficulties he has experienced in creating actual editions, it seems clear that this is the point.

If we were to take this lesson, then, that editions created using the methods of the New Bibliographers along with some of the lessons of the literary theorists and the

socio-historical school of McGann and McKenzie, we get something that looks very much like the medieval studies model that I referred to earlier. To this, we should make one important addition, by accepting McGann's suggestion that bibliographic codes form a necessary component of hermeneutic pursuit: I hope that we can realize that these bibliographic codes must now also extend to the elements that are being introduced by computer applications in scholarly work. Unlike scholars such as Willard McCarty, I do not believe that computers are an invisible medium. Computers contain and leave traces that must be accounted for in the production and reproduction of texts. Consider James L. West's advice to textual scholars focusing on modernist writers: "[e]ditors of late-twentieth-century texts will eventually have to study the quirks of computerized typesetting machines every bit as carefully as editors of Shakespeare's plays have analyzed the vagaries of Jaggard's Compositor B."<sup>505</sup> While considerations of the materiality of manuscripts and printed books are now part of the horizon of contemplation for all editors and textual scholars, the same cannot be said of the various components of computer technology. I believe this must change.

In order to encapsulate the cumulative effect of an analysis of the constituent elements of a text in the terms that I am describing, I introduced Martin Heidegger's use of Aristotle's four causes in his late essay "The Question Concerning Technology."<sup>506</sup> Heidegger's message in that article is that an obsession with technology can lead – through the instrumental use of language – to an inauthentic representation of the world. By using language merely to list things empirically, the technologist creates only a descriptive totality and not a referential totality, or one which captures the relations of all

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<sup>505</sup> West, "Twentieth Century American and British Literature" (366).

<sup>506</sup> Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology." In, *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. Revised and Expanded Edition. David Farrell Krell. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993.

of the elements in a given ontology. Without the referential situation there can be no meaning and we are reduced to dry lists, a condition very similar to that of the cataloguers in the scene from *Citizen Kane* that I referred to in my section on the Athlone *Piers Plowman*. As was the case with the character in that scene, a narrative must be adopted in order to make sense of the available data. We can decide to impose one, a story of our liking or one that we arrive at through critical examination, or we can decide, not to apply any narrative. Unfortunately, choosing not to decide is still a choice, and given my predilection for accessibility it is one that is fatal for editors.

In the Athlone *Piers Plowman*, George Kane decided to find a unifying story by chipping away the layers of what he defined as scribal error in order to reveal the gem underneath. The editors of *The Oxford Shakespeare* made one decision not to decide – when it came to the text of *King Lear* – and it seems that that choice may have led to consequences they would have rather avoided. For Hans Walter Gabler, the truth behind the archive of materials that make up James Joyce's *Ulysses* was to be found through a continuous manuscript approach that followed the entire compositional process. One element that each of these projects shares is a belief in the ability of an editor to establish an author's intention and to get closer to some form of ideal text that has been impaired during the process of transmission. However, belief in the so-called author function is no longer popular. The New Bibliographers, the chief proponents of theories of authorial intention, are now almost uniformly criticized for their belief in the author function. For followers of poststructural literary theory as well as for those that support the ideas of Jerome McGann as radically transformative rather than corrective, the author is a construct that is part of a larger matrix of exchange and should be removed from

consideration. However, these theories, while interesting in the abstract, have proven incapable of producing useful editions of texts.

In my opening chapter I made reference to Article 27 of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. It is perhaps a little grandiose to look to international law to coerce scholars into editing texts, but I believe the larger point lies in the general acceptance of the idea that societies value contact with their cultural heritage. That heritage, at least in its textual form, has been the dominion of the humanities scholars for several generations and I believe that they should continue their involvement. I am not certain when we gave up on the idea that access to education should be a fundamental right, but in the absence of that belief, Article 27 suits nicely. It also protects the rights of the author to be heard.

Humans are social beings and communication is a social practice. Authors, then, are involved in at least two forms of social existence. We should ask why a socio-historical practice of editing should need to deny authors their due. I would like to argue that we do not need to abandon authors in order to have a more complex reading of texts and textual production; we merely need to extend the franchise. Let us elevate scribes, compositors and programmers, rather than killing the lot and calling the creators society.

