

Valuing the Material Text: A Plea for a Change in Policy Concerning Selection of Reference Texts for Future New Variorum Shakespeare Editions, with Examples from the 1609 Quarto of *SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS*

In 1871, Horace Howard Furness initiated one of the greatest scholarly undertakings of modern times: *The New Variorum Shakespeare* -- an undertaking so vast in scope that it has not been completed to this day -- an undertaking so vast that it can never truly be completed -- an undertaking that of its very nature must like the Phoenix repeatedly consume itself in flames and be reborn of its own ashes. In the first of these editions, *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: ROMEO AND JULIET*, Furness explains his purpose and plan: faced with having the valuable notes of editors like "Knight, Singer, Collier, Ulrici, Delius, Dyce, Hudson, Staunton, White, Clarke, Keightley, and Halliwell" only available in different volumes, he proposed to save time and effort by "collecting these comments after the manner of a Variorum and presenting them, on the same page, in a condensed form, in connection with the difficulties which they explain" (vi). After originally deciding "to adopt the text of some one edition from which all the variations of the Quartos and Folios and other editions should be noted," he, "in consequence of unforeseen obstacles," chose instead to adopt "the reading of a majority of the ablest editors," producing a **composite** text to be used as the reference text for his edition (vii-viii). Composite texts were also used as reference texts for next three volumes: *Macbeth* (1873), *Hamlet* (1877), and *King Lear* (1880).

In 1886, *The New Variorum Shakespeare* underwent the first of its many transformations. Evidently preparing the first four volumes caused Furness to reflect more deeply on the nature of Shakespearean texts:

But when we study Shakespeare [as opposed to simply reading him], then our mood changes; no longer are we "sitting at a play," the passive recipients of impressions through the eye and ear, but we weigh every word, analyse every expression, shift every phrase, that no grain of art or beauty which we can

assimilate shall escape. To do this to our best advantage we must have Shakespeare's own words before us. No other words will avail, even though they be those of the wisest and most inspired of our day and generation. We must have Shakespeare's own text; or, failing this, the nearest possible approach to it. We shall be duly grateful to the wise and learned, who, where phrases are obscure, give us the words which they believe to have been Shakespeare's; but, as students, we must have under our eyes the original text, which, however stubborn it may seem at times, may yet open its treasures to our importunity, and reveal charms before undreamed of. (*Variorum Othello* v)

The "original text" Furness found in the 1623 First Folio. In a plea worthy of Michael Warren,¹ Furness eloquently offers his reasons for adopting the F1 text of *Othello* as his reference text:

Can any good reason be urged why, in this present play at least, we should not, in hours devoted to study, be it remembered, have the text of the First Folio as our guide? Is there not every reason why we should? If misspellings occur here and there, surely our common-school education is not so uncommon that we cannot silently correct them. If the punctuation be deficient, surely it can be supplied without an exorbitant demand upon our intelligence. And in lines incurably maimed by the printers, of what avail is the voice of a solitary editor amid the Babel that vociferates around, each voice proclaiming the virtues of its own specific? Who am I that should thrust myself in between the student and the text, as though in me resided the power to restore Shakespeare's own words? Even if a remedy be proposed which is by all acknowledged to be efficacious, it is not enough for the student that he should know the remedy; he must see the ailment. Let the ailment, therefore, appear in all its severity in the text, and let the remedies

¹See Michael J. Warren, "Textual Problems, Editorial Assertions in Editions of Shakespeare," in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. Jerome McGann, Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985. 23-37.

be exhibited in the notes; by this means we may make a text for ourselves, and thus made, it will become a part of ourselves, and speak to us with more power than were it made for us by the wisest editor of them all -- it may be "an ill-favoured thing, sir" but -- it will be "our own." (*Variorum Othello* v-vi)

For this and the next eleven volumes under his editorship, which included a second edition of *Macbeth*, Dr. Furness, instead of using a modernized text, employed a **type facsimile** of the plays reprinted from his own copy of the First Folio as the reference text² -- a practice he probably would have continued with the remainder of the plays and second editions of the first versions he had already produced, as this comment from the second edition of *Macbeth* suggests: "the Text of the first four plays is composite; the Text of the remaining eight is that of the First Folio. Although each play is a volume apart and independent of the rest, yet a uniformity of Text is, to some extent, desirable" (xiii). Furness evidently took great care in reproducing each of these facsimiles: "reprinting it from [his] own copy with all the exactitude in [his] power, scanning it letter by letter" (*Variorum Othello* vi). As a result, many bibliographical features are reproduced: block letters, approximate fonts, italics, spacing, ligatures, and even italic question marks; however, because of the layout, having textual and critical notes on the same page as the text they refer to, there is no attempt to indicate pagination or columns, and thus there are no signatures or catchwords.

