

# TEXTUAL CULTURES

*Texts, Contexts, Interpretation*

9:1

WINTER 2014

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# *Textual Cultures 9.1*

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# Marking the Body, Marking the Text

David Greetham's "Archive Fever"

*Katherine D. Harris*

## ABSTRACT

*In honor of David Greetham's retirement as a Distinguished Professor from The Graduate Center, I was pleased to offer a few remarks about his influence on my work and a few anecdotes about the highlights of working with him while completing my doctorate in the English Department at The Graduate Center, CUNY. For the ceremony itself in March 2014, I was excited to receive an invitation to revisit my alma mater, the place where I discovered how glorious it is to do research down the street in either direction with the main research library of the New York Public Library and the Morgan Library flanking either side of The Graduate Center.*

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## Why I Do What I Do or, David Made Me Do It

I showed up at the Graduate Center fifteen years ago intent on studying with Speed Hill only to receive the news from Scott Westrem that Speed was retiring. After having spent two years at another New York graduate program, I was crestfallen that the primary bibliography and textual studies scholar who wrote exciting things about the history of the book was no longer available. Scott walked me into the office adjacent to his, and in his generous way, announced my intentions to study history of the book to the office's occupant, David Greetham, the other textuist in the department. I thought, "Ok, I'll study with him, but I should probably read his publications first". After a few months of absorbing *all* of his work, I knew that I had selected the right program. David proved, however, to be much more than an intellectual match for my studies; he inspired an independence that had been suppressed by requirements during my early graduate school days. He began his mentoring of my career by introducing me to other faculty at our weekly Friday Forum gatherings where everyone in the

program would show up for the post-speaker wine and charcuterie, where the lights were dimmed and the conversation among 80–100 attendees was boisterous and exciting. There was one catch: He would escort me over to a few faculty in the middle of this crowded room, enter the conversation, introduce me, and then *walk away*. As a painfully-shy graduate student, I couldn't tell if these were faculty or other students and consequently stumbled in terms of the rules for addressing them since David had introduced them by their first names. As I watch my students struggle to address me and to discern the rules of engagement, David's actions are funny, but only now. He wasn't afraid to push me, and in fact has expressed that this was part of the socialization for The DCG Club, a training that would include an invite to watch the yearly rounds of friendly pugilism among bibliographers, textuists, and historians.

During January, David usually taught the intersession version of the department's only required course, an introduction to methodologies, which skewed heavily towards his strengths in textual studies. At the start of each session, David would arrive with a very tall stack of books that contained either readings for the day or further references for those interested in pursuing a particular line of thought further. We were lucky with this intersession course because it intersected with the annual Bibliography Week in New York. Though this gathering doesn't mirror the Modern Language Association Convention, the passion and zeal of each participant and presenter mimics that of Comi-Con. Libraries throw open their doors to archivists, bibliographers, textual scholars to show off their best archival holdings, and a select few new scholars are invited to take the stage in an auditorium full of eager and engaged listeners. Don Reiman, Jerry McGann, Don McKenzie, and many other scholars of bibliography and textual studies visited our seminar to discuss their latest projects and theories of the text. During the year that I attended the seminar, each scholar was invited serially to our meeting. In subsequent years, David would invite a panel, including myself, with the particular knowledge that the panelists would inherently disagree with each other and offer quite the robust performance for the attending students.

During my year, though, it was apparent that David was inspired to instigate all on his own. On the given day of one of these senior scholar's visits, David would place a book purposefully on the top of the stack. At first, I thought he was humoring the visitor by placing his or her scholarly work on the very tip-top of the mountainous volumes. It turns out that he would instead delicately move the opposing scholarly work to the top. Intentional or not, David didn't shy away from engaging debates—his

entire career, I think, focused on allowing his students room for that debate and boisterous disagreement.

What I didn't realize in that seminar, during an intersession that would precede my Ph.D. qualifying exams, was that David was rigorously testing my ability to absorb the entire field of textual studies. For these exams, the candidate forms three lists of readings in consultation with faculty, each of whom will appropriately grill the candidate during a two-hour oral exam. For a semester or two, David and I would engage in thoughtful conversations about the readings for his list—as my chair, he was responsible for moving me forward in the process, and as a reward for being the qualifying exam chair, he was allowed the final question during those two hours. Thinking that he had been tossing soft-ball questions for the entire two hours, I really expected him to offer up the hardest concluding question of all time. Instead, he opened the *New York Times*, pointed to some advertisement which parodied the Mona Lisa and asked “what is this?” My response was only “Um, Benjamin's representation of ‘aura’? and the defining . . .”, at which point he interrupted, smiled, folded the newspaper, and asked me to step outside. “That was it?” I thought. Really? During our preliminary meetings (debates, really), he had already decided that I had passed the qualifying exams; this meant that during the exam while the other two faculty were pushing me to think about nineteenth-century literature, David was enjoying the conversation as if we were in his office.

When I started work on my dissertation, David and I continued our one-hour meetings in which I felt like I was in a wind tunnel of knowledge. Then I would go away and read for a long time to catch up to the massive knowledge bank that was required to keep up with his rapid-fire recommendations. I thought surely that these meetings were laborious for him. But, at a Society for Textual Studies conference over dinner, a group of his former dissertation advisees asked why he had picked us to work with: “Because you came in with ideas and were excited. There was no hand-holding involved. I would say ‘great idea’ and you would go away to think, execute, and write”. David encouraged me to master the topics, create archives, and never stop exploring and engaging my curiosity. That governs my career now and certainly steered my doctoral work under his tutelage.

David's influence — letting me explore and screw around — has become a big portion of my pedagogy, especially where it concerns Digital Humanities. With David many of us were doing Digital Humanities before it was ever popularized as a field. Before that moment, though, David taught me about scholarly editing and archival work, both areas that I continue to be passionate about today. In fact, the topic of my dissertation involved

studying a set of nineteenth-century volumes that weren't collected in any U. S. library with any substantial care, with the exception of the University of South Carolina. I began amassing my own collection in order to write my dissertation. But the engravings and format and visual apparatus of each volume, swelling to 300 in my personal collection by this time, were very difficult to assess due to their duodecimo size. With this dilemma, David encouraged me to create a digital archive of the important parts of each volume. That project, in turn, became a public digital project, *The Forget Me Not Archive*, one of the first digital archives attempting to demonstrate the importance and far-reaching influence of literary annuals on British and American authors. Scholars typically couldn't examine the originals because, well, they just weren't available or were scattered across several libraries. *The Forget Me Not Archive* became a rogue project between authoritative and not quite "print" and only a single chapter in my 10-chapter dissertation.

With that digital archive, I was at once literary historian of the genre and imposing archivist on their continuing history. David reminded me continuously of Jacque Derrida's *Archive Fever*:

The archivist produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. It opens out of the future. (1996, 68)

\* \* \* \*

It is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement. No desire, no passion, no drive, no compulsion, indeed no repetition compulsion, no "*mal-de*" can arise for a person who is not already, in one way or another, *en mal d'archive*. (1996, 91)

"Keep going", he said, "keep going".

## The DCG Club

Writing a literary history of any genre or collection implies that the author has mastery of the topic or, more importantly, has combed through every



last piece of archival witnesses. Even with access to the New York Public Library and scatterings of collections in other local libraries, my literary history desperately needed more work, more archival research, more information, and, in the end, more data. In 2005, I had to stop working on it, though, because an Assistant Professor position was calling me to San Jose, California. Another eight years of visits to the British Library and several American and European libraries and archives, and I was finally able to submit the manuscript as artificially complete, but only because publishing the history will allow others to answer questions I could only pose. After fifteen years, the literary history of the early literary annuals offers a definition of the genre with reference to its materiality as well as its contents: those bibliographic and linguistic codes we debated so hotly in the methodologies seminar.

## Introducing the Literary Annuals<sup>1</sup>

I've been working on an archival project that historicizes the first decade of an early nineteenth-century literary genre.

### Retail Prices of Reading Materials, 1814–1835<sup>2</sup>

Cheap Weekly Magazines	1.5d.-6d. ( <i>Mirror of Literature</i> , 1822)
Political tracts	2d.
Cheap Non-Fiction	6d. per part 4s.6d. per complete volume (1827)
Weekly Magazine	6d.-1s.
Daily Newspapers	7d.
Recycled	1d.-3d. Illegally hired/lent to multiple readers
Re-prints (Literature)	1s-12s.(Shakespeare's plays)
Critical Periodicals	2s. ( <i>Fraser's</i> )
Monthly Magazines	2s.6d.-4s.
Numbered Series (Fiction)	2s.-5s. per weekly installment <sup>3</sup>

1. Gleaned from my literary history, *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual 1823–1835*, Ohio University Press.
2. Amassed from Richard Altick's *The English Common Reader* (1956, 260–93; 318–47).
3. However, as Altick points out, the total cost by the conclusion of the numbered series was not as cheap as the consumer could have wished. For instance, a Bible issued in 173 numbers cost in total £5.15s.: "We can assume that few of the purchasers who endured to the end of a serial issue counted up what they had spent; or, if they did, they failed to reflect that by determinedly saving sixpence

Poetry Volume	5s.
Review Periodicals	6s. ( <i>Quarterly Review, Edinburgh</i> )
Literary Annual	8s.-£3
3 Volume Novel	15–21s. (1814–1823)
Serialized Novel	20s. total for parts
	21s. complete vol. ( <i>Pickwick Papers</i> , 1836)
Scott Novel	31s.6d. (1820)
Circulating Library	35s. (per year for unlimited access)

Inspired by intercontinental literary forms and created by a successful art publisher, Rudolph Ackermann, the literary annual first appeared in London in 1822 and was claimed by a myriad of publishers to represent the best of British ingenuity—even though the material form, the printing process and the editorial methods were really borrowed from French and German pocket-books, albums, and emblems. Originally, literary annuals were to replace the conduct books of the late eighteenth century, but the editors' and publishers' claims don't match that intention.

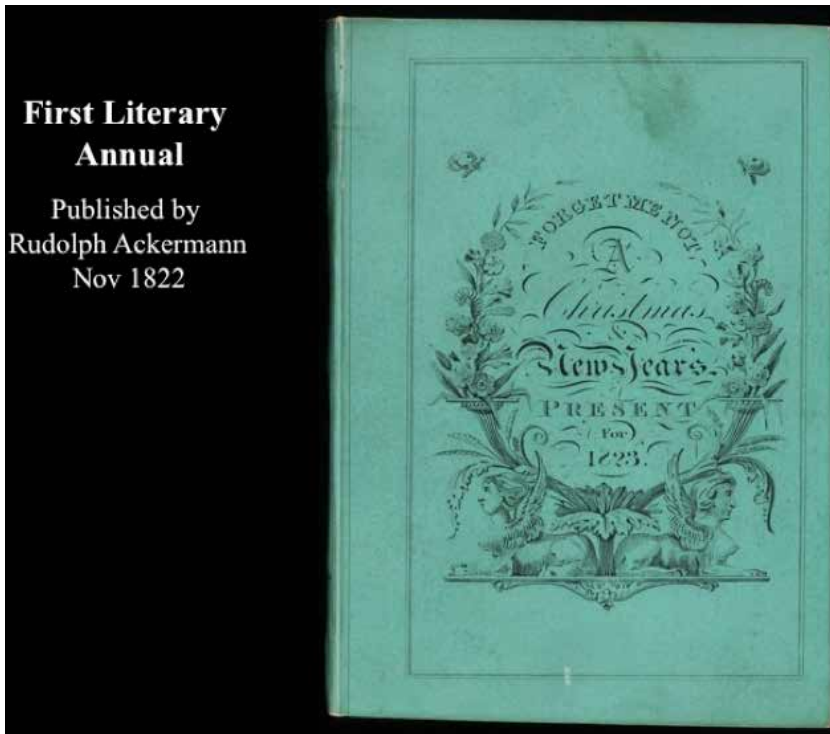
In my larger work, *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual 1823–1835*, I argue that the British nineteenth-century literary annual in its textual production is best seen as a female body, its male producers struggling to make it both proper and sexually alluring, its female authors and readers attempting to render it their own feminine ideal. At first, reviewers enjoyed the annuals, offering long excerpts and recommending particular annuals to their readers. Within five years, though, reviewers began to write with disgust about the genre—primarily with objections to the *poetess* aesthetic.

Laura Mandell points out that “two myths pervade the study of this immensely important and influential body of writing. One is that canonical writers shunned this work, refusing to publish in well-paying annuals and choosing instead to create great, high art; the other is that poetess poetry is ‘bad’ writing” (2006). Both myths rely on the production of aesthetics, and it was the reviewers who produced this demarcation about literary annuals—at first praising as possessing “a tone of romance, which, set off as it has been by poetry of a very high order, can have no other possible tendency than to purify the imagination and the heart” (Nov. 1826 *Monthly Review* 274).

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or a shilling a week, rather than giving it to the canvasser, they might have had their completed book sooner and much more cheaply” (1956, 265).

## The Forget Me Not Literary History

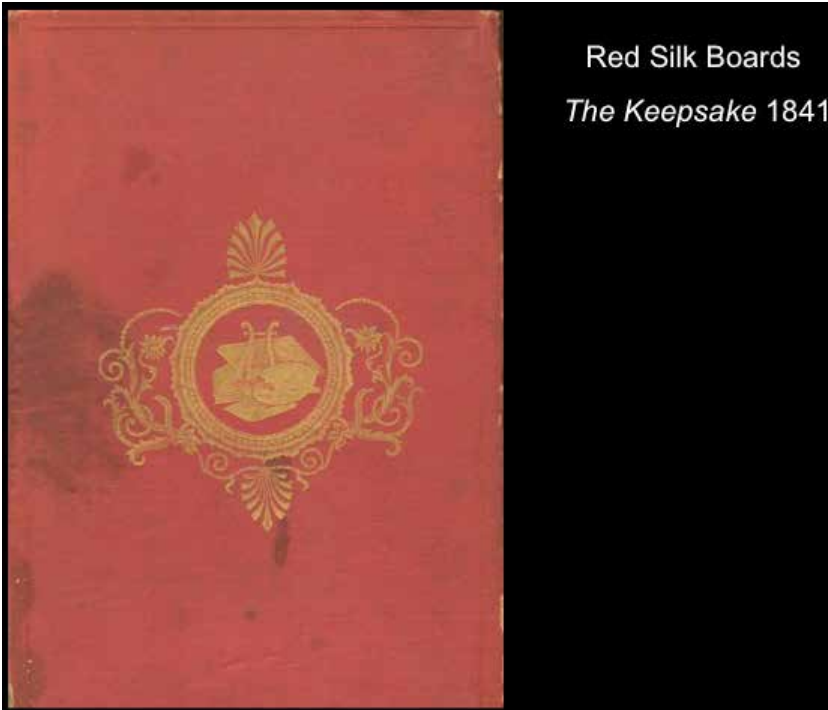


By wrapping beauty, literature, landscape art, and portraits into an alluring package, for 12 shillings editors and publishers filled the 1820s with this popular and best-selling genre. (Image 1: 1823 *Forget Me Not* paper-bound boards)<sup>4</sup>

4. All images are from the author's personal collection of literary annuals with the exception of the John Martin painting, which is in public domain.

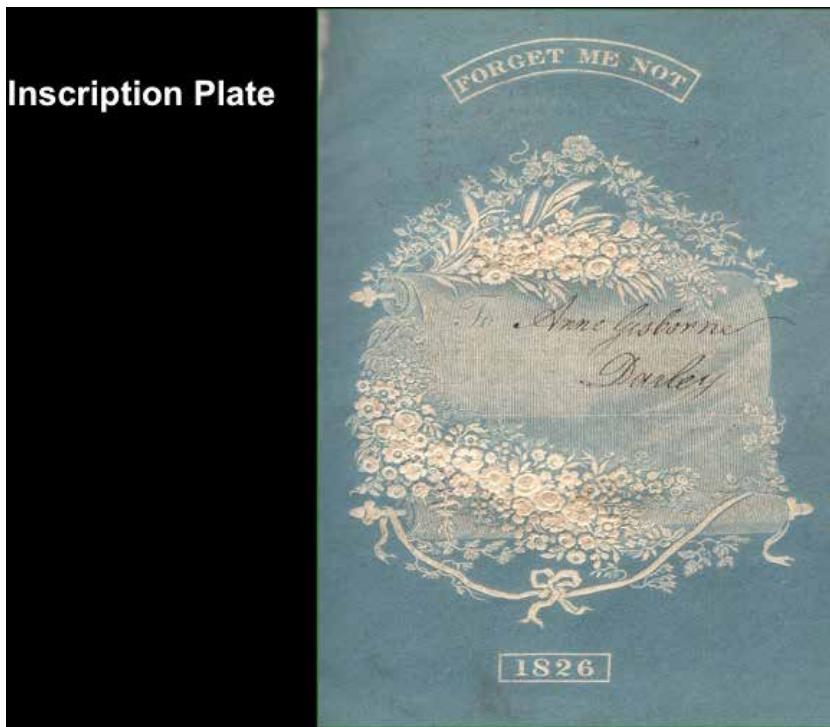


Originally published in paper boards, the annuals were usually re-bound in beautiful leather covers — at first by the booksellers then by the purchasers. (Image 2: 1827 *Forget Me Not* leather-bound boards)

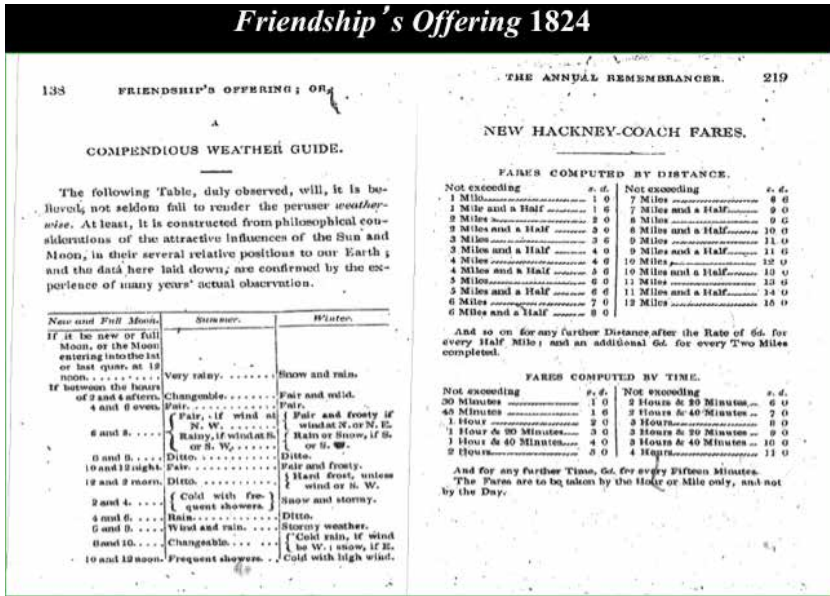


By 1828, publishers employed the latest innovations in binding and switched to silk to amplify the value of the material object. (Image 3: 1841 *The Keepsake* silk-covered boards)

## Inscription Plate



Each annual typically offered a confined space for dedication. (Image 4: Inscription plate from 1826 *Forget Me Not*)



Early annuals offered practical information similar to the Stationer's Company's almanac. But that would soon disappear in favor of more literary and visual content. (Image 5: Tables from 1824 *Friendship's Offering*)



Engravings were cast from popular paintings but rarely garnered fame for the engraver who was deemed a mere copyist and denied entrance into the Royal Academy. (Image 6: John Martin's painting "Seventh Plague of Egypt", 1823 compared to Henry Le Keux's engraving "Seventh Plague of Egypt", 1828 *Forget Me Not*)





Often engravings were commissioned, such as “Mother and Child” from the 1825 *Literary Souvenir*. (Image 7: “Mother and Child”. from the *Literary Souvenir*, 1825)

and then well-known poets were asked to render an accompanying poem, work for hire—eventually much to the poet’s dismay.

Mother and Child  
by Felicia Hemans

Where art thou, Boy? —Heaven, heaven! the babe is playing  
Even on the margin of the dizzy steep!  
Haste—hush! a breath, my agony betraying,  
And he is gone! —beneath him rolls the deep!  
Could I but keep the bursting cry suppress’d,  
And win him back in silence to my breast!

Thou 'rt safe! — Thou com'st, with smiles my fond arms meeting  
 Blest, fearless child! — I, I have tasted death!  
 Nearer! that I may *feel* thy warm heart beating!  
 And see thy bright hair floating in my breath!  
 Nearer! to still my bosom's yearning pain, —  
 I clasp thee now, mine own! thou 'rt here again! (*Literary Souvenir* 64)

*Let me stress this:* EVERYONE contributed to the annuals, even if they despised the genre.

With a large audience almost immediately clamoring for more literary annuals, Rudolph Ackermann and his editor, Frederic Shoberl, created a second *Forget Me Not* for 1824 and found themselves competing with *Friendship's Offering* and *The Graces*.

### **Retail Success of the British Literary Annual**

**1828:** 100,000 copies of 15 titles = aggregate retail value £70,000+

**1829:** Britain: 43 titles

America: 60+ titles

European colonies: 15 titles

**1840:** Britain: ~40 titles

**1860:** The annual and its poetess tradition had been subsumed into women's magazines and the periodical press only to be resurrected briefly in 1929 by Modernist author, Vita Sackville West, in homage to the popular form, the Romantic-era poetess and the annual's creator, Rudolph Ackermann.

By 1828, 15 English literary annual titles had joined the market only to vie for an audience against 30 more titles by 1830. The trade in annuals had become so popular that various titles emerged with hopes and promises of continuing a yearly publication. But with titles like *Olive Branch* and *Zoölogical Keepsake* appearing and vanishing in a single year, more often than not, that promise was broken. Many factors led to the success or demise of a particular title—external appearance, engraving quality, literary contents, popular authors, editorial arrangement, marketing, and reviews. This last element provided an introduction and public face to each annual by recommending, denouncing or simply excerpting its contents.

Even with all of this popular success, the critical condescension surrounding the literary annual would haunt the genre well into the nineteenth century:

The Annuals created a craze, the craze denoted some insanity in the public mind of the period; and much of this insanity is apparent within the curious circle of prolific writers, from which the general contributions were obtained. . . . This Annual was ephemeral not because it was effeminate; but because it was unequal, with a bias towards the trivial. It was one of the “cakes” of literature, not the bread. And even cakes become distasteful, when they provide only two or three currants each, notwithstanding that the surface is liberally endowed with sugar. (TALLENT-BATEMAN 1902; 90, 97; emphasis added)

After finally sputtering out in England in 1857, the literary annual reappeared as an homage to Rudolph Ackermann during the 1930s—even after Charles Tallent-Batement condescendingly recommends annuals and poetess poetry as the cakes of literature. It was Ackermann, though, who originally defined the genre according to his various advertisements and declarations:

- *Purpose*: Annuals are “expressly designed to serve as annual tokens of friendship or affection” (ADVERT 1823).
- *Publication Time Frame*: “It is intended that the Forget-Me-Not shall be ready for delivery every year, early in November” (SHOBERL 1823 vii).
- *Continual Evolution*: “[T]he Publisher has no doubt that, in the prosecution of his plan, he shall be enabled, by experience, to introduce improvements into the succeeding volumes” (SHOBERL 1823 vii).
- *Authorship*: “[H]e shall neglect no means to secure the contributions of the most eminent writers, both at home and abroad” (SHOBERL 1823 vii).
- *Originality*: “To convey an idea of the nature of the pieces which compose the bulk of this volume, it will be sufficient to state that they will consist chiefly of original and interesting Tales and Poetry” (ADVERT 1823).
- *Engravings*: “[W]hile his long and extensive connexion with the Arts, and the credit with which he has acquitted himself in his various undertakings in that line, will, he trusts, be a satisfactory pledge that his best exertions shall not be wanting to give to this Work in a decided superiority in regard to its embellishments, over every other existing publication of the kind” (SHOBERL 1823 viii).

- *Useful Information*: “The third portion comprises a Chronicle of Remarkable Events during the past year: a Genealogy of the Reigning Sovereigns of Europe and their Families; a List of Ambassadors resident at the different Courts; and a variety of other particulars extremely useful for reference to persons of all classes” (ADVERT 1823).
- *Exterior Format*: “The Forget Me Not is done up in a case for the pocket, and its external decorations display corresponding elegance and taste with the general execution of the interior” (ADVERT 1823).

### Textual Theory Based on The DCG Club

The material object is traditionally defined as closed once it is produced. But, it is my contention—aligned with Derrida—that the textual object, the physical book is also an archive of creation, memories, moments—especially the literary annual which was intended to represent memories. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida suggests that the moments of archivization are infinite throughout the life of the artifact: “The archivization produces as much as it records the event” (1996, 17). Archiving occurs at the moment that the previous representation is overwritten by a new “saved” document. Traces of the old document exist, but cannot be differentiated from the new. At the moment an archivist sits down to actively preserve and store and catalogue the objects, the archiving is once again contaminated with a process. This, according to Derrida, “produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. It opens out of the future” (1996, 68). Literary works become archives not only in their bibliographic and linguistic codes, but also in their social interactions yet to occur. It is the re-engagement with the work that adds to an archive and that continues the archiving itself beyond the physical object.

Textuality is a holistic study of the codex, book, text and work, which is not limited by bifurcating form from content, bibliographic code from linguistic code. The text/work is a body that is not exclusively bibliographic or linguistic, much like the physical, emotional and mental form of a human being, and textuality is the social condition of various times, places and persons. The entire “work” (i.e., each literary annual) functions like a human body: each part contributes to the survival of the individual. If extremities are lost, the body, the person is altered. *The book itself is like this body*. For instance, the cover contributes to the socio-cultural meaning

of the content, in a similar fashion as the publisher or author. Without the cover, the initial presentation of the work is altered, hence its meaning is re-constructed. And, with the annuals, each volume is unique, much like a body, with each variant binding or owner's inscriptions.

Each "body" is influenced by several "literary institutions", roles that contribute to the production of texts/works: author, editor, illustrator, publisher, printer and distributor. Each contributes to the meaning: "[L]iterary works are only material things to a degree that they are social projects which seek to adapt and modify themselves circumstantially; [i]n cultural products like literary works the location of authority necessarily becomes dispersed beyond the author" (McGann *Critique* 102 & 84). And, each institution is influenced by its socio-cultural surroundings—a process that allows a book to be a constantly evolving "work".

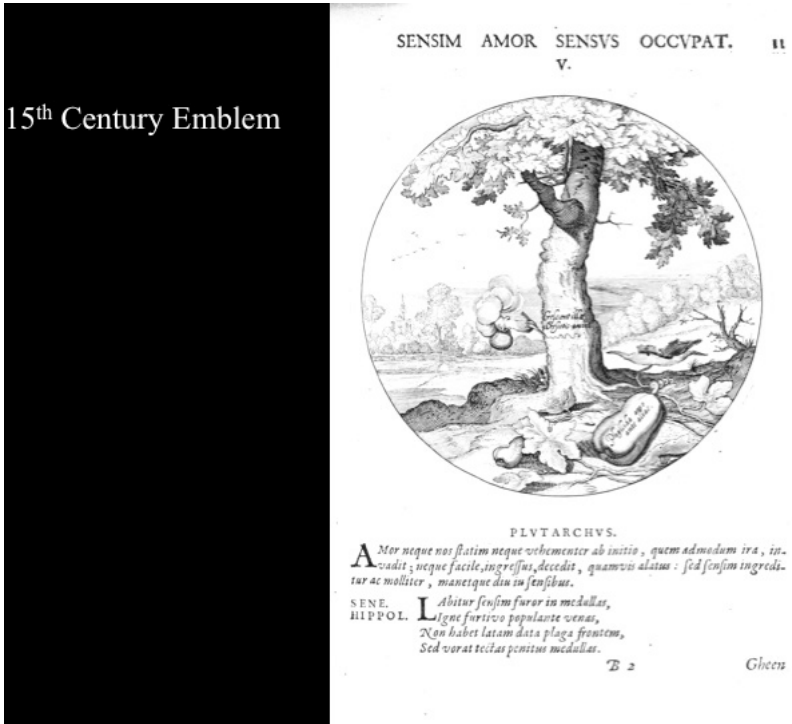
Editors and publishers of literary annuals consciously marketed their works as completed memories and thereby imbued the physical object with a humanity or intellect. With this in mind, we can see the literary annual as a particular form of transmissive interaction and not merely a channel of transmission. Even after printing and binding, each volume acquires meaning with each reader, reading, literary movement, critical reception or resurrection. In each literary annual's preface, the editors themselves desired this type of longevity and encouraged constantly shifting meanings.

In the context of this study, the literary annual is not merely an object or an artifact. Instead, I move beyond the linguistic and bibliographic codes of annuals to consider the entire production of meaning caused by each literary annual, each interaction with a reader, each translation, each subsequent re-interpretation. As is to be discussed across the chapters in my latest work, annuals were re-interpreted, translated, and revised so many times that they gathered meaning beyond what Ackermann intended in the original 1823 volume. For these reasons, it is inappropriate to venture into the debate surrounding form and genre. The literary annual borrowed a certain physical format from European and historical influences, but the combination of the contents and the physicality qualify the literary annual as a genre. To equate the annual with a form is to ignore the richness of these volumes and their impact on literary history.

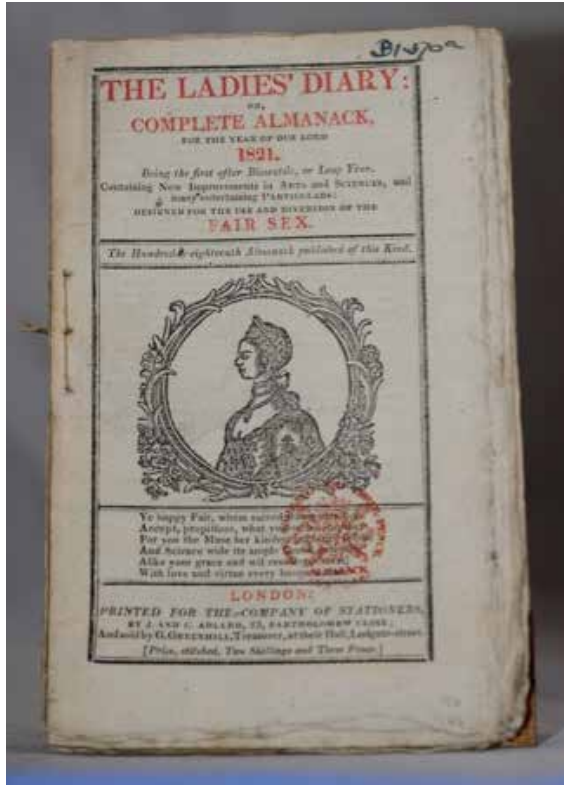
## **Archive Fever for the Annuals' History & Recuperation**

Over the last fifteen years, I've amassed a large collection of annuals, their precursors, and their afterings. The project inspired several trips to Lon-

don, the Netherlands, even a few American Libraries in search of every last letter, memo, business check, bookseller listing, contract, legal document—and the elusive journal of Rudolph Ackermann. I felt like Indiana Jones, but without the death defying acts and the whip. Early on, each time I discovered something, I would excitedly email David and ask about the connections.



(Image 8: Sensim Amor Emblem, Plutarchus emblem, *Proteus* 1618)



My perambulations lead me to write about fifteenth-century emblems, eighteenth-century conduct manuals, and eighteenth-century almanacs (the last one being perhaps the most fun to own and peruse at my leisure). (Image 9: 1821 *The Ladies' Diary*)

David encouraged a sense of discovery—to the point that I held onto this manuscript for well past the deadlines, much to the annoyance of my editors. Even when I submitted the dang thing this past February, I suffered a bit of anxiety about what I had missed. And each time I give a talk, I cringe just a little bit when someone brings up a great point that should have gone into this project. That was David—he taught me to be exhaustive. And he introduced me to what would eventually become my foundation in Digital Humanities and pedagogy: exploration, collaboration, *screwing around*.

When the manuscript was sent in, I had run out of time. Matt Kirschenbaum once told me that if the book was running long, footnote everything

and indeed I did. I saved writing the acknowledgements until the very last moment and then wrote a ten-page draft thanking everyone for the last fifteen years of support. Somewhat anxious that I'd left out some grant sponsor or another archive, I erased the entire thing and declined to include an acknowledgement. There's only one person to thank for that long overdue, but incredibly satisfying submission:

Thank you, David.

San Jose State University

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# Iconoclastic Textuality

## The Ecclesiastical Proust Archive<sup>1</sup>

*Jeffrey Drouin*

### ABSTRACT

*David Greetham encouraged the theoretical and methodological flexibility toward text that led me down the path of digital humanities. His introduction of archival and textual theories inspired the Ecclesiastical Proust Archive, an open-ended, experimental project investigating the nature of digital textuality as it embodies the massive À la recherche du temps perdu. In a few short examples, this article lays out some of the ways in which the project takes shape, including a multimedia database, semantic taxonomy, network graphing, and topic modeling.*

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DAVID'S INFLUENCE HAS LENT A FOCUS ON TEXTUAL STUDIES AND archival theory to all of my scholarship. His single course in textual studies introduced me to the examination of manuscripts and typescripts, the vagaries of editorial versioning, and visual reading techniques in periodical studies that, together, formed the methodology of my dissertation. It also prodded me in the direction of scholarly and pedagogical practices that would come to be known as the digital humanities. Today I will focus on the project that bears David's most direct stamp, the Ecclesiastical Proust Archive, which began as an experiment in isolating textual features and grew into a larger project synthesizing editorial, archival, and analytic practices.<sup>2</sup> The project's examination of textuality might seem at odds with its more recent forays into text analysis and topic modeling. Its evolution is interesting in light of recent trends in digital humanities that attempt to

1. The following talk was delivered during a panel at David Greetham's retirement event at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on April 11, 2014. A few alumni who had worked with David as graduate students were invited to speak about his influence on their work. I was pleased to return to my alma mater to see some old faces, to meet some new ones, and to be moved by the numerous stories that showed what a prolific and nurturing presence David had been to the program.
2. The archive can be accessed at <http://proustarchive.org>.

balance “big data” analysis and actual humanities interpretation. In what follows I will describe how the project came about as a way of interpreting Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* and then, with David’s nudging, developed into an open-ended digital humanities project that continues to evolve today.

During my first year in our program, AY 2002–2003, I took Eve Sedgwick’s yearlong seminar on Proust and immediately set about writing a long meditative essay on his use of Gothic and Romanesque cathedrals. When I first sat down to read *Swann’s Way*, the philosophical depth of its meditations, the vibrant and palpable descriptions of people and places, the emotional textures of historical and personal memory, and their embodiment in architecture all converged in a manner that was overwhelming. For some reason, the passages having to do with churches were electric to me, and immediately I decided that my project for the course would perform an extended meditation on this rich and complex motif.

My first move was what can only be described as an archival drive to capture the church motif in its entirety. As part of my effort to articulate the wholeness of the motif, which radiated irresistibly from its points in the narrative, I began keeping a spreadsheet that documented every one of its occurrences (fig. 1). I recorded the pagination, transcribed the passage in its entirety, included a note on the narrative context, and added keywords that would help find passages to write about later on (say, by using the Find function). In short, as I soon learned upon reading (in David’s course) Marta Werner and Paul Voss’s introduction to the archival theory issue of *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, I was curating a collection of textual objects and providing an access mechanism that imbued them with an interpretive politics.<sup>3</sup>

When I ran these ideas by Eve, she simply looked at me and said, in her endearingly awkward way, “Churches?” After all, in an environment where queer theory, the new psychoanalysis, and script theory were all the rage, the subject of churches was hopelessly dowdy—but not too dowdy for David! I showed him the spreadsheet as we began reading archival theory. He immediately urged me to turn it into a database and to include other media, even suggesting a title for the project: *Ecclesiastical Proust*, which ended up becoming *Ecclesiastical Proust Archive*. Once Eve saw what I was up to, she was enthusiastically involved and formed with David a continually supportive mentorship on the theoretical and textual bearing of the project. I would therefore like to say a little bit about this project’s engage-

3. *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 23:1 (Spring 1999).

ment with textuality, since it forms one of the more prominent pieces in my repertoire—and, as a side project, greatly contributed to my “longevity” as a student in the program—all thanks to David’s early guidance!

The *Ecclesiastical Proust Archive* (fig. 2) is a database of text and images that enable a researcher to explore the church motif of *In Search of Lost Time*.<sup>4</sup> The church motif forms one of the primary recurring elements and acts as the novel’s central metaphor for Lost Time. Churches constitute the orientation points of various settings and narrative phases. Proust at one point considered titling the novel *Le Cathédrale*, with the various parts named after architectural elements of a church. It is unsurprising, then, that Proust’s narrator concludes that books of this magnitude are never complete: “How many great cathedrals remain unfinished!” (VI.508). The narrator’s meditations upon such diverse topics as history, the subject/object distinction, jealousy, and the writing of books are frequently associated with “church”, and in myriad ways.

The project’s current instantiation as a database is adept at representing the complexities—and simplicities—of the church motif as extracted from its textual context. The five methods offered by the search page (fig. 3) include a text search (which allows boolean operators and wildcards), a dropdown menu of associations (loosely categorized tags that annotate the church passages), a dropdown menu of narrative context notes, a dropdown menu of image properties, and a pagination delimiter for working with a selected portion of the text. The search results (fig. 4) are displayed in a grid that from left to right displays the pagination info, the passage itself, the associations within the passage (if selected), a note on the passage’s narrative context (if selected), and an image illustrating the passage. The associations appear as links that allow the user to move through the archive by chains of association, as it were. Image captions can be viewed in tooltips on mouseover, and larger versions appear when clicked on. Though the search results are displayed in chronological order, they allow the reader to transcend large gaps in the narrative and behold at once a series of readings that are related, though separated in the original document by textual space.

As an example of the kinds of analysis that the database facilitates, we can examine an association search on the term Love Fantasy. The database returns two records containing the narrator’s memories of childhood love

4. In Eve’s course we read the 1992–1993 Enright revision of the Moncrieff/Kilmartin translation, published by Random House, which was the text used for the database. More recent activities on the project use an electronic version of the 1919 Nouvelle Revue Française edition in the original French.

fantasies. The first passage does not refer to any specific church, so the question of how to illustrate it involves a highly interpretive move.

But the interruption and the commentary which a visit from Swann once occasioned in the course of my reading, which had brought me to the work of an author quite new to me, Bergotte, resulted in the consequence that for a long time afterwards it was not against a wall gay with spikes of purple blossom, but against a wholly different background, the porch of a Gothic cathedral, that I saw the figure of one of the women of whom I dreamed. (I.124)

I decided to use my own photograph of the north porch, central portal of Chartres (fig. 5) because it displays one of the quintessential examples of French Gothic, bearing a correspondence with the architectural part and style described in the passage's love fantasy. This particular frame is dramatically overexposed, creating a ghostly effect that corresponds to the emotional tenor of the passage's paradoxically concrete yet hazy imagination of a future romance. However, after viewing it I notice more correspondences that have a larger significance. A tourist in the bottom right corner is looking up at the porch of the giant cathedral, mimicking the position of the narrator and, with him, the implied reader at this stage of the book: both are gazing at the mouth of a seemingly impenetrable archive inscribed with meanings in multiple media that will ultimately be revealed as a function of the love for a woman (fig. 6). Gilberte will be the first of these, while Albertine forms the basis of the narrator's pivotal crisis. Thus, the image of a Gothic porch prefaces and symbolizes the course of the narrative, with all of the concrete inscrutability of life's sensuous experience. This pairing shows the passage to be a kind of synecdoche for the whole novel. An association search on the term Love reveals similar results, with the idea of a future romantic affair taking place on the porch of an unnamed Gothic cathedral.