I would like to spend a little time, then, tracing what has become the most popular line of thinking when it comes to the erosion of the role of the author. One is hard pressed to pick up a book on textual scholarship today and not find a reference to Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, the twin executioners of the author. It is my position that there is a real need to revisit the works of these two French scholars because their positions are not being used in a manner that does justice to what they actually said. In a strange turn of

events, they are invoked as authorities on authorship in order to argue against the authority of authorship.

In 1968, Roland Barthes published a seven-page article entitled “The Death of the Author.”<sup>507</sup> In an examination of the narrator of Balzac’s *Sarrasine*, Barthes probes the nature of the speaking voice that is at once speaker and linguistic symbol. The blurring of relationships is one that would make many readers recall the concepts of free indirect discourse and the Uncle Charles principle, which I mentioned in Chapter 4. As in those cases, the identity of the speaker becomes malleable, dissolving into the expression of the moment.

Barthes says that “the author is a modern figure,” – by which he means a figure spanning the Middle Ages to the twentieth century – that is connected to capitalist worship of the individual.<sup>508</sup> Pointing to Mallarmé as the first example of an author aware of the fact that language speaks the author and not the other way around, Barthes details a form of poetics that causes the author to step away in order to foreground language.<sup>509</sup> It is clear from the interplay that Barthes is speaking metaphorically, since the author could not step out of the way to foreground language if he were already upstaged by a language which spoke him into existence. The analysis continues with an examination of Proust and Brecht in an attempt to illustrate the fact that modern writers had become aware of the author function and were actively seeking to undermine it. The article, like so much

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<sup>507</sup> Roland Barthes. “The Death of the Author,” in *Image, Music, Text*. Stephen Heath, Trans. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. (142-48)

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.* 142-43.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.* 143.

of Barthes work, is playful and culminates with the sentence “[o]nce the author is removed, the claim to decipher a text is futile.”<sup>510</sup>

After undercutting the value of the author, Barthes adds a coda to his piece. He calls for a commitment to reception studies, pointing out that critics have neglected the position of the reader, and rises to a fever pitch in his final sentence:

We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphrastical recriminations of good society in favour of the very thing it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.<sup>511</sup>

There are three central components of this short piece by Roland Barthes. First, it is a sensitive reading of one aspect of the narrator in a literary work. Second it contains the necessary catch-phrases expected of a French writer in the Marxist tradition. Third, it is playful, which allows for a deepening of the first reading and an undercutting of the second set of restrictions.

Michel Foucault, the close friend and sometime lover of Barthes, wrote a response to his fellow scholar’s piece.<sup>512</sup> In “What is an Author?” Foucault finds the only area in which he could take his friend’s argument further from firm footing.<sup>513</sup> Rather than killing the author, he would instead assume that the entire notion of the author was

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<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.* 147.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.* 148.

<sup>512</sup> Barthes and Foucault were lifelong friends with the elder scholar helping the younger with recommendations for jobs and support for book projects. At times when they were both in Paris they dined together as often as three times a week. While they did have quarrels during the tenure of their friendship they remained close throughout their lives. For more on their relationship see the best of the three available biographies, David Macey’s *The Lives of Michel Foucault*. New York: Vintage, 1994 (1993). The index is filled with the interaction between the two men, for which see pages 81-2 and 120. The earliest biography of Foucault is brief, but remains useful: see Didier Eribon *Michel Foucault*. Betsy Wing, Trans. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991. James Miller’s *The Passion of Michel Foucault*. New York: Simon and Shuster, 2000 is a vulgar book that advances the theory that Foucault purposely got and spread AIDS as a realization of his theories of the subject. Fortunately its writing is as poor as its arguments, so few readers are likely to be fooled by its slander.

<sup>513</sup> Michel Foucault. “What is an Author,” in *The Foucault Reader*. Paul Rabinow, Ed. New York: Pantheon, 1984. (101-120).

something beyond consideration. Originally presented as a lecture, the article became one of Foucault's best known pieces of work.

