

[ABSTRACTS]

SHAKESPEARE & TEXTUAL FAILURE (S37)

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SPEECH PREFIXES, EDITORS, AND TEXTUAL FAILURE

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Speech prefixes—the names of the characters that appear before they speak—are notoriously messy in early printed English drama. Not only are the names of the characters often truncated down to two or three letters, which can lead to ambiguity about who is speaking which line, but there are also times where one character receives multiple substantially different speech prefixes. The speech prefixes for Lady Capulet in Q2 of *Romeo and Juliet*, exemplify both forms of messiness as they vary between “*Wife*,” “*Old La*,” “*Capu. Wi.*,” “*Ca. Wi.*,” “*La*,” “*Mo.*,” and “*M.*”

The messiness of speech prefixes is often viewed by editors as a kind of paratextual failure that hinders comprehension. Many editors attempt to correct this by emending the speech prefixes, standardizing and elongating them to make the plays clearer to readers. Therefore, Lady Capulet’s speech prefixes become “Lady Capulet” in some editions and “Capulet’s Wife” in others. (The fact that I automatically refer to this character as Lady Capulet—a name that she is not given in speech prefixes in Q2—is a testament to how pervasive this emendation is in modern critical editions.) Standardized speech prefixes are useful in removing a barrier to understanding already difficult texts for students; however, this paper asks the following questions: Why do we view speech prefixes as textual failures? Why do we feel the need to regularize them? What do we lose when we eliminate the ambiguity that they can bring to a playbook? Why must Lady Capulet and others be textually reduced to one identity when their speech prefixes offer many different options? By engaging critically with speech prefixes given to royal figures—especially the speech prefixes given to Hal in Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV* and *The Famous Victories of Henry V*—I argue that messy/unclear speech prefixes open up interpretive possibilities. This in turn, leads to questions about what we prioritize in modern critical editions of plays.

ON MAKING MISTAKES

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In Q2 of *Romeo and Juliet*, the line “O Lord they fight, I will go call the Watch” (L2v), spoken in Q1 by the Boy (Q2’s Page), is set as a stage direction: in italics and centered on the page. This appears to be a mistake. In my paper, I ask three related questions arising from this. Why are we able to identify it as a mistake? What does it mean to call something a mistake? And what might all this tell us about the presuppositions of our interpretive work? Or, phrased more generally: What is a mistake? Who is making mistakes? And what can we do about it?

“CUT OFF HIS OPPOSITES”: CENSORSHIP, EMENDATION, AND THE MANUSCRIPT *BARNAVELT*

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The manuscript of *The Tragedie of Sir John van Olden Barnavelt*, written by John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, copied by Ralph Crane, annotated for performance at the Globe, and censored by both Bishop John King and Sir George Buc in the summer of 1619, presents its editor with a dizzying set of challenges. The most enigmatic is whether any of the heavily overwritten speeches can ever be salvaged. Another challenge, however, and the subject for this paper, is how to handle rewritten lines and scenes. Buc’s censorship process seems to have had two or three stages. He read the manuscript, which survives in BL MS Add. 18653, and made small pencil crosses in the margin next to passages that may have given him pause. Subsequently, he drew over some of these pencil crosses in ink, perhaps indicating his more grave concerns with a subset of the initial set of concerns. At some point, perhaps as he was inking in these crosses, he decided to eliminate whole speeches that he considered impossible to permit. Folio 22v, for instance, has a long column of text which can only partially be reconstructed. In other cases, however, Buc rewrote lines. In Barnavelt’s acrimonious reply to the court that has charged him with treason, for instance, on fol. 24r, Buc’s pencil cross next to Barnavelt’s comparison of the Prince of Orange to Octavius who “tooke that course” when he revoked “all hir auncient freedoms,” gets inked over; then “tooke that course” is crossed out and he writes “cutt of his opposites” in its place. Eventually, he simply drew a line through the final eleven lines of the scene, presumably deciding they could not be salvaged. They may not have been stageable, but Buc did not blot out these lines as he did elsewhere, pointing in some ways to the failure of Buc’s censorship – the lines could have been read by anyone with access to the manuscript and they are easily recovered by modern editors. A palimpsestic speech like this, then, stands as both an instance of textual failure and of textual persistence and this paper will seek to puzzle out the meaning of this failed failure.