By now it should be clear that the project venerates the church motif as an icon, despite (or because of?) the contradiction inherent in its radical decontextualization of passages that originate in an organic text. This iconoclasm results precisely from the urge to apprehend and understand the entirety of that object as it manifests in different times and places in the narrative. The self-contradictory iconoclasm of the database text is what marks it as a hybrid between an edition and an archive. Moreover, my recent forays into topic modeling and network analysis have taken the iconoclasm of the archival drive even further.

Network analysis is a technology that takes structured data (in this case the spreadsheet from which the database was made), finds connections

among them, and then draws a graph with edges and nodes to show where the centers of influence reside. In a network graph, the temporal dimension of memory is eliminated: it flattens the chronology of the narrative and its interpretive metadata to make all connections simultaneously present. A visualization created with a program called Organization Risk Analyzer (ORA)<sup>5</sup> shows the association of Venice as it is networked among church passages and narrative context notes amid the novel's entire network map (fig. 7). When manipulated in real time, the visualization highlights the links to other nodes and their related concepts or passages. What this means for the study of Proust is that we can think of the novel (and the novel *genre*) as a network of nodes consisting of concepts, characters, narrative elements, and any other unit of meaning that might enhance exploration of its text.

For instance, the network for the Time association (fig. 8) connects various types of recollection to provide insight into the narrator's artistic development. Here we find Time at the center, ringed by "Contemplation sparked by conversation with M. de Cambremer, at Guermantes party", "Imagining Florence and Venice (before visit)", "Contemplating experience of Vinteuil's sonata while jealous of Mlle Vinteuil and Albertine", "Contemplating women and the past", "Observations at Guermantes party", and "First visit to Balbec". The last in turn connects with Narthex and Carqueville, the site of a Romanesque church in Normandy that the narrator visits with Mme de Villeparisis and Albertine. In other words, Time as a backwards-looking concept is associated with jealousy over women, while the passages about Time as a forward-looking fantasy imagine the reddish domes of Florence and the frescos of Venice. This suggests a deepening of the structure that became apparent in the database searches above, where in early passages the thought of meeting a future lover, though not explicitly concerned with the nature of time, took place on the porch of an unidentified Gothic cathedral. These nodes presented by ORA show that the church passages consciously dealing with the nature of time occur *after* the narrator has experienced being in love with women. And correspondingly, the architectural element of this ring is the narthex, which is the entrance area just indoors or on the threshold to the porch. The narthex was not considered part of the church proper, but was placed close enough so that those deemed unworthy of entry, such as the unbaptized or unconfessed, could still receive instruction from services. Hence, the experience of love has brought the narrator past the porch but, because he is lost through jealousy, he still remains an outsider.

5. The program can be found at <http://www.casos.cs.cmu.edu/projects/ora/>.

Another practice that computes the statistical relationships among tokens is topic modeling, which clusters repeating patterns of single, double, or triple word phrases appearing within a specified span of text such as a paragraph or groups of, say, fifty words. Since the *Recherche* embodies more than one million words, topic modeling can be used to highlight features of the text that are not perceptible during the act of serial reading. I ran an electronic version of volume one of the first French edition, *Du côté de chez Swann*, through Mallet<sup>6</sup> to show token clusters for ten topics, which reveals some interesting patterns. The command line output shows ten topics, each consisting of the top nineteen recurring words that are statistically significant within the top ten recurring patterns in the text (fig. 9).

Some of the results are unsurprising, such as topic 7, which clearly derives from the many evening scenes at the Verdurins (*soir, chez, mai-son*) where Swann courted Odette among their coterie (*forcheville, cot-tard*), often becoming jealously heartbroken (*cœur, désir*) with wondering whether she was seeing other admirers on the sly (*demander, connaissait, amis*). Other topics reveal interesting patterns that fit with scenes across the entire narrative, such as number 10. It emphasizes the use and observation of the eyes (*yeux, vue*) in connection with the Duc and Duchesse de Guermantes, whose mysterious airs and glances are described in the Combray church passage in the database section above, as well as their association with art and symbolism of France (*image, figure*). But what also emerges is the consistency of the preposition before (*devant*), emphasizing the narrator's location not only in front of their paintings and of their glances, but also in front of a church (*église*) in connection to a woman (*dame*), a recurrence that was teased out by reading the database passages from the English translation.

Using a PHP script and MySQL database,<sup>7</sup> we can extract the tokens, word counts, and their connections from the Mallet topic model files into a graph file that generates edges and nodes, allowing us to view the ten topics as a network model in Gephi (fig. 10).<sup>8</sup> This entirely computer-generated model of associative networks in *Du côté de chez Swann* is markedly different from the static model created by my particular reading of the church motif above, though it shares some consistencies and interesting disparities.

For instance, when we drill down and filter to look more closely at the terms that join the different topics (fig. 11), we see that the word for noth-

6. The program can be found at <http://mallet.cs.umass.edu/>.

7. The technique used here was supplied by Elijah Meeks, Digital Humanities Specialist at Stanford University.

8. <http://gephi.org>

ing (*rien*) is the one that most frequently connects topics 6 and 9, which respectively center on themes of beautiful bodily gestures in music and domestic relationships, while time (*temps*) joins topic 6 with 3, which is focused on positive terms for love of Gilberte. According to the statistical features of the text, then, the first two parts of *Du côté de chez Swann* associate the expression of romantic love primarily with time, while the memory of familial love is associated primarily with absence. This perhaps comes as no shock to most readers of Proust, but if we compare this model with a search for the term “nothing” in the church motif database, as before, we receive a number of passages associated predominantly with romantic love. These two datasets, then, suggest a reading of the church motif as concerned with concepts of absence in romantic love, somewhat against the grain of the rest of the novel. There is not enough time here to deal with the problematics of translation/tutor text comparisons or the relation of computational algorithms to critical interpretation. But it is clear that domain expertise is just as necessary in digital scholarship as it is in print, as shown by the (illuminating) disparities between a human-reading and machine-reading of the text.

Iconoclasm—a society’s destruction of its own established religious imagery, venerated institutions, or cherished beliefs now regarded as fallacious or superstitious—is an apt word to describe the breaking up of Proust’s studiously organic text (for many years he insisted it be published in a single volume). However, we might see the iconoclasm of “automagically” tokenizing the text through software as, paradoxically, an act of devotion, seeking to find the epiphany in the hidden details. When the text is considered as an archive, computational methods for analysis provide a capacious reading tool for making connections that have not already been made, and finding questions we hadn’t thought to ask. It is to David’s guidance that I owe this peculiarly fulfilling relationship with text.

*The University of Tulsa*

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Entry	V/I/Pt/Ch/Pg	Passage	Met. Context	Associations	Description
1	I/II.1	And half an hour later the thought that it was time to look for sleep would awaken me: I would make as if to put away the book which I imagined was still in my hands, and to blow out the light; I had gone on thinking, while I was asleep, about what I had just been reading, but these thoughts had taken a rather peculiar turn, it seemed to me that I myself was the immediate subject of my book: a church, a quartet, the rivalry between François I and Charles V. This impression would persist for some moments after I awoke; it did not offend my reason, but lay like scales upon my eyes and prevented them from registering the fact that the candle was no longer burning. Then it would begin to seem unintelligible, as the thoughts of a previous existence must be after reincarnation; the subject of my book would separate itself from me, leaving me free to apply myself to it or not; and at the same time my sight would return and I would be astonished to find myself in a state of darkness, pleasant and restful enough for my eyes, but even more, perhaps, for my mind, to which it appeared incomprehensible, without a cause, something dark indeed.	Dreaming Reading	Sleep Imagination Subject/Object Kings Music Darkness Dreaming Reading Reason	Beginning of novel, dreams self as church
2	I/II.53-4	She attempted by a subterfuge, if not to eliminate altogether this commercial banality, at least to minimise it, to supplant it to a certain extent with what was still art, to introduce, as it were, several "thicknesses" of art: instead of photographs of Chartres Cathedral, of the Fountains of Saint-Cloud, or of Vesuvius, she would inquire of <i>Szwajm</i> whether some great painter had not depicted them, and preferred to give me photographs of "Chartres Cathedral" after Corot, of the "Fountains of Saint-Cloud" after Hubert Robert, and of "Vesuvius" after Turner, which were a stage higher in the scale of art.	Bedtime reading	Art Layers of representation Simulacra Authenticity Grandmother Chartres	Grandmother's gifts, for relief of anxiety
3	I/II.164	And as in the game wherein the Japanese amuse themselves by filling a porcelain bowl with water and steeping in it little pieces of paper which until then are without character or form, but, the moment they become wet, stretch and twist and take on colour and distinctive shape, become flowers or houses or people, solid and recognisable, so in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. <i>Szwajm's</i> park, and the water-lilies on the <i>Vivier</i> and the good folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of <i>Combray</i> and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea.	Teatime memory	Locus of memory Combray Landscape Folk Combray	End of the Madeleine passage
4	I/II.165	<i>Combray</i> at a distance, from a twenty-mile radius, as we used to see it from the railway when we arrived there in the week before Easter, was no more than a church epitomising the town, representing it, speaking of it and for it to the horizon, and as one drew near, gathering close about its long, dark cloak, sheltering from the wind, on the open plain, as a shepherdess gathers her sheep, the woolly grey backs of its huddled houses, which the remains of its mediaeval ramparts enclosed, here and there, in an outline as scrupulously circular as that of a little town in a primitive painting.	Combray landscape	Landscape Representation Name/Naming Medieval Primitive Painting Rustic Combray	Beginning of Part I, Section II
5	I/II.171	It was Françoise, motionless and erect, framed in the small doorway of the corridor like the statue of a saint in its niche. When we had grown more accustomed to this religious darkness we could discern in her features the disinterested love of humanity, the tender respect for the gentry, which the hope of receiving New Year bounty intensified in the nobler regions of her heart.	Memory of Aunt Léonie	Statues Saints Darkness Love Humanity Reverence Aristocracy Niche	Transition of memory of Aunt Léonie to memory of Françoise

Figure 1. Spreadsheet of the church passages with interpretive keys and contextual information.

# Ecclesiastical Proust Archive

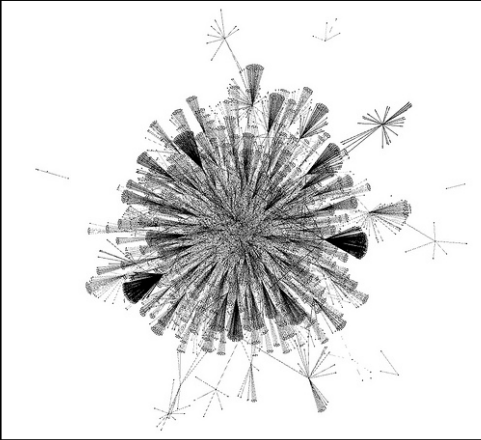
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**Gorgeous Network Visualizations with Gephi**

I just started playing around with [Gephi](#), which produces really amazing interactive graphs for intuitive data analysis. Thought I would post one here. Not sure how to read or use it yet, but it shows the entire church motif in the *Recherche*.



Post Category: [visualization](#)  
[Add comment](#)    December 3rd, 2010 at 12:11am    [Jeff Drouin](#)

**A Little Close Reading with Network Analysis Software**

I thought I would do some closer "distant-reading" of the *Recherche*. When using ORA to look at a metanetwork, the visualization can be manipulated in real time to highlight the links among nodes and their related concepts or passages. What this means for the study of Proust is that we can think of the novel (and the novel genre) as a network of nodes consisting of concepts, characters, narrative elements, and any other unit of meaning that might enhance exploration of its text.

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An Old Essay Fragment

Project Bamboo Workshop 4 Summary

Graphs, Maps, Trees

Archive Theory: S/Z

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**post history:**

Figure 2. Ecclesiastical Proust Archive homepage.

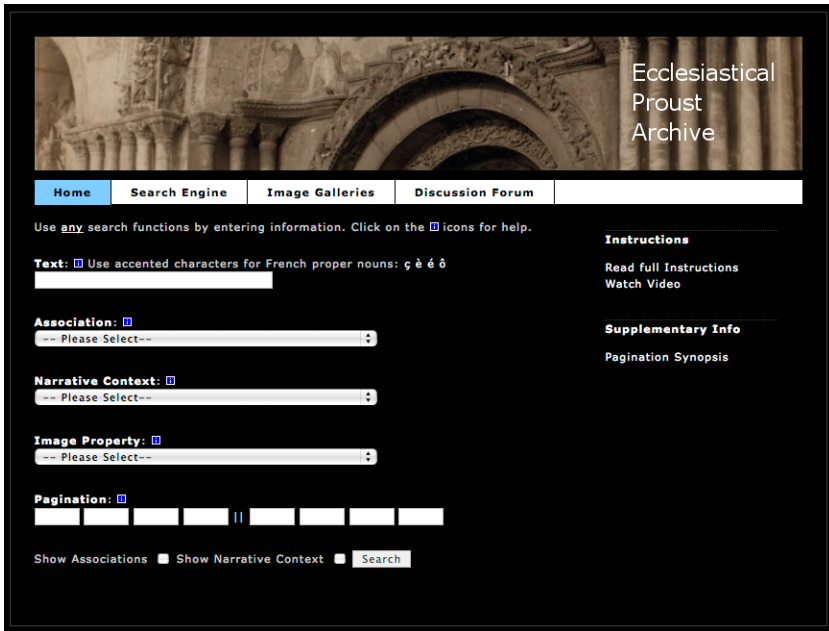
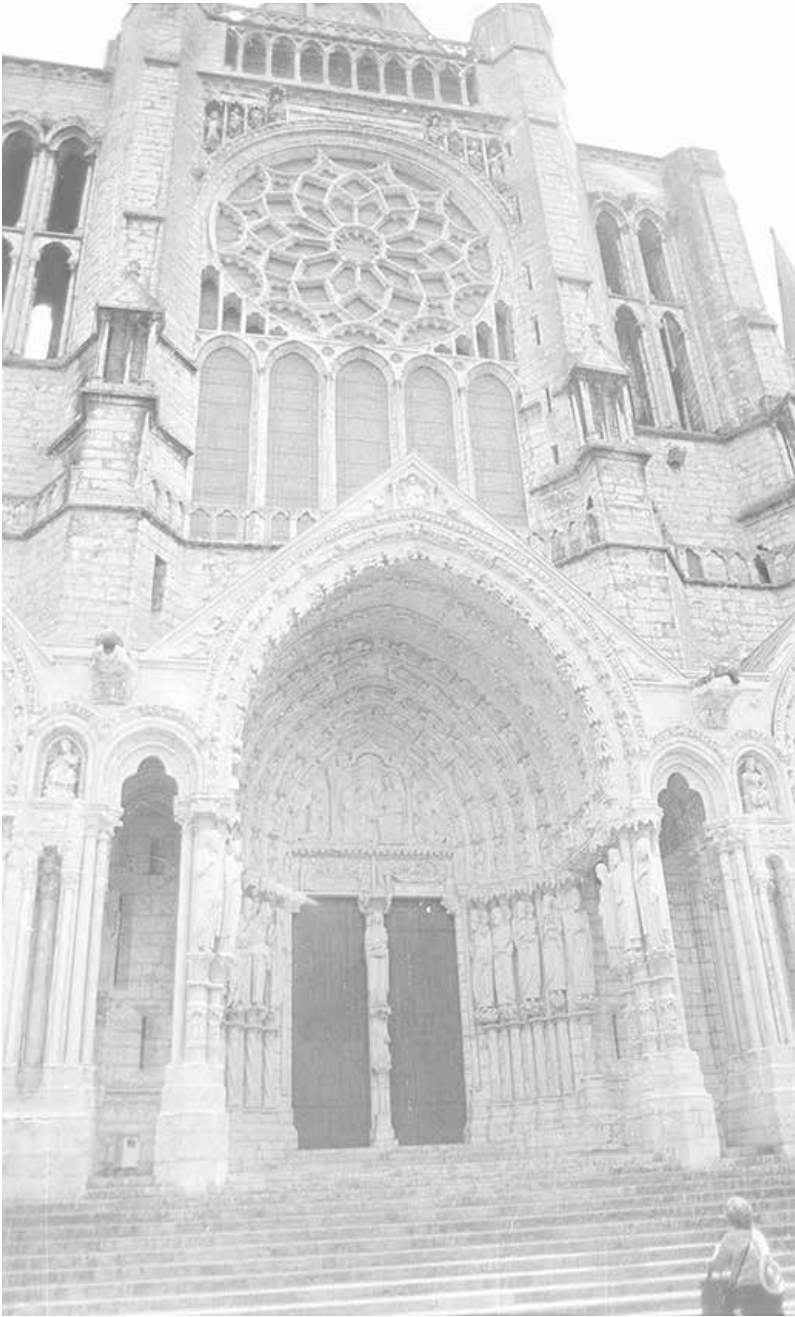


Figure 3. The search page.



Figure 4. Search results for the association "Love Fantasy".



**Figure 5.** Chartres Cathedral, north porch. Photographer: Jeffrey Drouin.



**Figure 6.** Chartres jamb statues, west porch. Photographer: Jeffrey Drouin.



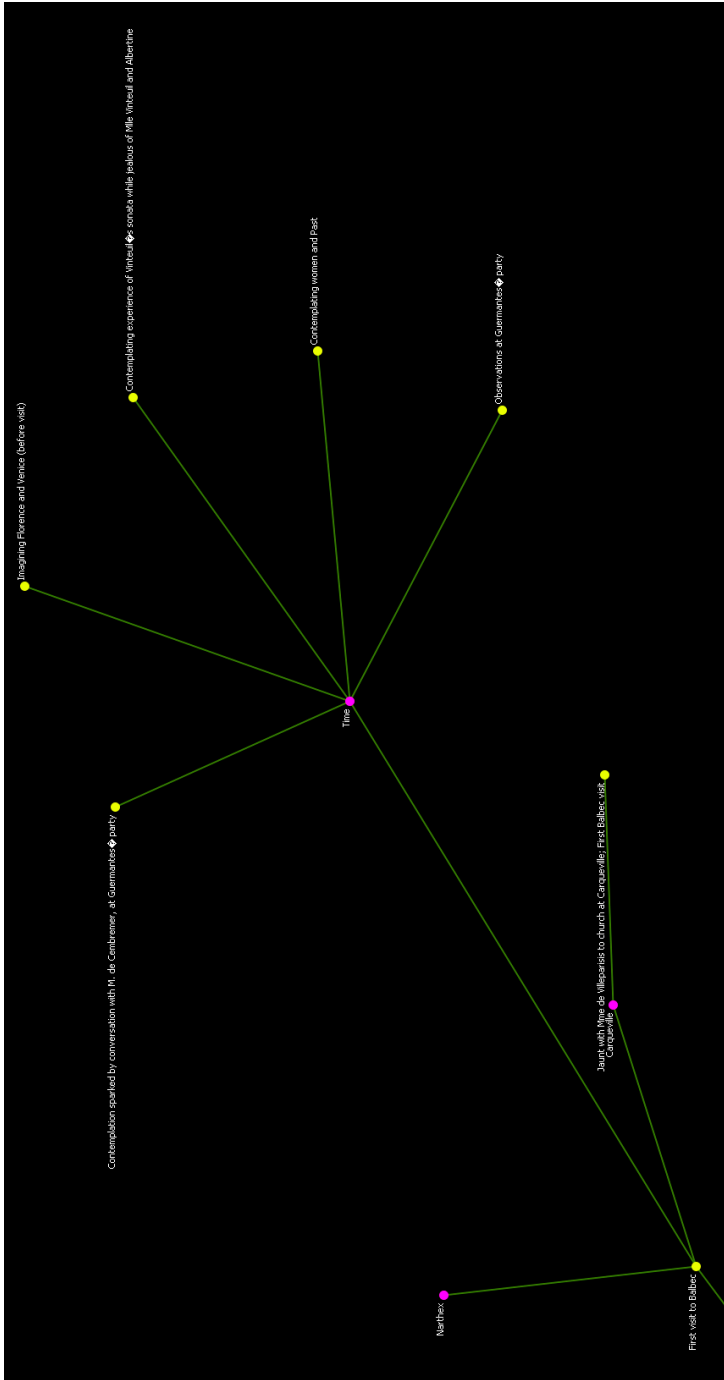


Figure 8. Time network, as visualized in ORA.



- ① chose moment pouvait jamais puis rien esprit pourtant visage savait voulait dire  
savoir mal trouvait première devait autres instant
- ② dit bien dire air jamais beaucoup tête toujours princesse ami docteur reste choses  
sais enfin regard répondit jeune entendu
- ③ vie amour plaisir souvent celle ainsi gilberte pu pensée besoin donnait tant sorte  
milieu cause femmes étais connaître joie
- ④ après temps jusqu heure pendant allait presque chambre longtemps près seul  
passer heures penser jour tard souvenir chercher toute
- ⑤ combray côté déjà rue soleil semblait fleurs saint bois place eau ciel petits vers jardin  
matin champs dessus autour
- ⑥ faisait toutes petite peine seule beau toute sourire donner phrase quelques trouver  
parfois contraire nature suite musique croire corps
- ⑦ swann odette chez verdurin monde disait gens femme forcheville homme soir effet  
amis connaissait demander personne cœur cottard
- ⑧ voir faire aller autres jours jour toujours maison venait venir désir grande contre dès  
autant paris rien lequel bien
- ⑨ grand tante mère père françoise faire bien fille disait parents maman voix partie  
personne bonne petit mort famille laisser
- ⑩ devant quermantes yeux nom air petit surtout or doute mieux église image fit vue  
dame tant aussitôt figure lesquelles

Figure 9. Ten-topic model of *Du côté de chez Swann*, produced with Mallet.

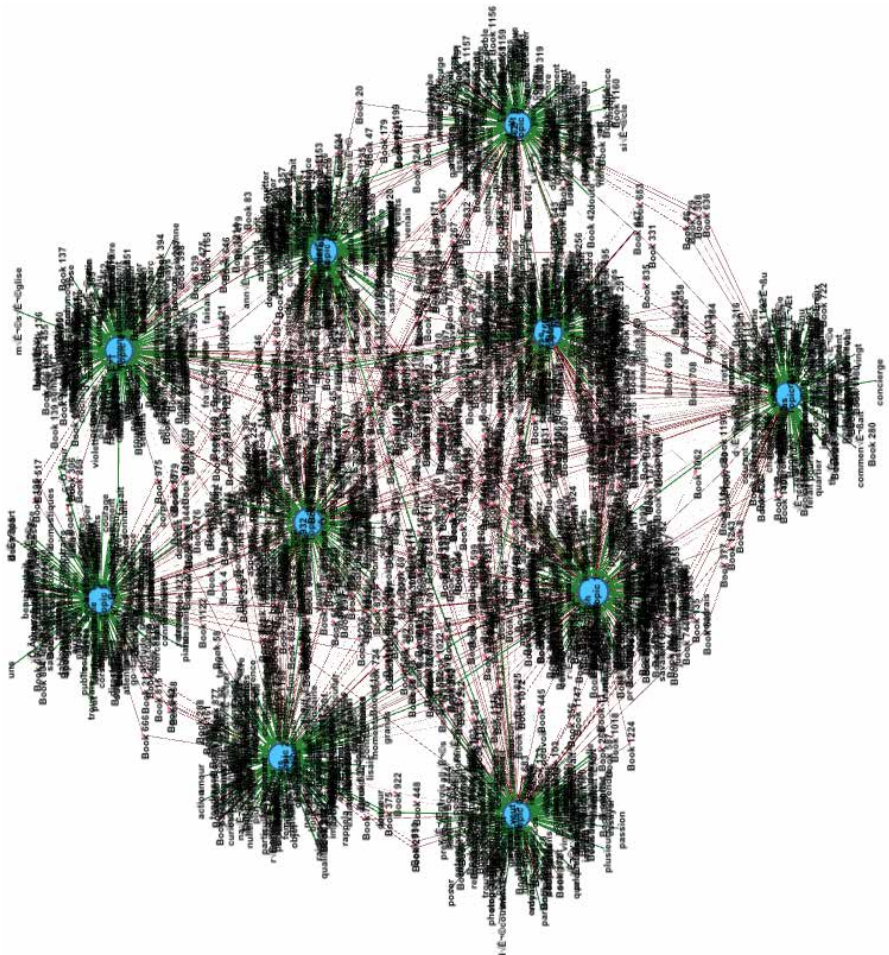


Figure 10. Network graph, made with Gephi, of a ten-topic model of *Du côté de chez Swann* produced with Mallet.



# Down the Rabbit Hole with David Greetham

*Emily Lauer*

## ABSTRACT

*Based on a talk given at the Symposium in honor of Dr. Greetham's retirement, this essay addresses the influence Greetham has had on the author's scholarship and pedagogy. Lauer describes a project she completed as Greetham's student in which she analyzed the illustration history of the book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. She argues that the history of a text's illustration can be read as a history of publishing intent: just as different annotations suit a text for a particular implied readership, so too do different illustrations. The illustrators of *Alice* come after each other, not to re-envision the words of Lewis Carroll, but to re-envision the scenes as already represented pictorially. Furthermore, Lauer posits that the creation of different illustrated editions is part of the historical trajectory of versioning. As Greetham says of annotation, illustration, too, is "always contingent and local, for the relationship between text and audience is always changing" (1994, 369).*

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ON APRIL 11, 2014, THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK GRADUATE Center held a symposium: a day-long series of events commemorating the retirement of Dr. David Greetham, Distinguished Professor and Co-founder of the Society for Textual Scholarship. There was a workshop, there were toasts, there was poetry, there was a guest lecturer, there was a panel of papers, there was a party. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the common thread running through all these events was that there was no way the influence of David Greetham could be adequately explored in just one day. During that symposium, I delivered the talk "Judge a Book by its Cover: Textual Scholarship of Pop Culture Texts" as part of the panel "Autopsies: The Textual Body After David Greetham". It was a difficult task for me to write about David's influence on me, because he was influential in so many different ways. I could have talked about how his interdisciplinarity and enthusiasm for unconventional projects has influenced my teaching, or about how reading his book *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, influenced my dissertation project and subsequent scholarly work, or about how his version of the required class for the CUNY English PhD program, "Theory

And in the second category, that of critical medium, the various branches of historical criticism, concerned with the reconstruction of moments in the past and an exposure of their *alterity* or “otherness” (again dependent on a faith in predictable historical development and the mapping of this development along linear paths) were challenged first by the anti-historical bias of New Criticism, in its attempt to isolate the complexity of textual utterance from such extraneous features as author, audience, and cultural context, and later by the post-structuralist dictum that all writing (*écriture*) is “always already written,” a weaving of intertextual associations seemingly denying any place for the individual authorial consciousness.

Figure 1. Paragraph from page 315 of *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* by David Greetham.

and Practice”, influenced my thinking about what English departments can and should achieve. I could even have talked about how my favorite sentence in *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* is an 11-line paragraph that begins with the word “and” and yet still achieves admirable sense, which has influenced my writing (fig. 1).

I attempted a balance between talking about David’s significant influence on my pedagogy, and talking about a representative “weird” project I did for his class that eventually worked its way into my dissertation. For the “Theory and Practice” class, which was the first time I met Dr. Greetham, I gathered and worked with several decades’ worth of illustrations to *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. David’s encouragement of this unusual project launched the ways in which he has been foundational to my life as a teacher and academic. His book *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* achieved its stated purpose of introducing me to textual scholarship, and his “Theory and Practice” class influenced my life now as well as my dissertation, as I am primarily a teacher and cultural studies scholar. I use the textual scholarship and pedagogical techniques I learned from David in both my teaching and my academic writing to clarify for myself and my students the ways in which textual concerns both shape, and are shaped by, the culture that produces them.

When I first read *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, I was already interested in how books as objects make meaning visually, and how different editions of the same “text” can have very different tones based on book size, font, paper choices, paratextual material, etc. I did not already know,

however, that there was a field of scholarship devoted to such issues.<sup>1</sup> Thus, reading *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* not only introduced me to new concepts and a lot of new information, it also gave me a vocabulary framework for discussing and analyzing elements of readership that I already found to be important. As Greetham writes in his introduction to *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, textual scholarship involves “the technical and conceptual recreation of the past through its texts” (GREETHAM 1994, ix), a process that requires examining “texts as both artifactual objects and conceptual entities” (x). He further defines textual scholarship as “the general term for all the activities associated with the discovery, description, transcription, editing, glossing, annotating, and commenting upon texts . . . all these fields reflect a *historical bias*” (2 italics in original).

This recognition of a historical bias was refreshing. I was drawn to textual scholarship because I appreciate its transparency: it acknowledges the scholar. David writes of textual criticism “It is critical, it does involve a speculative, personal, and individual confrontation of one mind by another” (1994, 295).<sup>2</sup> Editing, annotating, and making decisions about the presentation of a text all involve subjective decision-making. Recognizing that appeals to me both in its honesty, and for its implication that this stuff is an art rather than a mere tabulation of a data set.<sup>3</sup> I am trying for this kind of transparency in my notes for this essay, which began as a gimmick for my symposium talk in David’s honor. On that day, I was the only panelist not to address digital archives, and as such embraced my role as the analog representative by eschewing the use of the projector entirely and handing out a page of printed notes to my talk.

My introduction to Dr. Greetham and his work occurred when I enrolled in his “Theory and Practice” class, which met during the Winter intersession between the Fall and Spring semesters. Since the time was so short, we met several times a week during January to discuss the copious and far-ranging reading list, and then had the whole of the Spring semester to complete our projects for the course. Dr. Greetham’s reading list and

1. For instance, I just used the term “paratextual material”. Before being introduced to the field of textual scholarship, I did not know that term existed.
2. I go back and forth between referring to David Greetham as David and as Greetham. Trust me, he is both. Later, I’ll go back and forth between referring to the author of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* as Carroll, his pen name, and Dodgson, his given name. You can consider this a sneak preview of that vacillation as well.
3. This is reminiscent of the current move toward transparency and disclosure in journalism away from the illusion of objectivity, which I also appreciate.

assignments were novel: we were required to do actual archival work in libraries, and required to actually read about the history of our own profession, even though other versions of the “Theory and Practice” class generally treated it as a practicum for writing the dissertation proposal. David would stride into the tiny, windowless room in which our class was held, with a different massive stack of books each day, generously bookmarked. He rarely consulted these books during class, but the tower of them on the table was a constant reminder of his expertise. Those class sessions seemed to take place in a sort of incubator: packed into a small room, meeting multiple times a week for only a month.<sup>4</sup> What I remember most from that claustrophobic, fertile environment is David’s eager expression as he walked into the room, and the energetic glee with which he led discussions, pointing out the various dilemmas, catch 22s and self-contradictions in the theoretical frameworks he had assigned us to read about.

For that class, I created the project “Pictures in Conversations: Down the Rabbit Hole” in order to analyze the illustration history of the book *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.<sup>5</sup> Starting with Tenniel and Dodgson’s collaboration, I looked at how the novel was illustrated by several other hands in the intervening years since the book’s initial publication for the Christmas market in 1865. I argued that the history of a text’s illustration can be read as a history of publishing intent: that just as different annotations suit a text for a particular implied readership, so too do different illustrations, in a way that can be read in the aggregate as well as the particular. Basically, I believe that the creation of different illustrated editions is part of the historical trajectory of versioning and that, as Greetham says of annotation, illustration, too, is “always contingent and local, for the relationship between text and audience is always changing” (1994, 369).

Consequently, illustration can be considered a form of annotation. As Claire Lamont has argued about annotation, “something has been done to the reader by the annotator. It is this realization which has made the most recent commentators on annotation regard it as a question of *power*. . . . The critical view of the annotator is that he or she, in the guise of offering help, is knowingly or otherwise controlling the situation by both enabling and limiting interpretation of the text and both serving and creating the

4. Had I been aware of the phenomenon of “speed dating” at the time, this class would have reminded me of a sort of speed dating for theoretical approaches.
5. David referred to this project in an article for the Italian journal, *Ecdotica* in 2006 and I delivered a paper presentation based on this project at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Utopian Studies in Toronto, 2007.

reader” (LAMONT 1997, 53 italics in original).<sup>6</sup> I believe that the illustrator too has this power, because illustrations mean the reading experience is modified by visual representations of the reader’s encouraged focus. Interior illustrations regulate your response to the text they illustrate because the pictures—their subject, style, size and frequency—help construct the reader’s interaction with the story presented—as do annotations. And just as “Annotations will . . . have an implied reader, who may not be the same reader as the implied reader of the text” so too do I believe different illustration situations will have different implied readers/viewers/purchasers, which may be different from the original intended reader of the written word (LAMONT 1997, 48).

In *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll’s words and John Tenniel’s pictures together present Alice and her dreamworld as fully realized creations. From the moment Dodgson and Tenniel began to collaborate, their words and pictures were influenced heavily by each other’s work. Carroll’s writing style was well-suited to working closely with a meticulous and communicative illustrator like Tenniel. In fact, Carroll would generally wait to do much of the final wording until his first proofs were back from the publisher, so it is likely that the various lines directing the reader to the illustrations, such as “if you don’t know what a gryphon is, look at the picture” (CARROLL 1866, 130) or the line about how a king wore his crown over his judge’s wig, “look at the frontispiece if you want to see how he did it” (1886, 151) were written after some conversation between Carroll and Tenniel about the illustrations for these lines. Both men had the goal of making the reading process, including words and pictures, seamless for the child reader, and in the *Alice* books, the original child reader’s focus was undivided between the goals of the words and of the pictures.

Though Tenniel’s illustrations of the *Alice* books are almost universally lauded as masterpieces, different illustrators have still created their own versions of Alice over the years. In a strictly collaborative enterprise like the one between Tenniel and Dodgson, does it work to remove one person’s contribution and replace it with the work of another person? In an illustrated book, the words and pictures are being presented as parts of the same cultural text. So why illustrate what has already been illustrated? Why modify the representation of something already represented? These

6. Normally in an academic article I would strive to include quotations from recent scholarship in the field. Here, I am instead intentionally limiting myself to those texts that were particularly influential when David Greetham assigned them during my tenure as his student and advisee.



were the questions I was starting to approach in this project, which I would go on to address more fully in my eventual dissertation.

Novels that have been illustrated multiple times present various trajectories of publishing intent. They imply different societal uses for the novel in different eras and for different reading audiences. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has been claimed by many different sectors of society. These different social claims for it can be observed in different editions' illustrations since examining the appearance of a received text helps "demystify claims of art to 'universality,' unmasking instead the social contingency of its production and reception" (BORNSTEIN 2001, 165). In *Alice's* case, the book was almost immediately claimed by two disparate groups: educated adults, since Dodgson was an academic and Tenniel a political cartoonist; and children, Dodgson and Tenniel's primary intended audience. In the intervening decades, different illustrators have clearly targeted different audiences.

Consider, for instance, editions of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in which Alice is depicted as variously tan, smiling watercolor, abstract blocks of bright, dynamic color, or still and grave in black and white (fig. 2).

While the bare arms and flyaway hair of the Oxenbury illustration connote freedom and sweetness, the McGraw illustration favors style and composition over characterization, and the Tenniel Alice connotes composed neutrality. Imagine the different readings of Carroll's text that would result from these depictions. A reader could be thrown off by the disjunction between the written Victorian mores and the carefree, present-day style of Oxenbury's character's dress, mannerisms and hair, or the contemporary abstractions of McGraw. To paraphrase Lamont, "something has been done to the reader by the [illustrator, who,] in the guise of offering help, is knowingly or otherwise controlling the situation by both enabling and limiting interpretation of the text and both serving and creating the reader" (LAMONT 1997, 53 with my changes). Editions of "classics" with new illustrations create an extra layer of mediation between the reader and the original text: The goals of the new artist may be multiple—to update the look and feel of the novel for the current day, to fit the text into a particular genre, or suit it to a particular readership. And regardless of the new artist's motives, the new illustrations will be shaped by the history that has occurred since the text's original publication and the knowledge that it has become a "classic".

For this project, I examined several editions of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and attempted to find corollaries and intersections between the subjects *represented* in the illustrations and the techniques and tones



**Figure 2.** Three disparate Alices. Illustrated by (*top left*) Helen Oxenbury (2000), (*top right*) DeLoss McGraw (2001), and (*bottom*) Sir John Tenniel (1865).

of the illustrations. Notably, even when drastic changes are made, such as adding color, fitting hundreds of illustrations into the book instead of Tenniel's 42, and even when Alice beams a big smile from all the new pictures, there seem to be many choices made by Tenniel that are absorbed and repeated by later illustrators with no acknowledgement that they originated there. These include the choice of which textual moments to illustrate, Alice's mannerisms, especially in the arms and legs, and the line and shape of a full skirt, even when the updated outfit of a new visual version of Alice doesn't seem to call for that kind of stiffness.

This was a thought experiment inspired by George Bornstein's analysis of a composite edition of *Ulysses*, to which David had introduced me. Bornstein claims that by combining all witnesses of the text, the composite edition "fractures the deceptive unity of any single 'clear text' edition . . . there is no 'the' text, but only a series of texts, built up like a layered palimpsest" (BORNSTEIN 2001, 138). So I attempted to build up a layered palimpsest of my own by creating composites of *Alice* illustrations. Due to

the time constraints of a project that needed to be completed in one semester, I focused on the illustrations to the first chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, "Down The Rabbit Hole". This chapter introduces a little girl who cannot imagine enjoying a book "without pictures or conversations". She and the reader are then together introduced to Wonderland. This chapter seemed an appropriate focus to demonstrate my ideas about the illustration history of the novel because of its introductory nature. As the first chapter of the first book, it is through "Down the Rabbit-Hole" that a reader's first impressions of Alice, the rabbit, and Wonderland itself are shaped. Thus, it is through the illustrations in this chapter that the characters and locations will first be envisioned by the reader. If the first illustration of Alice does not interest a reader, it will be much more difficult for the subsequent illustrations of her to capture the reader's interest.

This chapter moves Alice between worlds: Tenniel's illustrations for the first chapter of *Alice*, "Down the Rabbit-Hole", do not include any picture of Alice or her sister, reading, suffering from boredom or discovering a rabbit hole: the first Tenniel illustration of Alice does not come till Alice has fallen, landed, and is exploring a hallway. This is very late in the chapter, and it effectively means that Alice is not shown to us, the readers, until she is already in a world unfamiliar to her. However, at least seven later illustrators attempt to create an idyllic scene of Alice with her reading sister—a scene that bored Alice to sleep. Why depict it as an enjoyed peaceful pastoral? The artists who choose to include visual evidence of this scene are choosing to make the dream world less all-encompassing in the narrative. This can have the effect of making Wonderland itself safer, less exciting, by providing first ocular proof of a mundane base for Alice.