Like Barthes, Foucault points out the inherent worship of individualism present in the construction of the author in the West.<sup>514</sup> At the outset of the article Foucault says that he will not embark on a socio-historical analysis of the author, though he says that such a study would be fruitful, given the dominance of man-and-his-work criticism.<sup>515</sup> It should be noted that Foucault is responding in the context of an intellectual tradition dominated by the Annales School and its particular form of biographical criticism. The way that this fact is overlooked points to the care that must be taken when we use a lecture from the Professor of the History of Systems of Thought at the Collège de France in order to comment on writing in English.

Once he has established that his interest will be in the relationship of author to text, Foucault goes on to develop the ideas of a contemporary self-referentiality in writing that effaces the author and the tradition of a link between writing and death that dates to the ancient Greeks.<sup>516</sup> Moving to specific examples, he brings forth the name of Nietzsche. Foucault asks: What parts of writing should we consider part of Nietzsche's body of work? His comments are an allusion to the German philologist's proclamation that "God is Dead," first made in that man's *The Gay Science*. Indeed, in the very next section Foucault mentions the death of man and God proclaimed by Nietzsche.<sup>517</sup> Here it is important to remember that both Barthes and Foucault were working in a climate where they had studied the death-of-man critique not only from a Nietzschean context,

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<sup>514</sup> *Foucault Reader*, 101.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.* 101.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.* 102.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

but from Althusser's structural Marxist position.<sup>518</sup> That position foregrounds an annihilation of the form of individualism central to capitalist socio-political structures. The language in these political arguments was common to both men, although both were famous skeptics of Marxist politics.

Foucault next does a detailed analysis of the author function, which he argues is a part of discursive practice.<sup>519</sup> He then goes on to expand his argument, showing the broader legitimating figures that are able to deliver a foundational discourse. These figures, such as Marx and Freud, embody the full power of discourse as power.<sup>520</sup> Foucault ends his argument by pointing out two basic reasons why an analysis of the position of the author in history might be a useful study. The first is that it would be a benefit to discourse studies; the second and more lengthy reason is for what Foucault calls "ideological reasons."<sup>521</sup> The argument culminates with the question "[w]hat difference does it make who is speaking?"<sup>522</sup> Perhaps a good response would be to answer that it makes a difference if you are the one up for tenure. It makes a difference if you have not yet received an academic appointment. It makes a difference if there is a check involved. It makes a difference if the message is one of Holocaust denial. It makes a difference if the message is one that breaks the law. It makes a difference because someone is trying to communicate.

But these answers do not do justice to the arguments presented. As the signatory of dozens of political petitions who found that his name could help political causes, as the

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<sup>518</sup> David Macey, 90. For more of Althusser's position in written form, see Louis Althusser. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Ben Brewster, Trans. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001. 116-7 and 140.

<sup>519</sup> *Foucault Reader* 108-13.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.* 113-17.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.* 117, 118.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.* 120.

printer of radical political documents who kept a hand press in his back yard while teaching in Tunisia, and as the editor of work by Nietzsche and a collection of letters by Pierre Rivière who followed traditional editing techniques in so doing, Michel Foucault was aware of what an author is. His question in this lecture was a form of response to an earlier question by Roland Barthes that is linked to their shared knowledge of earlier explorations by Louis Althusser and deep readings of Nietzsche. The idea that the argument would be taken literally probably never formed part of the author's intention.

The two most commonly cited passages from the piece are the article's second paragraph, which refers to man-and-his-work criticism, and the second justification in the conclusion that focuses on ideology. That means that the death of the author concept which uses Foucault as source is based either on an argument that he says he will not pursue, or from a personal political position that had as much to do with the work's appearance shortly after the May, 1968 actions and its presentation on a besieged spot of ground as it did with any other purpose we can find.

Michel Foucault did not say that the author was dead. He posed an intellectual question that has been taken and ossified as a statement and then used as grounds to support a form of editing which Foucault himself did not use in his own editing work. Perhaps a critique of the form that Foucault was calling for would ask questions about the use of an author's name to support ideas contrary to one's own research and practice. What seems clear is that it is a disservice to the thought of Foucault to limit his arguments as if his ideas were such paltry things as declarations about the death of the author, rather than a broad ranging examination of the role of the subject in society. Moreover, in light of the fact that Foucault was beaten and arrested several times in his

life for things that he wrote, claiming that he argued for the death of the author would seem to fly in the face of his lived experience. In the end, perhaps it matters who is speaking because we owe that person a proper hearing if we are going to use their words for our own ends.