After his father's death, Horace Furness, Jr., edited two more editions, both of which use F1 as the reference text, *The Life and Death of King John* (1919) and *The Tragedy of Coriolanus* (1928). After Horace Furness, Jr.'s death, the series came in 1933 under the sponsorship of the Modern Language Association. The first volume to be published under the MLA's auspices, *Henry the Fourth, Part I*, was edited by Samuel Burdett Hemingway, who

²*The Merchant of Venice* (1888), *The Tempest* (1892), *A Midsommer Nights Dreame* (1895), *The Winters Tale* (1898), *Much adoo about Nothing* (1899), *Twelfe-Night, or what you will* (1901), *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (1903), *Loues Labour lost* (1904), *The Life & Death of Richard the Third* (1908), *The Life and death of Julius Caesar* (1913), and *Cymbeline King of Britaine* (1913).

had been selected by Furness, Jr. This volume marks yet another departure for *The New Variorum Shakespeare*: it is the first edition to use a quarto as the reference text. In all previous volumes in which a quarto text is an earlier text than that of F1, Furness, Sr., had two arguments. In cases like those of *Much adoo about Nothing* and *Loues Labour lost*, Furness argues that even though the quarto text was earlier that "there is in reality but one text, inasmuch as it is from this Quarto that the Folio itself was printed" (*Variorum Adoo* v). In the case of *A Midsommer Nights Dreame* in which the quarto has claim to being the better text, Furness argues that "To enter into any minute examination of the three texts is needless in an edition like the present" (*Variorum Dreame* x) -- all variants would be recorded in the textual notes anyway. Hemingway changed all that by selecting Q1 and by making "a more thorough collation of the various copies of each quarto than has been deemed necessary in the earlier volumes in the series" (v). Of the volumes that followed in this -- what I call -- the first cycle under MLA sponsorship, the 1938 *Poems* and the 1944 *Sonnets* were obviously based on quarto texts, while the plays -- *Henry the Fourth, Part II* (1940), *Troilus and Cressida* (1953), and *Richard II* (1955) -- all use the F1 text as the reference text. However, these type facsimiles to my eyes appear to be less scrupulous about spacing than the volumes prepared under the Furnesses, conveying less bibliographical information (graphic codes),³ yet these seeming changes are nothing compared to those resulting from the policy of the second cycle of Variorum editions under the MLA's auspices.

Richard Knowles announced the next major transformation of the principles governing *The New Variorum Shakespeare* in his "Plan of the Work" for the 1977 *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: AS YOU LIKE IT*:

This edition differs somewhat from earlier volumes of the New Variorum

³In "Information on Information," Randall McLeod, using the pseudonym Random Clod, makes a distinction between *lexical items* and *the system of graphic codes* (250). This distinction corresponds to McGann's *linguistic codes* (the words) and *bibliographical codes* (the typography, layout, paper, order, and so on) as they are defined by D. C. Greetham in his Forward to McGann's *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*.

Shakespeare. The text is not a type facsimile, but a *modified diplomatic reprint* of the First Folio text which *ignores its significant typographical irregularities, corrects its obvious typographical errors, but retains its lineation*. All significant departures from F1 are duly recorded. [Emphasis added] (ix)

Under this editorial policy, which was followed by Mark Eccles in his 1980 *Measure for Measure* and Marvin Spevack in his 1990 *Antony and Cleopatra*, many typographical features of the original text are ignored or silently regularized:

The reprint does not reproduce typographical features such as the long s, ligatures, display and swash letters, and ornaments; abbreviations printed as one letter above another are reproduced as two consecutive letters, the second one superscript. Minor typographical blemishes such as irregular spacing, printing space-types, and wrong font, damaged, turned transposed, misprinted, or clearly erroneous or missing letters or punctuation marks have been corrected, usually silently. If, however, the anomaly is likely to have any bibliographical significance, its

correction is recorded in the appendix. Where the error is not clearly typographical, or where the correction is not an obvious one, the text has been left unaltered and various emendations have been recorded in the textual notes. . . . In general, the attempt has been made to omit and ignore all insignificant typographical peculiarities, but to retain or at least record any accidental details of possible textual significance. (Knowles, *Variorum AYL* xi-xii)

My work in preparing the first volume of *The Public-Domain, Old-Spelling, Electronic Shakespeare, SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS* and *A Louers complaint* (forthcoming from the Centre for Computing in the Humanities, University of Toronto), and my reading of the work of Jerome J. McGann and Randall McLeod have convinced me that the Variorum Shakespeare's new policy concerning the old-spelling reference texts for Variorum editions is a mistake.

