

2019 Seminar Abstracts: Modern Scholarly Editions: Challenges and Opportunities
Martin Butler, Leeds University
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Objectives

Recent years have seen the arrival of many new collected editions, both for Shakespeare and other early modern authors (Jonson, Middleton, Ford, Webster), and still more are in the pipeline (Nashe, Marston, Hakluyt, etc.). This generation of editions has been inflected by changing notions of the status of the author, by new technologies of digital editing and computer-aided analysis, by a new emphasis on performance, and by shifts in the market for scholarly publication and the funding of its production, which now supports teams of editors instead of the lone scholar of the early twentieth century. This seminar asks how the idea of the ‘complete works’ is changing and what opportunities, obstacles and pressures are experienced by current editors. What are the consequences of the need to redefine an author’s canon or to make him/her look new? What usages are assumed by these editions, and how are the changing needs of scholarly and student readers accommodated by critical texts? What have been the effects of digital or multiple-platform editing and how are different collected editions responding to these possibilities? Does the ethos of the single-author works still stand up in the face of modern thinking about literary production, collaboration, revision and attribution? Indeed, what has been or should be the impact of the rise of stylometric analysis alongside renewed interest in collaboration on the editing of early modern authors? What might be the future shape or boundaries of the collected works? We invite paper proposals that address one or more of our questions, and we look forward to a rounded discussion of the editing early modern authors in the twenty-first century.

**“Mediators of the wor(l)d:
 Another approach to editing early modern English drama”**

Brandi Adams
University of Maryland

In his essay “What We Owe to Editors,” about the challenges of editing early modern English drama, Lukas Erne writes that “editors are the unacknowledged mediators of the word.” More than this, however, single author scholarly editions and their editors shape larger cultural perceptions of individual authors—including but not limited to Shakespeare, Marlowe, Middleton, Jonson, and Nashe—as well as the world of early modern English drama itself. Perhaps without intent, editors perpetuate a myth that individual authors had a disproportionate role in early modern English theater, even as their scholarly editions contain new, bold material that addresses the collaborative nature of playwriting, the life and business of the theater, and the complicated processes of printing, publishing, and reading plays. Nevertheless, these editions prop up a narrative that often excludes “minor” playwrights and their contributions to the larger landscape of early modern English drama and continually lionize playwrights who were one of many working in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England. While I recognize the importance of “complete works,” I choose to argue that we consider another set of parameters by which to conceptualize, historicize, and even market scholarly editions of early modern dramatists: by collecting and editing plays according to the theaters (or even universities) in which they were produced and performed. This suggestion may not be an especially novel one, but I propose that by focusing on the space and architecture in and around which plays were written performed, we create a clearer picture of how early modern theater was experienced and read. In the end, we may also encourage scholars of all stripes to consider studying a wide variety of playwrights who were participating in the wor(l)d of early modern English drama.

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**“The Lap[se?] of Error”:
 Reconsidering the title of Elizabeth I’s “Golden Speech”**

Kristen Abbott Bennett
Framingham State University

This essay reviews the publication history of Elizabeth’s I’s final speeches to raise questions about how editors may retain documentary and historical accuracy when modernizing, abbreviating, and otherwise altering early modern titles. Digital spelunking in the British Library’s *English Short Title Catalogue* (ESTC) and cross-checking my findings in *Early English Books Online* has so far revealed that all printed variants of Elizabeth’s 30 November 1601 speech to Parliament that follow A.B.’s contemporaneous edition, “Her majesties most princelie answer, delivered by herselfe at the Court at White-hall, on the last day of November 1601,” have historically inaccurate titles. The confusion begins in 1628[?] when one finds an edition of “Queene Elizabeth’s Speech to Her Last Parliament” that was published twice again in 1642[?] with the same title. Yet these texts bear no resemblance to what Leah Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose have identified as Elizabeth’s “last” speech to Parliament, dated 19 December 1601 (*Elizabeth I Collected Works* 346-354); each is a variant of the 30 November speech. In 1659, Thomas Milbourn compounded the confusion when he published “The Golden Speech of Queen Elizabeth to her last Parliament 30 November, anno Domini 1601.” Many of Elizabeth’s editors have yet to clarify the historical and documentary discrepancies, following a centuries-long habit of referring to Elizabeth’s penultimate Parliamentary speech as her gilded swan song. Broadly speaking, the upshot of these titular emendations has been to historicize Elizabeth’s last acts in Parliament as “Golden,” and to forget the Spanish threat to Ireland that she discussed in her December 1601 address. The convoluted transmission and documentary history of Elizabeth’s final speeches challenges received wisdom about treating titles as labels, or assigning them based on convenient editorial conventions.