In order to conclude my journey through the three most controversial editing projects of the twentieth century, I would like to comment on two recent articles focusing on the current state of editing. The first is Karen Bjelland's 2000 article entitled "The Editor as Theologian, Historian and Archaeologist,"<sup>523</sup> and the second is Jerome McGann's 2002 Lyman Award acceptance speech, "Textonics: Literary and Cultural Studies in a Quantum World," which has recently been reprinted in an abbreviated form in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.<sup>524</sup> Both of these papers present interesting questions about the current state of editing and make predictions about the future of the field. Given that I have been attempting a similar project, they offer me a chance for a useful exchange that will allow me to summarize some of my ideas.

Karen Bjelland begins her article by referring to three French scholars who she says have "forever changed the nature and direction of the academic world." The scholars are Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault.<sup>525</sup> Bjelland moves quickly to characterize the work of Derrida as significant, while pointing out that Lacan has not had the same impact, and is currently losing influence. Bjelland is much more confident about

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<sup>523</sup> Karen Bjelland. "The Editor as Theologian, Historian, and Archaeologist: Shifting Paradigms within Editorial Theory and their Sociocultural Ramifications." *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography* (AEB). 11 (2000). (1-43).

<sup>524</sup> The Richard W. Lyman award was created by the National Humanities Center to recognize "pioneers in the use of digital tools in the humanities." The original lecture can be viewed online or downloaded in text format at: <http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/news/mcgannwebcast.htm>. The abbreviated version appeared under the title "Literary Scholarship in the Digital Future." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Volume 49 i 16 (July 2002).

<sup>525</sup> Bjelland 1.

the contribution of Michel Foucault, whom she presents as undercutting the author function as part of his stance as a “postmodernist critic.”<sup>526</sup> Here we see the French theorist as flying past the nets of “totalizing” projects such as are practiced by the theologian and the historian. It is in the context of these totalizing forces that Bjelland proposes to read Foucault’s work on the author function.<sup>527</sup>

Noting that her claim linking editors and theologians is controversial, Bjelland goes on to point out that the role of the Shakespearean First Folio is like that of religious scripture in our society. Here the error made by editors is in the failure to acknowledge “texts as being distinct from belief.”<sup>528</sup> Furthermore, the opening materials in the First Folio serve to create the author in a religious image.<sup>529</sup> Bjelland then posits a series of questions about the effects this representation of the life and work of Shakespeare have had on critics. In support of these claims, she argues that “as Michel Foucault would have recognized, these implicit statements play a powerful role in preserving the boundaries of a discipline as they also work to conserve a particular tradition.”<sup>530</sup>

Bjelland then makes a close examination of the development of Shakespearean editing, which she places in the context of recent developments in this activity. In order to do this she cites D. C. Greetham’s categories of Alexandrian and Pergamanian models of editing.<sup>531</sup> The derogatory epithet “Alexandrian” refers to what Bjelland identifies as the Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line, while the epithet “Pergamanian” refers to the school of archaeologists inspired by Foucault. Thus,

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<sup>526</sup> Bjelland 3

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.* 4

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.* 5

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.* 6

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.* 8

<sup>531</sup> The article to which Bjelland is referring here is D. C. Greetham. “Textual Scholarship,” in *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literature*. Joseph Gibaldi, Ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1992. 103-37.

What may make the twentieth century editorial tradition indicative of a significant change within editorial theory is not the perpetuation of an Alexandrian model of editing through the Greg-Bowers-Tanselle line, but rather the critique of this editorial tradition by those of a Pergamanian persuasion – the first among those editors whom we might rightly call Foucauldian “archaeologists.”<sup>532</sup>

We are given four examples of Pergamanians who are challenging the Alexandrians.