Fredson Bowers, in his "President's Address: Unfinished Business" presented before the

Society for Textual Scholarship, represents the views of many when he contends that "The aim of textual criticism is to make the fewest mistakes possible in presenting the authentic words of an author" (1). A textual critic, according to Bowers, achieves this end by "the reconstruction, usually from imperfect or partial evidence, of authorial intention" (2). With Elizabethan editing (as with much of current textual methodology), the key to this reconstruction is "Greg's theory of the copy-text with its differentiation of two authorities, each of which in some circumstances should be differently treated" (5). On the literary side, however, the issue of the recoverability of an author's intentions has been questioned at least since the New Critics. In addition, recently, several literary critics⁴ have interrogated the term "authentic" when applied to Shakespeare. On the textual side, no one in the past dozen years has advocated more persistently a reexamination of current textual practices than Jerome McGann, calling for "a socialized concept of authorship and textual authority" (*Critique* 8).

In 1981, in response to the establishment of *TEXT: The Transactions for Society for Textual Scholarship*, McGann tried to overcome the polarization in literary studies between the interests of textual scholars⁵ and literary critics by claiming that "Because criticism must articulate a system of differentials, then, a special demand is placed upon it to elucidate literary works at their point of origin, where the initial and determining sets of differentials are permanently established" ("Shall" 36-37). He explores this interest in the "point of origin" of literary works in his *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, offering his early thoughts on what has become known as his Social Theory of Editing.

McGann opens *A Critique* by summarizing the aims of modern textual criticism:

⁴In particular see Stephen Orgel, "The Authentic Shakespeare," *Representations* 21 (1988): 1-25, and Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text," *SQ* 44.3 (Fall 1993): 255-283.

⁵The title of the eventually printed essay in which these remarks appear is "Shall These Bones Live?", a reference to McGann's description of textual criticism: "Textual criticism, in the traditional sense, is an analytic discipline separated into two provinces, the so-called Lower and Higher Criticism. Its practitioners are those guardians of our dry bones, the editors, bibliographers, and philologists of various sorts who are best known to the ordinary student of literature for the work they do *not* do: that is, interpretation and literary criticism" (21-22).

All current textual critics . . . agree that to produce a critical edition entails an assessment of the history of the text's transmission with the purpose of exposing and eliminating errors. Ultimately, the object in view is the same in each case: to establish a text which, in the now universally accepted formulation, most nearly represents the author's original (or final) intentions. (15)

This current understanding proceeds from two hundred years of scholarship. Methodologies applied to classical and biblical texts were eventually adapted to Shakespearean and other early modern and modern texts, giving rise to 1) the theory of the critical edition, 2) the theory of the copy-text, 3) the problem (or theory) of final authorial intentions, and 4) the theory of the nonspecialist or modernized edition (23). A large part of the problem with textual criticism that followed, according to McGann, arises because Bowers appropriated Greg's theory of the copy-text to formulate a theory of authorial intentions, a theory underpinned by "the concept of the autonomy of the creative artist" (40). McGann, on the other hand, contends that "an autonomous author, and an ideal ('finally intended') text" are "two related phenomena which do not and cannot exit" (56). He sees the production of texts as more dynamic and socialized:

The rule of final authorial intentions, as well as the guideline determining choice of copy-text, all rest on an assumption about the location (and the locatability) of literary authority. As the very term "authority" suggests, the author is taken to be -- for editorial and critical purposes -- the ultimate locus of a text's authority, and literary works are consequently viewed in the most personal and individual way. . . . The result is that the dynamic social relations which always exist in literary production -- the dialectic between the historically located individual author and the historically developing institutions of literary production -- tends to become obscured in criticism. (81)

McGann concedes that "The author's wishes and intentions are obviously matters of importance, but they must be adverted to and assessed by the textual critic in a more generous social context"