**“Witness the Change:
 Teaching Textual Editing in Future Shakespeare Editions”**

Fran Connor
Wichita State University

Recent editions of Shakespeare aimed at classrooms—notably those published by Norton and Oxford—use their print and digital components to offer students plenty of information about Shakespeare’s texts. However, being critical editions, they present their texts as the result of decisions made by the works’ editors, and they generally do not ask students to think critically about the methodologies that inform the editors’ textual choices. This paper asks whether future editions of Shakespeare aimed at undergraduate students can or should do more to teach students about the practice of textual edition, and hopes to start this conversation by suggesting a few possibilities for doing so.

“Tinker, Curator, Perfecter, Editor”

Ian H. De Jong
University of Nevada, Reno

The proliferation of editions of the complete works of Shakespeare may be approaching the tipping-point into oversaturation, but shows no signs of abatement. In fact, a culture of incorporation

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pervades the editing of early modern authors, as dramatists like Thomas Middleton and John Ford, pamphleteers like Thomas Nashe, and intellectuals like Sir Francis Bacon also get the complete-works treatment. These rapidly multiplying complete works tend to configure their editors as curators, endlessly re-selecting, reframing, and reinterpreting a relatively finite pool of textual artifacts. The curatorial model of editing now in the ascendant lends itself to amnesiac reiteration—presentation and re-presentation relatively independent of what has come before.

As an alternative to this model, my essay repurposes an early modern proto-editorial function: perfection. Drawing upon Sonia Massai’s description of the print-house task of “perfecting” or “augmenting,” as well as upon William Sherman and Heather Wolfe’s discussion of an idiosyncratic example of this practice, I propose a kinship between modern scholarly editing and early modern print-house perfecting. This kinship illuminates the collaborative nature of scholarly editing and the hybridity of the scholarly edition; it also emphasizes the resonances between the modern proliferation of complete-works editions and early modern conceptions of books’ endless perfectibility.

“Arranging the Collected Edition”

Suzanne Gossett
Loyola University Chicago

Arrangement sounds like a home decorating project, but for an edition of an author’s works it opens up contested issues of textual scholarship and practical problems of publishing. First, the title: is this a ‘Collected’ or a ‘Complete’ Works? Some recent editions avoid the latter claim, but others (e.g. the *Cambridge Jonson*) retain it, possibly to reassure the buyer that she is getting her money’s worth. Next, Is the material to be ordered chronologically, generically, by single versus collaborated authorship, by unquestioned versus uncertain attribution, by print versus electronic publication? Each has its drawbacks. Many plays are undated or undateable. Poems published together in collections may have been written at widely varying times. The genre of many plays is debateable. Recent stylometric work has found collaboration where none was earlier suspected. The history of ‘dubia’ is itself notoriously dubious. Material placed in a print or electronic supplement may never be consulted. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, and despite ideological objections to seeking a single author for a socialized text, the one constant in the arrangement of collected editions of early modern authors is, perhaps inevitably, the focus on the individual.

The practical interests of readers and publishers are not always ignored. In the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher Folio Humphrey Moseley justified including only plays not previously published because otherwise the book would have been too ‘Voluminous’, and furthermore, ‘many gentlemen were already furnished, and I would have none say, they pay twice for the same book’. Limitations on size and price, as well as implicit beliefs about what readers want, may lead contemporary publishers to place scholarly materials in supplementary volumes or on the web. Concern for readers may also explain why the chronological *Collected Middleton* includes alphabetical and generic tables of contents, and why the Arden *Complete Shakespeare* simply arranges the plays in alphabetical order.