CORRECTED AND UNCORRECTED PAGES OF THE SHAKESPEARE FIRST FOLIO

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The basis for this study is the watermark and stop-press correction data collected for Eric Rasmussen and Anthony James West’s *The Shakespeare First Folios: A Descriptive Catalogue*. This study delves into the intriguing realm of stop-press corrections in the Shakespeare First Folio, exploring the nuances of proofreading practices, the nature of corrections, and the handling of printed sheets within the production process.

Through meticulous examination and analysis, this research identifies and catalogs over 300 stop-press corrections in the First Folio, shedding light on the dynamic interplay between proofreaders, compositors, and pressmen. It uncovers patterns in the distribution of corrections across pages and formes, revealing insights into the collaborative efforts and efficiency measures undertaken in the print shop.

This study investigates the nature of these corrections, highlighting the proofreader's inclination towards visually noticeable errors rather than subtle textual discrepancies. The findings illustrate the meticulousness employed to

create visually appealing pages amid the challenges posed by a constantly operating press. Analyzing the stop-press correction data invites how the printed sheets were handled during the production process, contemplating the placement of corrected and uncorrected sheets within the stacks.

What emerges from the data is the challenge to the preconceptions about the precision of printing practices in early modern times, suggesting a higher frequency of uncorrected sheets than would be assumed. The absence of fully corrected copies in the examined samples invites contemplation about the complexities and uncertainties inherent in the production of these historical texts, enriching our understanding of printing practices in that era.

FAILURE AND THE FUTURE OF THE NEW INTERNET SHAKESPEARE EDITIONS

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In 2018, the software stack of the ISE Platform failed. Since then, the *Internet Shakespeare Editions* (ISE) available at internetshakespeare.uvic.ca has been a collection of staticized HTML pages captured just before the server was taken offline. This essay, part of a longer article being co-written with Brett Greatley-Hirsch, Sarah Neville, and James Mardock, focuses on the technical reasons for the ISE's failures and on the steps Linked Early Modern Drama Online (LEMDO) has taken to ensure the longevity and functionality of the *New Internet Shakespeare Editions* (NISE). I describe the ISE's technologies and explain what I, as a digital humanist and website builder, see as its strengths and weaknesses. Situating the technical affordances of the ISE within the fields of digital humanities and textual criticism, I show why building the new LEMDO platform was a better option than patching the ISE Platform. I will explain the reasons for the failure of the ISE platform in December 2018 and the methods by which my developer-colleagues staticized the project. Arguing both that the ISE's capacious scope ultimately led to its failure and that the digital landscape no longer needs a "one-stop Shakespeare shop," I justify the NISE's decision to narrow its scope to editions and facsimiles, and additional decision to limit the number of digital objects included in an edition. I describe the highly constrained, non-boutique software stack of the LEMDO platform and show how following the Endings principles for digital longevity gives the rebranded NISE a long and bright future.

LOST IN TRANSLITERATION: *EDWARD II*

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This paper focuses on the failure of editors to acknowledge (let alone solve) a nexus of unusual typographic, spelling, metrical, and trans-linguistic complexity in Marlowe's *Edward II*. In the play's first edition (1594), the name of the Frenchman who assists Edward's allies against the Queen is *Lewne* throughout (with speech prefixes *Lew.* and *Lewn.*). The verse appears to require a two-syllable name with second-syllable accent, and in the first post-quarto edition (1744), Dodsley renamed the character "Levune." This franglaisation has been silently adopted in virtually all modern editions — though an occasional unexplained *Lejeune* or *Lecune* pops up in the early nineteenth century. As nicely as "Levune" may roll off the French-imitating English tongue, Dodsley's intervention depended on a "failure" of the archive: he thought Q2 the first edition, with its spellings *Levvne* and

Lewen. His decision also appears to be based on a (failed?) understanding of an early modern typographical/orthographical unlikelihood — medial “vv” for “vu.” The paper explores this puzzle through the thicket of multiply spelled English transliterations of French and Low-Countries placenames, Burgundian and Huguenot names of refugees and immigrants as recorded in early modern London, and one early reader’s notes on the play. But “puzzle” suggests “solution,” and the paper considers what is at stake in insisting on (versions of) success over failure – in editions that require “authoritative” texts, in the (open gendered) competitiveness of editorial crux-slaying, and in the context of an English play that invests significant affect in multiple French characters, including Edward’s queen and boyfriend, both French émigré(e)s.