They are Michael Warren and Stephen Urkowitz, for calling for the division of *King Lear* “the unquestioned Shakespearean masterpiece”; Randall McLeod, the provocative all-or-nothing editorial theorist; and Gary Taylor, for his thought only, since we are told that in practice he goes back to the Alexandrian mode.<sup>533</sup> A high point for Taylor and for editorial theory in general is Peter Shillingsburg’s “Key Issues in Editorial Theory,”<sup>534</sup> which takes issue with Tanselle’s support for authorial intention. Following this line in Bjelland’s terms is Jerome McGann’s “Rationale of Hyper-Text,”<sup>535</sup> which pairs with Shillingsburg’s *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*,<sup>536</sup> in order to unite the Pergamanian theory with the advances in computer technology.<sup>537</sup>

From this point, Bjelland goes on to develop the connections between McGann’s response to the New Bibliography’s “idealism” and his connection with the Foucauldian “archive.”<sup>538</sup> From here the argument takes up the case of Shakespearean editing and points out that “[a]s virtually every reader realizes, no archive has yet been constructed to

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<sup>532</sup> Bjelland 14.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

<sup>534</sup> Peter Shillingsburg. “Key Issues in Editorial Theory.” *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography* 6:1 (1982): 3-16.

<sup>535</sup> “The Rationale of Hyper-Text” originally published in *The Electronic Text: Investigations in the Theory of Computerized Textuality*, Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland Eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, (19-46) and now available in a revised state as Chapter 2 in McGann’s collection *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. (53-74)

<sup>536</sup> Peter Shillingsburg. *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996.

<sup>537</sup> Bjelland 17-18.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

adequately represent his canon.”<sup>539</sup> At this point, the paper turns to a review of the various forms of analysis that have been developed from early work by C.T. Onions, through Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and into the present day with a detailed account of the work involved with marking-up or tagging text.<sup>540</sup> It is at this point that Bjelland turns back on the recent advances in humanities computing and points out that the easy move toward infinite, hypertextual referencing could cause us to forget about historical philology, as has been done in the past in the context of variorum editions.<sup>541</sup>

In her third and final section, Bjelland points out a flaw or omission in Foucault’s article. Following this line, she observes that the idea of the author-function as being implemented by an aware author would have made Foucault’s argument more wide ranging, and would have allowed it to come to terms with Shakespeare’s overt use of the author function when he oversaw the publication of the *Rape of Lucrece*. Further, Bjelland argues that editors need to restudy the history of the author function in Foucauldian terms in order to better serve editorial theory.<sup>542</sup>

I would like to comment on some of the elements in Bjelland’s article before moving on to the McGann piece that I have mentioned. First, I agree that it is important to maintain the traditional skills of philological enquiry when it comes to editing. Bjelland’s warnings about becoming too distracted by computer technology mirror my own concerns about the instrumental use of language that I have related to Heidegger’s theories on technology and authenticity. This is the strongest component of this article and is the one that connects nicely with the McGann speech. Before I move to that piece,

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<sup>539</sup> Bjelland 22.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.* 25-6.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.* 28.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.* 30-2.

however, I would like to point out what I see as a particularly useful example of the type of reading of Foucault's work that I mentioned earlier.

It is perhaps best to start by mentioning that in my limited experience of interacting with historians and theologians at the institutions where I teach, I have not found them to be the limited, "totalizing" individuals that Bjelland makes them out to be. I will leave their defense at that, since I am also fairly certain that none of them are up nights fearing the dissolution of their fields at the hands of editorial theorists. As for Foucault's part in this argument – since it is he that is shown as the leader of the counter movement – it would serve us well to remember that almost all of Foucault's mentors were historians.

Bjelland goes on to suggest that the First Folio is our bible. I am not certain who that "our" refers to, but I believe that even after the totalizing work of the New Bibliographers, more people are reading the Bible than the First Folio. Even if that "our" refers to textual scholars, there are more textual scholars working on the Bible than on the Bard. Next the article focuses on the idea that the twentieth century will be known for the challenges made to textual scholarship rather than for the dominance of the New Bibliographers. This seems to be well wide of the mark, given that the attacks on the "Alexandrian" pursuits of that group did not begin until the 1980s and have failed to do much more than offer generalized criticism. With all of the populations of the English speaking world learning from the texts influenced by the New Bibliographic School, I do not see how Bjelland can make the claim in favour of the "Pergamanians."

The Pergamanians for their part are represented as the inheritors of Foucault. Here it seems that the issue is authorial intention, though it is never made clear why Foucault,

whose own editing was what Bjelland, interpreting Greetham, would call Alexandrian in form. Further, it seems interesting that the author of this article is able to tell us what “Michel Foucault would have understood,” given her rejection of the pursuit of authorial intention. Perhaps it is the argument that we must separate text and meaning that allows us to so completely divide what Foucault wrote from what we need him to say in order to upbraid editors, theologians and historians.