(90). By insisting "that literary interpretation is grounded in the historical study of material texts (whether or not the scholars are aware of this grounding, and whether or not their criticism makes self-conscious use of it)" (xxi), McGann is insisting on the importance of not only the linguistic codes of a text but also its bibliographical ones. This connection constitutes the principal focus of his essay "What Is Critical Editing?": "My study of texts . . . has made me aware how literary works are coded bibliographically as well as linguistically, and that in the case of the bibliographical codes 'author's intentions' rarely govern the state or the transmission of the text. In this sense literary texts, and their meanings, are collaborative events" (23). From McGann's perspective, textual criticism has located meaning in the linguistic text at the expense of the bibliographical one. Although the linguistic text may be the chief, it is not the sole authority, for "'meaning' in a literary work results from the interactive agency of these two semiotic mechanisms operating together" ("What" 28).

McGann's Theory of Social Editing has not gained wide acceptance among textual scholars. Bowers, labeling it "an editorial attitude" because it is "it is not specific enough as yet to be called a theory" (6), is "suspicious of any overall theory that denigrates an author's intentions by sharing them with social milieu as a central fact" (10). He continues to "place authorial intention above any other consideration, while recognizing that an initial intention can be modified from early to late, for better or worse, by the criticism of friends or of publishers' editors" (10-11). T. H. Howard-Hill is similarly critical:

. . . it may be said that the inability of *A Critique's* arguments to convince many editors (to whom in some measure it was directed) is an almost unavoidable function of the book's position within a program directed to extra-bibliographical (in the broadest sense) ends. (31)

Despite these criticisms from highly respected textual scholars, I cannot dismiss as casually the issues McGann raises, especially regarding early modern Shakespearean texts, texts produced in the printing house with no ostensible assistance by the author himself (the two narrative poems apparently being the only exceptions). I believe McGann is correct in asserting that textual

criticism has focused too narrowly on the linguistic text to the detriment of the bibliographical one. I believe the early quartos and First Folios that are the principal repositories of the texts we call Shakespeare's plays and poems are material objects and must be engaged on those terms. I also believe there is a middle ground between the attitude toward texts that McGann criticizes and the extreme relativist position that De Grazia and Stallybrass set forth in their "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text."⁶

I am concerned in this paper with the New Variorum Shakespeare Committee's decision regarding the nature of the reference text for volumes since 1977, the decision to use modified diplomatic reprints that do not reproduce the very bibliographical features that McGann maintains are important. No one has done more in the past fifteen years to call attention to the significance of these bibliographical features than Randall McLeod. McGann, commenting on orthographic variations in the 1609 quarto of *SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS*, points out that "As our scholarly knowledge increases, however, we often discover that texts which had previously seemed corrupt are not so at all; that it is we (or our ignorance) who are at fault" (99). McLeod, who has argued that some previously thought to be corrupt readings are probably not so, has actively been dispelling that ignorance and educating many of us to appreciate the wealth of information inherent in bibliographical detail.

McLeod is interested in "the iconicity of the text" ("UNEditing" 38). He maintains that "the old typographic medium was simultaneously communicating various messages -- *as text*

⁶De Grazia and Stallybrass appear to claim a materiality of uniqueness for every Shakespeare text, whether it be printed in the sixteenth-, seventeenth-, eighteenth-, nineteenth-, or twentieth-century: "The materiality of *this* essay, for instance, when it quotes from Shakespeare, at no point reproduces the materiality of the early Shakespearean texts, even when quoting from the 1623 Folio. . . . We do this because, despite our insistence on the specificity of early modern texts, we have no desire to perpetuate the illusion that we had an 'original' or 'unedited' text, in either its worn archival or fresh simulacral form. Even if we could convince ourselves that we had an 'original' or 'unedited' text, we would have established not its existence but rather the persistence of the epistemological categories that make us believe in its existence" (257). To an extent this assertion seems true enough; however, even though there are material differences between, for example, all thirteen extant copies of *SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS*, there are also significant similarities between the Aspley and the Wright imprints.

and *about* text. To consider the literary context alone is to turn a blind eye to this interconnectedness of medium and message" (Clod, "Information" 256-257). Gleaning from McLeod's stunning work, I intend to make a case for the New Variorum Shakespeare Committee's changing its policy regarding reference texts.