First, I photographed or scanned the illustrations of the 13 editions readily available to me.<sup>7</sup> I then sorted the illustrations into categories of what they depicted and made a collage of each depicted event (fig. 3)<sup>8</sup> Like

7. In retrospect this is a small sample size. I now yearn to do a larger archival project to see if my results hold up. For instance, only two of the included illustrators are women. How might the trajectory of publishing intent be seen to shift if more female illustrators were included? Right now, with this small sample size, I am unable to differentiate conclusively between what Matthew G. Kirschenbaum refers to as the absence of evidence versus the evidence of absence. See page 59 of this issue.

8. I took some liberty with the backgrounds of various illustrations (I removed some and rearranged others within their designated collage), but I did not combine illustrations of different events. For instance, I would not have used part of an illustration of Alice falling down the rabbit-hole to augment the collage of



**Figure 3.** My collage (a two-page spread) of the various illustrations of Alice falling down the rabbit hole—undepicted by Tenniel, but included by many, many others.

the *Ulysses* composite edition discussed by Bornstein, I felt that my project, in addition to fracturing the unity of any individual edition, created a virtual palimpsest because the removal of Tenniel’s illustrations is akin to the scraping of parchment. In each case, blankness can only be created imperfectly by removing what has left a mark.

Clearly, this is not a “normal” project for a class in an English PhD program, but it is just the kind of project David got excited about—a hybrid between an edition and an archive.<sup>9</sup> Coincidentally, during the CUNY Grad Center Symposium in April, after the panel of David’s students had spoken, we received a question from the audience inquiring about our propensity towards, and David’s willingness to work with, this kind of “weird” project. We all agreed that one of the liberating features of working with David was his enthusiasm for enthusiasm—that is, his students could propose an unusual archival project or edition and he would tell us to go for it, and then proceed to treat it with as much academic rigor as any 10-page seminar paper could be treated. I remember while working on the *Alice* illustrations project I found evidence of a “Classic Illustrated Edition”

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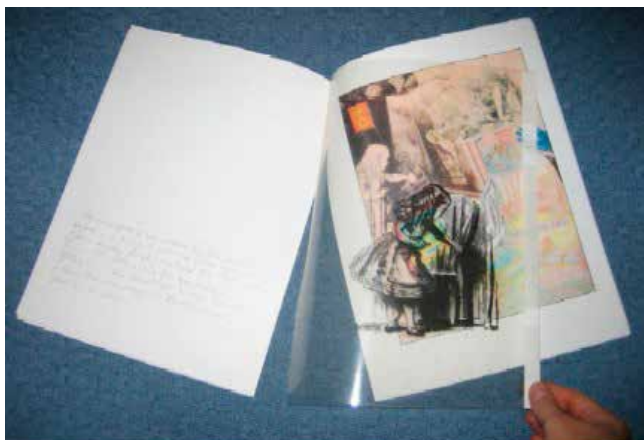
illustrations of Alice discovering she has shrunk after drinking from the “Drink me” bottle.

9. This is how Jeffrey Druin has described his own work. See page 25 of this issue.

of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* that included illustrations by different illustrators “compiled by Cooper Edens”. Worried, I emailed David with this information, and asked him if it would still be acceptable for me to do my project, since this edition already existed. David emailed me back promptly, telling me to go ahead with my project, which he declared was on “a different order” from this gift book. Later in person, he elaborated that mine was different precisely because I would be doing something *scholarly* with mine. That is the kind of confidence and encouragement that David gave his students.

The act of creating this representative archive/edition of the first chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was, indeed, illuminating. It led me to theories about how the text had been approached, marketed and consumed in the many decades since its initial publication. Sorting the illustrations resulted in the realization that not every inch of written text has been illustrated by various artists over the years, but rather that the same few lines of text have been illustrated again and again by different hands. I believe each artist's new *Alice* illustrations fit into part of a heritage: a narrative that starts with Tenniel's art as much as with Carroll's words. From the first chapter—a chapter of about 160 lines of words—a total of 16 were illustrated, and those *ad nauseum*. While the illustrations vary in style, they do not vary much in their subject matter. Not once was it difficult to categorize an illustration based on the works of other illustrators. That is, even when later illustrators depict moments unillustrated by Tenniel, they select the same moments as each other. The illustrations for *Alice*, then, seem to be different renditions of the same tune—they seem to share a core of meaning that is elaborated in different directions. To return to my driving conceit for this project, this is like an annotation history of the text. It explicates and draws attention to specific lines over and over again.

With this aggregate illustration history, what emerges is not a story, but rather a collection of set scenes, waiting to be enlivened by different illustrators. The illustrators come after each other, not to re-envision the words of Lewis Carroll, but to re-envision the scenes as already represented pictorially. This parade of illustrators is like a parade of annotators—explicating the text for each other at least as much as for their purported “intended” audience. The several editions I examined were all categorized and shelved as children's books, but it is hard to escape the feeling that many of the illustrations, (for instance the staged still life photography of Abelardo Morell,) were created more as academic exercises for the illustrator and less for the delight and edification of the child reader.



**Figure 4.** A page spread of my mock-up edition with illustration by Tenniel on transparency between the lines by Carroll being illustrated and the collage of later illustrators' versions.

I did not stop with this collation/collage of the illustrations. That part was the archive: what made this project also like an edition is that once the collages were done, I made a mock-up of a possible edition using these collages as illustrations. I copied the three Tenniel illustrations for the chapter onto transparencies individually and inserted the transparencies between the pages of text and collaged images on opaque paper. Each page spread in my mock-up thus presents both the collage, and the few passages of Carroll's written chapter illustrated by the work in the collage. If applicable, Tenniel's work is overlaid so that it can be turned over and juxtaposed with Carroll's words (fig. 4). This way, Tenniel's work can be seen as part of the illustration history, but it can also be "scraped" off the surface of the collaged image and paired with the original text being re-envisioned by later illustrators. The act of turning the transparency creates a moment when Tenniel's work is physically as well as figuratively in a liminal space: between, neither and both the "original" and the "after".<sup>10</sup>

David agreed to become my dissertation advisor soon after I completed this project for his class. In my dissertation, called "Drawing Conclusions: Visual Literacy in Fiction", I used four different illustrated novels of the

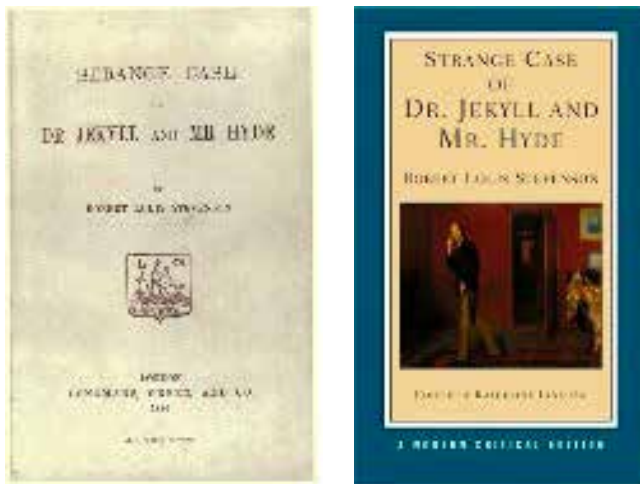
10. The act of flipping the transparency is also a nod to the method by which these illustrations were reproduced, since the wood engraving done by the Dalziels was the mirror image of the illustration that appeared on the printed page.

Victorian era as representative cases to address the ways that textual creation is informed by economic and social realities as well as literary and aesthetic theories. I used the situation of each novel's illustration to argue that the appearance of a written narrative (literally the way it looks) can subvert, reinforce, supplement or update that narrative.

This is, of course, a broad view of textual scholarship akin to how David has described Jerome J. McGann's "alternative view of composition, in which the entire history of the world is a fit subject for textual scholarship, and even posthumous changes by editors, publishers, friends and relations, are to be considered a perfectly valid part of the text read as a social construct" (GREETHAM 1994, 337). Not everything in a text is necessarily there due to authorial intent, but the different parts of the text as received may be equally worthy of analysis regardless of intent because the text as received is what has influenced our culture. As Bornstein posits, "the literary text consists not only of words (its linguistic code) but also of the semantic features of its material instantiations (its bibliographic code). . . . Bibliographic code can include features of page layout, book design, ink and paper, and typeface as well as broader issues . . . like publisher, print run, price, or audience" (BORNSTEIN 2001, 30–31). Different versions of the same text can be part of a larger textual fabric of culture, like D. F. McKenzie's "sociology of the text" that "takes an entire culture as 'text'"; as David has noted, this takes textual criticism "away from the book narrowly conceived . . . toward a consideration of all forms of communication in a society" (GREETHAM 1994, 338–39).

One of the major ways a book communicates is by its packaging, so I sometimes ask my students to analyze that packaging before we even open the book itself. Visual analysis of a book cover is often an excellent gateway for students into an understanding of the cultural and economic forces behind a text's publication. As part of a cultural studies approach in the classroom, judging a book by its cover can help students figure out how the content of a book is being marketed to them, and how they are being invited to make assumptions about that content. For instance, in my English 102 class "Introduction to Literature", we analyze the differences between the social context of the first edition of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and the current Norton Critical Edition (fig. 5).

It becomes clear to my students that the first edition of this book was not only cheap, but cheaply produced: with a combination of typefaces that now feels amateurish, with the general feel of a title page rather than a book cover, and with the publication date changed by hand, all of these factors make the book feel as though it was meant to be ephemeral—like a



**Figure 5.** The cover of the first edition (1886) of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as reproduced in the Norton Critical Edition (2003), contrasted with the cover of the Norton itself.

magazine or an issue of a comic book from the 1950s. In contrast, the Norton Critical Edition makes the text feel anything but ephemeral. Its cover is glossy, high-quality paper, well-bound, it has multiple layers of frames around the title, and the image—now in color—is one by a famous artist, of the author. Clearly, this cheap little text has grown into something much more substantial and weighty.<sup>11</sup>

In my teaching today, it is not only David's writing that has influenced me, but also his pedagogy. During our "Theory and Practice" class he proposed that what defines English as a discipline is that English is a *method* of study rather than an *object* of study; that is, rather than dealing simply with the study of the English language (and with the literature that happens to be written in the English language), "English", in its current form in academia, is an approach. It in fact means reading things as texts. English departments are thus full of professors encouraging students to approach a variety of cultural productions *as* textual and therefore readable. That

11. I ask my students to do this kind of analysis in other situations as well. In an article for the pop culture issue of the pedagogical journal *Transformations*, I discuss how my freshman composition class analyzes the cover of *Amazing Fantasy* #15, the comic with the first appearance of Spider-Man, for its bibliographic codes as well as its linguistic and pictorial codes.



perspective on the profession influenced me to explore cultural studies, to make the courses I teach and the subjects I write about interdisciplinary and intertextual, and it also inspired me to seek to apply techniques of literary analysis to “texts” far from the literary canon in the courses I teach.

Also pedagogical, perhaps the biggest effect David has had on me is one of attitude. David always treated me as though he was unflinchingly interested in my work from the time I proposed the *Alice* illustration project after being in his class only a few weeks to the time I studied my orals list with him, to all the time and energy he spent as my dissertation advisor. In every situation, he was remarkable for his generosity with his own enthusiasm. Thanks to his influence, I now prioritize being as enthusiastic about my students’ projects as he always has been for my own.

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# .Txtual Forensics

*Matthew Kirschenbaum*

## ABSTRACT

This essay explores David Greetham's notions of "textual forensics" in light of new forms of textual analytics practiced upon born-digital materials. It argues that computers and computational environments ask us to rethink basic evidentiary categories, i.e. "internal" vs. "external," as well as such concepts as normality, agency, and intentionality in relation to textual criticism. In the process—through a forensic examination of one specific piece of digital media—we also learn something about David's own personal computing habits.

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*for David Greetham*

I DIDN'T ATTEND THE CUNY GRADUATE CENTER, SO DAVID Greetham was never my teacher in the classroom sense. Nonetheless, his textual voice has always been inseparable from that of my University of Virginia teacher, Jerome McGann. I don't mean, of course, that they said the same things. Rather, that my encounter with these two giants of textual scholarship was collocated. In the fall of 1995 I was auditing McGann's seminar, whose subject was nominally the Pre-Raphaelites but which really was the textual conditions of our ongoing encounter with the Pre-Raphaelite Circle. On the book list was David's *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, just out the previous year from Garland, and still available only in cloth. The cost was something stratospheric to a graduate student, but I paid without hesitation, not only because Professor McGann said we had to, but because here, it was plain to me, was the essential counterpart to McGann's polemic: the nuts and bolts of what we needed to know, at least to instruct us in how much we did not yet know. This book has remained close at hand on my shelf, and I have turned to it many times since.

While Jerry cut a local figure on the Grounds of the University of Virginia and the nearby Corner, D. C. Greetham seemed towering, remote. His own graduate classes, immortalized in the introduction to McGann's *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* with the tale of the improvised calypso sounded thrilling, but I couldn't quite reconcile that carnival scene with

the intellectual presence that went on to publish, in very short order, monographs and collections such as *The Margins of the Text*, *Textual Transgressions*, and *Theories of the Text*, all within the next five years and all of which immediately found a place on my burgeoning bookshelves. At some point during this time, however, I attended my first STS conference, and the tall (he really was tall!) personage with the reading glasses round his neck who folded himself into one of the student desks in a mean little NYU classroom to hear my paper morphed from D. C. to just David. I did a global find and replace on my own internal hard drive, and it's been David ever since.

Now I've admitted this in public before so it's no great revelation here, but I sometimes think I've had exactly one really important idea in the course of my own scholarly work. This was the insight, such as it was, that the conversations then unfolding in the margins and pages of David's work and elsewhere in the textual scholarship community were equally applicable to the conditions of electronic textual production. When I began working on that idea as a graduate student I sought confirmation wherever I could find it. It was there in D. F. McKenzie's 1985 Panizzi lectures, where he explicitly included electronic data in his sociology of the bibliographical universe. It was certainly there in McGann, who always insisted that "hypertext" was the true subject of such books as he was then publishing, *Black Riders* and *The Textual Condition*. It was there in Random Cloud's wandering writings, which overtly channeled information theory. And of course it was there in David's work, both in concrete particulars such as the inclusion of an ASCII character table in the chapter on printed books in the *Textual Scholarship* volume, and in such contributions as "Is It Morphin' Time", a laser-sharp meditation on digital materiality by way of the Power Rangers which closed out a 1997 Oxford University Press collection on electronic textuality. But the work of David's which most immediately served to ground my thinking, first in my dissertation and then in my first book, was an essay he contributed to a 1996 special issue of *PMLA* organized around the Status of Evidence. Now I know it may seem inconceivable to many of you that *PMLA* could actually devote one of its numbers to any subject quite so fascinating, but the truth is that this issue, edited by Heather Dubrow, is a marvel. It features a roundtable on the subject of evidence with W. J. T. Mitchell, Janice Radway, and David Vander Meulen, among others. The articles are diverse: T. Hugh Crawford offers a piece on medical imaging, and there is a detailed manuscript study of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper". David's contribution was an essay entitled "Textual Forensics".

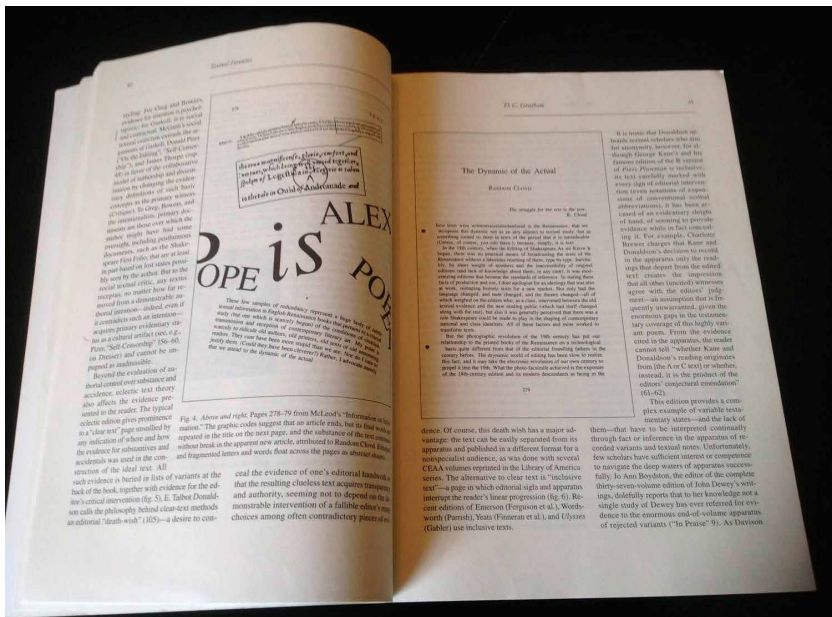


Figure 1. Greetham’s “Textual Forensics” essay, open to pages 40–41.

The first thing one notices about David’s essay is that it *looks* like a marvel. I mean that literally. It reproduces in facsimile the dramatic page scenes of Randall McLeod, whose own work is central to the discussion. There is a pleasing duality to the disruptive nature of this conspicuous display, for even as Randy is exposing the textualized norms of formal academic discourse, David, in reproducing these pages—are they image or text, illustration or (legible) textual appendage?—further complicates the staging of his own argumentation. “Textual Forensics” proceeds from the superimposition of the vocabulary between the forensic sciences and textual studies—notably evidence and witnesses—to take up questions related to the scientific method in bibliography and textual criticism, internal vs. external evidentiary states, and the conditions of bibliographical knowledge. But it is also a bold repositioning and a repositioning of textual scholarship itself, which David dubs an antiscipline, one that is both a postmodern pastiche of method and practice as well as lacking in any stable epistemological referent or even, he insists, an essential subject matter. Forensics itself, David reminds us, is a Janus-faced word, by definition both the presentation of scientific evidence and the construction of a rhetorical argument. Yet forensics for David arrives on the scene not primarily by way of

applied criminalistics, but rather through the notion of venatic lore, as presented by Carlo Ginzburg: marginal, seemingly insignificant details, mostly involuntary, which Giovanni Morelli used to authenticate the paintings of the European masters and which Ginzburg reads through both Freud and Arthur Conan Doyle as paradigmatic of a tradition of inference and deductive reasoning that David then brings to bear on the epistemology of textual knowing. This was a powerful lever for me as I began to ponder the accidentals and substantives of computer-generated documents. What is the appropriate measure of intentionality, and what are its symptoms, in a textual environment where every coded signal — themselves always reducible to voltage differences, as a fundamentalist such as Friedrich Kittler would remind us — is the product of some procedural agency, be it human or algorithmically initiated? The vast majority of what is written on *any* computer hard drive is, after all, the product of the machine. If you doubt me on this I commend you to *Diff in June*, a recently available 1600-page volume documenting and recording every piece of data that changed on a single day in June on a single computer's hard drive. The project's initiator, Martin Howse, describes it as “a novel of data archaeology in progress tracking the overt and the covert, merging the legal and illegal, personal and administrative, source code and frozen systematics”. The pages, in other words, are a data dump, most of it simply opaque and even the infrequent pockets of legibility resisting any simple semantic engagement since they are rendered within the context of a now absent operating system.

My reading of “Textual Forensics” also dovetailed with my discovery of an applied field of practice known as computer forensics, defined by authorities as involving “the preservation, identification, extraction, documentation, and interpretation of computer data” (Kruse II and Heiser 2001, 1). Computer forensics has furnished the practical armature for what I believe are my most important engagements with both textual scholarship and digital humanities, and much of my work in *Mechanisms* consisted in aligning (with what success I leave it to you to determine) computer forensics as practiced by specialists with the precepts of textual scholarship as they were articulated by David, Jerry McGann, Don McKenzie, and others.

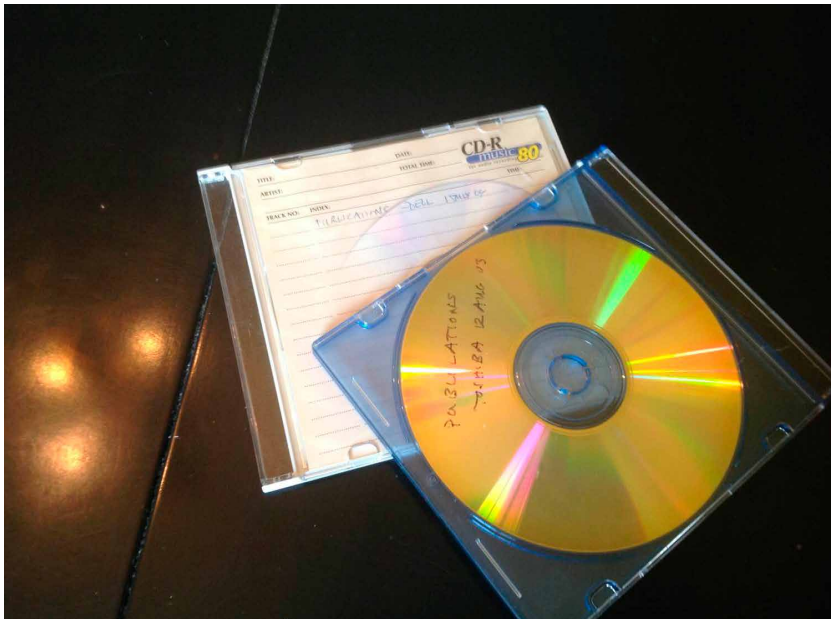
Computer forensics takes as its primary locus of investigation a specific class of digital object known as a disk image. “Image”, of course, is a commonplace term in computer network design, and refers to a perfect copy, or duplicate, of information at divergent points in the system. But image also carries with it the full freight of Western traditions of mimesis, from the inheritance of what W. J. T. Mitchell dubs iconology through the photographic revolution to the force of the facsimile image in modern editorial

practice, as demonstrated especially compellingly by McLeod. Likewise, as Heather MacNeil and Bonnie Mak remind us, the visibility of an image is deeply tied to notions of authenticity that derive from the function of records in evidentiary contexts: “The observational principles on which we ground our belief in records as trustworthy evidence [ . . . ] reflect a conception of records as witnesses to events, and a corresponding view of the world as one that is capable of being so witnessed” (2007, 40). Disk images obtained under appropriate conditions, including the use of cryptographic hashing, are legally acceptable as forensically sound substitutes for original storage media.

Consider this passage from the documentation of the AFF, or Advanced Forensic Format, detailing the function of one particular variable in the specification known as “badflag”:

The existence of the badflag makes it possible for forensic tools to distinguish between sectors that cannot be read and sectors that are filled with NULLs or another form of constant data, something that is not possible with traditional disk forensic tools. Tools that do not support the badflag will interpret each “bad” sector as a sector that begins with the words “BAD SECTOR” followed by random data; these sectors can thus be identified as being bad if they are encountered by a human examiner. Alternatively, AFF can be configured to return bad sectors as sectors filled with NULLs. (24)

In other words, at stake here is the investigator’s ability to discriminate among various levels of agency and intentionality in computational evidence. (In practice, one might be able to determine whether the contents of a particular file system have been deliberately tampered with.) But note too how the difference between evidence of absence and the absence of evidence is dependent on various acts of reading: what the disk imaging software can and cannot read from the physical media in question, and what the human investigator can or cannot read in the form of alphabetically encoded messages. The image is thus a site where signals are rendered as symbolic units (the “bits” of the bitstream, but also the hexadecimal and ASCII representations that one encounters with a typical viewer), all of which have varying degrees of semantic legibility. Put another way, the disk image is a site not just of mimetic imitation but also critical interpretation, based on the capabilities of both software and human analysts. Moreover, because a disk image is snapshot of the complete computing environment it effectively collapses the distinction between internal and

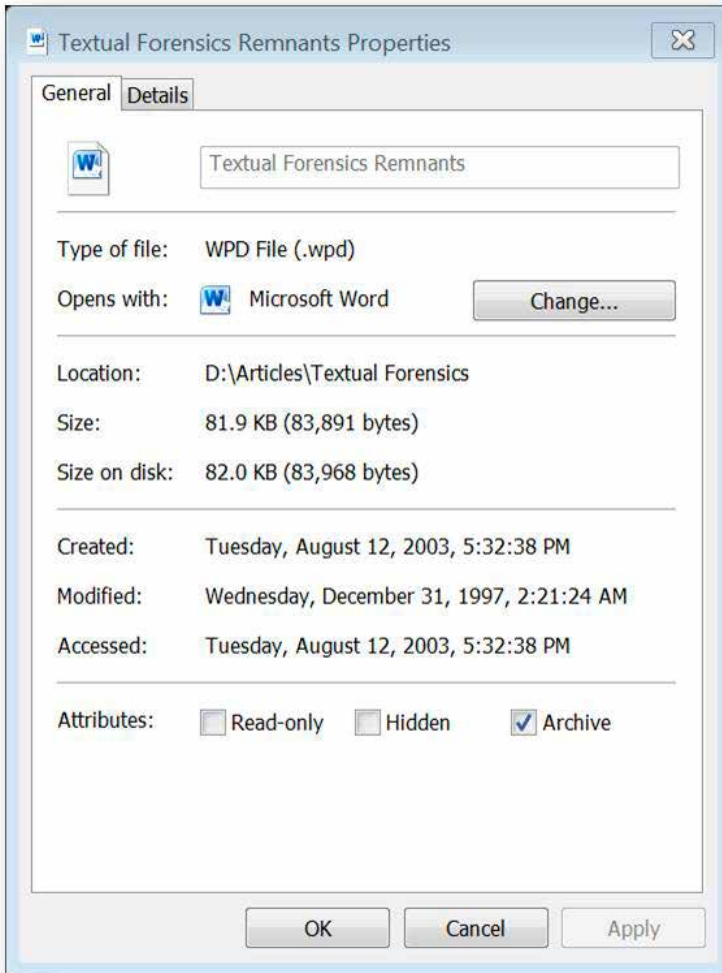


**Figure 2.** “Publications / Toshiba 12 Aug 03”. Two CD-ROMS provided by Greetham. Photo by author.

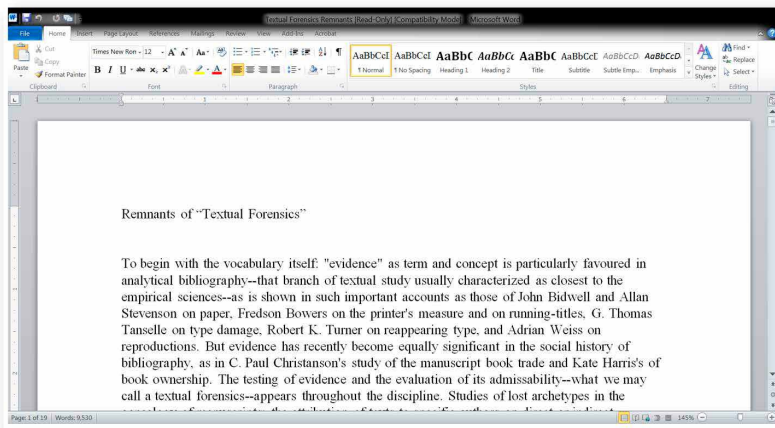
external evidence that David treats at length in his essay. Unlike a scholar such as McKenzie, who turns to the evidence of the archive to read the books—or a scholar such as Randy, who turns back to the books to ward away the pernicious influence of the overly edited archive—a disk image as evidentiary artifact is simply a linear stream of bits, text and context commingling in the one-dimensional topology of the string.

So let us now take a look at a .txtual body and the kind of evidence it reveals. Some weeks ago I contacted David and asked if he could find any of his own personal legacy digital storage media. He sent me two CD-ROMS, and as fortune would have it one of them contains a version of the “Textual Forensics” essay. Note that what we have here is not a forensically sound disk image in the manner I have just been describing, but rather a simple logical copy of a file system. Nonetheless, we’ll attempt a brief autopsy. First, we can get a sense of David’s directory structures and work habits as we navigate the CD. The file metadata, meanwhile, tells us David last touched this document very early in the morning of the last day of the year of 1997. Since the PMLA essay was in fact published in 1996 we can speculate as to his motives, but we can also consider that the essay may have simply been migrated to some new file system or media at that time.





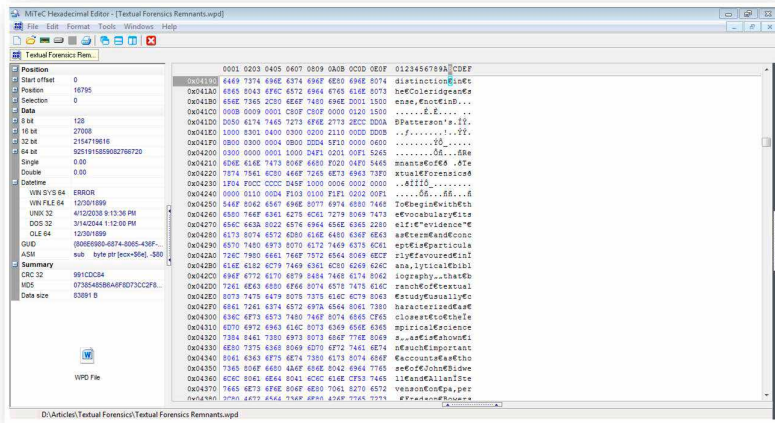
**Figure 3.** Windows Properties of file “Textual Forensics Remnants” indicating such information as date last modified, date this instance of the file was created (presumably corresponding to the creation of the CD, above), file format, file size, and directory location.



**Figure 4.** File “Textual Forensics Remnants” as rendered by Microsoft Word 2010. Note discrepancy between file name and the title given to the work in the document.

In any case, opening it reveals a document entitled “Remnants of ‘Textual Forensics.’” The title notwithstanding, it seems something more like a draft, existing in some state prior to submission to the journal’s editors.<sup>1</sup> Much of the text is consistent with what one reads in the published version, but there are variants throughout and it begins and ends in different places. Further inspection of the metadata tells me that this was originally a WPD or WordPerfect file, and that David was using a Lexmark Optra Plus laser printer at the time; given the mention of a Toshiba machine, almost certainly a laptop, on the CD itself, we can begin to reconstruct aspects of David’s computing environment that would be important to a future archivist seeking solutions to preserving this material. Here we see the rendition of the document in a hex viewer. The discontinuity between this and its presentation in my current copy of MS Word is jarring, but what is the definitive state of this digital artifact? It is no more this hexadecimal view than the seemingly normative presentation in my word processor, for both are in fact highly stylized renditions that are legible to us solely as the result of the imposition of various software logics, a phenomenon I

1. Greetham has subsequently suggested that this represents the first and fullest version of the essay, shortened at the request of PMLA, but its “remnants” retained in their original state for some possible future use (ultimately unrealized).



**Figure 5.** Hexadecimal view of a portion of “Textual Forensics Remnants”.

Hexadecimal values for each individual byte are displayed, along with their ASCII translation where possible. Note title of essay, visible about a third of the way down the right-hand column.

have elsewhere called formal materiality. Nonetheless, this particular view of David’s work, complete with the improperly rendered character codes (what we now call mojibake) has a patina of raw authenticity: these are the remnants of the .txtual body in perhaps their lowest state of legibility by any conventional means. To go further is to descend into the increasing abstractions of machine code and ultimately the pits and lands of the laser-scored surface of the CD itself.

“Where to stop? How to stop?” David asks rhetorically in his essay, echoing Foucault’s meditation on the extent of Nietzsche’s authorship, another key touchstone for him here (1996, 36). In the data dump that will characterize the textual scholarship of our very near future—recall the example of *Diff in June*, its printed bulk representing the capture of but a single day in the life of a system—this question will become all the more urgent. How much evidence is enough, and to what end when the archive itself consists of hundreds, thousands, even hundreds of thousands of variants, each date- and time-stamped to the millisecond? The textual forensics of the near-future will, I think, require its own forms of Big Data operations and analytics. We are fortunate that when we get there we will have David’s work and David’s example—neither of them small—to guide us.

*University of Maryland*

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# Scholar

*by Jerome McGann*

## **For David Greetham, precepts from his example**

Certain cultures will not yield to force,  
Care won't do, nor will, and never virtue.  
One needs patience hunting up a source.

To take that journey, start without provisions,  
Feed off the land (the people take it kindly),  
Expect nothing when you make decisions.

These rites of passage disallow prevention,  
Dead gods are deaf and dumb to all demands.  
Grace alone brings meaning to invention.

# Edna St. Vincent Millay's *A Few Figs from Thistles*

'Constant only to the Muse' and  
Not To Be Taken Lightly<sup>1</sup>

*Geffrey Davis*

## ABSTRACT

This article reconsiders the complicated production and reception of Edna St. Vincent Millay's early poetry, especially that of *A Few Figs from Thistles*. Millay's language of gender and sexual liberation in this 1920s volume received the label of "light verse," valences of which continue to affect readings across Millay's oeuvre. Looking to resituate the critical severity of *A Few Figs from Thistles*, this piece uses archival research and material culture to rethink the volume's original appearance and Millay's later release of two "revised" editions. Rather than recant rhetorically on the text's idiom of the New Woman, these redactions function as strategies for its critical redistribution. Unable to remain the equivalent of a radical figure above reality of consequence, the Millay of *A Few Figs from Thistles* reflects a poetic consciousness that understands the intricate nature of social resistance.

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Oh, think not I am faithful to a vow!  
Faithless am I save to love's self alone.  
Were you not lovely I would leave you now:  
After the feet of beauty fly my own.  
[. . .] So wanton, light and false, my love, are you,  
I am most faithless when I am most true. (MILLAY 1920, Sonnet III)

1. I would like to thank Penn State University's Center for American Literary Studies for their support of this work and also the Library of Congress for providing access to The Papers of Edna St. Vincent Millay and facilities in which to conduct archival research. This article developed from that work, which was presented on the "Poetry in the Social Sphere" panel at the 2009 Society for Textual Scholarship Conference.

I shall forget you presently, my dear,  
So make the most of this, your little day,  
Your little month, your little half a year,  
Ere I forget, or die, or move away  
[. . .] Whether or not we find what we are seeking  
Is idle, biologically speaking. (MILLAY 1920, Sonnet IV)

Rita Felski's *The Gender of Modernity* examines the "gendering of history" through her textual analyses of literary femininity, as constructed by both men and women writers, in order to build a "multi-perspectival" viewpoint from which "to unravel the complexities of modernity's relationship to femininity" (1995, 7). Felski fixes a critical focus on *modernity*—understood as "the more general experience of the aestheticization of everyday life" (13)—as key to approaching "past women's and men's own understanding of their positioning within historical and social processes" (1995, 8). In *Making Love Modern*, Nina Miller follows Felski's lead, situating the up-thrust of her study according to the intensity of women writers' engagements with modernity. Even more specifically, Miller's framework of *subcultural self-understanding* leads her to examine New York urban groups affiliated with a modern experience of distance from normative society. Important for Miller:

An urban formation and, by definition, oppositional, artistic subculture sets itself apart from the dominant bourgeois order in a posture of critique, distance, or, at least, ambivalence. More than a position, the subcultural posture marks a certain kind of person—quintessentially modern, defining herself in the paradoxical space of insider (to the subculture)/outsider (to the mainstream). (1999, 6)

Here, Miller outlines conditions that work to produce a greater sensitivity to popular recognitions (or lack thereof) by mainstream culture, as a subcultural position not only sets the critical stage for detecting the publicity of women's writing and women's engagement within the public sphere, but also gives critical visibility to modern women writers who were "actively invested in the sphere of public value, shaping and responding to public debate, and defining identity in relation to the terms of a public ethos" (1999, 7).

A twentieth-century text that intervened in public notions of modern femininity and that continues to be marked by negotiations of its cultural value and visibility, *A Few Figs from Thistles* helped launch the poet Edna

St. Vincent Millay's national career into an iconic literary spotlight. Despite the volume's significance to Millay's legacy, critics (both contemporary and recent) have largely labeled this text "light verse", qualitatively separating it from a larger body of Millay's "more serious" poetic work. Yet, *A Few Figs from Thistles*—a volume that positioned Millay for becoming the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry—did serious work within and yet against the established poetics and gendered ideologies of her time.

In *A Few Figs from Thistles*, Millay crafted an idiom of the New (or unconventional) Woman that radically engaged the modern female experience of everyday life according to a public discourse built upon traditional notions of gender, class, and sexuality. The text's language of resistance, enacted largely via a fluidity of female identification, refused conformity as either a backward-looking loyalty to preexisting ideals or a forward-looking concern with predetermined possibility. Indeed, Millay's New Woman staunchly denied and undermined domestic pressures to subscribe to patriarchal systems of women's value and self-identification: maternal pleasure in keeping house, monogamous satisfaction in choosing loyalty over promiscuity, pious pride in displaying aversions to capriciousness and impermanence, &c. As such, this text produced complex threats to a (gendered) social order, demanding both forthright sexuality and uncompromised sophistication, and opting for the kind of malleable performativity celebrated by later feminist theorists and activists.

Significant work has been done to revisit the importance of Millay's poetry. Critics like Will Brantley have noted Millay's unique use of voice and performance as highly subversive and often radically challenging preconceived gender roles and expectations (BRANTLEY 1991, 134). On its own terms, the New Woman constructed in the originary moment of *A Few Figs from Thistle* ruled supreme and, despite the odds, she did so with seemingly aesthetic, cultural, and political effortlessness. When not focusing exclusively on a short list of iconic poems or on Millay's modernization of the sonnet form,<sup>2</sup> however, the majority of the work that treats *A Few Figs from Thistles* maintains some essence of this volume as having been

2. In poet Molly Peacock's assessment, "Millay made what some would call a minor art—that is, she reinvigorated a traditional verse form, the sonnet, reclaiming it for a woman's voice—about the major themes of love and death. She was as uncompromising in her devotion to the rules of verse as she was in her flaunting of social rules. My guess is that Millay would not have held these two ideas as contradictions, but only as the opposition of forces that create from the energy of the lived life, an art driven by that life's energy" (2001, 116).



created on the apprentice continuum of Millay's poetic teleology.<sup>3</sup> Scholars who routinely cite the differences between the verse of *A Few Figs from Thistles* and Millay's other poems come to chart, in particular, a developmental narrative of maturation. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau articulate the popular opinion of where *A Few Figs from Thistles* fits into Millay's career:

Though some reviewers found it too flippant, audiences of the early 1920s, especially female readers, strongly associated with the work and saw it as emblematic of the era. *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems* is characterized by a more contemplative tone, which would continue to become more prominent over the course of her career [ . . . ] The light, cynical personae of *A Few Figs from Thistles* are replaced here by sympathetic voices of women enduring hardship and sorrow. (2006, 220)

This teleology has inflected even the more generous Millay scholarship. Schoenberg and Trudeau clearly appreciate Millay's boldness; however, they also echo the critical responses of Millay's day by explaining how the "light, cynical" tone of *A Few Figs from Thistles* develops into the "more contemplative tone" of *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems*. While the verses in *A Few Figs from Thistles* revel in a hard, bright wit, those in *The Harp-Weaver* acknowledge "hardship and sorrow"—a more appropriately mature, in Schoenberg's and Trudeau's view, territory for a female poet to inhabit.