Moving into the world of digital technology, Bjelland presents the idea of the Foucauldian archive. In this case, we are informed that most readers feel that we do not currently have sufficient information in our Shakespearean archive. I would argue that the opposite is true. As much as I enjoy the intense battles over the details of textual controversies such as those surrounding *The Oxford Shakespeare Editions*, I doubt that most, or even any number approaching half, of all readers feel that we need a broader spectrum of information about Shakespeare. Scholars would like more information and better information, but they simply do not make up the majority of readers. Has a student ever bravely got up from her or his seat and headed up the aisle toward the instructor’s desk holding aloft their Riverside Shakespeare and crying “Please, sir, can I have some more?”

The transformation of Foucault’s historicist project of recasting the field known as the history of ideas into a treatment of the way in which to organize data does a disservice to both areas of study. Yet, it is a very common approach in humanities computing today. It is also what leads Bjelland to suggest that Foucault’s formulation could have been more powerful if it had incorporated the individual’s ability to be aware of and hence manipulate the author function. If this sounds remarkably close to Stephen

Greenblatt's concept of Renaissance self-fashioning, it is in part due to the fact that Greenblatt's earlier but equally flawed reading of Foucault was one of the founding principles of that position. Bjelland can be forgiven for not explicitly noting her use of Greenblatt, since his work is so prominent in Renaissance circles as to have fallen into the realm of general knowledge.

My disagreements with Bjelland's reading of Foucault aside, her emphasis on philological rigor is admirable. Here she offers a corrective to Jerome McGann, who has been blazing a trail in humanities computing for the past two decades. In his recent acceptance speech for the Lyman award recognizing his contributions, McGann has some warnings of his own. Information technology he tells us is part of an "axis of evil"<sup>543</sup> and he goes on to denounce the "system of apartheid" that has been used to oppress textual scholars.<sup>544</sup>

As I have made clear in my arguments above, I think that McGann's work is of extraordinary importance, but more in conjunction with those who came before him than as a stand-alone theory of texts. The "Textonics" article provides a number of useful examples; I will focus on only a few. McGann tells us that what we need to do is strive to incorporate more digital technology in our work and to do so by emphasizing textual and bibliographic education in our schools. I would agree, though I must admit I have a hard time deciding whether this is what I feel would be best, or if it is just what I would like. For McGann, this commitment means that scholars working with computers must learn programming code.<sup>545</sup> Again he is right – by which I mean this is an argument that I too

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<sup>543</sup> I will provide page numbers for the McGann lecture from the downloadable version of the text. McGann 2.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.* 5.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.* 4.

have made – and also consistent, in that his earlier position on bibliographic codes should compel him to support the full examination of digital remediation. He then goes on to point to the problems in finding publishers for primary documents and the loss of emphasis on philological tradition in the United States.<sup>546</sup> McGann's position is that the culture wars have distracted American scholars, while their European counterparts have remained focused on philological pursuits. The concern here is that just as the West is attempting to digitize all of its textual materials, it is doing the least to prepare its new scholars for the work at hand.<sup>547</sup> Instead the work is being done by librarians and systems engineers, who, McGann feels, need the help of humanists. In order for the latter group to become engaged, it needs to move away from the vagaries of literary theory and toward the practical considerations of editorial theory. This again is one of those points that I want to be true, but which I think merely sounds attractive given my interests. Nonetheless, McGann makes a solid case for the lack of participation on the part of humanities scholars in the complete refashioning of the central institution of the university: the library.<sup>548</sup>

In the second section of his essay, McGann informs us that social editing, which has failed in print, will succeed in the digital realm. The success will be achieved through creation of archives. He then moves toward a description of material textual objects that sounds very much like a component of object-oriented-programming, a form of database construction that seems to match the other suggestions he is making about moving away from hierarchically structured data sets that follow SGML markup and toward a system that is continually changing. *The Rossetti Archive*, says McGann, has experienced a

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<sup>546</sup> McGann 7.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.* 7-8.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.* 2-10.