In 1979, in his "A Technique for Headline Analysis, with Application to *Shakespeares Sonnets*, 1609," McLeod provides concrete examples of the information that can be determined from the title page and running titles of the 1609 quarto of the *Sonnets*. Using evidence gathered from transparent photocopies of the title pages of Aspley and Wright imprints, McLeod speculates that the Wright was the later imprint:

The order of these changes [the transposing of a reglet and the interchanging of the first and third E's in the name], which coincide with the unlocking and adjustment of the page to alter the imprint, is not to be determined by strict bibliographical evidence. It is possible that in the unlocking of the page the first and perhaps the second line of type "SHAKE-SPEARES | SONNETS." pieced and was reassembled, in the process the two E's being interchanged and the reglet rearranged. However, since the position of the narrower-bodied E in "SHAKE-" in the Wright state of the title produces a more pleasing typographical effect than when it is the penultimate letter in "SPEARES" in the Aspley state, it is also possible that the change was deliberate, in which case the Wright was the later imprint. (202-203)

From a similar analysis of the running titles, he conjectures about the imposition of the formes and offers a probable reconstruction of the events, which calls into doubt MacD. P. Jackson's assertion that a new skeleton was constructed for Sheet K.⁷ The point of both examples is that valuable information is contained in what otherwise might be thought irrelevant bibliographical

⁷Jackson's "Punctuation and the Compositors of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, 1609" *The Library*, 5th series, 30 (1975): 1-24 is the standard work on the compositors' stints in the 1609 quarto of *SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS*.

details. Without getting into my proposal at this point, I will nevertheless contend that the changes in the running titles in Q1609 from "A LOVERS" (K3v, K4v, L1v) to "THE LOVERS" (L2v) and the various "SHAKE-SPEARES," (B1r, C2v), "SHAKE-SPEARES." (D1v, D2v, D3v, D4v, G1v, G2v, G3v, G4v), and "SHAKE-SPEARES" (B1v, B2r, B3v, B4v, C1v, C3v, C4v, E1v, E2v, E3v, E4v, F1v, F2v, F3v, F4v, H1v, H2v, H3v, H4v, I1v, I2v, I3v, I4v), all convey information that can be the starting point for further investigation.

Just as running headlines "function on high to unify the text beneath them" (Clod, "Information" 241), so do catchwords function on low to unify text between pages. In "Information on Information," McLeod explains how the mismatched catchword, "Ladies" for "Faire," in a copy of Harington's second edition of *Orlando Furioso* "is one example of a large body of evidence which shows that copy for the second edition must have been an annotated exemplar of the first" (268). This information characterizes the materiality of *this* text. Yet the significance of the information does not stop here: "A collation of copies of the second edition reveals that some of them do in fact have the normally-to-be-expected concord, 'Faire' for 'Faire'. These copies offer a later state, brought about by stop-press alteration" (270). If catchwords were included in the Variorum editions and if such a catchword crux were to appear, it would most likely, under current guidelines, be "corrected silently" as a clear error. However, McLeod forces us to reconsider such a decision:

I grant that the earlier state of the second-edition catchword, "Ladies", is *wrong* -- wrong *functionally*: but more importantly, it is also *true* -- true to copy, true as a *witness*. It opens to view a larger, transmissional,⁸ identity than does the smooth, reductive redundancy of the merely correct text. (But not to dismiss this merely correct text; for in the company of the variant state, it points to an even more expansive textual identity: the correct text is not simply

⁸McLeod defines "transmission" in the following: ". . . when a Renaissance text talks about itself, it is often not *quite* what it claims to be. Its structural redundancies are, crucially, both *of* its text and *about* it. Any lapse in them opens up contradiction at the heart of transmission. . . . By attending to such examples of texts mis-self-representation, we can gauge something of what I call its 'transmission' -- how it was *transformed* as it was *transmitted*" (Clod, "Information" 246).

correct -- it is *corrected*.) (270)

In "UNEditing Shak-speare," McLeod offers a similar argument for retaining the punctuation of an original text:

Editors argue that the printer's punctuation was a compositorial discretion (or indiscretion), and does not necessarily or accurately represent Shakespeare's pointing to the degree, for example, that the printer's diction represents the author's. This is likely an accurate assessment; but it does not follow that the punctuation is not part of the evidence, that it may not be partly Shakespearean, or that it lacks interest as intelligent contemporary reading in itself. (42-43)

In both these cases, McLeod forces us to consider the materiality of the text and the significance that the system of graphic codes in the material text can convey.