Even Suzanne Clark, who has been at the frontline of the effort to recuperate Millay's significance to literary and feminist studies, has rehearsed and recovered her own reaction to what she first perceived as "immaturity" in the poet's early work. In "Uncanny Millay" she writes, "Yet I, like so many, also associated her with adolescence and the identity crises of adolescence [ . . . ] Even sympathetic readers, including myself, thought of the figure of the girl in her poems as a mark of immaturity" (1995, 12). Clark, in her attempt to salvage Millay's poetics from the innocuous nature of the immature poet, goes on to say:

The mistake here was to read her work as if the trying on of identity associated with the adolescent were something to give up with maturity and as if the multiple identities dramatized by her poems could be coalesced into the figure of a girl and labeled immature by their very

3. See, for example, PERLMUTTER 1977, FRIED 1986, and HUBBARD 1995.

multiplicity. I would like to suggest that Millay has more to do with the way literature [. . .] is the locus of such a trying on of identities. (1995, 12)

Clark is right here to push us to reconsider, on the one hand, the political potency of trying on multiple identities and, on the other hand, the performative imperative of the literary space itself.

The production history of *A Few Figs from Thistles*, however, suggests an even more complicated relationship to such celebrations of Millay's idiomatic intervention into crises of identity, especially in relation to issues of class, gender, and sexuality. In particular, the volume's original 1920 appearance presented a rhetorical defiance that sets it apart from the book's subsequent editions. More specifically, the later 1921 and 1922 iterations, after a contested critical reception, began a process of complicating the voice, converting the original and more singular persona into to the increasingly varied and fragmented personae discussed by critics.

Some of the more recent scholarship does not seem to subscribe to the development narrative that places Millay's early work on an evaluative scale of maturity. For instance, Miller's feminist project uses cultural studies methodology to offer both material grounding and critical insight for questions concerning women's literary strategy. Miller positions 1920s Millay as representative of "New Womanhood" and an assertive female sexuality that worked to focus the culture's ambivalence about contemporary social change. Miller writes:

Through a poetry that was equal parts transgressive and traditional, Millay provided symbolic access to modernity for her national audience. In the Village, she served to anchor bohemian identity in Free Love, the pursuit of authentic intimate relations without interference from artificial constraints, legal or social, or their psychological residue, jealousy. No mere hedonism, the personal transformation upon which this ideal depended was seen explicitly as part of wider cultural and political change. [. . .] And for women writers of modernist subcultural New York[,] she was a powerful model for their own struggle to reconcile the competing demands of a simultaneously public, iconic, and literary femininity. (1999, 17)

Melissa Girard's essay "Jeweled Bindings: Modernist Women's Poetry and the Limits of Sentimentality" also reflects on how Millay's bohemianism added philosophical and aesthetic depth to her early poetry, arguing that "the gendered body represents a complex material through which Millay

manipulates the expressive and autobiographical conventions of the traditional lyric. . . Millay plays with 'pretty' surfaces—in this case, beauty and body—to challenge the superficiality typically associated with this feminine stuff" (2012, 113). In *Playing Smart: New York Women Writers and Modern Magazine Culture*, Catherine Keyser positions the appearance of Millay's verse (and prose satires) in urban "smart magazines" as highly manipulative and subversive—a literary strategy for exploring a range of modern anxieties, for crafting ironic stances of critique concerning the stereotypes on display within the very pages of such mass-market magazines, and for scrutinizing female "urbane sophisticates" as a feminine identity associated with both success and triviality. For Keyser, Millay's use of humor helped her to successfully establish a public ethos within and yet against influential magazine images of urban femininity, effectively distorting the artificiality of gender and sexuality circulated across class boundaries. Indeed, as such scholarly work reinforces, Millay's early poetic idiom (especially that of *A Few Figs from Thistles*) was far more culturally and critically complex than the dominant conversation has duly recognized.

The question remains, then, as to why so many critics continue to consider poems in this volume separate from Millay's larger oeuvre. As with so many questions of literary reception, the answers seem to lie, at least in part, in the material record of *A Few Figs from Thistles*' literary production. As Jerome McGann has argued, texts result from complex networks of communicative exchanges that begin when a text enters production (1991, 61–62).<sup>4</sup>

To better contribute to the intellectual pressure of scholars like Miller, Keyser, and Girard, who each offer interpretations of Millay's early poetry that work against its critical delimitations, I suggest the need for an archivally-renewed light of inquiry for Millay's poetic idiom of the New Woman, understanding that the push against a narrow critical reception requires not only engaging the cultural factors of her time, but also the volume's difficult publication history and subsequent strategic replies.<sup>5</sup>

4. In *The Textual Condition*, McGann studies texts as social conditions and investigates the various intersections/influences (many unpredictable) that audiences have with and upon the text and textual development. Like McGann, this particular study charts its investigations along the double helix of a work's reception history and its production history. For more on this field as it relates to modernism, see also BORNSTEIN 1991 and 2001.
5. While successful in reevaluating the importance and impact of Millay's early poetry, each of these scholarly contributions smuggles a misconception about

What's more, tracing the textual development of *A Few Figs from Thistles* and recovering a more complete story of Millay's early poetic production suggests a more complex relation among Millay's oeuvre. Through archival research and a reception history that rehearses the volume's convoluted journey into print, including unpublished correspondence and early manuscript materials, we can better determine the interconnectedness that this volume has with other poetic works and the seriousness of its social interventions, which spanned the poet's career.

Such attention should further enhance the nature of conversations concerning the literary and cultural interventions enacted by idioms shaped and reshaped by women poets. As the material record will evidence, aesthetically and thematically discursive strains throughout Millay's poetry suggest a need to rethink our efforts to map authoritative accounts onto the oeuvres of such poets. Not only does Millay's example warn against critical approaches that risk rehearsing trajectories, but it also highlights the danger of conversations and methodologies that rely too heavily on narratives built around the attractiveness of concepts like artistic maturation or poetic progress. Training a corrective focus on the (largely unchecked) reality of the text's production and reception history should disarm some of the more injurious critical attention currently clouding the idiom of the New Woman that Millay crafted within the original appearance of *A Few Figs from Thistles*. In addition, Millay's subsequent 1921 and 1922 "revisions" to the volume further trouble narratives or notions of progress, as these "revisions" demonstrate unique concerted efforts to navigate the problematically gendered terrain of Millay's time, effectively negotiating the aesthetic and critical resistance faced by modern American women writing during the first half of the twentieth century.

To avoid problematically reducing Millay's early creative identity into a single or rigid "girl", more readers and scholars should rethink such moves

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*A Few Figs from Thistles* that this article, in part, looks to address—most notably, neither scholar treats the production of the volume's own edition-to-edition multiplicity. Millay's footnoted or glossed lower-class background also needs repositioning, as something very crucial to her poetic intervention and transcendence of social boundaries. For examples of these well-documented cultural factors, see CLARK 1993, which explores the dueling demands of modernist artists on the one hand, and community readers on the other hand. Clark sheds light on the paradox faced by modernist women writers: "the more successfully they wrote, both to appeal to a feminized community of readers and to help readers feel part of the literary community, the less they could be considered serious writers" (133). Also see GILBERT and GUBAR 1995.

to distinguish *A Few Figs from Thistles* either from the “more serious” poetics of other modernist writers or from imagined stages of graduation imposed onto Millay’s poetic legacy. As Schoenberg’s and Trudeau’s casting of Millay’s reception history has it, Millay’s neglect “had less to do with the value of her work than with the aesthetic of modernist criticism” (2006, 220). Furthermore, the subsequent redactions made to this volume suggest the nuance of literary strategy on the part of Millay, which would continue to mark and shape her poetic output.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately perhaps, the real stake of the curious case of Millay and *A Few Figs from Thistles* is the provocation to reevaluate the organizing principles that have bestowed to us a discourse susceptible to such distortions.<sup>7</sup>

### ‘Arrested Production: What Came First, the Second April or the First Few Figs?’

The story of *A Few Figs from Thistles* begins with a publisher, though not the publisher ultimately responsible for the volume’s printing. The 1912 appearance of Millay’s poem *Renascence* (selected as one of the best one hundred poems in a literary contest and published in *The Lyric Year*) brought Millay and her poetry into contact with New York publisher Mitchell Kennerley (MILFORD 2001, 75–104). In 1913, Kennerley began publishing Millay’s poetry in his literary magazine *Forum* and, over the next three years, would feature twelve of her poems (ANDERSON 2003, 87). During this time, Kennerley also began to press Millay to let him bring out a volume. Eventually (over four years later), Millay did publish her first volume of poetry with Kennerley. *Renascence and Other Poems* appeared on December 19, 1917, and was highly praised, particularly for what was viewed as its promise and early maturity. One reviewer wrote: “Your first thought upon meeting Miss Millay is that she is much too young to have written her poetry. Her

6. See MICHAILIDOU 2004, which traces objections to Millay’s later work according to her alleged inability to attain artistic maturity, despite what he sees as Millay’s earlier attempts to expand her scope by turning to more abstract and philosophical aesthetics (121).
7. This point, in part, echoes FRAISTAT 1986, in which the author argues for the ethics of “rehistoricizing” texts. Referring to his study as “contextual poetics”, Fraistat offers a solid model for accounting for the various contexts and forms in which poems (or volumes of poetry or pieces of volumes, &c.) appear. He argues that readers and critics may sometimes discover or impose a unity on the text via their own cognitive ingenuity.

first book, ‘*Renascence*,’ seems to have come from a life of much suffering and wide experience” (NIKSAH 1920, 6). Critical reactions such as these, expressing assumptive surprise at the gap between Millay the person and Millay the poet, from the beginning yoked Millay’s poetics to a reading practice that needed to reconcile the tenor of her poetry with her identity as a (young) woman.

In addition to marking the beginning of Millay’s professional literary career, the publication of this first volume provides important insight into Millay’s early plans for her poetry. A few months before the printing of *Renascence*, in a letter home to her mother, Cora B. Millay, and sister, Norma, she wrote:

I have seen the fac-simile of the title-page of my book—[. . .] It is all—the whole book—going to be printed on that beautiful, very rough, very torn-edgy paper, like my *Modern Love*—do you remember.—I said to Mitchell concerning this matter—“Won’t it be terribly expensive? to print the whole book on such wonderful paper?” & he said “Oh, well,—you *promised* me, Edna, it was to be a very small book!”—and so it is—lovely & thin—only the very best—& bound in black with gold letters. Mitchell does get out the prettiest books!—It ought to sell well for Christmas presents—[. . .] (It’s so funny for me to think of the business end of it—but I want it to be read—it’s that more than the disgusting money—the dirty necessary money!) (MACDOUGALL 1952, 76–77)

While clearly playful here (a common tendency in Millay’s letter writing throughout her life), this letter also reveals Millay’s early-developed and abiding concern with the extent of her readership. From early on, the stakes included a poetically dominated presence and volumes that would circulate easily and widely; Millay imagined her poetic voice as one that could reach beyond a small coterie audience.<sup>8</sup>

Given the successful publication and reception of *Renascence*, Millay had no good reason to abandon Kennerley as a publisher, despite his faulty business practices. Adding to the appeal was Kennerley’s reputation for being one of the most dynamic publishing houses in New York, publishing

8. For additional counter-narratives built around the relationship between the construction of modernism and commodity culture, see Rainey, who contends that “modernism and commodity culture were not implacable enemies but fraternal rivals” (1999, 76).

poets such as Vachel Lindsay, Arthur Davison Ficke, and D. H. Lawrence. As Alfred A. Knopf remembered:

There were good publishing houses, of course . . . but it was Mitchell Kennerley who was setting another more adventurous course. [. . . Oh], the manner of his books. The way they were bound and produced. I remember them clearly, still, in their rich black cloth bindings with gold stamping. The man had extraordinary taste and certain judgment. (MILFORD 2001, 146–47)

Initially, this openness to adventure, coupled with Kennerley's belief in the "remarkable freshness, sincerity, and power" of Millay's poetry (Milford 149), kept Millay committed to Kennerley's publishing house, and, in early 1920, after finishing the proof of her second volume, she again gave the job to Kennerley.

In a letter to American writer and friend Allan Ross Macdougall, dated April 7, Millay wrote: "I sent the first page-proofs back to Mitchell Kennerley yesterday; and the book, which I call simply *POEMS*, ought to be out in two or three weeks" (MACDOUGALL 1952, 93). Kennerley promised to have her second volume out in May—a promise that he failed to keep. This failed promise would significantly alter Millay's planned output. While *A Few Figs from Thistles* has historically appeared as Millay's second volume of verse, the collection referred to here as "Poems" was not *A Few Figs from Thistles*. The volume that Millay hired Kennerley to bring out in April of 1920 was what we know as *Second April*; however, because of printing delays, *Second April* did not appear until 1921, the year after *A Few Figs from Thistles*' appearance. In a 1920 letter to American poet and friend Arthur Davison Ficke, Millay expressed telling expectations of what she assumed would to be her sophomore volume: "My second book of poems, *A Stalk of Fennel*, will be published this fall.<sup>9</sup> There are some very good things in it,—one group especially, a group of elegies, I am anxious to have you see" (MACDOUGALL 1952, 94). Millay's concern with the elegies—a reflective and gravitas form, lamenting loss and death—hints at her understanding of this volume's tone and of its reception.<sup>10</sup> *Spring*, the opening poem of *Second April*, contains sobering, anti-pastoral (and anti-

9. An early working title for *Second April*.

10. This group of elegies was written about Dorothy Coleman—a girl Millay knew from Vassar who died suddenly in the flu epidemic of 1918—and was printed

Victorian) lines such as, “Not only under ground are the brains of men / eaten by maggots” and “It is not enough that yearly, down this hill, / April / Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers”. The volume’s tone and content staked out poetic terrain that would have put her in more direct conversation with contemporaries such as Eliot and Williams.

However, in the spring of 1920 Kennerley’s publishing had come to a halt. In June, anxiously awaiting the appearance of *Second April*, Millay began to inquire more seriously about the printing delay:

Mitchell, dear,—

You are behaving disgracefully to lil’ Edna, whom you love,—all the time her mother keeps asking her questions which it is impossible for her to answer, & it is all very awkward & horrid, & you ought to be ashamed.

Write me at once, giving me some nice, plausible, mendacious-as-hell reason why you have not yet published my pretty book. (MILFORD 2001, 186)

Kennerley failed to provide a reason. In a letter to American poet and friend Witter (Hal) Bynner, dated October 29, 1920 (seven months after she first gave proofs of *Second April* to Kennerley), Millay wrote: “My book isn’t out yet. It’s dreadful. I write Mitchell all the time, and he won’t answer my letters; and every time I call up the office they tell me he is out, and I know dam [sic] well he is so near the telephone all the time that I hear his breathing” (Macdougall 103). With no contact from Kennerley, Millay had already begun to consider her options: “I am going to see Knopf about it, I think. Although I don’t see what he could do. Maybe there’ll be a law-suit, ‘n everything. I wish I’d taken it to Knopf in the first place, as you advised me to do, Hal” (MACDOUGALL 1952, 103).

Ultimately, Kennerley’s dilatory handling of *Second April* pushed Millay to offer a collection she originally meant to be her third volume—*A Few Figs from Thistles*—to a lesser-known, avant-garde publisher. With *Second April* still in publication limbo, Millay took her manuscript for *A Few Figs from Thistles* to publisher Frank Shay, who immediately printed *A Few Figs from Thistles* in the autumn of 1920. *Second April* did not appear from Kennerley’s publishing house until the following summer, 1921.

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under the general title “Memorial to D.C.”. It includes the poems *Epitaph*, *Prayer to Persephone*, *Chorus*, *Dirge*, and *Elegy* (MILFORD 2001, 187).



This alteration in Millay's output has had irrefutable consequences on popular readings of Millay's work.<sup>11</sup> In part, it opened up a space for speculation that this publishing house change paralleled her creation of the prose pseudonym Nancy Boyd and thus was a deliberate attempt to separate *A Few Figs from Thistles* from her larger body of "serious" work. Furthermore, with a three year gap between her first and second collections, the truancy of *Second April* as an identifiable inheritance from the promise generated by *Renascence* made for quite a different literary stage-setting on which audiences would encounter the more bold and radical poetics of *A Few Figs from Thistles*.

An expectant reviewer wrote in 1920, just prior to the appearance of *A Few Figs from Thistles*, "Edna St. Vincent is one of our most distinctive personalities in modern American poetry. She has a new volume soon to be published which is said to be a decided advance in intensity and form over her first volume, 'Renascence'" (Anon. 3). A 1922 review in *The Times*, reassessing Millay's career after her first three collections, not only ignored *A Few Figs from Thistles* altogether, but also claimed, "Perhaps it is a pity that the impulse to write 'Renascence' came to Miss Millay at the beginning of her poetical career" (DE SELINCOURT 1922, 208). Upon describing *Renascence* as "authentic" and "arresting", as leading the reader "through dramatic and mystical vicissitudes to the visionary climax" and "[implying] of humility, of prostration, of utter solitude, [constituting] a touch of genius", the reviewer suggests "After 'Renascence,' it must have been difficult for Miss Millay to go on. [ . . . ] But having read 'Renascence' we shall continue to wait patiently for the reassertion and development of the spiritual vision by which it was inspired, and its faithful application to all the stirrings and striving of our modern world" (DE SELINCOURT 1922, 208). The reviewer continues:

Meantime, Miss Millay regales us with various exhibitions of remarkable technique. [ . . . ] Versatile, unseizable, it is more difficult to explain her than to set her to explain herself. Her sensitiveness is extreme, and she is disposed, we think, to dwell less on what life has given, than on what it has taken or may take away from her; yet she has, as 'The Bean-Stalk'

11. In the earlier quoted 7 April 1920 letter to Allan Ross Macdougall, Millay had written: "Mr. Kennerley is going to bring out my *ARIA DA CAPO* in a little book, too, this spring. And I have decided to let him have the *FIGS FROM THISTLES*,—thus confining my publishing to one publisher, which I have decided is the best thing to do" (MACDOUGALL 1952, 93).

and ‘The Blue Flag in the Bog’ both show, a genuine power of creative imagination, an natural eloquence which sometimes allows her to pursue the expression of what she has expressed, and a musical ear which is equally at her service whether her verse is bond or free. She rounds off both her volumes with half-a-dozen or more sonnets, not fearing and, indeed, having no reason to fear, this final test. (DE SELINCOURT 1922, 208)

While the review arrives at something like praise for *Second April*, it’s difficult to ignore the reviewer’s inability to recover from the perceived discrepancies between what was promised and what came after *Renascence*.

This reception rippled through the years to follow, also marking later collections. Once made available to the public, the reviewers picked up on the serious tenor found within *Second April*. Much of the response, however, seems colored by the shadow of “immaturity” cast over *A Few Figs from Thistles*. In discussion of *Second April*, the poet-critic Padraic Colum wrote in 1921: “Miss Millay is a poet with good gifts—a gift of witty expression [ . . . ] But she does need to be reminded of the stern intellectual discipline that the writers who matter have given themselves—the discipline that permits the poet to have ice on the brain and fire in the heart” (1921, 189–190). Another 1921 reviewer wrote: “Genius is a strong word, and one too often used, but I do not use it idly, or, I think, inaccurately in connection with Edna St Vincent Millay. It is, at present, genius in the bud. It may never come to full flower. But it has every evidence of growing life” (MAYNARD 1921, 3). Yet another wrote: “She has the poet’s sight and the poet’s hearing. She sees visions in nature beyond our range, and hears sounds to us inaudible. These extra powers give to many of her verses a delicate charm” (PHELPS 1921, 10). Even in the act of identifying her poetic skill, reviews such as these maintain the notion of Millay as a poet engendered by novice status, effectively suspending her in a coming-of-age stage, despite already having three volumes and additional works under her creative belt. These perceptions continue to inflect discussions about Millay’s poetry today.

In addition to the overt botanical title cues linking her second and third volumes—“A Stalk of Fennel”, “Young April”<sup>12</sup>, *Second April*, *A Few Figs from Thistles*—mythological and biblical references situate these texts

12. Another working title for *Second April* that appeared in a list of works by Edna St. Vincent Millay printed in the 1920 edition of *A Few Figs from Thistles*. This working title has “(Ready Shortly)” printed below it.

within a shared discourse. Both native to the Mediterranean region, fennel and figs each figure heavily in traditional master narratives within Greek mythology and Christianity, respectively. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, angered by Prometheus' stubborn guile, Zeus decides to withhold "the power of unwearying fire" from humankind; however, Prometheus steals the gift of fire back from Olympus by concealing an ember in a hollow stalk of fennel (ATHANASSAKIS 2004, 25). "Stalk of Fennel", the working title for *Second April*, suggests that between these pages burn verses by Millay with the potential to transcend (divine) limitations and, through language, revolutionize the thinking made available to humankind. Likewise, the symbol of the fig conjures up a Christian parable with promises to expand human potential in the face of adversity. In the Book of Matthew, Jesus references figs as he delivers his lessons on prophesy:

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or A Few Figs from Thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:15–20)

Millay's title borrows strong rhetorical suggestions from this parable to construct an ideal reading process for her poetry. This process implicates the reader's judgment and presupposes a grave need to negotiate metaphorical and ideological thorns and thistles in order to access and digest the good content. Millay likens her thin collection of poems to the good fruit from a good tree, in a sense likening her female poet-speaker to a trustworthy prophet. The image of the fig speaks to Millay's sense of this poetry's ability to nourish society—specifically the female portion—with (divine) insight toward what she conceived of as a better version of itself. These embedded associations reveal not only Millay's effective uses of traditional forms and narratives, but they also reveal the interconnectedness and continuity among these works of poetry.

In the later *Collected Lyrics of Edna St. Vincent Millay*, edited by her sister Norma and published in 1959, the selections from *Second April* precede poems from *A Few Figs from Thistles*, honoring the original literary arch Millay had in mind. In the introduction, Norma wrote, "These collections [. . .] were compiled by the poet in the early forties and could be said to embrace [. . .] her poetic works up to that time" (v). In a sense, *Second April*

was meant to prepare the literary ground for *A Few Figs from Thistles*. Lacking the dark interlude of *Second April*, *A Few Figs from Thistles* was left open to the readings that have positioned the volume as emblematic of an inconsistent and adolescent cynicism, as “light” instead of serious, as flip-pant instead of highly subversive, as immature instead of intellectually suspicious of existing social norms. In the opinion of many readers and critics, Millay could not muster the next mature theme—an opinion that would carry over into assessments of her later collections. For example, a reviewer in 1923 writes: “Edna St. Vincent Millay has escaped somewhat from her mood of brittle cynicism. In ‘The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems’ we come on lyrics that are both sturdier and surer than some earlier performances. Her mood is still that of a woman who loves both lightly and deeply and is a trifle ironical about it all” (J. F. 1923, 4). The dismissive reading (which continues to impact readers and scholars today) had the effect of deflecting and diminishing critical responses to the challenges to conservative notions of domesticity, gender, and sexuality present throughout Millay’s oeuvre.

### ‘Threads of Indeterminacy: Millay’s Early Poetry’

While the complicated print production of Millay’s first three volumes sheds some light on the strange reception history of *A Few Figs from Thistles*, the material record of this volume’s construction does even more to debunk teleological narratives often read back onto Millay’s writing career. Indeed, notes for both *Second April* and *A Few Figs from Thistles* and early correspondence reveal a strong and extended interconnectedness between Millay’s poetic works. Rather than unveil a volume-to-volume story of progress in regard to Millay’s poetic sophistication and sensibilities, archival materials speak to a more singular moment that produced a poetic voice spanning Millay’s career. Even the more critically celebrated poetry of *The Harp-Weaver*—the volume most responsible for winning Millay the Pulitzer—seems to have been born alongside the poems that today make up *Second April* and *A Few Figs from Thistles*. This is not to suggest that something like development never occurred in Millay’s work, or that such aesthetic continuities do not exist to some extent for all poetry. But, in light of the critical labels used to inform readings of Millay’s oeuvre, this record calls into serious question methodologies or discourses founded too much on the attractiveness of the narratives of progress and maturation.

The final pages of an unpublished notebook used between the years 1918 and 1920 contain a handwritten list of poems under the heading “2nd, Volume” (MILLAY 1918–1920). While this working table of contents arguably belongs to what would become *Second April*, the list does less to create distinctions and more to blur the boundaries between Millay’s poetic works. In addition to poem titles such as *Death of Autumn* and *Elaine*, which appear in *Second April*, this list also includes the titles *Thursday*, *She’s Overheard Singing*, *The Unexplorer*, and *Daphne*—poems that appear in the 1920 edition of *A Few Figs from Thistles*—and the titles *Domestic as a Plate* (a working title for the poem *Grown-Up*) and *Recuerdo*—poems that Millay included in the 1921 and 1922 editions of *A Few Figs from Thistles*. Also found within this early notebook entry are titles such as *Departure*, *Visit to the Asylum*, *Humoresque* and *The Pond*—poems from Millay’s even later 1922 volume *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems*. This nascent listing of poem titles argues directly against the differentiations and critical chronologies used by critics to bolster developmental and qualitative distinctions between Millay’s volumes.

While the early manuscript evidence shows that nearly inseparable aesthetic intricacies and thematic ties abound in her body of work, even close friends and the readers that Millay included in her construction process tried to make distinctions for her; however, ultimately, the record of these “collaborations”, like the manuscripts, do more blurring than deciding. Even Millay herself was questioning the content and structures for the textual containers that the public would receive, and she looked for outside input to help her sort the wheat from the chaff. Millay sent an inclusive manuscript of her second volume for Bynner (and Ficke) to review. In addition to providing praise and his commentary for poems within this large manuscript, Bynner also made his suggestions for omissions and inclusions in an unpublished portion of a letter dated September 10, 1920:<sup>13</sup>

For what they are worth, even though print may have vetoed their possible practical usefulness, I append some notes I made on the mss. you sent me. [ . . . ] I would omit *Distingué*, *The Socialist*, *To a Poet that Died Young*, *Pastoral*, *Assault*, *To Kathleen*, *To E.W.M.K.*, *To a Lady in a Position of Influence*, *To All Magnificent Ladies* [ . . . ], *To Poison Ivy*, *Thursday*, *A Reflection*, *Q.E.D.*, *The Unbeliever*, *Humoresque*, *The New*

13. For the published portions of this letter, see KRAFT 1981, 76–78.

Fancy, “I know I said, ‘I am weary of you; go’”, Journey, and The Blue Flag in the Bog. [. . .] I forgot to add that I would omit all of Rosemary . . . and all of Alms . . . and, I think, all of The Little Hill. [. . .] Ode to Silence, full of beauties, is yet troubling like Francis Thompson. And I am not keen for the following: The Bean-Stalk (in spite of Harriet), The Philosopher, The Cheerful Abstainer, Grown-Up (on account of Stevenson) and The Wild Swans.

Objections being over, I lie at your feet again and always. I have sung Recuerdo back and forth on San Francisco Bay (and not I alone), I feel my back creep with the beauty of The Death of Autumn. I marvel at the dexterities of Travel, Passer Mortuus Est, Two Slatterns and a King, The Pond, The Singin’ Woman, The Penitent, She is Overheard Singing, First Fig, Second Fig and Daphne. I am moved by Inland, Burial, Eel-Grass, Song of a Second April, Lament, Portrait by a Neighbor and To a Certain Rich Man. And I am awed to the quick by the Twenty Sonnets. And the beauty of it all, of you, of your poetry, is an integral part of my deepest happiness, the happiness that neither comes nor goes but is. (BYNNER 1920)

Similar to Millay’s notebook, Bynner here discusses poems that span a larger portion of Millay’s poetic career—*Second April*, all three iterations of *A Few Figs from Thistles*, and *The Harp-Weaver*. What’s more, Millay’s counter response to Bynner’s suggestions only further foils attempts at making any volume-to-volume distinctions. In October of 1920, she wrote back:

A great deal of what Arthur wrote on the margins of the Ode to Silence is perfectly true. But it’s too late to change it now. You see, I can’t get in touch with Mitchell. And when he gets ready to print it, he’ll go ahead and print it, without consulting me at all. However, the most of those poems you advised me to leave out, Hal, were not going into the book anyway. I just happened to send them along. Many of them will be collected, eventually, into the volume I am going to call *A Few Figs from Thistles*. (MACDOUGALL 1952, 103–104)

Although Millay expressed an understandable doubt concerning her ability to make changes to *Second April*, and despite her claim that what Hal had advised to leave out was in fact intended to become its own separate collection, this correspondence only further complicates the pedigrees of these volumes, as changes were made—neither Bynner’s suggested in-list nor his out-list coincides with the content of *Second April* or *A Few Figs*

from *Thistles*. Titles from these lists appear across multiple volumes as we have them today. This discussion of the not-yet-distinct volumes further collapses critical distinctions and resists suggestions that the poetic voices found from volume to volume are necessarily markers of Millay's teleology as a poet.

### 'Engendering a "New" Woman: Class/Gender Mobility'

Although marked and somewhat limited by an absent consideration of *A Few Figs from Thistles'* production history, an understanding of Millay's importance in shaping the New Woman according to modern concerns and nuance has gained critical traction. As Miller rehearses it:

Insofar as her poems negotiated the imperatives of her authorial position, their principal task was the management of a public, unconventional, female sexuality—one capable of reflecting the self-image of a national as well as a bohemian readership. In this capacity Millay was most New Woman: on the one hand representing a concrete and accessible modernity in the sexuality her poems expressed; on the other hand, in her lyricism, her traditional forms, and even in her poetry as such, representing the rejection of the ordinary mainstream world—including its fetishization of modernity. As the symbol of Free Love, she had to balance male prerogative and conventional femininity as well as control the meaning of her own universal desirability. The circulation that set such desire in motion—as represented in her poems and enacted in the buying and selling of her books—made her acutely vulnerable to denigration as a woman. [. . .] Millay tackled the intricacies of her predicament partly through a synthesis of female sexuality and the typically bohemian poetics of economy. (1999, 30–31)

The relationship between her social engagement and her aesthetics has been studied; however, despite its coverage in her biography, the role that a lower-class background played in developing Millay's outlook remains largely footnoted or glossed over, portraying a spontaneous bohemian sensibility basically divorced from material conditions.

Although often read and discussed according to her activity in bourgeoisie circles, Millay had a working class background and was highly aware of her precarious financial situation at the emergence of her literary career. Not only do images of labor—maids, milk men, &c.—populate

Millay's early work, but her gendered mastery of inside/outside manipulation also reflects her financially sponsored transition from an underprivileged experience of Vermont to a privileged experience of New York. This class-ranging experience arguably influenced Millay's sensitivity to social pressures and also her investment in crafting a gendered and mobile idiom of the New Woman.

The original edition of *A Few Figs from Thistles* begins with the group of poems commonly referred to as "A Few Figs".<sup>14</sup> This set establishes the book's idiom of the New Woman. The poems in this short series debunk a conservative economy of time and work to celebrate counter-cultural women's values and outlooks that have been traditionally coded as male terrain (in this case, living in the present at the expense of past or future concerns). Initiating things is one of Millay's most quoted poems and memorable images—the candle that "burns at both ends"—as *First Fig* recodes the impracticality of forgoing past/future concerns as the pleasurable and powerful embracement of immediacy. In other words, the threat of an unsustainable temporality becomes subordinate to the potency of experience. As Girard puts it,

Even her most seemingly flippant, "light" verse participates in this mode of lyric experimentation. . . [*First Fig*] has typically been read as an emblem of the bohemian ethos that dominated Greenwich Village in the late teens and early twenties. While this is undoubtedly true, the poem. . . also performs an important meta-poetic function. As we are dazzled by that brilliant, double-burning candle—a powerful metaphor for Millay's body—the speaker addresses us directly, "Ah, my foes, and oh, my friends", and commands us to watch: "It gives a lovely light!" We are positioned explicitly as voyeurs rather than readers, by a coy speaker who seems to revel in that objectification. . . This power dynamic, in which a visually arresting speaker captivates her audience and manipulates our desire to watch and follow, develops across Millay's poetry into a formal aesthetic logic. (2012, 113)

Indeed, throughout *A Few Figs from Thistles*, we see challenge after challenge to societal expectations, especially those expectations routed in a

14. This grouping contains five poems—*First Fig*, *Second Fig*, *The Unexplorer*, *Thursday*, and *The Penitent*—and was labeled "A Few Figs" when printed in the June 1918 issue of Harriet Monroe's *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*.



class and gender performance that asks women to exhibit and (re)produce the kind of permanence that is both passive and compliant.

In *The Merry Maid*, for instance, we encounter a maid who, rather than weep or mourn over love-lost, celebrates her heartbreak for inciting a new, liberated perspective on domestic relations. More specifically, this sudden outlook allows the maid claim to a liberating account of love's fleeting nature and promise, freeing her from the traditional burden of a monogamous investment in romance:

Oh, I am grown so free from care  
Since my heart broke!  
I set my throat against the air,  
I laugh at simple folk! (MILLAY 1920, 11)

Instead of exhibiting the victimized or uncontrolled reaction perhaps expected of a female figure featured in a story of love-lost, this working class speaker inherits what has traditionally been a male-oriented framework to the end of a relationship: sexual freedom!

In *Daphne*, the poem that ends this text's original idiomatic sweep of female liberation, we witness the force of female independence and indeterminacy taken to the level of myth, as Millay conjures Apollo, the god of verse, imbuing the text with a divine rhetorical force. What's more, this poem gives this myth's moment of transformation a feminist bend. The poem's female speaker proclaims:

Why do you follow me?—  
Any moment I can be  
Nothing but a laurel-tree. (MILLAY 1920, 14)

In Ovid's version, the nymph Daphne turns into a laurel tree (the leaf of which, in addition to being a common cooking herb, is both the symbol of the unattainable and the object used to adorn the prosperous). After an act of desperate pleading to her divine father for salvation from Apollo's pursuit, her feet turn numb and cold and fasten to the ground, bark grows around her body, her hair turns into leaves, her arms into boughs, and only the smoothness of her skin remains, which Apollo still touches after her transformation (DRYDEN, et al. 1844, 34–37). In Millay's version, however, rather than DRYDEN the tragic tale of Daphne's despairing attempt to maintain her virginity by turning into the static image of an unattainable (yet consumable) laurel tree, the female speaker of this poem instead har-

nesses changeability as an active means of power and, more importantly, of mobility. In a final act of defiance, the challenge that this volume has been enacting comes to fruition, outmaneuvering even the gods:

Yet if over hill and hollow  
 Still it is your will to follow,  
 I am off;—to heel, Apollo! (MILLAY 1920, 14)

Although labeling the poem “light”, Keyser also considers *Daphne* exemplary of Millay’s “depictions of modern women’s virtuosic self-transformations” (2011, 36):

While Millay depicts this transformation in mythological terms, the poem implies that the modern woman can outpace her male competitors in performing multiple versions of the self. Women can extend, when needed, the ‘pink bough’ of blossoming femininity. Self-transformation in Millay’s imagining is neither tragic nor terrifying, but rather playful, strategic, and even triumphant. (2011, 40)

Concluding with *Daphne*, then, the arc of the original edition of *A Few Figs from Thistles*, from the language of ephemeral beginning to the language of ethereal end, radically undermines traditional notions of class/domestic roles, gender performances, and sexual norms. As such, Millay’s early poetry activated the kind of female autonomy that laid groundwork for feminist interventions enacted by the New Woman.

### ‘Within Yet Against: Millay’s Redacted Modes of Resistance’

In spite of its intense feminist gestures and its interconnectedness with her poetic oeuvre, critics (both then and now) have created a delimiting lens of immaturity and apprenticeship around the original appearance of Millay’s *A Few Figs from Thistles*. The effects of this critical consideration can be seen in the subsequent 1921 and 1922 editions of the volume, which display revisionary and creative reactions to this reception. What’s more, these follow-up textual moments offer a nuanced understanding of what Artemis Michailidou has recognized as Millay’s role “in the formation of the younger woman’s artistic social consciousness, providing her with the necessary tools to articulate frustration, victimization, and enclosure,

[as Millay] turned frustration and domestic enclosure into new subjects for women's writing" (2004, 68). Indeed, the two revised editions—with a total addition of eight poems and drastic changes to the bibliographic presentation—produce distinct changes that, without yielding, ultimately alter how Millay's idiom of the New Woman functioned.

These alterations demonstrate Millay's concerted efforts to negotiate gendered resistances to her text in order to redeploy the subversive messages present within its pages. Millay's first "revision" of *A Few Figs from Thistles* was printed in 1921 and included four new poems: *To S.M.*, *The Singing Woman from the Wood's Edge*, *Grown-Up*, and *The Prisoner*. Two things are immediately striking about these additions. First, they introduce themes that do not appear in the 1920 edition—loss and defeat—drastically shifting the tone of this volume. Especially surprising is the addition of the poems *Grown-Up* and *The Prisoner*, as they each evince anxieties about losing control and questions of identity that don't exist in the first edition. In the 1920 edition, at most, poems such as *The Penitent* feigned an uncertainty that is soon countered by an even stronger realization of the new female identity. Moreover, while the speaker in the original edition spent time in the domestic space, she did so explicitly on her own terms—she maintained a level of separation—and no force could seem to confine her to predetermined domestic roles. However, the poems added in the 1921 edition present a female speaker "domestic as a plate" and "locked into" a name, generating a more serious consideration of the risks to women associated with the domestic space. These introductions create tension with the language of resolute confidence governing the ideas and actions of the original female speaker, perhaps injecting doses of susceptibility and risk that reflect the existing pressure of social norms.

In addition to these tonal shifts, the placement of two other poems results in thematic and kinetic disruptions to the order of the collection, in particular the beginning and ending experience produced by the original moment of *A Few Figs from Thistles*.<sup>15</sup> The early appearance of the elegy *To S.M.* after the poem *Thursday* interrupts the grouping known as "A Few Figs", which originally opened the volume. The elegiac stance of *To S.M.* creates tension with this grouping's radical dismissal of past and future consequence, as the speaker's grief over death and her resistance to change trouble the once unwavering tribute to all things ephemeral.

15. The four-poem sonnet sequence that ends *Figs from Thistles*, beside minor adjustment in the bibliographic coding (i.e. the inclusion or exclusion of the group title "Sonnet"), stays consistent across each edition.

The 1921 revision to the two closing poems similarly troubles the rhetorical momentum generated in the original language. As mentioned earlier, the 1920 edition ended with the poem *To the Not Impossible Him*—which features a speaker who denounces the domestic and romantic demands for permanence in favor of the power and contingency of mobility—and the culminating poem *Daphne*—which takes the female speaker’s subversion of gendered norms to the mythical level. The 1921 edition, however, ends with the short poems *Grown-Up* and *The Prisoner*, each featuring a speaker constrained and affected by the demands of domesticity, capping the original’s final tones of defiance, independence, and precocious changeability. Ending with such unsettled female figures that are marked by the pressures of social norms severely alters the volume’s idiomatic sweep of female liberation.