**“Leave Not a Rack Behind?:
The Value of Negative Evidence in Dating Shakespeare’s London Beginnings”**

Mark Hulse
University of Alabama

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Establishing the approximate date for Shakespeare's earliest theatrical activities in London is of tremendous importance to editors, especially when assembling his collected works into a single, chronologically arranged edition. Nearly all mainstream critics accept a date somewhere within the 1586 to 1591 range, but there has been little movement toward a more precise consensus. Critics are rightly skeptical about interpreting the absence of Shakespeare's name from encomiasts like Webbe, Puttenham, and Harrington as indicating an exclusively post-1590 theatrical career (a theory pioneered by Edmund Malone), since popular playwrights were rarely featured in such lists. Distrusting such forms of negative evidence as proof of Shakespeare's late start, critics routinely adjust the timeline to accommodate earlier composition dates using predominantly internal evidence. My study advocates for the inherent necessity of negative evidence as a category, and seeks to analyze and evaluate the data available for Shakespeare. I argue that we can and should broaden the focus beyond references to the author, surveying all traces left by him and his works in the historical record. Modern editions often examine plays in isolation, especially in discussions of dating, and this weakens the perceived value of the documentary evidence that can be accumulated. The collected data is formidable and noteworthy for several reasons, including the quantity of items, their testimony to numerous works, and their largely independent origins. I suggest that the explosion of such traces in the historical record from 1592 to 1595, in contrast to the dearth of definitive items prior to this period, compellingly supports a post-1590 beginning to Shakespeare's London career.

“A complete Marlowe”

András Kiséry
City College of New York, CUNY

I have been invited to submit a proposal for single-volume edition of Christopher Marlowe's works, one that is expected by the series guidelines to “pay greater attention ... to the material history of the writings that it presents, conveying some sense of the ways in which they originally found their readership.”

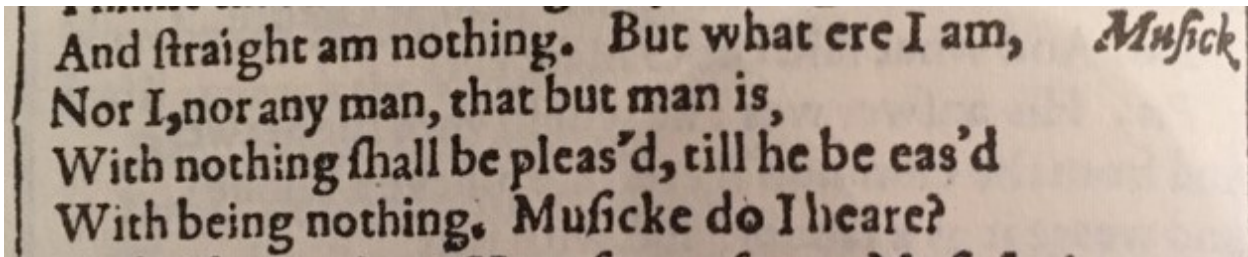
Marlowe is an excellent opportunity for such an edition: while the oeuvre is relatively compact, it poses a series of questions about authorship and transmission. Almost all of the texts associated with Marlowe come down to us in posthumous editions, and several of them are explicitly collaborative in nature. This condition of the textual corpus is in striking contrast with the highly individualized authorship imagined by literary critics, whose projections of a literary career have defined our sense of the canon and shaped scholarly editions.

Rather than writing a formal paper, I hope to share an extended version of my proposal. I will first explain why I would like to edit the complete rather than selected works, and then discuss what the complete works of Marlowe would look like--both in terms of the shape and organization of the authorial canon and in terms of the presentation and textual apparatus--in such an edition.

“Bringing dead texts to life”

Joe Penczak
Troupe of Friends theatre company

There are a few lines of verse in Act 5 scene 4 of *The Life and Death of Richard the Second*, or *Actus Quintus Scena Quarta* as it is written in the First Folio, that have always puzzled me: Picking it up midline:



When memorizing this speech for a production my theater company mounted in 2011, I had trouble figuring out exactly what this meant. That is, until I thought perhaps there was an error in the text. What if the line should read:

But what ere I am,
 Nor I, nor any man, but that man is
 With nothing, shall be pleas'd, till he be eas'd
 With being nothing.