McLeod's work evinces a concern with the early modern typographical medium -- its "subtle texture of accidentals" ("Spellbound" 81) and its "complex, ambiguous, contradictory, unhomogeneous" face (Clod, "Information" 246). The starting point for any bibliographical conjecture must be the material text itself because; as McLeod notes, "The relationship of printed image to typeface and to type is concrete, and our inferences about composition are necessarily tied to an actual historic event" ("Spellbound" 81). There are often explicit reasons for the "Minor typographical blemishes such as irregular spacing, printing space-types, and wrong font, damaged, turned, transposed, misprinted, or clearly erroneous or missing letters" (Knowles, *Variorum AYL* xi) that the present Variorum Shakespeare guidelines deny us. For example, McLeod offers an explanation for the presence of the variety of mixed font "w's" and the use of "vv" or "VV" in a text like the 1609 quarto of *SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS*: "English printers often acquired their types from more advanced publishing cultures, among whom the Italians and French had little use for the letter w. As a consequence, the w's in English Renaissance books often mix founts" (Clod, "Information" 246). Under the current guidelines, "vv" and "VV" would be reproduced ("Spellbound" 90) but mixed font "w's" apparently would be silently corrected or regularized and with this change information would be lost.

In addition, under the current guidelines, the u (round-u) and v (sharp-u) allotypes would be distinguished in the Variorum's old-spelling reference texts, but the |s (long-s) and s (round-s) would not. This to me is a significant loss. In early modern typesetting, these two allotypes were used in these

ways: v (sharp-u) was used initially, while u (round-u) was used medially or finally; |s (long-s) was used initially and medially, while s (round-s) was used finally and as a capital (Clod, "Information" 249, 254). Thus, both allotypes function "to differentiate the ends of words from the middle" and their leveling "obscures the kind of information we see in the originals themselves" ("Spellbound" 87). Further, McLeod explains that "the old medium did not distinguish as many sounds, but it was more *self-referential*, and enhanced the detection of transmissional error" (Clod, "Information" 251). Besides enabling us to determine more easily transmissional errors, the presence of the |s (long-s) and s (round-s) distinction helps us to see predictable exceptions, such as in this rhyme from Sonnet 16:

To giue away your |selfe, keeps your |selfe {st}ill,
And you mu{st} liue drawne by your owne |sweet skill,
(<B4r> Sonnet 16.13-14)⁹

McLeod explains the presence in the last line of the exception, the five-type "skill" rather than the expected ligatured, four-type "{sk}ill": "If a long-s type had been used instead, the kerning right edge of its *typeface*, which corresponds to a vulnerable projection of metal off the edge of the *typebody*, would have broken against the ascender of the k, which is rooted on its *typebody*" (Clod, "Information" 254). Concerning this crux, McLeod writes, "The leveling of the

⁹This quotation is from my forthcoming edition, to be published by the Centre for Computing in the Humanities at the University of Toronto in both electronic and print forms. The text is a diplomatic transcription of the Folger Shakespeare Library's Aspley imprint with variant readings from the Folger's Wright imprint. The text is unnormalized, encoded conservatively both in TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) exchange format and in COCOA tags (for use with TACT or OCP -- The Oxford Concordance Program). It includes all significant bibliographic and linguistic features of the text and declines to introduce emendations, even of probable errors. In it long-s is indicated by "|s" and ligatures by {curly brackets}. I employ these notations throughout this paper.

distinctions of s in modern typesetting decreases redundancy, making our setting of this crux less dense a communication than that of the seventeenth century" (Clod, "Information" 254-255).

In "Spellbound," McLeod examines issues surrounding typefaces that involve the difficulties of distinguishing an etymological spelling, a phonetic spelling, and a type-exigent setting/spelling in that typesetting problems often "undermine the validity of the spelling concept" (83). For example, as we saw above, a kerned piece of type is a vulnerable piece of type. That italic type has "more kerned sorts than black-letter or roman founts" (83) make more problematic the determination of why a particular word in italic type is spelled the way it is. There are, of course, practical lessons with applications, for example, to studies of compositor's stints: McLeod maintains that each of the compositors who set type for *Troilus and Cressida*¹⁰ "sets type in peculiar ways not accounted for by the concept of spelling" (85), yet another reason for having the bibliographical features the current Variorum policy denies us.