The second “revision” of *A Few Figs from Thistles* appeared in 1922 and introduced four more poems: *Recuerdo*, *MacDougal Street*, *Midnight Oil*, and *To Kathleen*.<sup>16</sup> These new poems—which again introduce counter-themes of limitation and stagnation—were coupled with a drastic reordering, even further augmenting the volume’s feminist embracement of the ephemeral and further fragmenting the liberatory momentum generated by its language.

*Recuerdo* constructs a bohemian imperative linked to a refrain—an imperative, then, that arguably and paradoxically subscribes to the rigidity of cycles and structures:

We were very tired, we were very merry—  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry. (MILLAY 1922, 10–11)

While there are instances of spontaneity in this poem (suddenly purchasing a dozen each of apples and pears, greeting a stranger, buying the morning paper without intending to read it, and giving away the apples and pears), the repetition of these lines (in addition to being trivial) frames this spontaneity within (if also against) the safety and predictability of poetic pattern, smuggling in an elements of stasis and tradition. Certain scholarly conversations about Millay’s early poems celebrate these pieces as being more harmonious with the original rhetorical tone of the *A Few Figs from Thistles*. Miller, for example, reads a back-and-forth between romantic plenitude and economic scarcity within *Recuerdo* as an idyllic and successful

16. *Recuerdo* was first published in *Poetry* in 1919, as additional evidence against an easily parsed narrative of Millay’s creative output or aesthetic periodicity during the 1920s.

synthesis of bohemian ideals (1999, 31–32). Girard's reflections on Millay's bohemianism also gesture at her ability to add philosophical and aesthetic depth to seemingly “flippant” poems like *Recuerdo*. When considering the poem's later addition and its relationship to the text's initial form, however, *Recuerdo* also has divergent registers. More specifically, Spanish for “memory” and “I remember”, this poem endorses a counter-intuitive investment in the past, creating a structure of repeatability around an experience that otherwise prides itself on impulse and contingency. The poem's placement compounds this tension, as it comes directly after the pair *First Fig* and *Second Fig*—poems that remain loyal to the present moment at all costs—heightening the ideological and rhetorical feedback that *Recuerdo* produces in relation to the volume's originary radical and feminist language of defiance.

*Macdougall Street* further develops the encroachment of value systems that appear informed by dominant culture. Like *Recuerdo*, Miller reads *MacDougall Street* along advantageous lines, with a speaker who, despite her loss of control and reduction to waiting for a male-driven attention, is ultimately saved by her bohemian aesthetic sensibility (1999, 33–34). In particular, this poem challenges the thing seemingly held most dear in the volume: female autonomy. Indeed, it portrays a shy and uncertain female figure that constructs and assesses worth in relation to a male presence:

As I went up and down to take the evening air,  
 (Sweet to meet upon the street, why must I be so shy?)  
 I saw him lay his hand upon her torn black hair;  
 (“Little dirty Latin child, let the lady by!”)

[ . . ]

He walked like a king through the filth and the clutter,  
 (Sweet to meet upon the street, why did you glance me by?)  
 But he caught the quaint Italian quip she flung him from the gutter;  
 (What can there be to cry about that I should lie and cry?)

He laid his darling hand upon her little black head,  
 (I wish I were a ragged child with ear-rings in my ears!)  
 And he said she was a baggage to have said what she had said;  
 (Truly I shall be ill unless I stop these tears!) (MILLAY 1922, 14–15)

This poem conflicts directly with the absolutist brand of agency and positionality enforced throughout the original edition. Here, we have a speaker who, rather than set herself apart from gendered expectations, goes so far

as to subordinate herself to a male figure, seeking value in his recognition. Furthermore, we have the introduction of an explicit female-against-female competition created by the speaker's desire to garner attention from the male figure of the poem. The female speaker shifts from degrading to envying the young girl according to the girl's proximity to this male figure. Also, the fact that he "glances her by" potentially places her on the same level with the filth and clutter he walks through "like a king". By the end, the female speaker is nearly undone, both emotionally and physically, by her longing to be desired by this man. The placement of *Macdougall Street* underscores the disparity between this newly introduced female figure and the type of feminine figure we observe throughout the original edition. The poem appears right after *To The Not Impossible Him*—a poem in which conventional ideas of male-female relations fall apart, and the poem all but promises an eventual change of heart on the part of the female speaker. Placing *Macdougall Street* after *To The Not Impossible Him* and changing the follow-up of *Daphne* further complicates the original brand of independence, frustrating the confidence and certainty of maintaining a purely and subversively liberated female position in the volume's world.

Not all additions to the volume work to merely create rhetorical tensions or complications for the idiom. There are new poems in the 1922 edition that maintain or extend the original themes. *Midnight Oil*, for example, performs a defiance of sleep:

Cut if you will, with Sleep's dull knife,  
 Each day to half its length, my friend,—  
 The years the Time takes of my life,  
 He'll take from off the other end! (MILLAY 1922, 30)

In accordance with the bohemian tradition, the speaker here denounces sleep for its banality, preferring an early death to a conservative good night's rest. This paradigm echoes the embracement of temporality valorized in the grouping "A Few Figs". Also the poem *To Kathleen* does interesting things with male gendering of the poet-speaker, challenging or bending reader expectations. This poem also, in part, wants to interrogate notions about poetry itself: besides the somber tenor of the poem, the creativity that goes into poetry comes under suspicion. Writing has become something static, cold, and inhospitable.

Collectively, the changes made to *A Few Figs from Thistles* work to temper the deployment of the volume's subversive idiom of the New Woman, as radical poems become more spread out, with *Daphne*, the climactic poem of

feminine sovereignty and defiant transcendence of gendered performances, buried in the middle. Rather than build a romanticized story of maturation, however, these revisions—coupled with the complicated textual history of this volume's production and reception—elucidate the gendered forces that women writers have pushed against, then and now.

\* \* \* \*

The critical trajectories and readings of *A Few Figs from Thistles*, as well as Millay's larger oeuvre, expose the reality for subversive women writers that must navigate (and re-navigate) the nexus of material and social circumstance impacting the literary scene. I do not want to suggest, however, that these changes are merely Millay's submission to influence. As Miriam Gurko wrote in her biography, *Restless Spirit*:

One of [Millay's] deepest convictions was that she must never deviate from the truth as she saw it and as she felt impelled to write it. She refused to make any concessions in order to placate or curry favor with another person, even someone who had done as much for her as Caroline Dow. She once wrote a poem containing the line, "A bucket of blood in my path". Floyd Dell and Arthur Ficke did not like the line and Arthur told her so. She replied: "I had rather give up a bucket of your blood, Arthur, than this bucket of blood". (1962, 126)

While changes arguably altered the contours and the delivery of Millay's idiom of the New Woman, each iteration of *A Few Figs from Thistles* maintained her loyalty to the make-up of the text's original intervention. All poems remain intact though redistributed. Rather than remain the equivalent of a mystical figure imagining herself above all reality of consequence, the increasingly complicated and adaptable presentation of the idiom demonstrated in later editions suggests a poetic consciousness that understands the intricate nature of identity politics and social revolution. Death and time enter these editions, as does the realization that, perhaps, mere declarations may not lead to radical change. Ultimately, these redactions act as another example of Millay working within and yet against existing poetics and ideologies—even her own—in order to (re)expose serious issues of class, domesticity, gender norms, and sexual deviance to a wider audience.

An underlying irony of this project has been its own strange reliance on narrating suspicions of critical inquiries and methodologies too couched in the attractiveness of linearity. However, rather than outlaw "progress" as

an organizing principle for criticism, the historical production of this volume should draw important attention to the difficulty of recuperative and interpretive acts. Reclaiming this book as “light verse”—verse separate from that of an imagined version of a more serious and politically active Millay—is to create artificial distinctions and, consequently, to undermine this text’s cultural value in service of the development narratives commonly found in critical scholarship. With a new handle on this pivotal volume’s complicated material and social make-up and an approach to its reiterations informed by something other than teleological progress, perhaps we can perform even more productive re-visitations to Millay’s work.

Although regularly referred to as a “fruit”, the fig is actually an inflorescence (an inside-out flower of the tree)—the flowers and the seed grow together to form a single mass, with the non-visible flower blooming inside (FLAISHMAN, RODOV, and STOVER 2008). Like the fig of its title, we have long consumed the rhetoric and identity constructed within *A Few Figs from Thistles* without a fuller understanding of the text’s unique construction. Like the fig, Millay’s display of the New Woman has maintained a level of opacity, staying loyal to the impenetrability of her process for producing new structures of care and new forms of femininity—all while refusing to give up a bloom.

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# On the Early Letters of Ernest Hemingway

Teasing, Typewriting, Editing

*E. J. F. Allen*

## ABSTRACT

Ernest Hemingway has rarely seemed a reliable pen pal—not, in the main, through any fault of his own, but because the evidence for determining any such identity has been hard to assemble. In 2011, Sandra Spanier and Robert W. Trogdon published the first volume of Hemingway's collected letters, and in doing so prompted a reevaluation of his epistolary habit; one that requires careful editing and close textual scrutiny. Taking the first volume of the new Letters as a case study, this article offers an interpretative approach to matters of textuality, typographic expression, and mechanical accident that lie at the heart of Hemingway's early life-writing.

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IN MARCH 1924 A COLLECTION OF PROSE VIGNETTES APPEARED among the spring offerings of Shakespeare and Company on the rue de l'Odéon in Paris. The slim, snappily dressed volume, *in our time*, bore the name of Ernest Hemingway, and it provided the final installment of "An Inquest into the State of Contemporary English Prose", a series devised by the bookshop's resident handyman, Ezra Pound.<sup>1</sup> Part of Pound's sojourn in the 6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement was spent assembling furniture, as well as constructing literary careers, though it is hard to say exactly what hand *il miglior fab-*

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1. *in our time* was published by the Three Mountains Press. It is reprinted in HEMINGWAY 1995.

*bro* had in the making or mending of *in our time*.<sup>2</sup> Readers of the “Inquest” series could expect to hear “the truth about *moeurs contemporaines*”, Pound declared, “without fake, melodrama, conventional ending” (1923, 62).<sup>3</sup> Editors, as Pound must have known, are obliged to lay down the law, but there appears in this decree a curious hint of honesty; almost, you might say, a touch of earnestness.

At the centre of *in our time* is a piece that lampoons precisely the faults of artifice and convention to which Pound refers in his brief. Chapter 10 tells the abbreviated love story of an injured (nameless) soldier and Ag, a nurse stationed in Milan. The romance flourishes, in keeping with Pound’s probing theme, under thorough examination:

When they operated on him she prepared him for the operating table, and they had a joke about friend or enema. He went under the anæsthetic holding tight on to himself so that he would not blab about anything during the silly, talky time. (1995, 24)

Uniquely among the longer pieces of *in our time*, chapter 10 is bereft of conversation. The closest we come to hearing the lovers express themselves are moments, like this one, of narratological slippage—brief sputters of free indirect style—as when the intimate joke (“friend or enema”) is snatched by the story’s third-party, or the soldier’s fear of the “silly, talky time” (an anxiety he hopes to hush up) quivers through the narrative voice. Such moments have been felt in Hemingway’s work to reveal an irony of consciousness, an impression that the observing mind has been tinged or, in one critic’s view, “flavour[ed]” by the speech events and innermost thoughts of the characters in question (LAMB 2010, 88). In chapter 10, this blending of voices also raises questions as to how, and at what cost to understanding, private acts of communication go awry:

2. The best attempt to do so remains COHEN 2005.
3. Pound’s *Indiscretions; or, Une Revue de Deux Mondes* had first appeared in *The New Age*, in twelve parts, from May to August 1920. It was published in book form in 1923 by the Three Mountains Press, and was intended as a foreword to the so-called “Inquest” series. In addition to *in our time*, the series comprised: Ford Madox Ford, *Women and Men*; B. C. Windeler, *Elimus*; William Carlos Williams, *The Great American Novel*; and B. M. G. Adams, *England*. Pound had applied the slogan “*moeurs contemporaines*” to a sequence of poems in *The Little Review* in May 1918 (POUND 1918).

Ag wrote him many letters that he never got until after the armistice. Fifteen came in a bunch and he sorted them by the dates and read them all straight through. They were about the hospital, and how much she loved him and how it was impossible to get along without him and how terrible it was missing him at night. (1995, 24)

The belated reception of Ag's *billets-doux* is the first sign that something is amiss. Here, again, the account is flecked with purple patches: the throb of "how . . . how . . . how", the "impossible" and "terrible" qualities of estrangement. In more ways than one, the nurse's letters blunder in the post, and in doing so seem to portend the conclusion of her last dispatch: the news that "theirs had been only a boy and girl affair", and that she is to marry an Italian (1995, 25). The consolations of this final, reported letter ("She loved him as always. . . She knew it was for the best") sound at once hollow and peculiarly embodied, as if wise to the paper-thin reality of something received in the post, an ephemeral comfort. In their partial reconstruction by the narrator, the letters of chapter 10 denote not stable written records, but a volatile kind of textuality, fragmentary and skewed. Little wonder, as we learn with the story's final jilt, that "Ag never got an answer to her letter".

There are many ways and places one could begin an assessment of Hemingway's early correspondence. Like the brief love affair of chapter 10, Hemingway's European novels witness a keen epistolary habit, with their leisurely letters and pithy telegrams. For Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), a laconic memo says it all ("*Vengo Jueves Cohn*" [2004, 111]), and yet Barnes remains a diligent correspondent, sensitive to the effect of a good letterhead: "They were not very good letters", he admits in chapter 6, reminded of a morning spent at the hotel writing desk, "but I hoped their being on Crillon stationery would help them" (36).<sup>4</sup> Then there's Ralph Williams, a man in love and an "idealist" to boot, who spends one early tale beating out a letter on his office typewriter. For him, as for Barnes, corresponding is just another "means of talking" ("Portrait of the Idealist in Love" [1995, 766]). Such characters certainly belong in Hemingway's fiction to a dense network of exchange, in which banker's drafts, greetings cards, and *billets-doux* must compete for attention, crossing as they do in the mail, cluttering the fine interstice between work and pleasure. What I want to

4. Something of Barnes's epistolary routine is captured in Hannah Sullivan's recent *The Work of Revision*, which traces Barnes's "laconic" mood back to the novel's first draft (2013, 115–16). See also CIRINO 2012, 89.

consider in this essay, however, is the fragility of postal traffic; a fragility to which the narrator of *in our time* gives voice, and one that can be heard between the lines of Hemingway's collected letters. My broader purpose, then, is to characterize the textual condition of his correspondence as a mode of oblique historiography, which is underwritten and frequently disrupted by the clatter of typographic procedure. A mixture of ventriloquism and confession, Hemingway's early letters participate in the sort of vocal sport that requires careful editing and imaginative critical reading.

\* \* \* \*

For those familiar with the details of Hemingway's young adult life, the story of Ag and the soldier in chapter 10 signifies an important bit of baggage. In July 1918, a month after arriving in Europe as a Red Cross volunteer, Hemingway was wounded and taken to a hospital in Milan, where he met Agnes von Kurowsky. The following romance would crop up in various guises throughout his oeuvre, in fabular snapshots, character sketches, and in the extended form of *A Farewell to Arms* (1929).<sup>5</sup> Inasmuch as it sheds new light on the origins of the relationship, the inaugural volume of the collected letters (HEMINGWAY 2011) is an alluring prospect. No measure of solid, investigative editing can make amends for the disappearance of the writer's letters to Kurowsky, of course: hopes of locating the "whole bushel of letters" mentioned by the nurse in a surviving missive have long since been abandoned.<sup>6</sup> And yet there are readers who will look on the *Letters* as a particularly transparent kind of life-writing, rich with opportunities for studying the defining episodes of Papa Hemingway's story. Reading another person's letters involves a certain "indiscretion", as Anne Stillman remarks (2010, 370), and such indiscretion has its risks for interpretation. Biographical studies incline to the superlatives of lived experience, and so the temptation in this case might be to rank the *Letters* according to the received truths of Hemingway's young adulthood—encouraged, for instance, by the notion that "[t]he most influential woman in Hemingway's life, apart from his mother, was Agnes von Kurowsky" (MEYERS 1986, 41).<sup>7</sup> Those who

5. Chapter 10 became, in the New York edition (*In Our Time*), "A Very Short Story", and Ag's name was changed to Luz.

6. See VILLARD and NAGEL 1989, 162. Sandra Spanier, the General Editor of the *Letters*, follows Villard and Nagel in conjecturing that Kurowsky was forced to burn Hemingway's letters (HEMINGWAY 2011, xxiii).

7. WAGNER-MARTIN 2007 covers much of the same ground, though her discussion of Kurowsky and Grace Hall Hemingway is based in part on the psychiatric

hope to corroborate such claims are unlikely to feel disappointed by the crises and plot developments of the early correspondence.

Hemingway has rarely seemed a reliable pen pal, not through any fault of his own, but because the evidence for determining any such identity has been hard to assemble. Fewer than half of the letters in the first volume of the new collected edition have appeared in print before, most of them in Carlos Baker's weighty *Selected Letters* (1981).<sup>8</sup> A scholarly edition has long been needed, but the question now, as Anthony Burgess wondered of the *Selected Letters*, is whether the story encoded in the correspondence stands up to critical scrutiny, or whether we'd simply prefer "another, real book".<sup>9</sup> There are various ways one could read Sandra Spanier and Robert W. Trogdon's edition—like an uncensored memoir, like a novel lost in the post—but the most illuminating efforts of reception, I think, will be those that seek, in keeping with the mixed messages of *in our time's* chapter 10, to dwell on the accidents and minor feats of epistolary sense-making. The opportunities for doing so bear interestingly upon the task of shadowing the apprentice Hemingway, who starts the volume as he means to go on, hooking fish, playing rough, and telling tales. These are the sorts of small, almost symbolic acts of recreation that pepper the *Letters*, though it is not always easy to tell apart social pursuits from professional assignments, as when angling trout helps to pay the bills, or boozing with the Chicago Cubs baseball team prompts a newspaper report. "Drinks purchased to get a story are by order of the boss called car fare", he advises his father in 1918 (2011, 90), as if alert, in Andrew O'Hagan's words, to the ways a vermouth or soda could fortify his early brand of "myth-making" (2012, 7).

Numerous letters do drip with a career-minded *eau de vie*, but there is more to this correspondence than hard liquor. The years 1907–1922 were marked by regular, often sobering upheaval. After a childhood of journeying between the suburbs of Chicago and Walloon Lake in Michigan, Hemingway settled in Kansas City in late 1917, having abandoned life on his family's farm for a job at the *Kansas City Star* as a cub reporter. Thoughts of enlisting soon began to distract the young journalist, and in May 1918 he was on his way to Bordeaux, looking "a million dollars" in

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profiling undertaken by YALOM and YALOM 1971.

8. The other letters to have appeared before are scattered mostly between the following volumes: SANFORD 1999; GRIFFIN 1985; and VILLARD and NAGEL 1989.
9. "I have always said that I could do without Shakespeare's *Sir Thomas More* or *Love's Labour's Found* if I could see one of his laundry lists, let alone a yearning epistle to Mistress Hathaway" (BURGESS 1981, 65).

his military finery, and primed for “a wonderful time” on the Italian Front (2011, 97–98). Despite a gap-yearish plan to “bum” around the continent, Hemingway spent little more than six months away from home, and he would only embark on peacetime Europe after a return to Chicago and marriage to his first wife, Hadley Richardson, with whom he sailed to Le Havre in the winter of 1921.

Grand romantic gestures come thick and fast in his early correspondence, but so too do pranks and tiny tricks of voice. Scores of letters in the second half of the volume swagger in borrowed tongues, puffed up with bits of French, Italian, Spanish, and German, which are frequently misspelt, and so come to rest in Hemingway’s vocabulary like slightly tacky souvenirs. Language switching and leaps of register often separate the hero from the pack, it’s true: think of Robert Jordan’s grasp of Spanish slang in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), or of Hemingway’s own cocktail of parlour and gutter French in *A Moveable Feast* (1964). But the distinctive thing about these letters is their indulgence in a type of self-taught language play, which denotes an urge to cloak the Midwestern twang in a new textual habit:

On pended gknees I peg your bardun vor the ladness of this legger. Bud a gombination of monthly examinachugs and Bad goldt are my eggs-cuse, or to quote “them immortal lines,” the brooks are ruggig—also my gnose. (2011, 26)

Biographers have noted Hemingway’s susceptibility to head colds and tonsillitis, though few have sensed, as this letter seems to, the chatty possibilities of the sickbed. Bugged up and teasingly forlorn, Hemingway’s note to a childhood friend asks to be pardoned, even as it makes light of its infirmities. Having commenced on “pended gknees”, the “legger” rises to do its legwork, and snuffles from apology into performance, clearing its head just enough to think of “Strawberries”, a poem by Dora Read Goodale.<sup>10</sup> Streaming nose and running brook congeal into a joke, and yet the impression here, as in other, more ordinary letters, is one of barely suppressed excitement; a feeling that the boy Hemingway (stricken by “ladness”) has something serious to say about the health of textual discourse.

10. “When the brooks are running over, / And the days are bright with song, / Then, from every nook and bower, / Peeps the dainty strawberry flower” (GOODALE 1878, 155).



Written in March 1916, Hemingway's sick note is one of the 150 or so pieces that appear in the *Letters* for the first time. Many of them have quite plain things to impart, and so their substance consists partly in the way casual reportage is punctured by affectation ("really quite melior"), or lightened by colloquialism ("But seriously [John] Masefield is a whangdinger") (2011, 26). Hemingway often treads a fine line between usage and abuse, content to dawdle somewhere between the schoolroom and the street; but if in 1916 his letters seem too much taken by the wish to charm, then there are moments in his postwar communications of quieter intent, when linguistic precocity dissolves into simple understanding. "There is so much of this world we haven't seen and it is just a little while that we're here anyway", he tells a dejected friend in August 1919, before fixing on just the right word ("We are Simpatico Bill") to bolster the thought (2011, 201). Sometimes, as Hemingway knew, there were other ways besides those of *machismo* braggery to seal a deal.

It is tempting in this respect to see a shift of consciousness in Hemingway's correspondence; a maturation of style brought on by his departure for Europe, and one that was marked indelibly by a conflict he could not bear to pass up. The comings and goings of war appear to transmute smoothly into the experiential benchmarks of his early writing career, but to acknowledge them as such is to overlook subtler occasions for innovation, and to submit too easily to the idea that letter writing is merely about getting information across. Often it is, of course, but that should not discourage us from wanting to question how the stuff of nondescript living finds its way into lettered form. Hemingway was the first to confess his shortcomings as a correspondent—"my letters", he owns, "are very commonplace" (2011, 329)—but in that confession there resides a less than bashful sensitivity to the matter of what "commonplace" could possibly mean, or in what sense a hurried note might accommodate the quotidian. What I want to consider now is not so much what finds expression in Hemingway's correspondence as the *way* quite ordinary things take shape. It may be that there is another style of historiography at work in these letters, a style principally concerned with the legibility of personal history, with the form and character of its day-to-day transmission.

In the autumn of 1917, shortly after starting work at the *Kansas City Star*, Hemingway took to composing most of his letters on a typewriter. He would work his way through several models on the road to literary recognition—a Royal Quiet Deluxe, an Underwood Noiseless Portable, the Halda Portable—though one gets the sense in his early correspondence that nothing ever compared to his first "chattering Corona", a gift from

Hadley in July 1921. Hemingway wrote to his sister the following month, tickled by the machine, and alive, despite the Corona's compact proportions, to its "marvelous melody" (2011, 301). So taken was he with his new, dinky companion that he thought it fit for a poem:

MITRAILLIATRICE

The mills of the gods grind slowly;  
 But this mill  
 Chatters in mechanical staccato.  
 Ugly short infantry of the mind,  
 Advancing over difficult terrain,  
 Make this Corona  
 Their mitrailleuse.

(HEMINGWAY 1979, 37)<sup>11</sup>

As lightweight as the Corona is portable, this poem sounds less hefty than it should, given the gear it carries; a sense conveyed by its appropriation of a French machine gun—"mitrailleuse"—which somehow softens its parting shot. The *Oxford English Dictionary* credits Hemingway with the first application of "shot" as a figurative term for the ruin of a feeling or the destruction of a thing: the impression that all is "shot to hell" originates towards the end of *The Sun Also Rises* (2004, 209), as Barnes hastens from San Sebastian to Madrid, turning from one lost cause to another.<sup>12</sup> Barnes's is not a new thought, of course, and to read Hemingway's early verse is to see by the same token a mind beaten in action. The action of "Mitrailatrice" is twofold, as the bullet-sputter of the poem's title finds an analogue in the action of the Corona; no longer a fount of melody, but one of curt, articulatory force—something like the snare drumming of Carl Nielsen's Fifth

11. "Mitrailatrice" first appeared in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* 2.4 (1923): 193. The title of the poem was changed, in keeping with the Italian, to "Mitraigliatrice" when it was collected in *Three Stories & Ten Poems* (1923). The version printed here is taken from *88 Poems* © 1979. Printed with the permission of the Ernest Hemingway Foundation.
12. OED: 4c. "In fig. phr. *shot through* (also *shot to hell* or *pieces*), in a state of ruin or collapse. *colloq.* (chiefly U.S.). [Accessed 5 December 2013.] In fact, it's probable that Hemingway borrowed the idiom from Hadley, who used it—"I was shot to pieces myself"—in a letter to him in December 1920, for which see DILIBERTO 1992, 46.

Symphony—which “[c]hatters in mechanical staccato”.<sup>13</sup> Hemingway had noted as early as 1918 the mingling of artillery and mechanized typography—the flight of bullets through “bulletins” (HEMINGWAY 1970, 91), and the “steady typewriter clatter” of machine gun fire (43). But it was not until 1922, perhaps, with a Corona to hand, that Hemingway felt equipped to reproduce something that had, for so many, become run of the mill.

Literary production often seemed a vicious pursuit in the golden days of standardized typewriting. “That machine was a wonder”, recalls Jack London in *John Barleycorn* (1913), nostalgic for his “infernal” Blickensderfer: “I could weep now as I recollect my wrestlings with it” (2009, 134).<sup>14</sup> Pitted against a machine that “never does the same thing in the same way twice”, the typist in *John Barleycorn* finds himself “blistered” and “a-weary” (135), at war with the proverbial loose cannon. For Martin Heidegger, pondering his handicraft some years later, the typewriter would strike a blow at ontology itself:

The essential correlation of the hand and the word as the essential distinguishing mark of man is revealed in the fact that the hand indicates and by indicating discloses what was concealed, and thereby marks off, and while marking off forms the indicating marks into formations. (1992, 84)

Handwriting, it seems, has to do with feeling inscribed—it indicates, in essence, “a decision about the comportment of man to beings”—and so to withdraw the hand from the act of writing in favour of operating a typewriter is to transform, or rupture, the question of Being. Heidegger goes about his argument playfully, alive to the possibility of proceeding “in good hands”, and conscious, in ways that anticipate his late work on machine culture, of the typewriter as a mechanism of clouding “obtrusiveness” (84–85). Put simply, “[t]he typewriter makes everyone look the same”, and this is the idea one tends to find reiterated in more recent media histories; the thought, further impressed by the example of Friedrich Nietzsche, that somewhere along the line “the grace of a human subject” must bear the brunt of typographic replication (KITTLER 1999, 203–04).

13. Premiered in early 1922, the first movement of Nielsen’s Symphony No. 5 (op. 50, FS 97) features what to many ears smacks of gunfire—an effect achieved on the snare drum.
14. For more on typewriting as a mode of hand-to-hand combat, see BODDY 2008, 145, 217.

Hemingway was wise to the threat of mechanical writing, and he was quick to blame his tools. “[P]ardon the rotten typer”, he implored his mother one January evening in 1921, “— it’s a new one and stiff as a frozen whisker” (2011, 264). While swift to turn a gaffe into a gag, Hemingway frequently draws attention to his poor typing, to the “thousands of errati” triggered by the “all-finger” touch system (2011, 286). Usually the errors are small, but the fact that we have the opportunity to evaluate them at all is one of the distinctions of the new collected letters. Compare, for example, the following passages (the first from Baker’s edition, the second from Spanier and Trogon’s):

Somewhere on les briny

Dear Folks:

Well we are approaching our port of debarkation and are entering the widely known submarine zone so I will get this epistle off so you will be sure and get one any way. Very cheerful thought what aint it? This is the rottenest tub in the world and so it may be revealing a military secret to tell you. But it is absolutely. Now think what the rottenest ship in the world is and you know what I am on. We had two days of glorious weather, warm and calm, just a pleasant breeze! regular waloon lake days. Then we ran into a storm that cleared the dining rooms with great regularity. (1981, 9)

So[mew]here on les briny.

Dear Folks

Well we wre approcaching our port of deebarkation and are entering the widely known submarine zone so I will get this epistle off so you will besure and get one any way. Very cheerful thought what aint it? This is the rottenst tubin the world and so it may be revealing a military secret to tell you. But it is absolutely. Now think what the rottenest ship in the world is and you know what I am on. Wehad two days of glorious weather ! warm and calm, just a pleasant breeze ! regular waloon lake days. 5hen we ran into a storm that cleared the dining rooms with grea regularity. (2011, 107)

“[L]ike all live writing”, Hugh Kenner has said of modernist textuality, “it ingests what’s around it” (1987, 14), and there is something of that assimilative quality here. The drift of the second snippet is easily caught—its discursive meaning is not at issue—but its typos and ellipses indicate a wobbliness of self we may well expect of someone bunked up at sea, his

crack at calm articulation left almost grainy by the sense that words have begun to fragment. It may be the storm Hemingway records, or its after-effects, that play havoc with his spelling; or perhaps it's the threat of entering dangerous water that throws words together ("tubin"), as if the urgency of dispatching the epistle precludes any pause for thought. There's no time or room for doubt, it seems, since he wants his family to "besure".

Some mistakes are simply explained, as when a *w* usurps an *a*, or a finger strays onto the *5* instead of the *t*. The provenance of Christopher Latham Sholes's *QWERTY* keyboard design remains to this day a matter shrouded in mystery, but its logic and subtle rhythms have not changed all that much since Hemingway got the measure of his machine, and it's easy to forgive the insertions and slipups which characterize his hurried correspondence.<sup>15</sup> Yet there are irregularities of a different kind in Hemingway's letters, like the placement of exclamation marks, which suggest a more deliberate performance. Raising a voice or sounding surprised were tricky gestures to achieve on typewriters of this period, when most machines lacked the requisite key. It is likely that the best option available to Hemingway in 1918, as one contemporary manual explains, was a three-stroke combination:<sup>16</sup>

If required, quite a number of signs not on the keyboard can be made by the combination of two particular characters —

EXCLAMATION MARK (!): Strike the single quotation mark; by means of the back-spacer return the carriage one space and strike the full-stop.

(SYLVESTER 1916, 39)

No sense of the writer's exertions is preserved in Baker's edition; no sense, indeed, that the valediction required any extra effort at all, either of mind or of dexterity, when we suspect (as Baker does himself) that letters do have something more "tangible" to offer by way of vocal presence (HEMINGWAY 1981, xx–xxi). It is the spaces which border the exclamation marks in the revised version that confirm the typist's graft. Having slipped so much already, it may be that Hemingway resolved to get his punctuation right,

15. Darren Wershler-Henry provides the best recent account of the keyboard's dynamic history in *The Iron Whim: A Fragmented History of Typewriting* (2005).

16. We do not know for sure which model of typewriter accompanied Hemingway on his trip to Europe in 1918. It's possible that he took the advice of a colleague at the *Kansas City Star* and borrowed or purchased a "Baby Corona" (see MADSEN 2013, 110). As with most portable models at this time, the "Baby Corona" did not have an exclamation mark built in.

inserting an extra space (“glorious weather ! warm and calm”) so as to allow the three-stroke combination its proper force. Whatever the reason for such idiosyncrasies, a comparison of these typewritten voices reveals a loose end in Heidegger’s disquisition. Typewriters do *not* make everyone look the same, and nor, as Hemingway discovered on the *SS Chicago*, do they guarantee “grea regularity”. In the pressures it brings to bear on letter writing, the stowaway typewriter reveals Hemingway in one of his most idiosyncratic tempers.

A good deal has happened since Baker’s publication of the *Selected Letters* to change the way we think about editorial practice in general, and how the positivist instinct, in particular, sits with us when we alight on casual or private modes of writing. For the exacting reader, the question is, which of the “les briny” epistles is more watertight? The wish to present Hemingway’s letters “exactly as he wrote them” comes in Baker’s edition with the familiar caveat that “[o]bvious errors in typed letters and slips of the pen in longhand have been silently corrected” (1981, xxiii, xxv). As the new editors advise, however, Hemingway was frequently “erratic” about punctuation, “forceful” on the subject of corrections, and inclined to “improvise” as the mood or situation took him, such that any urge to amend “obvious” errors in the correspondence must be considered a dubious pursuit (2011, xli–xlili). And although Spanier and Trogdon go in for some amendments of their own—the improvised exclamation mark is noted rather than reproduced—the guiding principle of their edition is to register the author’s “carelessness or breathlessness”, and so to steer clear of the sorts of “arbitrary logic or false clarity” we find imposed in less meticulous editions.

Editing is complex and complicating, an act of interpretation that has to feel at ease with the idea that its findings may prove provisional—the odd conviction that things could have been different. “Editing then is not for the faint of heart” (SCHULZE 2007, 124), and yet a good edition reads, as this one does, like an open love letter, as much to the process of editorial tending as to the readers who are inclined to consider that process a means of access to the life beyond the script. The condition so often implied by Spanier and Trogdon’s edition is that script and life are conterminous, that the two would be difficult to separate, as if the moments Hemingway felt most alive in even his early years were those in which the shapes of words seemed most to matter. Fan mail or business note, longhand or typeface—Hemingway’s writing practices warrant, like any handicraft, a special kind of scrutiny. “How feelings get done in language”, as Simon Jarvis has said, “travels right through to the very serifs, uprights and swashes

of its written, printed, drawn or carved or painted letter forms” (2011, 234); and if we believe this, then the real dope of a book like the *Letters* is to be found between its headline stories, in the mishaps and kicks of smaller textual events. This is not to ignore, in Hemingway’s words, “the making of large gobs of history” (2011, 120), but rather to apportion time and energy to the material aspects of historiography, to the glyphic feel of life-writing.

The implications of this proposition should and do extend beyond the borders of Hemingway’s writing. Playing with *Pale Fire*, Andrew Ferguson has shown in the pages of this journal the value of reading Vladimir Nabokov with an eye for the erroneous, and of taking his bumpy textures seriously. As Ferguson remarks, intrigued by what it might mean to seek out Nabokov’s “glitches”: “The greatest revelations may come not from any personal vision or sage counsel, but through errors: a typo here, a misreading there leading to wild flights of imaginative and critical play” (2013, 114). The hermeneutic stakes are rather different for an experimental novel, of course, but this should not deter us from exercising the same sort of playfulness—imaginative but strictly refereed—when confronted with a bunch of letters. Determined, no doubt, to avoid the critical reaction which greeted the poor transcription of Robert Frost’s *Notebooks* in 2007, the present editors of Frost’s new collected *Letters* sound confident about their chosen occupation.<sup>17</sup> With Frost’s prose and jottings already in the public domain, the editors advise, “the *Letters of Robert Frost* advances significantly the process of bringing all Frost primary material into accessible print” (2014, vii). What is meant, one wonders, by that strange conjunction, “accessible print”? Easy to lay your hands on, certainly, and presented in a way that will not trouble the scholarly reader unduly as she comes “to know Robert Frost anew” (xi). But consider the following passage, included in the volume’s “Editorial Principles”:

the disposition of the text on the pages of Frost’s manuscript and typescript letters is never a significant feature of their meaning. In view of this, we have produced not type facsimiles but clean transcripts of the letters. We concentrate entirely on the *intended* content of the original. When Frost makes a correction in a letter, he typically does so by striking out a word and continuing, or by striking out a word or phrase and inserting a correction interlinearly. Our practice (unless special circum-

17. James Sitar (2007) was among the first to notice the high frequency of transcription errors in the Belknap edition of Frost’s *Notebooks*.

stances apply) is to produce the single text that any corrections present in the document plainly require. (xviii–xix: italics in original)

The editors may be right to say that the “meaning” of Frost’s letters is never bound up substantively with the “disposition of the text”—his *mise en page* is “traditional”, we’re told—but who’s to say what Frost “intended”, or in what ways the process of self-correction may (or may not) have influenced the mind at work? In order to answer such questions, it is necessary that the very dregs of written practice—the insertions and repetitions, the strikeouts, the unconscious but telling glitches—are allowed to speak for themselves, untouched by well-meaning editorial hands. Some “inconsistencies” of Frost’s spelling and punctuation have been “respected”, it must be said, although this is only likely to heighten one’s sense that other curiosities have been wiped out in the name of “silent correction” (xix). There are good practical and economic grounds for producing an edition of this sort, but it’s difficult not to feel suspicious about that familiar sleight of hand—“(unless special circumstances apply)” —when you feel sure that the job of establishing what’s “special” and what’s not is interpretative territory, and a matter of vital importance to those who consider the subtlest rewording or slippage a reason to sit up and take notice. Regrettable though it may be to receive a “cramped and cryptic” postcard, as Frost did one day in April 1919, there’s always something to say about “messy” correspondence (668).

My purpose in this essay has been to show what a difference a letter can make. The importance to Hemingway studies of the new collected Letters is hard to overstate, its revelations and bigger personalities unlikely to pass without comment and explanation. That we find ourselves now with fresh information about Hemingway’s association with Gertrude Stein is the sort of red-letter news critics are eager to receive.<sup>18</sup> But some of the rewards of this first volume, in the end, arrive like unexpected gifts:

Your box came in the nick of time. Those sox that Grandmother sent me were great. I will write her right away and thank her for them. I woke up to hear the telephone ring and it was the boss telling me that their was a big fire at 18th and Holmes street and that on my way down to the office to go over there and get a story on it. Well I went and got tge yarn

18. A letter dated 14 February 1922 (2011, 327–29) indicates that Hemingway had begun to visit and consult Stein at least a month earlier than biographers have hitherto supposed.



and telephoned for a photographer and got soaked all through my shoes in the icy water and then came into the office and there were my warm wool sox that I had put in my locker the night before. (2011, 78)

On the evidence of his box of cookies and winter sox, Hemingway had good cause to stay in touch, though it is perhaps the inattentions of this letter—happily preserved, most of them innocent—which speak for his gratitude. Did he notice, in his hurry to reply, the infelicity of “their” or the slip of “tge”? And what of those mistaken woollies? Hemingway would refer a few months later to his government-issued “woolen socks” (2011, 97), but here he opts for the sporty variety, the implication being that these “sox” have something of his home team about them, the Chicago White Sox, who had just won the World Series that winter.<sup>19</sup> Clearly Hemingway has sox on the brain, from the moment of his hotfooting it into the cold January night, to the chance of gathering “yarn” for another story. The letter has its snags, of form and thought, but it is because (and not in spite) of them that the message seems to carry. In his barely punctuated haste, the typist gets his feelings “done” in language, and in doing so finds his feet:

Well I beat it into the room where such things are done and changed my soaked, froze cotton ones into the warm wool jazzy ones and was ready to step forth among them.