I wouldn't be the first editor to suggest a transposition of two words and moving some commas around, but I might be the first actor that suggested an editorial change based on performance choices.

Recently, I've become enamored with The First Folio text as a guide for actors, and immersed myself with various publications on that line of scholarship. For ready access to the First Folio (or Quarto) version of a particular play, I primarily use Open Source Shakespeare, an online website that houses the texts of all of the plays and sonnets, and has a great search tool to enable the casual reader to find a particular phrase or word from any of the plays. I typically start my process of acting in Shakespeare by finding out if the Folio is the only text, or, if not, what differences there are between the variations. The Furness Variorum has also proved invaluable in its annotations, which can at times be quite amusing – it's like watching dead ghosts from the 17 and 1800's arguing with each other over the correctness of the received or amended text.

The Open Source Shakespeare site posits an interesting possible future for online Shakespeare:

What about the future of OSS itself? It is not in its terminal form – I hope to continue extending and refining it long after this paper is completed. I see three main possibilities for improvement:

1. Include multiple versions of the texts. The Internet Shakespeare Editions has already transcribed the folio and quarto versions of each text, with the original spelling. Having an editorial edition (Moby) alongside the early texts would be ideal: readers could use Moby for everyday use, and scholars could compare the early texts onscreen. There are some technical challenges to be overcome – namely, how does one collate, or “map,” the passages in one text to the passages in another? What about passages that are in one text, but not in another text – how will they be stored or displayed? I have no doubt that these issues are soluble, but they require careful thought.

2. Include folio and quarto images, audio clips, and video clips. There are sites such as the Electronic Text Library that will let you look up a passage, then display an image of a First Folio page onscreen, where you can see the passage yourself (Electronic). This strikes me as an extremely useful tool for scholars. Keeping track of which passage is on what page is a monumental task, so OSS would have to use texts that were already mapped to the pages. Such texts exist; whether or not they can be used legally is a different matter.

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Considering the inclusion of audio and video clips may be a flight of fancy. It would involve taking very large computer files and breaking them up into smaller files, then mapping them to each passage. Yet would it not be wonderful to read a soliloquy, and then hear it read out loud – or, when you are trying to understand a passage of dialogue, to see actors interpret it on your computer screen?

I do not underestimate the amount of work involved with this. Completing all of the works would take years of full-time effort. But in the short term, I would like to take a single scene – most likely Act I, Scene 1 of “Romeo and Juliet” – and add multiple text versions, folio and quarto facsimiles, audio clips, and video clips. I have that particular scene in mind because the folio and first quarto versions differ significantly, so it would show the value in comparing variant texts side-by-side. Also, the scene has a lot of action, and it is universally well-known, even to high school students who started to read the play and then decided to fake it for the test.

3. Build another site, with another text collection. I have thought of the Gospels or Chaucer’s works as possible candidates for a new collection, to demonstrate that OSS’s parser, database, and display code could potentially ingest and display any kind of literary work. That may happen eventually, but the thought of embarking on another project like Open Source Shakespeare, even one requiring far less effort, makes me want to lie down for a while.

What I hope to write about is the feasibility of doing a combination of points 1 and 2 above, with one additional feature: housing this product in an open source website that can be freely modified by scholars, rogues, and peasant slaves alike – a Wikipedia for Shakespeare’s Works if you will. I believe the tools are available to suggest the future of scholarly editing of Shakespeare will be collaborative, online, and multi-media based. In our lifetime, we will visit a webpage and have our choice of reading the text, having it read to us, watching clips of scenes from a multitude of sources (cinematic, theatrical, animated, etc), all while having the option of clicking through hyperlinks of footnoted words/phrases/lines that open up pages and pages of hundreds of years of editorial choices made since the 16th century.