The current policy also does not reproduce ligatures. McLeod has argued on grounds that begin with bibliographical ones that the emendation of "with" for "wi{|sh}" [{|sh} equals a long-s ligatured with h] in the first line of Sonnet 111 ("Unemending") and of "skill" for "{|st}ill" [{|st} equals a long-s ligatured with t] in line twelve of Sonnet 106 (Clod "Information") are not justified. Concerning the former, McLeod writes,

We have been wrong to talk of the reading of Q1 as "wish," for it is

wi{|sh}

-- to give it back its ligatured face and to countenance it for the first time. It is a three-sort word, with two of its letters, |s and h, tied, printed as a single type, {|sh}. The "with," however, is a four-sort word with no ligatures. The letters t + h never form a ligature in this fount (any that I have seen), whereas the letters |s + h are never set without ligation in this text, though they can be occasionally found untied in contemporary English texts. It is strange but true that this simplest of

¹⁰Incidentally, according to Jackson, these are the same two compositors who later that same year set *SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS* for Eld (2-5).

physical facts, ligation, completely undercuts the only rationale editors have ever used to justify their emendations in Sonnet 111, that "wish" -- as they put it -- is an obvious typo. The editors have committed a blunder equivalent to saying "4 = 3." ("Unemending" 82-83)

From these examples, it is evident to me that the MLA's New Variorum Shakespeare Committee made a serious mistake when it began using "modified diplomatic reprints" instead of state-of-the-art facsimiles. The decision, I am sure, was in large part economic,¹¹ and I agree completely with Randall McLeod's observation that "Cutting corners on typesetting costs in such scholarly collations greatly increases their ambiguity, and decreases their scholarly value" ("Spellbound" 91).

I would like to see the Variorum Shakespeare use the latest in printing technologies, those advocated by Michael Warren in his essay "Textual Problems, Editorial Assertions in Editions of Shakespeare,"¹² to reproduce in photographic facsimile the text of a judiciously chosen quarto or First Folio to be the reference text for future volumes in the series. I would like to see this text reproduced with all of its bibliographical details intact, duplicating each page exactly as it appears in the chosen original text. This suggestion would, of course, have many far-reaching implications beyond simply economic ones. Because each page would be reproduced exactly as it appears in the original, the entire layout of the Variorum editions would need to be rethought. No longer would notes appear on the same page as the text to which they refer. Instead a layout resembling that chosen by Stephen Booth for his 1977 edition of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* probably would be more appropriate with textual and critical notes appearing on pages facing the photo-facsimile. Such a reference text as I advocate would be

¹¹See McLeod's "Spellbound": "The strongest reason for abandoning the allotypes of s, a feature of our written and typeset language we share in common with German, ancient Greek and Hebrew, in which printing traditions they are still in active use, is economic: the *Variorum Handbook* says the differentiation of these allotypes costs too much" (90).

¹²In this essay, Warren notes that "in a period where the common reader and the student are well provided for, the needs of the scholars are not being met -- needs of which, I suggest, many scholars are unaware" (24).

immensely more useful to scholars than the current diplomatic reprint.

One might ask, as I have been asked on two occasions,¹³ why, when facsimile texts are easily available, should the Variorum Shakespeare texts be providing the bibliographic fidelity I argue for and in doing so inevitably increasing the price of those editions? To these concerns, I respond that my interest is in the information that is conveyed in the bibliographic codes of particular, unmediated texts. Currently, the Variorum policy privileges the linguistic text and de-emphasizes the bibliographical one. If Variorum editions are to be the compendiums of knowledge about Shakespearean texts that they purport to be, then they would be better served by using as their starting point -- their reference text -- a facsimile of a particular, unmediated material text. Doing so would acknowledge the value of the bibliographical information that such texts contain and would recognize thereby that all editorial decisions are judgments that begin with the material text -- a Platonic ideal text simply does not exist nor never has existed.