Love  
Ernie.

*University of Cambridge*

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19. After a couple of shaky mid-series games against the New York Giants, the White Sox clinched the World Championship on 15 October 1917, with a final series score of 6–4.

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# “By her unveil’d each horrid crime appears”

Authorship, Text, and Subtext in Phillis  
Wheatley’s Variants Poems

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## ABSTRACT

In 1773, Phillis Wheatley’s *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* appeared in print. Ever since the publication of her book of neoclassic verse, the African-born poet has been a controversial figure in American History. At the center of the controversy is the question of whether or not the mother of the African American literary tradition criticized slavery. While some scholars have denounced Wheatley for not addressing the institution; others argue that her work represented a subtle critique. Ironically, missing in this discourse are the poet’s diacritical marks that underscores not only the power of words to mean, but also subversive readings—both of which are the focus of this essay.

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MAY 8, 1773, THE BOSTON SCHOONER *LONDON* POINTED ITS SAILS eastward and started for London—not surprisingly the English metropolis after which it been named. Although the modest mercantile vessel had crisscrossed the Atlantic many times before, this particular voyage differed from all of the others. Because among the ship’s party of passengers were Nathaniel Wheatley whose father owned the *London*, and, probably more important, Phillis, the family’s bondservant, whose trip to the urban center marked the beginning of a literary tour that would result in the publication

1. Abridged versions of this paper were presented at The Society for Textual Scholarship’s Fourteenth Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference on March 19, 2009, New York University, the National Association of African American Studies and Affiliates’ National conference on February 14, 2013, and the 1619: The Making of America conference at Hampton University on September 18, 2014. The author would thank the editor and the readers of *Textual Cultures* for their helpful suggestions and comments.

of a volume of the slave-poet's neo-classical songs. With letters of introduction sent in advance and a farewell poem included with a number of the public notices of her departure, Phillis Wheatley sailed aboard the family-owned boat into history and freedom.<sup>2</sup>

Ever since that mild September, the African-born poet has been a subject of controversy, particularly among her modern critics.<sup>3</sup> At the center of that melee lies the question of whether or not she protested slavery. For critics like Angelene Jamison, Eleanor Smith and Merle A. Richmond, the institution lobotomized the African native and robbed her of her humanity, leaving only an empty shell of a person behind. Dim were her eyes; diminished were her genteel verses of poetry. Wheatley, Jamison explained, "wrote to Whites, for Whites and generally in the Euro-American tradition at the time". She accepted the values of her captors and embraced the yoke of her unfortunate lot; she expressed nothing of the cruelties of slavery or anything of her African or Black self. J. Saunders Redding agreed. In his *To Make A Poet Black*, the literary scholar criticized Wheatley's *Poems* as artificial in their inability to articulate protest against slavery: "Not once . . . [did] she express in either word or action a thought on the enslavement of her race: not once did she utter a straightforward word for the freedom of the Negro" (JAMISON 1974, 408).<sup>4</sup>

James Levernier and Charles Scruggs, however, disagreed, noting in the poet's work a subtle critique of slavery (LEVERNIER 1981, 25–26; SCRUGGS 1981, 279–95). Similarly, Mukhtar Ali Isani, John C. Shields, and Babacar M'Baye observed in Wheatley's writings an acknowledgment of Africa and

2. Robinson, 1984, 12. Shortly after her *Poems* appeared in print, Phillis Wheatley earned her freedom. In his recent biography of the slave-poet, Vincent Carretta argues that Wheatley used the trip to not only advertise the publication of her *Poems*, but also, in the wake of the Somerset decision in 1772, to negotiate the terms of her emancipation (CARRETTA 2011, 128–37). For the advertisements noting her departure, see *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Weekly News Letter* (May 6, 1774), 2; *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* (May 8, 1773), 2; *Boston Evening Post* (May 10, 1773), 2; *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Post Boy and Advertiser* (May 10, 1773), 3; *Pennsylvania Packet and General Advertiser* (May 13, 1773), 2; *Connecticut Courant* (May 25, 1773), 4; and, *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* (May 27, 1773), 2.
3. For a thorough account of Wheatley's contemporary critics, see ROBINSON 1982. For more recent and revisionist critiques of the poet, see SHIELDS and LAMORE 2012.
4. See also REDDING 1939, 10; RICHMOND 1974, 64–66 and Smith 1974, 401–07.

of her African heritage (ALI ISANI 1979, 353–72; SHIELDS 1982, 189–205; M'BAYE 2009, 21–68). Sondra O'Neale and Lonnell E. Johnson found in her poems an appropriation of the Bible as a meta-text, one she employed to critique slavery and imagine freedom (O'NEALE 1986, 144–63; JOHNSON 1986, 1–30, 55–73). Philip M. Richards and Robert L. Kendrix read her poetry as an expression of an Anglo-American literary idiom (RICHARDS 1992, 163–91; KENDRIX 1993, 222–51). In her occasional poems, such as *An [sic] Hymn to the Evening* and *On Virtue*, Russell Reising argued that the poet's use of contrasting colors and metaphors underscored an ambivalence that demonstrated her ability to voice something of the austere life most slaves had no choice but to endure (REISING 1989, 231–61).

Despite her divided critics, all seem to agree on at least one thing. Though the property of another, the poet apparently enjoyed a considerable extent of *control* over how her writings appeared in print. Purportedly, before leaving, as William H. Robinson and Kirstin Wilcox's studies have suggested, she revised several of her poems (ROBINSON 1984, 28–35; WILCOX 1999, 1–31). After the proposal for a Boston publication of her *Poems* proved unsuccessful, Wheatley made plans to widen her circle of readers. With the help of her mistress, she prepared her book for a London audience. During her stay in England, Wheatley not only promoted *Poems*, but also interrupted "the printing process" involved in the publication of her work. Before returning to Boston, she improved the printer's proofs and edited the galley copy. Perhaps because of the novelty of her being a supposedly unlearned Ethiopian learning how to compose verse, Wheatley was able to articulate in manuscript and in print an unusual degree of authorial control (ROBINSON 1977, 54).

But considering that there is no extant proof copy or manuscript for Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects*, such claims are problematic. Indeed, taking into account Mark Rose, David S. Shields and Margaret J. M. Ezell's recent studies of authorship in the early English-speaking world, it seems at best ill-advised to suggest that Phillis Wheatley actually enjoyed such poetic license in the absence of supporting documentation. Thus, the question of her control over her texts is an unresolved matter and one for which this essay proposes as another context to explore Phillis Wheatley's poetics.<sup>5</sup>



5. For a fuller account of authorship in the early Anglo-American world, see ROSE 1995, EZELL 1999, SHIELDS 2000.

As recent studies of Anglo-American literary culture have demonstrated, well before and even during the advent of modern copyright, specifically the notion of intellectual property in the early 1770s, only a select few authors (e.g. Alexander Pope) had control over what they wrote as printers rushed to print, many times without an author's consent.<sup>6</sup> Often the road to print was an uncertain one for writers. Early on, most were first manuscript authors who "published" their work by circulating handwritten copies among a small circle of readers. These early avenues of publication were not only commonplace but they also created useful belletristic coteries that could later become equally useful circles of benefactors, patrons and ultimately subscribers. "Possessing fair copies of a writing in an author's handwriting", David S. Shields explained, "advertised a personal connection between writer and reader" (SHIELDS, 2000, 438). In both the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, "scribal publication served the end of personal access to persons with talent, power, and place". Within these scribal circles or social authorship as Margaret J. M. Ezell described them, an author's writings were freely copied, edited and revised by others. Such had certainly been the case with authors like Elizabeth Brackley, Jane Cavendish and Anne Bradstreet.<sup>7</sup>

There were also those occasions where an author's work appeared in print without consent. Richard Marriott and Henry Haringman, for example, *stole* the manuscript of Henry King's *Poems, Elegies* and published it. In an ancillary letter they included in the book, they not only acknowledged the theft, but also offered justification for their transgression: "The best we can say of our selves is, that if we have injured you it is meerly [sic] in your own defense, preventing the present attempts of others, who to their theft would (by their false Copies of these Poems) have added violence, and some way have wounded your reputation" (EZELL 1999, 47). Marriott and Haringman's disclaimer underscored two significant points. First, both clearly thought themselves members of Henry King's select circle of readers. Second, as part of that coterie, both men freely revised and edited King's scribal book; indeed to such an extent that they believed that they could discern a true copy from a false one.

Judging from her extant manuscript papers, Phillis Wheatley proved no exception. Like Henry King, her reputation also began by way of scribal or manuscript publication. Of the few Wheatley manuscript poems that

6. For studies about how Pope controlled how his texts appeared in print, see FOXON 1991 and EZELL 1999.

7. Also see SHIELDS 1992, 412–16 and EZELL 1999, 21–60.

have survived, several are multiple copies of particular pieces that were popular among her coterie of readers. Two copies, for example, of the poet's eulogy of Joseph Sewall have survived. One is at the American Antiquarian Society; the other in the Countess of Huntington Papers at Westminster College in Cambridge, England. Similarly, several manuscript copies of Wheatley's eulogy to Charles Eliot have also survived.<sup>8</sup>

Like other authors of her day, Wheatley's manuscripts also appear to have been freely copied, revised and edited by her admirers. At the Massachusetts Historical Society, for example, there are two copies of Wheatley's poems, written in a hand other than that of the poet's. One is a hand written copy of Wheatley's elegy of Samuel Cooper. In that copy, her name is misspelled. The poem also includes the marginal line numbering used in the printed eight-page funerary pamphlet from which it was apparently copied. The other is a hand written copy of Wheatley's elegy on the death of Mary Sanford, the second wife of Lieutenant-Governor Andrew Oliver (MASON 1989, 172–74 note 44). Though these are the only known Wheatley poems that has survived in another person's hand, they nonetheless bolster both Ezell's and Shield's assessment of authorship in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. (Incidentally, Vincent Carretta has recently discovered in Reverend Jeremy Belknap's diary a copy of an elegy that might represent the poet's earliest known verse. Although only a few lines long, it too includes several diacritical marks, much like a number of Wheatley's manuscript writings [CARRETTA 2011, 49–50].<sup>9</sup>)

Remarkable perhaps describes best Wheatley's literary coterie. Her readers included some of the "most respectable Characters in *Boston*" (WHEATLEY 1773, vii). Among them: Thomas Hutchinson, the Governor of Massachusetts, Andrew Oliver, the Lieutenant-Governor and the Honorable Thomas Hubbard, John Erving, James Pitts, Harrison Gray and James Bowdoin. The slave-poet's list of admirers did not end there. Reverends Charles Chauncy, Mather Bayles, Edward Pemberton, Andre Elliot, Samuel Cooper, Samuel Mather and John Moorhead also counted themselves as members of her literary circle. So did John Hancock, a prominent

8. WHEATLEY, Phillis, *Poems*, 1767; 1769. Mss Reserve. American Antiquarian Society. For a facsimile of the other Sewall manuscript, see ROBINSON 1984, 365–67.

9. If in fact the Thatcher elegy is the work of the slave-poet, it represents not only Wheatley's earliest known poem, but also the earliest known example of how the poet used diacritical marks (i.e. punctuation, underlining, and brackets) to highlight the power of words to mean.



merchant in the Boston community, as well as a patriot of the budding revolutionary cause. Even the Countess of Huntingdon had been a member (WHEATLEY 1773, vii).

A distinguished literary figure in her own day, Wheatley may have also counted herself among that exceptional lot of authors who did in fact enjoy a significant degree of control over how their manuscripts were eventually rendered in print. Although the property of another, she was quite artful. Besides manipulating words, Carretta explained, Wheatley manipulated masterfully "people as well" (CARRETTA 2001, 137).<sup>10</sup> In that respect, most compelling are her extant manuscript poems that included numerous diacritical marks, that is highlighted words, phrases, or symbols that were introduced to punctuate meaning. Of the thirty-eight poems printed in her 1773 book of neoclassic verse, six manuscript poems have survived; fourteen considering those that were omitted. A close reading of them clearly underscores Wheatley's control over how those particular poems appeared in print, and possibly how *Poems on Various Subject, Religious and Moral* appeared in print as well.<sup>11</sup>

10. As both David S. Shield and Margaret Ezell make plan in their studies of authorship in the eighteenth-century, few authors truly enjoyed the degree of poetical license Wheatley possessed that is ironic considering that she represent literally a thing possessed. Wheatley notwithstanding, Alexander Pope, the eighteenth-century poet laureate and master of the heroic couplet, shaped the reception of his works by controlling how they appeared in print. Analyzing both Pope's manuscripts and his printed works, David Foxon showed that Pope employed accidentals as a method of influencing readership (1991, 196–201). In addition to Pope, a close reading of the manuscript papers and of the printed poems of St. George Tucker illustrate that he too had been responsible for the diacritical marks that appear in the printed versions of his writings. See "Poems" in the Tucker-Coleman Papers held at the College of William and Mary and TUCKER 1796, *The Probationary Odes of Jonathan Pindar*. Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin Bache.
11. The poems concerned are "To the University of Cambridge" (at the American Antiquarian Society); "To the King's Most Excellency Majesty, 1768; "The Decease of the Rev'd Dr. Sewell" (at the Huntington Papers at Cheshunt Foundation); "On the Death of the Rev'd Dr. Sewall, 1769 (Massachusetts Historical Society); "A Poems on the Death of Charles Eliot aged 12. Months (Massachusetts Historical Society); "A Poem on the death of Charles Eliot aged 12 mo. To Mr. S Eliot" (Houghton Library, Harvard University); "To the Right Hon. William Earl of Dartmouth, His Majesty's Secretary of State for North America"

Consider, for instance, the two manuscripts Wheatley wrote to Samuel Eliot, eulogizing his son, Charles. Of the father we know a good deal. Not so of his son, whom we know only through the kind words of Phillis Wheatley. In 1765, to briefly recount the Eliot family's tragic tale that inspired the poet to write, Samuel Eliot married Elizabeth Barrell, the daughter of Joseph Barrell, "a wealthy and noteworthy Boston citizen, who lived in a grand style" (BELL 1997, 1: 469).<sup>12</sup> Five years later, the couple welcomed an addition to their family. Unfortunately, like many children in the eighteenth-century, Charles did not live to see his majority.<sup>13</sup> He died that October, little over a year old. That September, Wheatley wrote two poems, eulogizing the infant's death. One copy, she sent to Charles' father. Shortly thereafter, she revised the piece and sent it to William Barrell by way of John Andrew, an admirer and close friend of the Barrell and Eliot families.<sup>14</sup>

With respect to these two elegies, it is currently believed that Wheatley composed the manuscript at the Houghton Library at Harvard University first. In that copy, she underlined the title of the poem and coupled verses 35–37 with a bracket. She also capitalized the words "Universal", "Phantom", "Infant", and "Glory" in verses 4, 45, 46, and 47.<sup>15</sup> In the second manuscript, now at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Wheatley revised the poem, making several changes in punctuation and phrasing. In the MHS manuscript, she also underlined Charles Eliot's name in the title of the verse and emphasis the word "GOD" in the second stanza and "Charles" in the third stanza by inscribing them in bold faced characters. As she had done before, she also connected the verses "The Son of bliss.—no with superior air, / Methinks he answers with a Smile severe, / Thrones and Dominions cannot tempt me there!" together with a bracket.<sup>16</sup>

(Earl of Dartmouth Papers); and, *On the Death of Dr. Samuel Marshall* (Connecticut Historical Society).

12. For a fuller account Samuel Eliot's life, see BELL 1997, 469–76.
13. For much of the eighteenth-century, well over half of the children in colonial New England died before they reached adulthood; many died before they were two years old (VINOVSIS 1972, 190–92; WELLS 1992, 90–97).
14. See Wheatley's "A Poem on the death of Charles Eliot aged 12 mo. To Mr. S Eliot" (in ROBINSON 1984, 383–84) and her "A Poem on the Death of Charles Eliot" (dated 1 September 1772 and in Special Collections, Massachusetts Historical Society).
15. Phillis Wheatley, "A Poem on the death of Charles Eliot aged 12 mo. To Mr. S Eliot" in ROBINSON 1984, 384; MASON 1989, 146–47 note 26.
16. "A Poem on the Death of Charles Eliot", by Phillis Wheatley, 1 September 1772, Special Collections, Massachusetts Historical Society.

In print, most of these manuscript diacriticals are maintained. "Charles" is italicized in the second stanza and "Phantom" at the very end of the stanza. Verses 35–37 are also connected with a bracket. Not discounting other changes in punctuation, capitalization and phrasing, the manuscript copies differs little from the version printed in *Poems*. As a matter of fact, a close reading of the three poems suggest that Wheatley more than likely stressed the name of the deceased infant in both of the manuscripts and its printed variant. It is also likely that she was responsible for the other emphasized words and phrases that appeared in published version of the poem.<sup>17</sup>

Presumably, either before or during her stay in London, Wheatley revised the poem again, making slight changes to the words she wanted to stress, drawing probably on her earlier two manuscripts. That is certainly reasonable to assume if we were to consider seventeenth and eighteenth-century printing manuals that, as a matter of custom, if they were provided with a "Copy perfect", set names of people and capitalized words in italic. As early as the 1680s, printers were beginning to acknowledge in print the author's use of diacriticals that functioned as a type of signature, at least for those scribal readers who first enjoyed the author's work.<sup>18</sup>

17. According to John Smith's *The Printer's Grammar*, printed in 1755, brackets and/or braces were "used chiefly in Tables of Accounts, and other such-like Matter that consists of a variety of Articles". Judging from the manuscript of the Sewell verse, it is reasonable to assume that the poet's use of brackets represents one of those "other such-like Matters" Smith mentioned (127).
18. According to Joseph Moxon's 1683 manual for printers, a copy perfect is a manuscript submitted by an author that acknowledges the printer instructions with regards to emphasis. Similarly, in their manuals, John Smith and Paul Luckombe also include a set of instructions for authors. Both note that the italicization of names as a common practice, as well as setting an author's capitalized words in italics (MOXON 1683 [reprint. 1962], 250–51). See also SMITH 1755, 12–17 and LUCKOMBE 1771, 234–38, 379. For instructions on setting capitalized words in italics, see SMITH 1755, 52–55. There, Smith suggests that publishers often acknowledge those capitalized words in one of several ways. In either case, these accidentals were neither import words nor a person's name. Also, for more instructions to authors about the particulars of wording and punctuation, see SMITH 1755, 168, 223, 272–78 and LUCKOMBE 1771, 377–79, 393, 448. For other useful studies of how Wheatley used italics as a form of signature, see LEVERNIER 1981, 25–26 and SCRUGGS 1995, 177–92. Also see my 1997, 205–08 and 1999, 10–13. Incidentally, on March 12, 1770, the unsigned poem below, elegizing the fallen compatriots of the Boston Massacre, appeared in the *Boston Evening Post*:

So did Phillis Wheatley review the manuscript copies of her poem before they were typeset? In all likely, she did.<sup>19</sup> Had she been made aware of certain practices in the book trade, particularly those regarding authors? Plausible; it is also possible that the slave-poet used her celebrity to encode in her writings a practice she had learned before being brought to America. *Nsibidi*, as Robert Farris Thompson, Grey Gundaker, and others have explained, is a form of graphic system Africans used for communication (THOMPSON 1984, 227–29 and 244–68; GUNDAKER 1998, 42–44; 53).

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With Fire enwrapt, surcharg'd with sudden Death,  
Lo, the pois'd Tube convolves its fatal breath!  
The flying Ball with heaven-directed Force,  
Rids the Spirit of the fallen corse.

Well sated Shades! let no unwomanly Tear  
From Pity's Eye, disdain in your honour'd Bier;  
Lost to their View, surviving Friends may mourn,  
Yet on thy Pile shall Flames celestial burn;  
Long as in *Freedom's* Cause the wise contend,  
Dear to your unity shall Fame extend;  
While to the World, the letter'd Stone shall tell,  
How *Caldwell*, *Attacks*, *Gray*, and *Mav'rick* fell. (2)

In *Phillis Wheatley and Her Writings*, Wheatley-biographer William H. Robinson observed that this anonymous poem resembles, in “style, sentiment, and vocabulary” the works of Phillis Wheatley (1984, 455). According to Robinson, those lines are part of a poem by Wheatley whose title, “On The Affray in King Street, On the Evening of the 5th of March”, appeared in her 1772 proposals for *Poems*. Unfortunately, that poem was not included in her volume of poetry. Considering its subject, it is obvious why the poem had been dropped from Wheatley's *Poems* that were published in London, England.

I also argued that that unsigned verse is the work of Phillis Wheatley. After comparing the nameless lines to other works written by Wheatley, I observed that the poem is not only similar to Wheatley in its style and diction, but also in its use of diacriticals as a literary device to stress meaning. Moreover, I argued that the diacritics in both the anonymous verse printed in the *Evening Post* and other poems written by Wheatley function as an underlying signature that points to her as its author (BLY 1998, 177–80).

19. While there presently are only nine manuscript poems in Wheatley's hand, each of them registers by way of punctuation, diction, and emphasis the poet's intent to invest in certain words and/or phrases at once explicit and implicit meanings.

Besides the Ejagham people and their Cross River neighbors, *nsibidi* reflects an intersection of orality and early African writing systems. To be certain, as David Dalby's work on West African scripts demonstrate, the Wolof (the ethnic group to whom many scholars believe Wheatley belonged), Mende, Fula, Yoruba, Vai, Kpelle, Bassa, and other ethnic groups also employed types of *nsibidi*, well before the trans-Atlantic system brought millions of Africans to the Americas (1967, 1–51; 1968, 156–97; and 1969, 161–91).<sup>20</sup> When darkly inscribed, these highlighted symbols or characters magnified even more the power of the word or characters to mean. In an African context, they connected the world of the living to the world of the dead. They transcended the physical boundaries, the secular trapping of the here and now. Considering the account left by Wheatley's first biographer, Margaret Matilda Odell, one cannot help but wonder about the significance of the slave-poet's use of such signs. Shortly after she arrived in New England, as the great grandniece of Wheatley's mistress noted, the young African native "soon gave indications of *uncommon intelligence*, and was frequently seen endeavoring to make letters upon the wall with a piece of chalk or charcoal" (1834, 10). In those moments, perhaps Wheatley attempted to write something out in Arabic or perhaps she drew upon older traditions.

While we may never know for certain whether or not the poet understood fully eighteenth-century book practices or African customs with regarding to inscribing, one thing is certain. Wheatley's diacritical marks warrant consideration. In light of her life story, they suggest something more than an obvious acknowledgement of emerging conventions in the art of printing. They also represented something more than an African custom in which highlighted marks and symbols signified text, meaning and status.<sup>21</sup> That is to say, particularly when considering her unique African American experience, Wheatley's *nsibidi* probably functioned as

20. Many of the indigenous West African scripts Dalby examined emerge in the early nineteenth-century. Older markings clearly preceded these systems hundreds of years.
21. Like most, if not all, colonial African peoples, among the Ibo (modern-day Nigeria) body marks conveyed to the community a sense of belonging and status. In that regard, Olaudah Equiano recalled in the first chapter of his autobiography published in 1789: "My father was one of those elders or chiefs I have spoken of, and was styled Embrenche; a term, as I remember, importing the highest distinction, and signifying in our language a mark of grandeur. This mark is conferred on the person entitled to it, by cutting the skin across at the top of the forehead, and drawing it down to the eye-brows; and while it is in this situation applying a

a bridge between Africa and America: bricolage. Most likely they did not wholly reflect one view or the other, but rather both. Aesthetically, Wheatley's diacritical marks documents one of many expressions of what I will characterize as *sass* which is an essential element of Afro-Atlantic culture.

A word of West African origin, *sass* communicates agency. It signifies confidence, assertiveness, and resilience. According to Joanne Braxton, *sass* is associated with Eshu or Elegba, the trickster orisha of the Yoruba religion. Traditionally, in both the West and in Africa, it means talking back; it connotes a form of resistance. In an Afro-Atlantic context, however, *sass* signifies a great deal more. Although there are indeed similarities between European and African notions of *sass*, the cultural value of *sass* from an Afro-Atlantic perspective differs from the European and the African one in that its emphasis is not primarily negative in its connotation. Instead, *sass* signifies both. It is inherently dualistic, like the trickster Eshu or Brer Rabbit of nineteenth-century African American folklore. All at once, *sass* is cognitive, pastiche, parody, and dexterity. An overlooked and yet pivotal aesthetic of the Afro-Atlantic world, *sass* is the palimpsest text upon which Robert Farris Thompson's aesthetic of the cool or *itutu* is realized. It is the twin of the cool.<sup>22</sup>

Before delving further into Wheatley's use of *sass* and its underlining meaning, one must first return to the subject of the poet's elegy about

warm hand, and rubbing it until it shrinks up into a thick *weal* across the lower part of the forehead" (1837, 9, underline emphasis mine).

22. My conceptualization of *sass* is based in part on Thompson's work, as well as that of Clifford Geertz's regarding thin and thick descriptions and deep play. It differs from Braxton's use of the term which is primarily oral in nature. In other words, although she recognizes the words' African origins, Braxton's explanation of the term *sass* is primarily as a verb: talking back. In my view however, *sass* is adjective; it is a cognitive aesthetic of pastiche, parody, and critique. Like Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem, "We wear the Mask", *sass* is a veneer, it is a cover, a facade that "grins and lies" and whose mouth reveals a "myriad subtleties". Like the hunter mask of the Dogon people of West Africa or Lewis Carroll's Cheshire cat, *sass* is deliberately misleading without necessarily appearing cheeky, crude, or subversive. Instead, it is intentionally coded and illusive. Consequently, in Wheatley use of diacritical marks or, in an African sense, *nsibidi*, the slave-poet puts on the mask, or the veil—a term she would deploy in her own work, but not so much as to express impertinence. Freedom or the ability to express herself without restraint is her intent (THOMPSON 2011; BRAXTON, 1989, chapter 1, esp. 30–31; and, GEERTZ 1977, 5–7).

Charles Eliot and place the manuscript in context. In short, Wheatley's elegies are written both in the Puritan tradition of the day and a convention of her own design. As Gregory Rigsby explained in his analysis of her elegies within the milieu of the New England elegiac tradition, the slave-poet's elegies were not conventional. Quite the contrary, hers displayed elements that were more than likely informed both by her African past and her status as a slave.<sup>23</sup> In Wheatley's elegies, for instance, heaven was not the "traditional land of milk and honey, objective and fixed for all alike". That was the New England mode. Instead, heaven was "the topmost rung of the hierarchical ladder—the seat of the ancestors". Secondly, in Wheatley's elegies, the deceased are depicted in flight, betwixt the temporal and the celestial planes rather than already being situated in the afterlife. After their arrival, the African-born poet's beatific vision of heaven usually emphasized a montage in which music played a central role. In several of her elegies, the native of Gambia described her verses as songs, signifying thus African traditions in which music represented language. Traditionally, by Rigsby's account, New England elegies stressed sight over sound. Breaking with tradition yet again, Wheatley's elegies also focused on the celestial life over the temporal world. Considering her plight as a slave, one could argue that the slave-poet welcomed death as it brought an end to her daily labors and marked the beginning of her reunion with her lost loved ones (RIGSBY 1975, 248–57).

Several of these elements are present in both the manuscripts and the printed version of her elegy to Charles Eliot. In the beginning, for instance, the 12-month-old child is described as a winged figure in flight, caught between the earthy and the spiritual planes, or as she eloquently puts it in verses 1–3 of the MHS manuscript: "Thro' airy realms, he wings his instant flight,/ To purer regions of celestial light;/ Unmov'd he sees unnumber'd systems roll". Additionally, of the 47 verses that make up the poem; well over half of them involve a grand celestial scene in which the departed child assumes his respective place in the hereafter or as explained in verses 9–12 of the MHS manuscript:

23. Elsewhere, I considered the poet used the eighteenth-century Puritan elegy as a metaphor not only to bemoan the lost of her friends and associates, but to articulate the peculiar space she inhabited as a slave and poet. Like Rigsby, I argued that Wheatley used the elegy as a literacy device in which she imagines freedom. But at the center of my argument is a semantic reading of the poet's accentuation of the deceased child's name as a way to achieve two voices at once (BLY 1999, 10–13; 2015, 1–4).

The heav'nly legions, view, with joy unknown,  
 Press his soft hand, and seat him on the throne,  
 And smiling, thus: "To this divine abode,  
 "The seat of Saints, of Angels, and of GOD:

Moreover, after assuming his place in Heaven, Charles is greeted by a chorus of cherubs singing and clapping. Taken as a whole, these elements of Charles' eulogy color the poet's memory of definite African customs.

Rigsby's analysis, however, does not take into account Wheatley's use of diacritical marks that may have afforded the poet an overlooked occasion to address slavery and her African past. In other words, by stressing Charles's name, she at once recognizes book traditions and makes a subtle statement. Using the deceased boy as a symbolic veil, she achieved a bolder, second voice. In the middle of the elegiac song, for example, Charles (or should we say Wheatley) looked back and elected to describe the world that s/he left behind as a "rod for horrid crimes I knew". Considering the fact that the subject of the elegy is a twelve month old child of a well-to-do family, verse 19 seems at best a curious one as it raises the questions of who is actually speaking and whose view of world is being described? The meaning of the verse is further complicated when we take into account that the author of the poem is a slave. In other words, although the reference in both manuscripts copies to the rod could be read as an allusion to the Old Testament, specifically Solomon's injunction on rearing children, the "horrid crimes" reference is an altogether different matter. Because for Wheatley, the "rod" and "horrid crimes" references may actually represent an autobiographical allusion, albeit veiled, to the beating of Prince, the Wheatley's domestic who incurred the wrath of his mistress one evening after she observed the saucy slave riding home alongside her beloved protégée after one of her visits with an admirer. This reading is further substantiated if we were to take into account the printed version of the verse that reads: "E'er yet the lash for horrid crimes I felt" (line 19). There, the quotation marks, the pronoun, and verb clearly insert within the verse confusion with respect to voice or at least a level of nuance and ambiguity with regards to whom is speaking. Though Wheatley's subtle reference to Prince's beating is not as explicit as that of Frederick Douglass watching his Aunt Hester being whipped or Booker T. Washington witnessing the callous correction of his uncle, it is no less powerful. Like Douglass and Washington, who wrote decades later, Wheatley's "lash for horrid crimes" reference reveals a common aspect of slave life. Consequently, one can only imagine the pain she must have



"felt" personally, considering that she had caused, albeit unintentionally, Prince to be punished or as Margaret Matilda Odell characterized the matter: "a severe reprimand" (1834, 13).

In last two stanzas of the poem, the poet appears to have afforded herself yet another opportunity to say something about herself. Attempting to console Charles' parents, she encouraged the couple to focus not on their deceased child's life while he was alive but on his new life in the blissful hereafter or she as explains in verses 30–31 of the MHS manuscript: "A happier world, and nobler strains belong./ Say would you tear him from the realms above?" Particularly striking within that poetic montage is line forty-one where the poet recounts, in terms of time itself, the infant's life on earth as being "Twelve moons revol'd". Bearing in mind that the source of Charles' song is an African, this reference to time can in fact be read as an allusion to the poet's memory of an African custom, specifically the way in which West Africans reckoned the passage of time. Indeed, as A. B. Ellis' ethnographic studies have demonstrated, most Western Africans discerned time by moons and lunar months (1964, 142–51; 1890, 215–21).<sup>24</sup> If not an African retention, Wheatley's reference to time may reflect the influence of Islam in the western region of the African continent during the eighteenth-century.

Wheatley's "On the Death of the Rev'd Dr. Sewall" provides us another illustration of how the poet may have not only achieved a less than deferential voice, but also asserted control over how her texts appeared in print: sass. Joseph Sewall was the son of Samuel Sewall, the celebrated author of the 1700 anti-slavery pamphlet, *The Selling of Joseph*. Like many graduates of Harvard, Sewall became a minister and made a name for himself as an ardent Calvinist and a strong supporter of the patriot cause at the Old South Congregational Church and Meeting House in Boston. But, on 27 June 1769, he died at the rare age of eighty-one. As a member of that church, Phillis Wheatley probably knew Sewall and of his works.

In the manuscript of the Sewall poem, now in the Countess of Huntingdon's papers in Cambridge, England, Wheatley did not use any accent marks, except for several capitalized words and phrases. But in a second manuscript, now at the American Antiquarian Society, she underlined the title of the poem. Verses 23–25 are connected with a bracket. In the fourth stanza of that manuscript, she set verse 31, "The rocks responsive to the voice, reply'd", in parenthesis. Not surprisingly, in the AAS manuscript,

24. "A Poem on the Death of Charles Eliot", by Phillis Wheatley. 1 September 1772, Special Collections, Massachusetts Historical Society.

she maintains many of the diacritical marks in the Huntingdon manuscript. Indeed, that manuscript also retained the capitalization the words “Saint”, “Spirit”, “God”, “Christ”, “Savior”, “Captive”, “Captivity”, and several others that also appeared in the earlier copy.<sup>25</sup>

In print, many of those manuscript diacritics were maintained. Sewall’s name, for example, is set in capital letters. A bracket is also inserted next to verses 23–25. Similarly, the words “Saint”, “Spirit”, “God”, “Christ”, “Savior” are either capitalized or set in italics. The verse “The rocks responsive to the voice, reply’d”, however, was dropped when the poem appeared in print. Still, the other diacritical marks suggest that the poet enjoyed a considerable degree control over how the poem appeared in print. What’s more, considering those diacritics, Wheatley appears to have invested within her song for Sewall multiple levels of meaning (WHEATLEY 1773, 19–21).

Like her song for Charles Eliot, Wheatley’s elegy for Dr. Sewall is an unconventional one, one informed nonetheless by her memory of African traditions. Rather than enumerated the particulars of her subject’s “Swift-pinioned *Fame*”—the custom of most Puritan elegies—the slave-poet turns her attention instead to otherworldly matters. Following in Wheatley’s elegiac style, Sewall’s journey begins not in heaven, but rapturous purgatory (although brief), or as she penned it in the sixth verse of the AAS manuscript: “The saint ascending to his native Skies”. After his arrival there, the deceased minster assumed his place in heaven among the numbered saints.<sup>26</sup>

Though Wheatley did not invoke a heavenly choir in her song for Sewall, she does nevertheless include other ambiguous references that all suggest both an awareness of her African past and her slave present. For example, while in Charles’ elegy, the twelve month-old infant takes flight, Sewall appears to have ascended and crossed over a body of water to arrive safely on the “immortal Shore”. Making an allowance for what we know about

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25. “The Decease of the Rev’d Dr. Sewell” in *Phillis Wheatley and Her Writings*, 365–67; Wheatley, *Phillis, Poems*, 1767; 1769. Mss Reserve. American Antiquarian Society. In his reading of the Sewall verses, Julian Mason observed that Wheatley was more than likely responsible for several diacritical marks that appear in her printed work. “The brackets”, he noted, “that she put into some of her manuscripts suggest that she also might have been responsible for the frequent use of such bracketing in her [published] book. Mason, however, did not explore the subject further” (1989, 129 note 13).

26. WHEATLEY, *Phillis, Poems*, 1767; 1769. Mss Reserve. American Antiquarian Society.

Wheatley's life before she had been brought from Africa to America, such a reference, particularly her emphasis on the word "Shore" in verse three, might in fact represent a real and/or symbolic return home.<sup>27</sup> It may also represent an overlooked characteristic of the slave-poet's elegiac style. For in many of her elegies, Wheatley often depicted death and spiritual ascendency in metaphorical terms in which the winged souls of the deceased journeyed over, across or through water that appears to separate the land of the living from that of the dead. In "To a Gentleman and Lady on the Death of the Lady's Brother and Sister, and a Child of the Name *Avis*, Aged One Year", for example, "*Avis*", the only person Wheatley mentions directly by name, takes flight from the "mortal shore" where "Death reigns tyrant". In "To His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, On the Death of His Lady", "Death" carries Mary Sanford Oliver to "th' immortal coast". In "To the Honourable T.H. Esq; On the Death of His Daughter", Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hubbards watch their daughter, "[Thankfull Hubbard] *Leonard*" ascend to the skies, leaving behind the "earth's dusky shore". In "On the Death of a Young Lady of Five Years of Age", Wheatley consoles "*Nancy*'s" bereft parents, reminding them that one day after "sail[ing] through life's tempestuous sea" they too will join their "happy babe... on the blissful shore". Equally telling, in her famous elegiac poem to George Whitefield, Wheatley imagines the Reverend "*Whitefield*... sail[ing] to Zion, through [the] vast seas of day". In each of these elegies, Sewall's song notwithstanding, the allusion to crossing over water could be read as a reference to the poet's education in the classical literature. Just as easily, however, it can also be read as an allusion to her own Middle Passage experience. By highlighting the names of the departed whom she elegizes, their journey becomes hers both spiritually and physically; their familial separation becomes her familial reunification.<sup>28</sup>

The water reference can also be read as an allusion to her African past. Before being brought to America, she probably learned from her parents the significance of water in their indigenous religious culture. Like most Africans of the Senegambia region, Wheatley probably believed that a body of water divided the land of the living from the land of the dead. The Wolof, as David P. Gamble explained, believed that the spirit (*jine*) of their ancestors lived either under the sea or in the earth, presumably underneath

27. WHEATLEY, 1767; 1769.

28. For an insightful account of Phillis Wheatley's actual Middle Passage, see CARRETTA, 2–20.

the sea that lay under the earth (GAMBLE 1967, 71). Other West Africans also held a similar, if not identical, belief. Either way, considering her background, Wheatley's water reference does not fit easily within the New England elegiac tradition she wrote in.<sup>29</sup>

Incidentally, the theme of crossing over water in Wheatley elegies preceded nineteenth-century slave spirituals. Much like the African-born poet's concealed flight under the veil of the elegiac mode, the slave spirituals demonstrated that antebellum slaves also imagined themselves crossing over water in order to reach Christ and freedom.<sup>30</sup> In "Hold Your Light", they sang of "Canaan's shore", while in "O Brother, Don't Get Weary", they "landed on Canaan's shore". In "Sail, O Believer", slaves "Sail, Sail, over yonder, And view de promised land" (ALLEN, et al. 1867, 10, 95, and 24). On other occasions, they described Jesus as a captain of a ship who ferried them over the river, in most cases the Jordan River, to the Promised Land. In "The Old Ship of Zion", for instance, they sang,

1. What ship is that you're enlisted upon?  
O glory hallelujah!

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29. Incidentally, other West Africans, like the Bambara people of Senegambia, the Tshi or Twi speaking peoples (i.e., Ashanti, Gaman, Akim, Assin, Fanti, Wasaw, Ahanta, Akan, etc.) of the Gold Coast, the Ewe-speaking peoples (i.e., Mahi, Dahomey, Awuna, and the Whydah) of the Slave Coast, and the Edo-speaking peoples (i.e., Itsekiri, Igbo, Igala, Odah, Uhobo, and the Isoko) of the Bight of Biafra, also expressed similar beliefs. So too did the people of Angola who view the world as "two mountains opposed at their bases and separated by the ocean" (HALL 1992, 45–50; ELLIS 1970, 150–57 and 1890, 105–108; BRADBURY 1964, 53; and JANZEN and MACGAFFEY 1974, 34). Significantly, in the manuscript of her elegy to "General Wooster", at the Massachusetts Historical Society in the Hugh Upham Clark Papers, Wheatley acknowledged "Gambia" as her home. Taking into account both the poet's acknowledgement of Gambia and the extant historical record, John C. Shields and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. have postulated that Wheatley more than likely belonged to either the Fulani or the Wolof people (SHIELDS 1978, 43; GATES 2003, 17). For a fuller discussion of water as a symbolic divide between the celestial and temporal planes in the black Diaspora, see FARRIS 1983, 160; SOBEL 1987, 214–25; GUNDAKER 1998, 44–46; and BOLSTER 1997, 62–63.