“The BBC Hybrid Complete Works”

Jonah Kent Richards
SUNY Albany

In coordination with the release of their 1978 to 1985 television series, *The Shakespeare Plays*, the BBC published scholarly paperback editions of all thirty-seven of their plays. While the BBC published each play as a single edition, they are collectively linked by a common format into a complete works series like *The Folger Shakespeare Library editions*. The BBC based their editions on the 1951 *Alexander Text of the Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. The BBC editions contained an introductory essay on the play and another on the production. The “notes to the text” explains that the texts were designed to be read independently or in conjunction with screenings from the television productions. The play text itself is primarily composed of the unaltered Alexander text with its theatrical divisions into acts and scenes and original locations and stage directions. On the right hand of the margins of the text, the editors recorded the scene divisions and locations from the television production along with any cuts or rearrangements that the script editor made to Shakespeare’s original text.

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The BBC never explicitly states their purpose behind publishing the editions other than providing access to audiences to their television scripts. My paper proposes to treat the BBC editions and *The Shakespeare Plays* as a single hybrid complete works. The BBC saw their editions as means of entering an Anglo-American academic market as it redefined the Shakespeare plays as performances. While the BBC editions have fallen out of fashion, they are a pre-cursor to contemporary hybrid complete works like *The Norton Shakespeare, Third Edition*. In addition to the printed versions of Shakespeare's work, *The Norton* contains a supplementary digital edition of material like recordings of songs from the plays and audio performances from the British theatre along with links to *The Norton Shakespeare YouTube Channel* that contains clips of stage productions of the plays.

“Re-writing Francis Bacon”

Alan Stewart
Columbia University

This paper turns to the vexed question of how a scholarly edition should treat a work that is repeatedly rewritten, whether by its author, scribes, early editors, or publishers. It draws on research undertaken for the scholarly edition for which I am co-Director, The Oxford Francis Bacon. Bacon's own penchant for revising his writings is well-known: his *Essays* exist in three distinct printed versions (1597, 1612, 1625), as well as other manuscript and translated states, while his English *The advancement of learning* (1605) provided the foundation for his Latin *De augmentis scientiarum* (1620 on). But I now know (from my work on volume 1, Bacon's *Early Writings, 1584-1596*) that Bacon's editor William Rawley revised some of Bacon's manuscript writings for print as late as the 1650s, which has meant that the dominant posthumous Baconian print tradition fails to reflect the manuscript versions that circulated in his lifetime. How should an edition deal with such texts? Is a text fixed by its initial composition, its circulation, or its “final” form? How are the answers to that question related to assumptions about manuscript and print? How do these issues intersect with the governing principle of chronology in an edition such as the Oxford Francis Bacon?

"Editorial Design"

Gary Taylor
Florida State University

This essay argues that editorial theory and practice should recognize that all scholarly editions (indeed, all posthumous editions) are designed material objects, containing other earlier designed material objects that were made by other people. We can therefore usefully reimagine editions (printed or digital) in terms of theories and practices of the industrial design of mass-produced commodities. These principles apply as much to the 1623 Shakespeare folio as to recent editions of the collected works of Shakespeare and Middleton.

“Arden Completed”

Ann Thompson
King's College London

The third series of the Arden Shakespeare will be completed with the publication of *Measure for Measure* in 2019 and to mark the occasion we will also publish a revised and updated edition of the

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Complete Works in one volume, scheduled for 2020. The first Arden *Complete Works* was published (by Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd) in 1998, only three years after the appearance of the first three plays in the third series. The proposal came from the publishers and all three of the General Editors (Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan) were at first reluctant to undertake the project. Nevertheless, we went ahead and were agreeably surprised by the sales figures. The volume was reprinted (now by Thomson Learning) in 2000 and a revised edition appeared from yet another publisher, Bloomsbury, in 2011. A fourth General Editor, Henry Woudhuysen, is involved in the 2020 revision and our work is due to be submitted to the press by 23 April 2019.

In my seminar paper I discuss the rationale for the Arden *Complete Works* and why we were (and to some extent still are) reluctant to undertake it. I consider the relation of the *Complete Works* to the third Arden series and the changing publishing context. I also discuss some of the issues that arose during the initial work on the project and the 2011 revision, including the arrangement of the plays and the problem of how to present variant texts. In the light of the 2020 ‘final’ version (which of course will not be final; the fourth Arden series is already under way), I end with a note on how far editions can aim to be ‘definitive’.