THOMAS SHADWELL, *TIMON OF ATHENS*, AND TEXTUAL FAILURE

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It’s not quite what you think: I’m not suggesting that Shadwell (hardly a top-tier Restoration dramatist, to be sure) is a failure; nor that *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare’s least-loved play, is a failure. Nor do I mean to imply that Shadwell’s 1678 adaptation of *Timon* is a failure (though I can’t recall it having been staged of late...). Rather, I’m actually wondering if almost the opposite of all this could be true. Shakespeare and Middleton’s *Timon of Athens* (c.1607) has only a single early textual witness: the text as it appeared in the First Folio of 1623. E. K. Chambers declared that ‘The structure of *Timon* as a whole is incoherent’, and Coleridge famously described it as ‘the stillborn twin of *King Lear*’. Speech prefixes are inconsistent throughout the Folio text and the stage directions are messy and permissive; verse and prose are often printed incorrectly (posing knotty questions about lineation); and underdeveloped plotlines (e.g., Alcibiades’) have been read by scholars as evidence that the play is unfinished. There are no known surviving records of *Timon* in performance during the early seventeenth century. So – allowing for the significant aesthetic and material differences of Restoration playing – what, if anything, can we learn from Shadwell about responding to perceived textual failure in the Folio text when trying to prepare the play for performance? Is it useful at all to posit Shadwell as an early editor of the play as much as an early adaptor; one whose editorial vision was to make the text ready for performance? What did he think worked that might surprise us, and what did he feel compelled to change? What might it mean to use Shadwell as our guide to the Folio text’s performative possibilities and recuperate it as a playtext capable of performance?

REVISITING SHAKESPEARE’S IMAGERY: CAROLINE SPURGEON’S UNFINISHED TRILOGY

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Caroline Spurgeon is known to Shakespeareans as the author of *Shakespeare’s Imagery and What it Tells Us* (1935). Spurgeon’s opening up of this field was generally lauded by early critics, although strident criticisms of her tendency towards biographical criticism, her reliance on statistics, and her arguments from negative evidence later emerged. Today, scholarly opinion on Spurgeon remains ambivalent, simultaneously dismissing some aspects of her work as quaint while acknowledging others as path-breaking. One fact of Spurgeon’s legacy which is little accounted for in discussions of her work—and with which this paper will engage—is the incomplete and (by some

accounts) failed nature of *Shakespeare's Imagery*. The 1935 volume, which has come to be judged as Spurgeon's definitive contribution, represents only the first installment of her planned trilogy. While Spurgeon's declining health means that she did not live to complete the work, the research was left in a more advanced state than is normally acknowledged. Her unpublished manuscripts and cache of index cards towards the later publications (held at the Folger) have the potential to make good on her intentions to evaluate figurative language as a means of determining authorship, and to identify cultural influences on Shakespeare's language.

The Folger's ongoing renovations mean that some of my discussions at this point (and in this paper) are necessarily speculative—thus perhaps reproducing another form of textual failure—but a few generative questions about its contents and contexts will nonetheless be explored. What is the nature of the 'failure' ascribed to Spurgeon and her work in the twentieth century, and in our own time? What would Spurgeon's archives need to contain in order to redeem *Shakespeare's Imagery* from charges of textual failure (and what does this tell us about our own scholarly judgements and biases)? To what extent was Spurgeon a thinker of her time (as a student of nineteenth-century positivist thinking) or ahead of her time (as a practitioner of what we might now call computational stylistics)? Finally, what might her ensuring of the archive's survival suggest about Spurgeon's own attitude to textual failure?