30. Significantly, I am not the first to comment on the similarities between Wheatley's poems and the nineteen slave spirituals with respect to crossing over water. Although a passing reference at best, R. Lynn Matson made a similar observation (1972, 227).

'Tis the old ship of Zion, hallelujah!

'Tis the old ship of Zion, hallelujah!

2. And who is the Captain of the ship that you're on?

O glory, etc.

My Saviour is the Captain, hallelujah!

3. Don't you see that ship a sail-in',

a sail-in', a sail-in',

Don't you see that ship sail-in',

Gwine over to the Promised Land. (ALLEN, et. al. 1867, 102–03)

Like Wheatley's elegies, nineteenth-century allusions toward crossing over water also referenced memories of Africa and reuniting with lost love ones.

Returning to the poet's song for Sewall, her lament that "we shall hear thy warning voice no more" might represent yet another veiled reference. Although Sewall had garnered something of a reputation for himself as a deeply pious man who preached repentance, he toiled nonetheless in the shadow of his larger-than-life father whose pamphlet, *The Selling of Joseph*, denounced the institution of slavery and, in so doing, stirred the passions of a divided public. Indeed, throughout Boston, Sewall's booklet inspired intense debate, as it challenged then popular rationales for the enslavement of Africans. "These *Ethiopians*", he exclaimed in print, "as black as they are; seeing they are the Sons and Daughters of the First *Adam*, the Brethren and Sisters of the Last *ADAM*, and the Offspring of *GOD*; They ought to be treated with a Respect agreeable" (SEWELL 1700, 3). In his mind, for men "to persist in holding their Neighbours [sic] and Brethren under the Rigor of perpetual Bondage, seems to be no proper way of gaining Assurance that God ha's [sic] given them Spiritual Freedom". At once concise and bold, Sewall's leaflet stirred a rigorous debate about slavery. It seems unlikely that African-born poet did not know of Sewall's public lament on behalf of African Americans. As a result, her "warning voice no more" reference may in fact pay homage to both the father and the son at the same time. In verses 23–30, she embellishes the matter even further when she observes in the AAS manuscript:

"Sewall is dead". Swift pinion'd fame thus cry'd

Is Sewall dead? my trembling heart reply'd.

O what a blessing in thy flight deny'd

But when our Jesus had ascended high,

With Captive bands he led Captivity;  
 And gifts reciev'd for such as knew not God  
 Lord! Send a Pastor, for thy Churches [good]  
 O ruin'd world! bereft of thee, we cry'd,

There Wheatley reference to Sewall's "Swift pinion'd fame" may actually speak more of the renown of the father than the son. Furthermore, considering the father's work on behalf of the enslaved, one can better understand why the poet's heart trembled at the thought of his death.<sup>31</sup>

Wheatley's poem to the Earl of Dartmouth may also demonstrate her ability to control her texts and voice. Ironically, the poem was written to dissuade a critic who questioned her assertion of authorship. After reading several poems ascribed to Phillis Wheatley, Thomas Wooldridge, an English functionary and representative of the Earl of Dartmouth, went to her master's house and requested a verse of the slave-poet—that his doubts may be removed. That day however Wheatley was unable to receive guests. At the time engaged, she suggested to Wooldridge a meeting for that following morning. As proof of her talent, she proposed that he select a subject for a verse. Being an official of the Earl, Wooldridge chose understandably the Earl of Dartmouth. The following day, in his presence, Wheatley wrote "To the Right Hon. William, Earl of Dartmouth" (WHEATLEY, 1773h).

Months later, not long after she had left for her London tour, the *New York Journal* published the poem. Appended to the piece is an explanatory note, describing the impromptu nature in which the poem had been composed. A close reading of the original manuscript, now in the Dartmouth papers at the Staffordshire Records Office in Stafford, England, and its variant published in the *New York Journal*, again underscores the poet's command over how her works appeared in print. In the manuscript, Wheatley incorporated several diacritical marks. Throughout the poem, she capitalized of the words "Freedom", "Faction", "Tyranny", "Speech", and "Race". She also placed the verse "Immortal Honours [sic] grace the Patriot's names" in parenthesis. Most of these were maintained in the version of the poem that appeared in *New York Journal*, not to mention she included several new ones. "Freedom", for example, is italicized in verses two and eight, "Faction" in verse ten, and "Liberty" in verse sixteen. "That" is italicized in verse thirty-three. "GOD" is set in capitalized letters in the forty-eighth verse of the poem, and, equally significant, verse forty-four,

31. WHEATLEY, Phillis, Poems, 1767; 1769. Mss Reserve. American Antiquarian Society.

"Immortal Honours [sic] Grace the Patriot's Names", is set in parenthesis (WHEATLEY, 1773h).

But most notably in the Dartmouth manuscript, Wheatley capitalized the words "Freedom", "Tyranny", and "Faction". As a matter of custom, printers were already beginning to maintain those diacritical marks in print. Then, such marks represented not only signs of authorship, but also creativity and nuance. On other occasions, however, publishers also set those emphatic words in italic. Taken in this context, one can argue that was the case with the printed variant of Wheatley's manuscript. In the poem printed in the *New York Journal*, those words are indeed set in italic. In *Poems on Various Subjects*, those same words are again set in italic as both printers probably assumed (and understandably so) that the emphasis belonged to the author.

On one level, "Freedom", "Tyranny", and "faction" can be read as an accent of Wheatley's perception, albeit misplaced in retrospect, of the Earl of Dartmouth, as an emissary of colonial freedom. On another level, those same diacritics can be read as saying something, however subtle, of the burgeoning Revolution, its ideas of natural rights and liberty, and possibly even something with regards to the paradox many slave-holding colonists found themselves. In other words, by stressing "Freedom", "Tyranny", and "faction", the poet makes a definite comment on the precarious nature of being not only a slave and a poet, occupations that appears on the surface antithetical to one another, but also a bondservant at a time when slaveholders were equating (hypocritically one might add) themselves to slaves of the King (WHEATLEY, 1773h).<sup>32</sup>

The manuscript of Wheatley's Cambridge poem, now at the American Antiquarian Society, also suggests that the poet shaped how her text appeared in print. "To the University of Cambridge, Wrote in 1767" is an artful scolding of the overexcited students of Harvard College who in 1766 "generated a publicized commotion over being served bad butter in their commons". An "intricate collage of contrasting ideas and metaphors", the poem includes a number of diacritics that demonstrate not only the poet's control over the text, but also multiple levels of meaning (ROBINSON 1984, 354; BLY 1997, 205). In the first stanza, for example, Wheatley's capitalization of the phrases "native Shore", "sable Land", and "Powerfull hand" in verses three, four, and six paints a portrait of a gratified slave whose tragic

32. For a fuller account of colonial Americans' symbolic appropriation of slavery during the American Revolution, see OKOYE 1980.

past offers her a unique moment to admonish Boston's "Bright youths".<sup>33</sup> Those diacritical marks also paints a different portrait, a cold, heartless one in which the "Powerfull hand" of the Transatlantic slave trade ripped the slave-poet from her family, her parents, her "native Shore". In the third stanza, her shrewd reprimand builds. Amidst their studies of "the ethereal Space" and "glorious Systems of revolving worlds", Wheatley advises, almost in mocking fashion, "ye Sons of Science" to remember Christ's sacrifice that in her view made possible their studies at the College. For that reason, she capitalizes the phrases "Savior's blood", "Redemption flows", "[See] Him", "the Cross", "Condescention in the Son of God", and "deign'd to Die" in verses fourteen, fifteen, eighteen, and twenty. Here, the poet's emphasis can be read in multiple ways. On one level, they function as a mild rebuke. On another level, however, such diacritics serve as a shrewd contrast, one of which makes the young men's actions appear small and self-serving. In its ability to rebuke without necessarily appearing rebuking, Wheatley's verse documents an articulation of the aesthetic of sass (WHEATLEY, 1767, 1769).

Her lecture to the boisterous boys reaches its climax in the fourth and final stanza where she not only instructs them to "Suppress the sable monster in its growth", but also reminds the privileged lot that "An Ethiop tells you, tis your greatest foe". On literal level, Wheatley reaffirms her didactic stance by using her race as a symbolic shield against potential criticism. On a symbolic level, however, Wheatley's "sable monster" reference coupled with her earlier reference to the "Powerfull hand" and verse seven underscore a rather stinging condemnation of the institution of slavery which "Brought [her] in Safety from the dark abode" (WHEATLEY, 1767, 1769). Perhaps reflecting on her own passage from Africa to America, Wheatley's stress of the word "Safely" in verse seven demonstrates that her passage was far from being a safe one. As the subtext of her poem to the Harvard students, Wheatley's sable reference cast the young men in perhaps the worse light. That is to say, in a world where slaves and indentured servitudes made up well over half of the population, and many of that unfortunate lot found themselves ill-used by their masters, the students of the College can find nothing better to do with their time than to complain about butter.<sup>34</sup>

33. "To the University of Cambridge, Wrote in 1767", *American Antiquarian Society*, Stanza 8, Verse 8.

34. For a useful study of slavery and unfreedom or indentured servitude in early America, see FOGLEMAN 1998. Also see the "Introduction" to BLY and HAYGOOD 2014 for an account of the abuses of servants.



Possibly anticipating her critics, Wheatley revised the poem. Like the Dartmouth verse, she changed almost every line. Compared to the Cambridge poem printed in her *Poems on Various Subjects*, that manuscript contains over two dozen changes in capitalization and over a dozen changes in punctuation. In the printed version of the poem, one verse was omitted from the first stanza. Another was excluded from the second.

But perhaps the most striking revision can be found in the twenty-eighth verse of the third stanza of the Cambridge manuscript. There, the poet cautioned the Harvard students to guard against the debauching character of sin, instructing them to "Suppress the sable monster in its growth". In print, Wheatley would rewrite the verse, advising them instead to "Suppress the deadly serpent in its egg". Revised, the metaphor of the "deadly serpent" represented an allusion to the biblical story of Adam and Eve and their fall from Eden. On a literal level, the Cambridge verse can be read as a type of jeremiad that admonishes the students for their boisterous reputation. By revising the verse, she transforms the piece into a type of parable (WHEATLEY 1767, 1769; 1773, 15–16).

R. Lynn Matson however, offered a different explanation for her revision. In "Phillis Wheatley—Soul Sister", he argued that the manuscript's metaphor of the steadily growing "sable monster", as opposed to the "deadly serpent" that appears in *Poems*, represented too blatant a reference to slavery to be maintained in print. By changing "sable monster" to "deadly serpent", Matson argued that the poet substituted the defiant spirit of the manuscript with a theological milieu (MATSON 1972, 229). In a similar vein, Kirstin Wilcox also held that in an effort to market *Poems* to a broader audience, Wheatley, at the behest of her mistress and her transatlantic circle of supporters, omitted those poems that stressed or directly dealt with the issues of race and slavery (WILCOX 1999, 16–26).

Other poems she simply revised. While the race-conscious and unapologetic authority Wheatley assumed as an "Ethiopian" in "An Address to the Deist" and "An Address to the Atheist" more than likely lead to those poems being dropped from her book altogether, the diminutive "*Ethiop*" persona the poet assumed in the printed Cambridge poem used race as a means to authenticate her didactic stance toward the Harvard students. There, the "sable monster" reference is rewritten as the "deadly serpent" in print to de-emphasize race and the authoritative tone of the original manuscript. Either way, judging from the AAS manuscript and the version of the Cambridge poem printed in her book, it is nonetheless reasonable to assume that Phillis Wheatley not only revised the manuscript, but also included the italics in print as a literary strategy to accentuate her position

as an “*Ethiop*” whose “race” blessed her with the tragic vision of “sin”, or as she eloquently puts it in the first stanza of the poem:

’Twas not long since I left my native shore  
The land of errors, and *Egyptian* gloom:  
Father of mercy, ’twas thy gracious hand  
Brought me in safety from those dark abodes.

In this context, the revision of the Cambridge poem registered a moment in which Wheatley determined how her work would appear in print—possibly to placate the fancies of her trans-Atlantic public and thus ensure for herself a wider audience. In the printed version of the poem, she elected to remove the capital letters from phrases like “Land of Errors”, “Sons of Science”, “Redemption flow”, and several others to downplay the stinging tone of the original manuscript (BALKUN 2002, 121–35; WHEATLEY, 1767; 1769).

However, using italics, the poet also appears to have retained something of the defiant tone of the original manuscript. In the above stanza, for example, Wheatley’s emphasis of the phrase “*Egyptian* gloom” might actually suggest otherwise of her native land. Furthermore, her italicization of “*Jesus*” in the second stanza of the printed poem and “*Ethiop*” in the last stanza reveals a haughty, perhaps self-righteous, moment on the part of the poet who had to have known of Simon of Cyrene, an African, who carried the cross part of the way for Jesus. Consequently, considering her education in classical authors, “*Ethiop*” simply meant black, as it was a popular name for Africans in general.

Significantly, those manuscripts dropped from Phillis Wheatley’s *Poems on Various Subjects* offer even stronger evidence that the poet’s control over her text. In the “Address to the Atheist”, now at the Massachusetts Historical Society, she underscored the words “greatest” and “minutest” in verse eight, the phrase “Corner stone” in verse twenty-six, and correspondingly the names of the Greek gods “Apollo”, “Minerva”, “Pluto”, and “Cupid” in verses forty-two, forty-four, forty-five, and forty-seven. There, Wheatley’s accentuation of the names of these deities represented yet another point in which the poet’s expression of creativity intersected the emerging conventions of eighteenth-century print culture. Again, as a general rule in print, printers often typeset unfamiliar, foreign, and import words in italic (SMITH 1755, 213; LUCKOMBE 1771, 386). One could argue, however, that Wheatley’s manuscript, in particular her diacritical marks,

warrants multiple, perhaps subversive, readings of the poem. These marks clearly demonstrate that *she* wanted to stress those words in print, complicating thus tradition: sass. Similarly, in her "An Address to the Deist", also at the Massachusetts Historical Society, she underscored the words "Eternal" in verse seven and "Day" in verse twenty-two. Had these poems been revised and included as a part of *Poems*, it is likely they would have in italicized in print.<sup>35</sup>



Ultimately, the diacritical or *nsibidi* marks that appear in her extant manuscripts and their published variants clearly demonstrate that Phillis Wheatley did in all likelihood enjoy a considerable degree of control over how those particular texts appeared in print. Under the sable veil of the elegiac mode, for example, the slave-poet achieved at once two different voices and revealed two distinctly different stories when she took up her pen to remember and honor the dead. The first of course pertained to the deceased subject at hand who as fate would have it would inspire her to write. The second story however was her very own. In short, Wheatley's use of emphasis documents in print articulations of the aesthetic of sass where she managed simultaneously to critique without necessarily being overtly criticizing or damning. Like an African mask, her use of emphasis grinned and smiled, concealing all a while a pen of myriad subtleties. Considering her writings, however, Wheatley probably preferred the use of a veil as a more proper metaphor.<sup>36</sup>

Either way, death was a constant reminder to the poet of the life she had lost, a life lost by no fault of her own choosing. Arguably death was an obsession of hers. She wrote about it all the time. It haunted her. It followed her across the Atlantic. According Margaret Matilda Odell, death reminded the poet of the gentle and loving countenance of her mother. "She does not seem to have preserved any remembrance of the place of her nativity", she explained in her memoir of the poet, "or of her parents,

35. Phillis Wheatley, "An Address to the Atheist," Robie-Sewall Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Wheatley, "An Address to the Deist," Robie-Sewall Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

36. Long before W.E.B. DuBois would invoke the veil as a metaphor to characterize the African American experience in the United States, Wheatley's use of the term registers perhaps the earliest example of the concept of double consciousness.

excepting the simple circumstance that her mother *poured out water before the sun at his rising*—in reference, no doubt, to an ancient African custom”. (ODELL 1834, 10; BLY 1999, 10).<sup>37</sup>

The subject of death probably offered Wheatley some solace in what must have been an otherwise lonely life. Of the thirty-nine poems in her historic volume of poetry, nearly half of them are elegies. Contrary to the claims of some of the poet’s critics, Phillis Wheatley remembered Africa; she remembered her African homeland; she remembered them all the time and all too well as the Puritan elegiac mode and her use of diacritical marks gave her numerous opportunities to reflect. Whatever their meanings, explicit and otherwise, Wheatley’s *nsibidi*, those connecting symbols, enclosing signs, and slanted characters all emphasize the word’s power to mean, for meaning is implicit in their very design or as D. F. McKenzie observed: “form affects meaning”. As such, therein is the new challenge to the poet’s modern critics: the challenge of explicating “each horrid crime” she used to “unveil” otherwise unspeakable things artful spoken. (McKENZIE 1999, 13; Wheatley, 1773, 90).

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37. Odell’s comment undoubtedly references libation and ancestral worship.

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# Receiving and Rendering

## Notes on the Edited Shakespeare Page

*Paul J. Hecht*

### ABSTRACT

*This essay argues for a greater variety of approaches to editing Shakespeare, including editors who may creatively and productively refashion or distort the text, not just clarify it. Following an aggressive, seemingly spurious emendation to a speech in *As You Like It* by eighteenth-century editor William Warburton (here called a “dead crux”), the author explores how the dynamics of a Shakespeare scene inflect and infect the voice of the editor, in a way all but unimaginable within the predominant, professional tone of present-day Shakespeare editing. Working from the speculative writing of Lawrence Lipking, and the editorial provocations of James Joyce, as well as Shakespeare himself, other possibilities for the relationship of text, editor, edition, and reader are considered; this in the context of a reading, based on Warburton’s emendation, of the Shakespeare scene in question.*

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THE CONTINGENCY OF THE EDITORIAL TRADITION OF SHAKESPEARE, the way influential individuals and ideas shaped how many subsequent editors approached the text, has been visible for a long time.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1990s, however, the sense of contingency has been considerably deepened. Margreta de Grazia’s *Shakespeare Verbatim* (1991) displayed the social and political influences woven into Malone’s edition of 1790, and demonstrated just how spurious was the view of editorial progress whereby one saw, in “the history of Shakespeare studies one streamlined course whose

This essay has had a long gestation, and has accrued many debts, though responsibility for the flaws of the final product remain all mine. I wish to thank Timothy Billings, Marshall Brown, Peter Holland, Richard Strier, Suzanne Gossett, Matthew Harrison, H. Wayne Storey, and Daniel O’Sullivan, as well as two anonymous readers, for their insights and thoughtful recommendations, which have improved the essay immeasurably.

1. Faced with the complexity of the textual situation for many plays, editors have been particularly susceptible to theoretical interpretations that order the materials in various ways. For the most comprehensive, recent overview, see MURPHY 2003.

most advanced point was always the present” (7).<sup>2</sup> In 1996, Leah Marcus argued for how editors should respond to this newly clarifying understanding of editorial history in *Unediting the Renaissance*—a phrase that has stuck. Marcus accepted the claims of de Grazia and others, that “our standard editions are shaped by nineteenth-century or even earlier assumptions and ideologies”, and advocated looking at unedited, original texts in order to get free of “centuries of editorial accretion”, a metaphorical weight that can cause even avowedly experimental editions to “collapse into received orthodoxy” (5).

In more recent work Marcus has continued to argue for “breaking the authority of past editorial practice in favor of greater openness and multiplicity” (MARCUS 2007, 142). In the prior decade much had happened, both in terms of heightened consciousness among editors of the weight of the editorial past, and also in the way texts are presented, including “parallel text” editions that avoid conflation and an array of new web-based approaches to presenting and reading Shakespeare. But Marcus insisted that more remained to be done. Despite the continuing flow of new editions of Shakespeare, they remained, she claimed, “too uniform, too much alike, too often geared to the same audience rather than to disparate audiences” (142). The point about audiences seems crucial. It is not that Marcus thinks all Shakespeare editing, all taking away of possibility (variety, for example, of word or phrase in multiple play-texts) and inserting of clarifying gloss and explanation, is bad.<sup>3</sup> Far from it. It is rather that there is too much uniformity in what I would call the editorial voice, upon the stage, as it were, of the critical edition, in which glosses dispassionately explain and illuminate. Whereas, if one goes sufficiently far into the past of Shake-

2. More recently, in *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature before Heterosexuality* (2007), Rebecca Ann Bach argued that in the evolution of Shakespeare editing one can see the gradual emergence of modern notions of gender roles and the place of sexual desire that would have been utterly alien to Elizabethans. Editors, she argues, have unconsciously emphasized and deemphasized aspects of the text to fit the governing cultural view of men and women.
3. I quote Marcus at length in part to counter an argument put forward by Lukas Erne that Marcus and those of like mind are against editing in general, that they suggest that the only tolerable edition of a Renaissance text is a photofacsimile. It seems clear that both in 1996 and 2007, Marcus has supported a greater multiplicity of editorial approaches, pushing commentary along a continuum away from “dogmatism” and ignorant acceptance of past editors’ choices. See ERNE 2008, 4–6, 9–10. Note that most of Erne’s support for the notion of “abandonment” of editing comes from essays written in the 1980s.

spere editing, one finds true multiplicity of voice, the present has instead a uniform, professional character. This despite the fact that Shakespeare scholars have never been more at odds about the nature of Shakespeare's own voice, how he wrote, and the kind of author he was.<sup>4</sup> And despite the number of Shakespeare editions in print, truly experimental editions are few and far between; almost all Shakespeare editions appear within series that profess to include all the author's extant plays, and follow the same general stylistic and editorial principles.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, Shakespeare editing is currently treated as much more science than art. Editors are expected to have a mastery of early modern English plays, literature, and culture, as well as the textual and scholarly tradition of the plays they edit, and the best editors mobilize this learning with subtlety, finesse, and brilliance. But most do not see themselves as engaged in making a beautiful edition of a play, or of making an edition that, like an audacious director, might remake the play in the minds of its readers. Are directors involved in Shakespeare editing? Are poets and active playwrights? Other than the occasional director's foreword, I know of no such meddling with the profession of Shakespeare editing. If we believe that Shakespeare's art was a collaborative one, then why do we not allow and encourage teams of creative people to present plays in radically new ways? And if we believe Shakespeare saw himself as a literary author, why do we not allow people whose qualifications are more literary in the broad sense

4. On the debate about what kind of author Shakespeare was, see ERNE and KIDNIE 2004, and their introduction to the book (1–7), as well as the forum in *Shakespeare Studies* 36 (2007): 19–131. In introducing their book, Erne and Kidnie come to this conclusion: “The sum of these essays suggests that whether, and if so how, we have access to authors (rather than just manuscripts and printed texts) is a question that remains wide open” (9); Patrick Cheney, in introducing the *Shakespeare Studies* forum, comes to much the same conclusion when, surveying the arguments of several prominent scholars on various conflicting interpretations of Shakespearean authorship—primarily theatrical or literary, individual or collaborative—“no one seems to be budging” (CHENEY 2007, 20). With such a lack of consensus about the fundamental nature of the plays and their author, a greater diversity of editorial approaches seems all the more necessary.
5. The claim is a broad one, but when the question was put to a Shakespeare Association of America seminar in 2008 that included editors of both print and web editions, as well as a general editor, the consensus was that it is true; such an edition as Michael Warren's of *King Lear* is an exception (WARREN 1989).

to work hand-in-hand with those whose early modern qualifications can guard against anachronism and error?

Though perhaps even anachronism and error might be tonic too.<sup>6</sup> This essay argues as much. It began in frustration in reading *As You Like It*, sensing a certain dynamic at work, but unable to find a language to illuminate it. In this case, I found a way forward by happening on, in Furness's variorum edition, a comment and a suggested emendation by a not-well-reputed eighteenth-century editor of Shakespeare, William Warburton. Immersing myself in an editorial controversy that has no weight with modern editors (I call it a "dead crux" — a passage that was once emended and argued over where now the Folio reading has become unquestionable), I found myself carried into a productively distorting view of a part of the text that had never seemed problematic. Eventually, I found Warburton's distorting view to make sense as an extension of one of the mindsets in the scene—a hyper-rational vision, clashing against a mysticizing one. Warburton's shrill voice clarified for me a complex of gendered and opposed voices in this scene that radiates outward into the surrounding play. So the old, obsolete edition, with its unprofessional, grating, distorting view of the play, ends up allowing me a new purchase, a new way forward in 2012. If there were more editions as tendentious as Warburton now, that would be a good thing. We ought to allow a greater variety of voices to take the editorial stage in Shakespeare, even if we may find their work shrill, distorting, or simply wrong.

1. Before Warburton, however, I want to begin with the passage from *As You Like It* that he comments on, as it is presented and annotated in a modern edition, the *Arden3* by Juliet Dusinberre (2006). At the end of this essay, I will return to Dusinberre's glosses for a final model of the overall relationship of text, commentary, and meaning in my analysis, but for now they are here to provide a sense of the comfortable professionalism of modern Shakespeare editing, what some years ago, beginning a larger project on *Rosalind in Spenser and Shakespeare*, I found oddly oppressive. The idea now is to highlight just how far Warburton is from the interests and

6. The last decade has also seen the rise of presentism as a response to the new historicism, the complex products of which can be seen, for example, in Linda Charnes' "Anticipating Nostalgia" (CHARNES 2009), and de Grazia's article on anachronism, in which she notes that historicism's mantra, "always historicize", always contained an implicit "never anachronize", something which she here brings considerable pressure against (DE GRAZIA 2010).

sensibilities of the modern editor. Here is the passage in question, from act 1, scene 2, where Celia, having heard of Charles the wrestler's lethal skill, urges Orlando to reconsider fighting him:

Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years. You have seen cruel proof of this man's strength. If you saw yourself with your eyes or knew your self with your judgement, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise. (165–70)

About this passage, Dusinberre supplies one footnoted comment:

167 **If . . . eyes** It was a favourite Renaissance paradox that the eyes look outward and therefore do not see their owner; see Davies, *Nosce Teipsum* (1599): 'the eye, . . . Whose rayes reflect not, but spread outwardly, / Not seeing it selfe, when other things it sees' (5). See TC 3.3.96–112 and Dusinberre, 'TC', 92–3.

For frequent readers of scholarly Shakespeare editions, none of this will appear strange or foreign—as indeed, for me, it was oppressively familiar—but in case a present reader lacks that familiarity, I will briefly discuss what is going on here. Dusinberre, after saying that Celia's "if you saw your self with your eyes" invokes a "favourite Renaissance paradox", provides evidence for that by referencing a contemporary text by Sir John Davies. The quotation from Davies isn't really enough to support this point, but the title, if one knows some Latin, does better—*Know Yourself*, that is. What comes afterward is even trickier—an abbreviation that must be looked up if *Troilus and Cressida* isn't on the tip of one's tongue, and then a Dusinberre article, also requiring retrieval.

It might be objected that, for Celia, there is little sense of either paradox or fascination, but the comment's full significance only comes into focus with Dusinberre's later comments, which create a network of association whereby the paradox is effectively evoked by its proximity to language used elsewhere in the play. In act 3, we come upon a scene where lack of self-knowledge, because of lack of ability to see oneself, is much more easily adduced as something that drives the action. The scene is Rosalind's interruption of Silvius's fruitless efforts to woo the shepherdess Phoebe. According to Rosalind, Phoebe does not know her own worth, particularly the degree of her beauty, for if she did, she would accept Silvius's offer of marriage, recognizing that she can do no better. The proliferation of references to "eyes" and to various situations of looking, being looked upon, and the

power of eyes to “hurt” or “tangle” or charm, or not, is such that a reference to Renaissance fascination seems quite justified. Dusinger waits for Rosalind to say “Know yourself” (3.5.58) to make the link: “Rosalind’s command would have been familiar to educated Elizabethans from many different sources. See 55n. [on flattering self-reflection]; Davies *Nosce Teipsum*; and 1.2.167n” (280)—that last reference being to the earlier moment in act 1, scene 2, with which we began.

There is nothing unusual about this comment, but unpacking it demonstrates just how much is packed in, how much of a specialized vocabulary, abbreviations, how much work pulling together references within and without the play is all contained in a single friendly footnote. There is a lot to make students and scholars alike feel accomplished, once they can decipher a footnote like this and reach the point where it feels familiar. Note also how this work is couched in historical terms: by writing about a “favourite Renaissance paradox”, Dusinger implies that *As You Like It*’s original audience and readers would have detected the glow of significance around “see yourself . . . know yourself” that Dusinger’s comments create in this edition. So by learning the modern method of Shakespearian annotation, and by following Dusinger’s comments around *As You Like It*, the final result is that we are closer to Shakespeare’s originally intended readers and listeners—so the thinking goes.

2. And we are not quite finished with the passage in its modern presentation. Below the commentary, in Arden editions, is a smaller space, in a smaller font, for textual notes. Two such notes appear for the passage in question:

167 your] your own *Rowe*2; our *Hanmer*

and then for “your judgement”

168 <sup>1</sup>your] our *Hanmer*

Now the notation becomes truly challenging for the uninitiated. The introduction provides the key: “the textual notes are designed to let readers know when the edited text diverges from the early edition(s) on which it is based” (xiv). The introduction continues:

The textual notes take a form that has been in use since the nineteenth century. This comprises, first: line reference, reading adopted in the text

and closing square bracket; then: abbreviated reference, in italic, to the earliest edition to adopt the accepted reading, italic semicolon and noteworthy alternative reading(s), each with abbreviated italic reference to its source. (xiv)

We can gather then that in the case of the two notes quoted above, we are looking purely at “noteworthy alternative reading(s)” — the lack of an italicized source of the bracketed word tells us that this word is what is in the Folio; the superscript 1 for the line 168 “your” identifies it as the first of the two in the line.

What also seems noteworthy is the extent to which this information stands passively at the bottom of the page in comparison with the non-textual comment. The abbreviations and compression make the comment challenging enough to follow, but it is hard to imagine another circumstance where one would carefully consult the textual notes except if one had a doubt about a particular word, an odd phrase, or, in a text that, unlike *As You Like It*, had two or more significant candidates for copy-text, to check in with what other texts did with that word. As a stream of information, it is clearly one entirely separate from the explanatory, associating, historicizing work of the commentary above. And the smaller font and position on the page likewise makes it clear what is more important than what: text first, then editorial comments, then textual apparatus.

3. In the eighteenth-century edition that I will turn to now, that hierarchy is inverted. Far from highlighting subtle networks of association in the text, William Warburton, whose comment I am using here, reads with a hair-trigger sensitivity to error and absurdity.<sup>7</sup> In the speech by Celia I quoted above he finds a blatant error, writing that makes no sense. For Warburton, Celia must mean that Orlando should listen to *her* judgment, see himself with *her* eyes and those of Rosalind. What does she know about his judgment, which has anyway led him to the brink of this catastrophe? It is her own judgment that she is expressing, and that she is urging him to heed. Here again is the comment by Celia in the form that it came to Warburton:

7. William Warburton (1698–1779) was Bishop of Gloucester, author of several theological monographs, friend and literary executor to Alexander Pope, and editor of Shakespeare, in an eight-volume edition of 1747. Warburton’s edition was followed within a year by a vicious satirical assault on its editorial practices (EDWARDS 1748). Its reputation hasn’t recovered much since then.



Young Gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years: you have seen cruel proof of this man's strength. If you saw your self with your eyes, or knew your self with your judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise.<sup>8</sup>

And here is Warburton's full note:

*If you saw your self with Y O U R eyes, or knew your self with Y O U R judgment,] Absurd! The sense requires that we should read, O U R eyes, and O U R judgment. The argument is, Your spirits are too bold, and therefore your judgment deceives you; but did you see and know your self with our more impartial judgment you would forbear. (WARBURTON 1747, 2:303)<sup>9</sup>*

When I first came upon this comment I was not, to be sure, reading Warburton's own edition—I was reading Henry Howard Furness's variorum edition of 1890, readily accessible on many library shelves as well as, with a bit of looking, on Google Books. The comment struck me as bracingly strange. It seemed wrong and unnecessary, indeed, as palpably absurd as Warburton seemed to feel the unemended text to be. It seemed like a distortion within Warburton comparable to a mistake of perspective for a viewer—looking at a large unfamiliar space, for example—that can be readily and permanently corrected by either exploring the space or explaining to the viewer his mistake. And indeed, to the first editor to comment next on the same passage, Samuel Johnson, Warburton seemed to be making a big something out of nothing. Johnson's edition quotes and addresses Warburton

8. Warburton's copy-text, reproduced here, was THEOBALD 1733, 2:197. Interestingly, in his later edition of 1740, Theobald kept this passage the same, except for an added "own" before "eyes", as in "If you saw your self with your own eyes . . ." (2:274). For the record, the Folio text is the following: "Yong Gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your yeares: you haue seene cruell prooffe of this mans strength, if you saw your selfe with your eies, or knew your selfe with your iudgment, the feare of your aduenture would counsel you to a more equall enterprise". This reproduced from HINMAN 1968, TLN 336–42.
9. Warburton's emendation was first made by Thomas HANMER in his six-volume edition of 1743–44, but Warburton does not acknowledge this; this explains why Hanmer is cited in Dusinger's textual note, and not Warburton. The full title of Warburton's edition is worth quoting for its confidence and ambition: *The Genuine Text (collated with all former Editions, and then corrected and emended) is here settled: Being restored from the Blunders of the first Editors, and the Interpolations of the two Last . . .*

directly: “I cannot find the absurdity of the present reading”. He continues, “*If you were not blinded and intoxicated*”—and momentarily we wonder: accusations leveled at Warburton? But no—“*blinded and intoxicated*” says the princess, *with the spirit of enterprise, if you could use your own eyes to see [sic], or your own judgment to know yourself, the fear of your adventure would counsel you*” (JOHNSON 1765, 2:16).<sup>10</sup> “Your own eyes” and “your own judgment” says his revoicing of Celia, the “own”s making it abundantly clear that it is Orlando’s sight and judgment she is speaking of.

Though Samuel Johnson was much less overtly hostile than Warburton’s satirist, Thomas Edwards, this example does fit squarely with the assessment of Warburton’s editing that Johnson makes in the introduction to his edition:

The original and predominant error of his commentary is an acquiescence in his first thoughts; that precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labor only can perform, by penetrating the bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the author more profundity of meaning, than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. (1:l:iii)

This seems to sum up the situation with the Celia comment as clearly as anyone might need. And yet, returning to Furness, one sees that in spite of Johnson’s clear-headedness, editors and commentators continued to debate Warburton’s proposition for a hundred years after he made it. This is what I am calling a “dead crux”, in the sense that no one is debating Warburton’s suggested emendation any more, and since Warburton wasn’t the first editor to suggest it, he doesn’t even appear in the fine print of the Arden3 textual apparatus we examined above. But I also see it as fascinating and rather miraculous—that this editor was able to propagate over a century a reading which even shortly after he had made it was already deemed absurd. To me, it is a fascinatingly paradoxical phenomenon to be placed next to Dusinberre’s Renaissance fascination with the paradox of self-vision and self-knowledge, a phenomenon charted across editions, diachronically, in contrast with the dual-synchronic network of Dusinberre: one within *As You Like It*, and also across contemporary texts by Shakespeare and others.

10. Johnson reproduces Warburton’s comment in full before his response.

4. But to get to how Warburton's dead crux allowed me to break a logjam in my own thinking about *As You Like It*, I have to go through one more step, and the critic that inspired me to consider the border between characters' voices and the voices of commentators as more porous than it usually appears. That critic is Lawrence Lipking, in an essay called "The Marginal Gloss", published in 1979. The essay distinguishes between two broad types of printed commentary in the history of the edited text: the marginal gloss, and marginalia. As it turns out, history of the book scholarship, which has flowered in the years since 1979, has effectively negated using "marginalia" in the way Lipking suggests it be used, but the distinction is still an interesting one. Lipking writes of two fundamental genres of explanatory commentary, or "frame[s] of mind" (612), as having entirely different intentions relative to the text they frame. Older, in terms of printed editions, is the marginal gloss: "however dense the text, the gloss holds out the hope that all perplexities can be explained and all obliquities reduced to order" (613). This includes both local knots of meaning and the relationship of parts to the whole, which marginal glosses affirm, either by directing us to other places in the text, or by creating a logical sequence through a series of subheadings. Marginalia are altogether different: Lipking believes that Poe was the first to publish his own, and suggests that they would not have been published without the Romantic encouragement of "a taste for fragments and impulses, the suggestive part, rather than the whole"—the term itself is Coleridge's coinage (612).<sup>11</sup> Rather than orienting, marginalia seeks disorientation, "offers the reader a kind of puzzle . . . a fragmentary clue to buried possibilities of meaning . . . the more outrageous the clue, the better the puzzle"—and by "deciphering the apparent nonsense of the marginalia, we perform the act of reading" (609).

If we review the two comments examined in this essay so far, Lipking's distinction can both clarify their differences and further complicate matters. At first glance, Warburton would seem to be a glossator par excellence, completely focused on explaining and illuminating the text. But as Johnson points out, Warburton's readiness simply to rewrite Shakespeare's text when he finds even a hint of obscurity ends up creating more confusion and obscurity than was there in the first place—so he ends up looking more like weird marginalia in this history of Shakespeare editing than the clarifying presence he envisioned for himself. And likewise, Dusinger might at first look like a writer of marginalia, offering with her *Nosce Teipsum* note "a fragmentary clue to buried possibilities of meaning". But sufficiently

11. This history is confirmed in JACKSON 2001, 7.

decoded, we can see how she almost certainly sees herself as a glossator, clarifying the historical weight of “know thyself” for Elizabethans, as well as alerting readers to a network of considerations of this idea within the play. So Lipking’s distinction is interesting but slippery.

Things reach the apex of productive slipperiness when Lipking turns to James Joyce, specifically the *Storiella as She Is Syung* portion of the “Night Lessons” chapter of Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*. Here a reader finds a central text surrounded on two sides by child glossators, and footnoted by a third below. On one side, writing hyper-scholarly glosses, is Shaun, —“HE CAN EXPLAIN IT ALL. CONSISTENTLY RELEVANT, HIS COMMENTS DEMONSTRATE THAT HE UNDERSTANDS THE TEXT MUCH BETTER THAN IT KNOWS ITSELF” (633). On the other side is Shem, writing not explanatory glosses but poetic and playful marginalia. At the bottom of the page is Issy, for whom the text is all about the sex. And Lipking suggests the following: “The relation of text to footnote, Joyce notes, is basically chauvinistic; the wisdom of the earthdaughter looks up to the power of the übermench” (634, footnote, of course). As the episode goes on, these relations begin to break down, until

As *Storiella* nears its close, light dies before its uncreating word; the page literally begins to disintegrate before our eyes.