There is, however, one final issue I would like to address -- *The New Variorum Shakespeare* of the future. In the Winter 1992 issue of *The Shakespeare Newsletter*, Richard

¹³For the 1994 Shakespeare Association of America seminar, "Shakespeare's Sonnets: Mapping Uncertainty," Lars Engle, leader of the seminar, asked me, "At a time when everyone interested in Shakespeare can easily obtain Hinman's Folio facsimile and a variety of facsimiles of Quarto texts, could you say why it is now more rather than less necessary for the Variorum to be providing the kind of bibliographic fidelity that you seek than it used to be?" Also, after posting a version of my seminar paper on the SHAKSPER Fileserver, David Wilson-Okamura, a member of SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference that I own, edit, and moderate (SHAKSPER@UTORONTO.BITNET), wrote me the following:

If I understand you correctly, forthcoming volumes of the New Variorum Shakespeare series would ideally be printed with notes and a facsimile text on facing pages. Briefly, my question is this: since facsimiles are readily available, why drive up the cost of such a useful reference item? It would, I grant you, be nice to "have it all" in one convenient edition, and it might promote awareness of Shakespeare's "textual condition" (a good thing, that). Speaking as a potential buyer, however, I want an affordable variorum commentary; the inconvenience of a separate facsimile volume I think I can live with. Electronic editions, on the other hand, are another story: a text like yours, which registers typographical details like the long `_s_` in a machine-readable format, does something existing tools (including facsimiles) cannot do, and moreover do not significantly increase the cost of distribution.

Knowles wrote, "The MLA has also, as recently as three months ago, explored the possibility of publication in both book and electronic form, but discovered that the program has not yet been invented that can provide access to information as well as the printed volume" ("Cum" 59). In this age of rapidly advancing technologies, that program, or medium, **will** be coming; there is no doubt that future Variorum Shakespeares will appear in both print and electronic form. I suspect that the electronic form in which the Variorum will be available will be the CD-ROM medium or its successor. In a medium like this, I imagine that the text will appear in facsimile on the screen or split-screen with a hypertext engine that will enable users to explore its "compendium of knowledge" (Knowles, "Cum" 59), the editorial, textual, critical, and historical scholarship that it contains. I also predict that included in each multimedia edition will be a text analysis program like TACT and a text like the one I have prepared for the Centre for Computing in the Humanities that will further allow users to explore electronically both the linguistic and the bibliographical text -- an act that would further acknowledge the value of the material text.

Works Cited

- Bowers, Fredson. "President's Address: Unfinished Business." In *TEXT: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*. Eds. Greetham, D. C. and W. Speed Hill. Vol. 4. New York: AMS Press, 1988. 1-11.
- Clod, Random [Randall McLeod]. "Information of Information." *TEXT* 5 (1991): 241-81.
- De Grazia, Margrta, and Peter Stallybrass. "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text." *SQ* 44.3 (Fall 1993): 255-283.
- Furness, Horace Howard, ed. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: A Midsommer Nights Dreame*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1895.
- . *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Much adoo about Nothing*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1899.
- . *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: MACBETH*. Second Edition. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1903.
- . *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: OTHELLO*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1886.
- . *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: ROMEO AND JULIET*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1871.
- Greetham, D. C. "Forward." *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. By Jerome J. McGann. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1992. (Originally publish in 1983)
- Hemingway, Samuel Burdett, ed. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Henry the Fourth, Part I*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1936.
- Jackson, MacD. P. "Punctuation and the Compositors of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, 1609." *The Library*, 5th series, 30 (1975): 1-24.
- Knowles, Richard. "Cum Notis Variorum," *SLN* 42 (1992): 59, 61.
- , ed. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: As You Like It*, New York: MLA, 1977.

McGann, Jerome J. *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1992. (Originally published in 1983)

---. "Shall These Bones Live?" In *TEXT: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*. Eds. D. C. Greetham and W. Speed Hill. Vol. 1. New York: AMS Press, 1984. 21-37.

---. "What Is Critical Editing?" *TEXT: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*. Eds. D. C. Greetham and W. Speed Hill. Vol. 5. New York: AMS Press, 1991. 15-29.

McLeod, Randall. "Spellbound." In *Play-Texts in Old-Spelling: Papers from the Glendon Conference*. Eds. G. B. Shand and Raymond C. Shady. New York: AMS Press, 1984.

---. "A Technique for Headline Analysis, with Application to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 1609." *Studies in Bibliography* (1979): 197-210.

---. "UNEditing Shak-speare," *Sub-stance*, 33/34 (1982): 26-55.

---. "Unemending Shakespeare's Sonnet 111." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1600*. 21 (1981): 75-96.

Orgel, Stephen. "The Authentic Shakespeare." *Representations* 21 (1988): 1-25.

Warren, Michael J. "Textual Problems, Editorial Assertions in Editions of Shakespeare." In *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*. Ed. Jerome McGann. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985. 23