FLYING LADY MACDUFF

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The murder of Lady Macduff and her child in 4.2 *Macbeth* is considered a critical scene that contrasts innocence and virtue with the heartless brutality of Scotland's usurping king. However, by the late Eighteenth Century the murders only existed in the report Ross provides to Macduff in 4.3. The 1670 promptbook from Dublin's Smock Alley cut the boy, leaving only Lady Macduff's dialogue with Ross and the Messenger prior to the arrival of the murderers. The 1710 edition of the play, which follows the Davenant version, shows this cut became standard in performance. The Bell edition of 1773, following Garrick's version, sanctions the cut with the note: "Here Shakespeare, as if the vigorous exertion of his faculties, in the preceding scene, required relaxation, has given us a most trifling superfluous dialogue, between Lady Macduff, Rosse, and her son, merely that another murder may be committed, on the stage too. We heartily concur in, and approve of, striking out the greatest part of it." Kemble, Macready, Charles Kean, Irving, and Forbes-Robertson eliminated the entire scene, which meant the murder of Lady Macduff and her child was generally not shown to the audience through most of the Nineteenth Century. Samuel Phelps originally included it in his productions during the 1840s; however, he eliminated it by 1853. At least one critic questioned its "genuineness," finding it "repulsive" and lacking narrative purpose. Objections that the scene was too painful and served no moral function given that Macbeth's iniquity was already established by this point in the play appear to have supported its elimination in performance. My paper will examine the elimination of this scene in performance and how it affects the play.

IDOLS OF THE CAVE: ERRING VOICES AND TEXTS IN PHILIP SIDNEY'S *OLD ARCADIA*

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Philip Sidney's *Old Arcadia* features a number of sonnets which, in spite of their famously tight poetic form, are described as having been delivered by faltering, stammering, and variously errant voices. Repeated assurances that these messy vocal performances have been tidied up by the editorial pen of *Arcadia's* narrator (which, "having more leisure, then [performers'] tongues, might perchance pullish a little the Rudenes" of the live vocal performances) are only partly borne out by manuscript texts of the sonnets themselves, inviting readers to consider possible scribal analogues to the "abundance of sighes" and other vocal tics and tremors that continually interrupt Arcadian sonnet performances. Focusing on Folger MS H.b.1 (an early manuscript of *Arcadia* by a professional scribe) this paper considers voice breaks alongside page breaks and other bibliographic features that put pressure on the distinction between accident, intention, and intentional accident. Moments of textual failure within the manuscript, I argue, might be understood as part of a larger poetics of vocal failure informing Sidney's text.

THE DEFAULTER:

RUTH RAWORTH, TEXTUAL FAILURE, AND THE BEAUMONT & FLETCHER FOLIO

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In late 1646, Ruth Raworth's printing house was one of at least seven in London laboring to complete Humphrey Moseley and Humphrey Robinson's folio edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays. Textual evidence shows that the work allocations were reshuffled partway through the volume's production, seemingly due to the Raworth house failing to complete their assigned section. In his landmark study on the B&F folio, R.C. Bald characterized Ruth as a "defaulter" – one who fails to fulfill a duty or obligation.

Traditionally, the engine driving research into early modern printing practices and book trade personnel has been failure in the form of error. Without those literal imprints marking the moments when mechanical production met humanity and humanity won, it would be easy to ignore the identities and experiences of the people who made books. In this paper, my exploration of error and failure is twofold. On the one hand, we have the initial moment of "failure" in 1646/7; on the other, the errors, often rooted in assumption and implicit bias, committed by bibliographers in their interpretations and explanations of such events. How does the original story change when told by a different narrator? And how do we understand our relationship to the previous narrators – and our responsibility to interrogate the stories they told us?

TEXTUAL[IZED] FAILURE IN *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST*.

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The early printings of *Love's Labour's Lost* (Q1 1598; F 1623) are full of failures, both in and of text. I am being coy with my prepositions here in order to indicate the two main interests of my paper. In an effort to link the odd typography of the early printings of these plays (first pointed out to me long ago on an older website known as "Twitter" by the leader of our seminar) to the plays' interest in the materiality of language (in manuscript props, in intrigue plotting, in jests about the sounds of words and letters, and in exaggeratedly physical enunciation), I will read the play's ambiguous, but attention-grabbing letter forms in print alongside the textualized moments of social and aesthetic failure enacted by its characters in performance. To put it more axiomatically: When it comes to understanding *Love's Labour's Lost* in classrooms and in criticism, editors, scholars, teachers, and students can all benefit from knowing how, in the play's earliest extant iterations, text fails. When it comes to performance, and to understanding the imagined social dynamics of the play, it is likewise important to recognize how, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, failure is repeatedly textualized.