poverty of results because of its use of SGML, rather than emphasizing the physical nature of objects. This designation he takes from Donald McKenzie's early work on the sociology of texts. In an interesting rhetorical move for a paper that refers to quantum mechanics in its title, he calls McKenzie "the great Newtonian imagination," while later linking his own project with Einsteinian thought.<sup>549</sup>

For McGann, the archive is weakened if we do not focus on the object. In order to do this, we need to restudy the technology of the book in order to design better interfaces that will record our use and continually update our personal settings, to be as "user-specific" and as "use specific" as possible.<sup>550</sup> Using Blake as an entry point, McGann quotes himself at length:

Digital technology has remained instrumental in serving the technical and pre-critical occupations of librarians and archivists and editors. But the general field of humanities education and scholarship will not take the use of digital technology seriously until one demonstrates how its tools improve the ways we explore and explain aesthetic works – until, that is, they expand our interpretational procedures. (*Radiant Textuality* xii)<sup>551</sup>

Here McGann is making an argument about how we can involve humanists in forms of computing that directly impact their work. In order to do this he must overcome the dichotomy between what he calls the "heavens of literary interpretation," and the "hells of statistics." Humanists, he tells us, do not like math and as a result they do not like computers.<sup>552</sup>

McGann's solution is an emphasis on the graphic through his new game IVANHOE, which allow scholars to interact with texts in a geographical sense. In real

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<sup>549</sup> McGann 19, 25.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

terms this means that the interface presents illustrations plotted on graphs based on the statistical analysis of texts. The implication is that if humanists do not like numbers, perhaps they will like pretty pictures.<sup>553</sup> As a humanities scholar I find this mildly amusing. As someone who has a considerable background in statistics, I find it insulting. Graphically representing the relations between words in order to create what McGann calls the “Rossetti Spaghetti” might do as a party trick, but as research it does nothing other than show the fact that given a lot of information, patterns emerge. This has been done before.

Most recently, Chaos theorist Edward Lorenz used this type of plotting in an attempt to find patterns that would allow him to improve weather prediction.<sup>554</sup> Popularizers took his graphs and coloured them and sold them as art. They were interesting to look at, but had little to do with the actual research, which Lorenz insisted on reminding his “fans” was deterministic. Of course, Lorenz used controls where McGann and his colleagues are inputting words as if they were bits of scientific data. It is clear that we may shortly have some more pretty pictures; we will not be any closer to understanding Rossetti.

For McGann, poetry is a quantum phenomenon, with a seemingly infinite number of meanings, most of which should be computable.<sup>555</sup> All that needs to be done is to load all of our texts into computers, design better interfaces and implement quantum computing so that we can make massive amounts of computations. I am not so sure about this vision of the future. It seems to me that somehow we have exchanged the magic of

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<sup>553</sup> McGann 23.

<sup>554</sup> For an overview of these developments see James Gleick. *Chaos Making a New Science*. New York: Penguin, 1998. I was fortunate to attend a lecture that Edward Lorenz gave at the University of Victoria on September 24, 1997 where he detailed his research in this area.

<sup>555</sup> McGann 24-7.

literature for the magic of machines. I cannot help but wonder why it is not a-social and a-historical in the very terms of the project of socio-historical editing McGann expounds to move print books so readily into the foul rag and bone shop of the object-oriented database. Regardless of whether the computer moves quickly or not, or whether it uses an object-oriented as opposed to a relational database, it still makes an instrumental use of language that falls into the category of descriptive totality laid out by Heidegger. That does not change just because the graphs look better when we tried this in the 1970s.

Still, while I find the notion of the archive put forward by Bjelland and McGann to be more of a house of mirrors than an updated library, I do agree with their emphasis on philology and the need for humanists to engage with digital technology. What is needed is a commitment to research that emphasizes form, content and context. My brief historical overview of the three main controversies in the field has been one attempt to show how important it is that we keep one eye on history and one eye on the future. Here we can learn much from the earlier transformations that we have encountered. As Clemens reminds us in the epigraph at the head of this chapter, “history may not repeat itself, but it very often rhymes.” Technology changes, but humanity remains. As long as we know that – and as long as we don’t have Housman’s pumpkins on our shoulders – we should be just fine.

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