[ . . ]

Suddenly the scholarly apparatus has disappeared—no gloss, no marginalia, no notes. Or rather, no text. For now the text belongs to the children; they have come in from the margins, and collaborated on a letter of their own; now *they* mean too. (636–37)

Lipking reads in Joyce a time-lapse film of editions and editorial approaches flourishing, decaying, changing, the way we might start to see things if we could free ourselves from our temporal situatedness, from our scholarly and editorial habits of mind. Joyce, as Lipking reads him, sees “main text” and various approaches to commenting upon it as elements with their own characters, genders, relative positions of power, engaged in struggle and flux that can supersede editorial principles and intentions. This is to say, *Storiella* presents an allegory of textual dynamics that reveals the potential for metamorphosis and historical change on the edited page. It suggests the extent to which roles might change: serious scholarship slips into parody; poetic and provocative becomes merely perplexing; editors and authors switch positions or their roles become indistinguishably mixed. And this,

at last, sets all the groundwork for the way Warburton started to make sense of things to me.

5. In her pathbreaking study, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (1975), Juliet Dusinberre argued that Rosalind, in comparison with other Shakespearean heroines, is often emphatically feminine: she is “all vivacity, spirit, speed, susceptibility and fancy” (251). The reason Dusinberre posits for this concerns theatrical illusion: in order for Rosalind to work as Ganymede for great stretches of the play, and as a boy actor playing Rosalind-playing-Ganymede-playing-Rosalind, she must be *written* in sufficiently feminine fashion for the illusion to hold. With male actors and limited resources of disguise, she argues, the language had to be able to carry a sense of gender (252). Analysis of *As You Like It* has usually focused on genre, on the play’s treatment of pastoral convention. In the broad discussion of Shakespeare’s comedies and their treatment of gender, the new historicism found that *As You Like It*, like other comedies, ended up containing through the patriarchal structure of marriage whatever social and erotic energies it unleashed.<sup>12</sup> Dusinberre’s argument for a feminist Shakespeare, as in a Shakespeare that breaks with the prejudices of the time and considers both sexes potential equals, has not lately been in favor.<sup>13</sup>

With Warburton’s comment as marginal provocation, I would like to introduce a different way of ordering the elements of the play that are in tension. At least as important as its loosening and reshuffling of gender roles is its exploration of pastoral convention which, many critics have observed, is continually in this play subject to “critical wit” (ALPERS 1996, 131). Frequently that critical wit, which can also be stolid rationalism or even-tempered calculation, appears in the play in opposition to a more fanciful frame of mind. Many critics see a similar tension in pastoral itself, between the fantasy of a “golden” or prelapsarian world and the fallen present, or between “harder” and “softer” views within pastoral. These opposing points of view can be mapped right onto the “country and the city”, or rather, to keep the positioning consistent, the city and the country, and thence into materialism and idealism.<sup>14</sup> They can be mapped onto gen-

12. E.g., “if *As You Like It* is a vehicle for Rosalind’s exuberance, it is also a structure for her containment” (MONTROSE 1981, 52).

13. For a history of the disillusionment with Shakespeare as a vehicle for feminism, see RACKIN 2009, 49–60, esp. 54.

14. See WILLIAMS 1973. Alan Sinfield, following Williams, and arguing for the “unfinished business” of cultural materialism, finds Alpers giving in to idealism

ders too, as in the feminine qualities of “susceptibility” and “fancy” that Dusinberre sees in Rosalind. But in this early moment in the play, when we are still in the demesne of the usurping, tyrannical duke, there is a curious precursor to the appropriations and reversals of gender positions, social positions, idealizing and skeptical casts of thought, that will become so prominent once the characters have retired or fled to Arden.

Paul Alpers argues that the skeptical voices in *As You Like It*, so expanded and deepened by Shakespeare relative to his source in Lodge’s *Rosalynde*, do not finally demolish what is appealing about pastoral as it appears here (ALPERS 1996, 132–34).<sup>15</sup> The moment around Celia’s speech, with Warburton’s help, can be seen as an early example of how this might go, how a skeptical point of view might run into its match, and this happens through a reversal of gendered speech that presages the reversals that are to come. William Warburton in his protestations of absurdity sounds like a recognizable, recognizably male voice of dogged rationalism, none too witty, in this case—more Duke Frederick than Jaques. As Warburton declares the Folio version of Celia’s speech to be absurd, other aspects of the scene ironically undermine him: Celia, however she deploys her pronouns, is wrong about Orlando, but then, it isn’t clear whether Celia and Rosalind’s initial address to Orlando matters semantically much at all—the point is to get to talk to him and to inspect him more closely, and as will become clear momentarily, their evaluation is as much erotic as sporting, potentially marital as martial.

To their skeptical and rational view that cuts rapidly to the sense of things, Orlando returns a mysticizing speech, all the more striking since up until this point in the play, and from his first moments on stage, he has been all about piercing the habitual acceptance of his unjust circumstances and appealing rationally for what is rightfully his. There is nothing of that Orlando in his answer: he does not answer the judgment of the women on

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despite what seems to me extraordinary critical self-consciousness. Sinfield finds the whole enterprise of “literary history” to be deeply misguided (SINFIELD 2006, 31–39).

15. In brief, Shakespeare’s major additions and changes to Thomas Lodge’s *Rosalynde* include the following: Jaques and Touchstone are innovations, and greatly expand the satirical material in the story, while the skeptical, searing, and satiric qualities of Rosalind vastly expand on a few hints in *Rosalynde*’s reproaches to Montanus. At the same time the mystical and magical elements of the story are heightened—most prominently in the treatment of the transformation of Oliver and his subsequent love affair with Celia. For a modern edition of Lodge, see KNOWLES 1977, 382–475.

its terms (“Actually I’ve had a lot of experience wrestling farm hands that my brother forces me to cavort with—I’m really pretty good—you’ll see!”), but on entirely different terms. In Dusinger’s version, we read:

I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts, wherein I confess me much guilty to deny so fair and excellent ladies anything. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial, wherein if I be foiled there is but one shamed that was never gracious, if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing. Only in the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty. (175–84)

Orlando has no use for their “hard thoughts”, or for their prudent and reasoned assessment of his chances against the duke’s champion, or his chances of getting away with his reputation untarnished. Rather he wants their unskeptical and “fair eyes and gentle wishes” as he takes on a “trial” the existential and world-altering quality of which his rhetoric emphasizes and expands even as it is palpably loose with the facts (see what Oliver says about him at the end of the previous scene for confirmation of how far he exaggerates here). Nonetheless, the speech is highly effective: before it, the prudence and skepticism of the cousins dissolve and they give him the feminine encouragement he has requested. If we see the scene as a clash between these two points of view, between rational analysis and that which dissolves and upends it, Warburton and even Johnson begin to look like comic extensions of the rational view. One toys with the notion of Warburton interceding in the scene, urging Celia to step aside while he clarifies what she *means to say* (and if he’d been allowed to say this, perhaps the silly young man would have listened). This extension, this carrying a thread of thinking to a comic breaking point, is something that the play does more and more as it develops, and the extension and intensification of critical reasoning takes place most spectacularly in the jubilantly masculine version of *Rosalind*.<sup>16</sup>

Editors and commentators do not like to consider themselves as actors or characters in the scene of the fictions they edit. This is a fundamental category error: Shakespeare is not Joyce, is not Pope with his Scrib-

16. I explore *Rosalind*, Shakespeare’s as well as Spenser’s and Lodge’s, at much greater length in a book manuscript in progress, entitled *What Rosalind Likes: Elizabethan Poetic Evaluation*.

lerus, is not even Johnson with his marginalia or Spenser with the possibly self-fabricated E.K. There is a bright line between what editors say about Shakespeare and what Shakespeare, however complicatedly and spread across however many contradictory folios and quartos, says. And yet this moment in *As You Like It* seems one where the dynamics of the scene in question anticipate, provoke, and thus partially envelop the commentary that surrounds it. And this goes both ways: by voicing a more extreme, hyper-rational version of the voice of one character, Warburton highlights the play's own interest in taking this point of view to extremes. His distortion of the text anticipates the distortion, indeed, the violence that will be on display when Rosalind takes this as far as it can be taken, as she reads the love letter from the unfortunate Phoebe in act 4, scene 3.

6. For a last consideration of the relationship of text and commentary, I want to follow Dusinberre's gestures toward *Troilus and Cressida*, just after the reference to self-knowledge that she cites. In this scene, Ulysses is laying a trap for Achilles, and after an allusion to the paradox of self-seeing that is rebuffed by Achilles as a boring commonplace, Ulysses accordingly raises his game:

I do not strain at the position—  
 It is familiar— but at the author's drift,  
 Who in his circumstance expressly proves  
 That no man is the lord of anything,  
 Though in and of him there be much consisting,  
 Till he communicate his parts to others;  
 Nor doth he of himself know them for aught  
 Till he behold them formed in th'applause  
 Where they're extended— who, like an arch, reverbrate  
 The voice again, or, like a gate of steel  
 Fronting the sun, receives and renders back  
 His figure and his heat. I was much rapt in this,  
 And apprehended here immediately  
 Th'unknown Ajax. (3.3.113–26 in BEVINGTON 1998)

The two metaphors Ulysses gives in quick succession take on more significance in light of the argument of this essay: the “arch” that reverberates the voice, and “the gate of steel” that “receives and renders back” the image and heat of the sun. Lipking's survey of the history of glossing and marginalia tends to make one alert to the shifting relationships of gloss and text, and



to the fact that they sometimes together demand holistic aesthetic analysis—this was certainly the case with Coleridge, who wrote his own glosses, or Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*, and various other postmodern texts where the margins are grabbed up and put to use before an editor ever arrives on the scene. The notes and glosses in a Shakespeare edition—Johnson, Furness, Dusinberre—can be seen as exactly the sort of reflective, re-rendering surfaces Ulysses describes. By “receiving and rendering back” they set off waves of association, amplifying, as Lipking describes it, “wayward . . . traces” that “spring up spontaneously around a text unaware of their presence” (612). We can go as far as Ulysses, if we like, and suggest that Shakespeare is indeed nothing without such echoic, reflective structures; we can say that all the power of the text is in reflection; but we can also say that all the power is in the sun, and in the voice, and that reflection merely subserviently propagates what would find other media for propagation in its absence.

But Ulysses’ point, for Shakespeare editing, remains for me both irrefutable and little-acknowledged. Shakespeare editions powerfully shape the plays they edit, suggest the tone of their speeches, scenes, arguments, mediate our sense of their complexity, obscurity, and clarity. Shakespeare editors whether they like it or not extend and mediate the plays; their voices take a place in an ever-expanding echo-chamber of voices that move within and without the loose borders of “Shakespeare’s text”. No matter how professional, how consistent, and how much based in sound, rational principles, editors participate aesthetically in the plays they edit. To my mind, we would all be better off if there were wider acceptance of this, as well as a greater commitment to the possibilities it implies. We would also be better off if more editors and more publishers accepted as a duty not just the providing of clarifying, making-it-easier editions, as well as scholarly, making-us-feel-smart editions, but also genuinely experimental, making-it-strange editions, as is so often the case in Shakespearean productions. Directors know that they have to get audiences to see and listen to well-known plays afresh, in order for the plays to have the impact they can and should have, in order for them to matter as living works of art. This doesn’t seem to be an editorial principle anywhere that I can find. It should be.

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# Bédier's Contribution to the Accomplishment of Stemmatic Method

An Italian Perspective<sup>1</sup>

*Paolo Trovato*

## ABSTRACT

*This paper is concerned with an aspects of Bédier's legacy, possibly the least known in the English-speaking world. Bédier's works of 1913 and 1928–29 did not just create a schism in the apparently peaceful context of textual scholarship: through his statements, critical editions produced with a single copy-text regained the academic prestige that Gaston Paris' adaptations of stemmatic method had taken away from them. Since then, Bédier's objections have also forced meticulous textual critics to rethink their editorial practice: though retaining the method of shared errors, such scholars (often scarcely known outside Italy) have brought important progress in the methods of textual criticism.*

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As a reaction against purely mechanical rules for recovering the original of a text from revised and re-revised manuscripts his [i.e. Bédier's] protest was wholesome: no one today would wish or dare to revive the system of Wendelin Foerster in editing the works of Chrétien de Troyes. But to find in this a justification for neglecting intensive comparative study of manuscripts, and for uniformly renouncing efforts to arrive closer than one or another of those manuscripts to the text of the original author, is another matter. Bédier has not, as some may have thought, hewn down at the root the 'manuscript tree'; he did, however, effectively prune from it a number of diseased offshoots. (ARMSTRONG et al. 1939, 412)

1. A less concise version of this paper, delivered to the International Conference of the Society for Textual Scholarship (Seattle, March 20–22 2014), is found in TROVATO 2014, (chapter 4, "Bédier's schism").

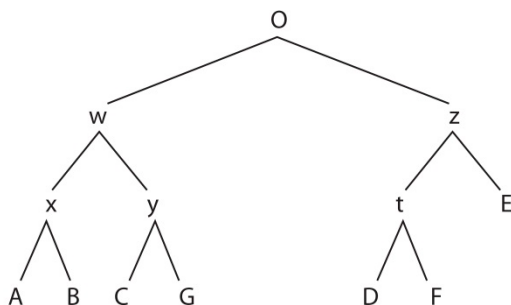
1. Between the late 1920s and early 1930s, genealogical criticism seemed to be faring very well. In 1927 Maas had reformulated with remarkable effectiveness most of the ground principles of the method in a set of brief and clear rules. In 1934, Pasquali had boldly expanded the field of philological inquiry to areas Maas had excluded, but which some Italianists investigated in depth, such as authorial variants (MAAS 1958 [1927]; PASQUALI 1952 [1934]). However, as early as 1913 and, more effectively, in 1928, one of the most renowned French scholars, Joseph Bédier (Paris, 1864–Le Grand-Serre, 1938) expressed a number of often radical perplexities regarding the genealogical-reconstructive method developed by German scholars; which, incidentally, was the method used by his mentor Gaston Paris, as well as by dozens of editors who followed in Paris's wake, albeit sometimes in a naïve and excessively mechanical way.

Although today, a century later, we can prove that Bédier's principal objections were unfounded, the prestige of the great scholar and his extraordinary gift for argumentation brought on an irremediable schism in the relatively peaceful world of scholarly editors. While classicists and Italian Romance philologists remained essentially unaffected, a number of scholars all over the world (francophone Romance philologists, Biblical philologists, etc.) rejected the common-error method.

Nevertheless, the questions raised by Bédier, which are intimately connected to the methodological refinements introduced from 1928 to the present day to refute his criticism, remain of the highest interest.

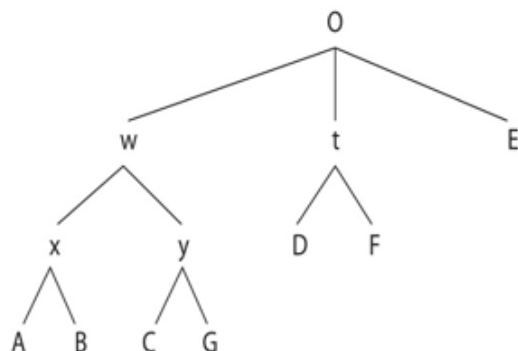
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In 1890, Bédier published, in the manner of Gaston Paris, a short poem by Jean Renart, the *Lai de l'ombre*. The two-branched stemma he proposed,



(BÉDIER 1890)

was immediately rejected by Paris in an overall very laudatory review, where he proposed, however, a three-branched stemma:



(PARIS 1890).

The fact that two competent editors employing the same method—although sometimes in ways we would today call naïve—ended up reconstructing two different stemmata, with all the implications that the shape of a stemma has for the reconstruction of a text, led Bédier to radically rethink his approach (BÉDIER 1913; BÉDIER 1928–1929).

The strongest argument against the genealogical method, known as Bédier’s Paradox, is the fact that, out of 110 stemmata of French manuscript traditions Bédier examined, 105 were two-branched. In his own words:

Tous sont pareils, ou du moins 105 sur 110 sont pareils. D’où une loi, qui peut s’exprimer ainsi: dans la flore philologique, il n’y a d’arbres que d’une seule essence: toujours le tronc s’en divise en deux branches maîtresses, et en deux seulement [. . .]. Tout philologue qui publie un texte après étude des copies diversement altérées que nous en avons, arrive fatalement à se persuader que ces copies, si nombreuses qu’elles puissent être, ont dérivé de l’original par l’intermédiaire de deux copies perdues, *w* et *z*, et de ces deux-là seulement [. . .]. Un arbre bifide n’a rien d’étrange, mais un bosquet d’arbres bifides, un bois, une forêt? *Silva portentosa*” (BÉDIER 1928–1929, 11–12).

At any rate, Bédier’s conclusion was that those trees were not originally two-branched, but, as we shall see more clearly below, had been reduced to that condition, albeit unconsciously, by philologists themselves: “Nos

arbres bifides n'ont pas tous poussé tels quels; ce sont, pour la plupart, des arbres ébranchés . . ." (BÉDIER 1928–1929, 12–13).

2. One of Bédier's most cutting objections to Gaston Paris's method is the above-mentioned accusation of, so to speak, therapeutic or rather philological excess. Philologists, Bédier argued, hunted for alleged conjunctive errors until they obtained a two-branched tree. This allowed them, by a back door, to introduce the subjectivity and freedom to choose between competing readings that the iron rule of majority had driven out the door. In sum, Bédier sees the prevalence of two-branched stemmata as a mainly ideological, or even psychological problem.

Actually, Bédier's own brilliant essay of 1928 lends itself to (broadly speaking) a psychoanalytical interpretation. It is indeed an out-and-out act of rebellion against his academic father, Gaston Paris, with the usual attending self-censorship and denial. One only needs to consider that Bédier constantly refers to Paris's method as "la méthode de Lachmann" [Lachmann's method]—a designation that was to become immensely popular in the twentieth century and is still found in many textual criticism manuals. Now—as Sebastiano Timpanaro guessed in the 1960s and a young but already accomplished scholar, Giovanni Fiesoli, proved in 2000—Lachmann *never* employed the common-error method, in any of the fields of study he worked in, whether in his essays on classical philology, on Biblical philology, or on Germanistics (TIMPANARO 2005 [1963]; FIESOLI 2000).

But let us return to Bédier's contribution to perfecting the genealogical method. A good starting point is an observation by Gianfranco Contini (Domodossola, 1912–1990), one of the greatest disciples of the French master and one of the main exponents of so-called Neo-Lachmannian philology (which could be roughly characterized as a method that remains faithful to the common-error method, but after taking Bédier's objections into account). In an essay of 1970, "La vita francese di Sant'Alessio e l'arte di pubblicare i testi antichi" [The French life of St. Alexis and the art of publishing ancient texts], whose title is already an evident homage to Bédier, Contini remarks that "to be Lachmannian today, it is indispensable to have gone through an Anti-Lachmannian apprenticeship (that is, Bédier) and a Post-Lachmannian experience (that is, at least in classical philology, Pasquali)" (CONTINI 1992, 68, now in CONTINI 2007, II, 958).<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter, Contini acknowledges "the incomparable contribution

2. On Contini, see ITALIA 2013.

of Bédier's objections to the new Lachmannism" (CONTINI 1992, 74, now in CONTINI 2007, II, 963).

\* \* \* \*

In my handbook of textual criticism, I briefly discuss the beneficial effect of Bédier's critique of the reconstructive excesses of the early generations of Romance philologists as regards the language of texts, such as, for example, Paris himself's attempt, in his *Extraits de la Chanson de Roland*, to translate into Francien the Oxford *Roland*, which is in Anglo-Norman (TROVATO 2014, chapter 5).<sup>3</sup>

As regards textual substance, Rajna's position in an essay of the same year, 1929, is noteworthy. After carefully considering Bédier's objections, Rajna reasserts his trust in the reconstructive method ("I still find the contested method to be good"), but frankly admits that the method is of uncertain effectiveness when applied to *mixed*, that is, contaminated traditions:

We have paid too little attention to perturbing factors, such as to make the system inapplicable in a great number of cases, and we have made the serious mistake of proceeding in the same manner under very different conditions [. . .]. In mixed transmission [. . .], even when genetic relationships exist between several individuals of a lineage, these relationships become so uncertain that we should give up the notion of identifying them, and the confidence that we can use them to reconstruct the text with procedures *pour ainsi dire mathématiques*, as Paris thought he could (RAJNA 1929, 50).

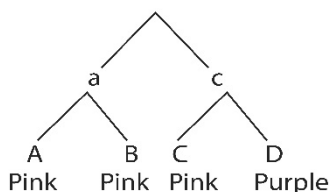
In fact, after Bédier's objections to the practice of arbitrarily reconstructing texts, all of the most scrupulous Neo-Lachmannian editors, stemmatic conditions being equal, have been retaining the readings of the same base manuscript (It. *manoscritto base*) adopted for the language of the text, after the example of Occitanists. They thereby reduce recourse to the other branch(es) of the stemma to a minimum, that is, only to cases of errors in the witness adopted as the base manuscript.

Another innovation introduced under the spur of Bédier's objections is that for the majority principle to be applicable—and for having what, ever since Pasquali coined the expression, we call a "closed recension"—a three-branched stemma is not necessary. Given a two-branched stemma, it is not at all inevitable for each equally acceptable variant to be found

3. See also TROVATO 2013a.



in 50% of the surviving tradition, and thus to be equally probable. On the contrary, in a significant number of cases a majority is obtained, albeit a fractional one. In the following case, e.g., the majority in favor of the reading *pink* (versus *purple*) is overwhelming, even in the absence of three branches: 75% against 25%.<sup>4</sup>



In turn, Contini replied to two very momentous objections by Bédier, viz., that the prevalence of two-branched stemmata reveals an unconscious desire for freedom of choice, and that the discovery of new witnesses can alter the stemma and thus deeply modify the text. Every critical edition, Contini observed, is simply a “working hypothesis”, and the quality of results fatally depends on the quality of the documents available to the editor, which varies from one case to the other, but progressive approximation as increasingly adequate solutions are found, sometimes through the discovery of new witnesses, is a typical scientific approach (CONTINI 1992, 32–33, 73–74, now in CONTINI 2007, I, 29–30; II, 963).

3. Other advancements we can credit Neo-Lachmannian philologists with are the result of their attempts to explain the so-called “Bédier’s Paradox”, that is, the overwhelming prevalence of two-branched stemmata in classical and Romance philology.

Sebastiano Timpanaro already provides a number of possible partial explanations for this phenomenon, including contamination and extrastemmatic contamination, in Appendix C of his fundamental book on Lachmann’s method (TIMPANARO 2005 [1963], 157–87).<sup>5</sup>

As to the issue of how the decimation of witnesses affects the so-called real tree over time, significant light has been shed on the question by two articles by the Hebrew specialist Michael Weitzman, who adopted an

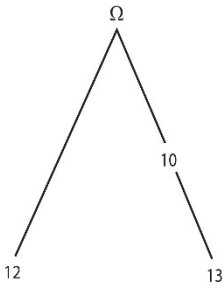
4. “Si deux familles s’opposent, on a le droit de choisir, mais si une famille s’accorde avec una partie de l’autre famille contre l’autre partie, le calcul de probabilité impose la leçon donnée par cet accord” (COLLOMP 1931, 68).
5. The Appendix is entitled *Stemmi bipartiti e perturbazioni della tradizione manoscritta* [Bipartite Stemmas and Disturbances of the Manuscript Tradition].

experimental approach to address other crucial problems of textual criticism, such as that of “open” traditions. In his 1982 essay, Weitzman adapts a “birth-and-death process” statistical model to virtual manuscript traditions of classical texts. The instructions he gave a computer to automatically generate genealogical trees were based on the hypothesis that texts composed in 500 AD and copied until 1500 could either disappear or spawn descendants. At the beginning of each manuscript tradition (or “population”), texts could only be copied, whereas at the end of the thousand-year-period in question (following the spread of printed books) they could only “die”. Furthermore: 1) the average size of a survived population—by analogy with various ancient Greek literary works—was set at 40 copies; 2) the average “date of birth” of exemplars had to be 1400, that is, the golden century of Humanism (as is the case for so many *recentiores* of classical literary works); 3) the rate of extinction was set at about 90%.

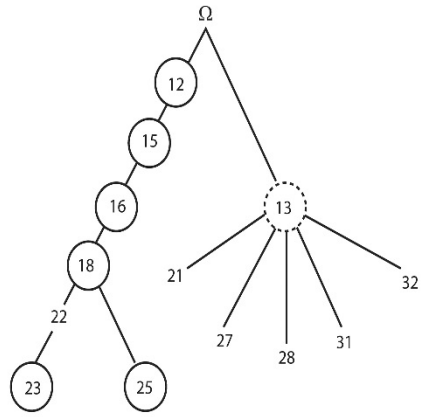
In 46 experiments, the computer generated 31 populations that became extinct early on, and 15 surviving populations, of various sizes and complexity. Two of these were composed, respectively, of only one and only two copies. The remaining 13, in Weitzman’s own words, had the following characteristics:

In all thirteen other experiments, all the manuscripts derived from a lost archetype, i.e. their latest common ancestor (now lost) was distinct from the original. In ten experiments, the tree split thence in two branches; in the other three, it had three branches. At stages later than the archetype, rather more three-way and occasional four-way splits occurred, though most splits were still into two branches only (WEITZMAN 1982, 56).

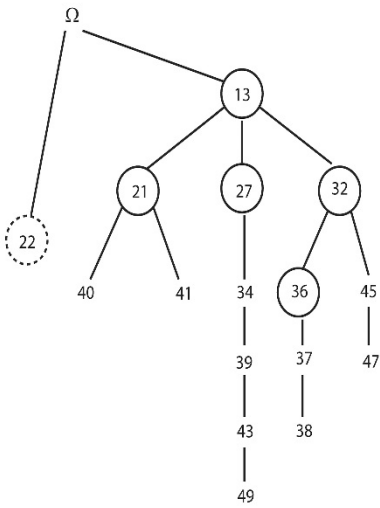
The author observes, very reasonably in my opinion, that the high rate of lost archetypes and two-branched stemmata is explained by the high rate (90%) of extinction of individual copies. The ability of Weitzman’s software program to monitor variations in a stemma over time by successive “photographic” frames, confirms indeed that the bottom reason for the prevalence of two-branched stemmata and the failure of the archetype to be preserved in Weitzman’s stemmas is the high mortality rate of witnesses (entrusted, in the real world, to fragile media, such as papyrus, parchment, and paper). Notably, Weitzman shows genealogical trees of a single experiment, which captures 4 different stages in transmission between the year 941 AD and the end of the process:



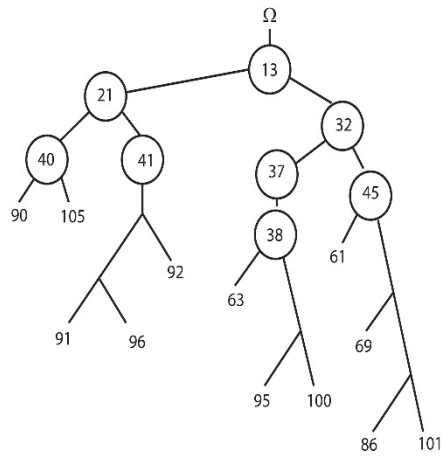
AD 941



AD 1144



AD 1287



End of process

In Weitzman's own words: "ω represents the lost original. All manuscripts alive at the stated time are shown, without any ring, except that four *codices descripti* in the final population ('sons' of 61 and 95, another 'son' of 95 and its own 'son') are omitted. Manuscripts fully ringed are dead; many other dead manuscripts are omitted. A dotted ring indicates a dying manuscript" (WEITZMAN 1982, 59). I corrected the last tree ("End of process") as per Weitzman's own indications (WEITZMAN 1987, 289).

I will now briefly comment on the four trees. Year 941: in spite of the disappearance of witnesses 1–9 and 11, a small two-branched tree lives on (witness 12 on one side, witnesses 10 and 13 on the other). Year 1144: the branch of 12—which had generated 15, 16, 18, 23, etc.—is almost wholly extinct, while the other branch (descended from 13) continues to thrive and reproduce. Year 1287: the first of the two branches of 941 (presumably, but not certainly, original, since transmission began in 500 AD) consists of a single, moribund copy (witness 22, a remote descendant of 12), while the other branch is still prospering, although 13 has by now become extinct. The two-branched stemma we find at the end of the process, with two sub-families per branch, is thus the result of an almost unbroken chain of transformations, including: 1) the extinction of one of the two primary branches in 941 AD; 2) the (gradual) shrinking of the most fortunate of the two initial families from 5 branches in 1144 to 3 in 1297 and 2 in 1500.

Differently from what Weitzman suggests at this point, this is a result not so much of scarce productivity of the upper levels (the real tree, which numbered 101 witnesses, was a lot larger!), but rather of loss, as he himself has noted above. We remark the disappearance, among other things, of:

- a) the first 9 copies (941 AD tree);
- b) a whole branch of the 941 tree (End of process);
- c) several witnesses of the other branch, including witness 13 (the manuscript all the surviving end-of-process witnesses descend from, and hence, if we were to trace their stemma, their archetype).

\* \* \* \*

Weitzman's longer 1987 essay elaborates on his earlier study. In regard to the trend to two-branched stemmata, Weitzmann points out that earlier attempts to neutralize Bédier's paradox through probability calculus were regarded as unsatisfactory by the proponents themselves, whereas his own mathematical model indicates a 77% probability for two-branched trees for Greek texts, and 71% for Latin texts. Weitzman persuasively concludes:

Here [. . .] the phenomena are held to follow naturally from features common to most traditions—the chronological spread of extinctions from the ever present risk of manuscript “death,” and the prevalence of archetypes and two-branched stemmata from the high extinction probability for the population arising from any manuscript [. . .]. A mathematical model, as Kleinlogel and others urge, is not the same as the intricate processes of history. It can, however, establish a reasoned presumption, in the place of sheer conjecture; the present model, for example, overturns Bédier’s assertion that the majority of stemmata cannot be two-branched (WEITZMAN 1987, 303).

\* \* \* \*

Vincenzo Guidi and I have recently attempted to reexamine Bédier’s Paradox as a whole and explain it in terms of probability calculus, in a study entitled *Sugli stemmi bipartiti. Decimazione, asimmetria e calcolo dell’eprobabilità* [On Two-Branched Stemmata. Decimation, Asymmetry, and Probability Calculus]. To begin with, after collecting the not too numerous stemmata of fifteenth and sixteenth-century printed books known to us (about fifteen), we noticed that almost half of them were three-branched. So we asked ourselves in what way these printed editions were different from manuscripts. The obvious answer is that, since every printed edition is printed in  $n$  copies, each edition has not one but  $n$  chances of surviving. This led us to hypothesize that the prevalence of two branches in the stemmata of classical, medieval and Renaissance manuscript traditions depends to the highest degree from the effects of decimation over time, which are more devastating for manuscripts than for printed editions (GUIDI and TROVATO 2004).

This empirical observation has been confirmed countless times. Here I limit myself to another example. The earliest printed tradition for the famous opera libretto *Il turco in Italia* (Romani and Rossini), studied by Fiamma Nicolodi and the present writer (27 editions preserved between 1814 and 1830), has a five-branched stemma (NICOLODI and TROVATO 2003). We could add that, since decimation is directly proportional to the time (=T) that has elapsed between the creation of the witnesses and the moment when textual critics try to reconstruct their text, textual scholars who study printed editions, but also relatively recent MSS traditions, are more likely than most classicists, or than Bédier (who worked on thirteenth and fourteenth century traditions), to run into or obtain stemmata with more than two branches.

\* \* \* \*

Our subsequent step was to use the stemma of some apparently complete printed traditions—with no witnesses marked with lower-case Greek or Latin letters, that is to say, lost and only logically assumed to have existed—as a possible *model* for a real tree, that is, the ensemble of all manuscript copies that ever existed of a given text. We then decided to decimate one of these model trees more or less severely, between 10 and 90%, and then calculated:

- a) the probability of a reduction of originally multi-branched real trees to two or single-branched stemmata;
- b) the probability—since philologists draw up their stemmata blindly, with whatever witnesses happen to have survived decimation—of assigning manuscripts belonging to the same (albeit luxuriant) branch of the real tree to different primary branches of the stemma. (This part, of course, was done by Vincenzo Guidi, a nuclear physicist and hence more experienced than I am in fairly complex calculations).

Assuming a not too slender three-branched real tree, formed of about thirty witnesses, and—as is very often the case with the stemmata of the most diverse works—more or less markedly asymmetrical, modest decimation rates (from 10 to 30%) do not result in very significant modifications. High decimation rates (70, 80, 90%), however, result in:

- a') a clear-cut increase in the probability (varying from case to case, but not inferior to 60% in the traditions Guidi and I studied) that the tree will lose some of its flimsier branches, turning into a two-branched stemma;
- b') a high probability (varying from case to case) that this two-branched stemma will be drawn up from what are actually descendants of a single branch (the more luxuriant one) of a multipartite real tree.

The prevalence of two-branched stemmata thus depends on the intensity of decimation, which, in its turn, depends on T, that is, as I said above, the time elapsed between the early transmission of a given text and the genealogical classification of its surviving copies.

4. While many philologists have overhastily espoused Bédier's positions, putting a “virtual ban on stemmatic studies” (DEMBOWSKY 1992–1993),

a number of scholars, from Greg to Maas, from the American Romanists of the “Chicago School” to Fourquet, Castellani, Timpanaro, Segre, Peri (Pflaum), Blecua, Reeve, Montanari and others, have denounced the limits of Bédier’s anti-Lachmannian arguments. As Segre observed regarding Bédier’s editions of the *Chanson de Roland*:

L'esprit de système ne pouvait fermer à la réalité les yeux d'un philologue averti comme l'était Bédier: il est absolument impossible qu'un copiste ne commette pas un certain nombre d'erreurs; et puisqu'il y a au moins un manuscrit interposé entre l'Archétype et O [viz., the famous Oxford manuscript], deux séries d'erreurs au moins doivent s'être superposées dans notre manuscrit [. . .]. Bédier 1938 reconnaît qu'il doit bien se trouver en O 142 *lapsus calami* et une dizaine d'erreurs (p. 161), puis il accepte les corrections d'autres éditeurs, ici deux (p. 179), ici douze (p. 189), là cinq (pp. 190–91), là quatre (pp. 231–32), et ainsi de suite, pour un total de 25 au moins, 35 au plus (p. 520) [. . .]. *Que ces concessions de Bédier soient réduites au minimum (leur nombre pourtant est déjà considérable) importe moins que le fait qu'elles ouvrent irrémédiablement une brèche dans le mur des positions de principe. Les copistes se trompent; il faut corriger les textes; la critique textuelle nous donne la méthode pour les corriger, souvent avec la plus grande probabilité d'atteindre l'original au plus près. Les concessions de Bédier impliquent tout cela. Et dès lors l'opposition manichéenne entre “interventionnistes” et “conservateurs” doit faire place à une discussion tranquille, cas par cas, sur la réalité effective de l'erreur* (SEGRE [1989] 2003, 11–12 note; my emphasis).

Nevertheless, the thesis that it is not possible to produce a satisfactory classification of the *Lai de l'ombre* has passed scrutiny. In the context of growing adhesion to Bédier’s conservatism, all the twentieth-century editions of the *Lai* limited themselves to reproducing, with slight changes, one or another of Bédier’s editions, sometimes stressing the higher degree of “scientificity” of the French master’s editing method.

Adrian Tudor, for example, observes:

The text was edited twice in the nineteenth century, by Francisque Michel and Achille Jubinal [. . .]. These editions seek an ‘authentic’ text, one which is made up from all extant manuscripts. The reconstruction of a hybrid text was no longer in fashion when Joseph Bédier published his edition of 1913. He attempted to conserve as much and correct as

little as possible, a principle generally adopted by scholars today (TUDOR 2004, 7).

Apart from the fact that Tudor appears to be scarcely informed about the editorial history of the *Lai de l'ombre* (the Michel editions of 1836 and the Jubinal edition of 1846, both earlier than Gaston Paris's methodological revolution, are respectively based on mss. A and F, and thus, one could say, Bédierian *ante litteram*; Bédier's "hybrid" edition of 1890 is strangely forgotten), his conclusion that Bédier's attempt "to conserve as much and correct as little as possible" is "a principle generally adopted by scholars today" is hardly disputable. Actually, editors of various nationalities—French, British, etc.—have shared the perception that editions à la *manière de Bédier*, which are often reticent about the reasons for the choice of the base MS, were extremely respectful of the historical reality of the text, in spite of the warnings of scholars such as Alberto Vàrvaro and Gianfranco Contini. Obviously alluding to the more recent Bédieriste edition of the *Lai*, as well as that of the *Roland*, Contini observes:

As to the radical freedom [of philologists], we can rest assured that no one will ever be able to destroy it. Bédier's skepticism of textual paleontology [i.e., nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions based on the common error method] led him to radically restrict its freedom by confining it to the edition of a single manuscript. However, since it was neither photographic nor diplomatic, but still interpretative, *within that same boundary he had confined it in he made it perform unheard-of orgies* (CONTINI 1992, 78, now in CONTINI 2007, II, 967; my emphasis).

Contini's most relevant objection against the Bédierism of Bédier's epigones is that Bédiérian editors are defenseless when their base manuscript confronts them with a reading that is not manifestly wrong, but which a comparison with other witnesses, and especially the detection of so-called diffraction, in presence or absence, would reveal it to be very probably not original, that is, a latent error:

The decisive objection against the myth of the unique manuscript is the following: besides easily emendable erroneous innovations, besides trivializations (*lectiones faciliores* in the case of several witnesses) that are corrigible [. . .] within tradition, there are also equally acceptable ones that are only detectable by collating the other witnesses, as these all show equally acceptable variants [. . .]. A multiple innovation in the



same variation place does not elude reason: why have all the manuscripts [. . .] innovated, and in a colorless manner to boot? Was this not because there was an objective obstacle in the original? (CONTINI 1992, 140, now in CONTINI 2007, I, 67).

In the late twentieth-century practice of so-called “Bédierist” editing, things do not seem to have improved. According to Dembowski,

many editions of important Old French texts do not offer any appreciable quantity of variants and are not, in fact, “critical” in any sense [. . .]. Unfortunately, many literary scholars do not realize that an acquaintance not only with a good manuscript but with the rest of the manuscript tradition is no outlandish “philological” requirement. This can be vital to the understanding of literary sense [. . .]. The scarcity of variants [*viz.* in Roques’s edition of Chrétien de Troyes] does present serious problems not only for text-minded philologists but also for the literary scholars who thereby remain unaware that they are studying the practices of the good but doubtless interventionist scribe Guiot and not the unmediated production of the poet Chrétien (DEMBOWSKI 1992–1993, 525–26)<sup>6</sup>.

\* \* \* \*

To expose the not exactly impeccable logic of many editions founded on a single MS regarded as the best, one only needs to point out that both Bédier’s 1913 and 1928 editions of the *Lai de l'ombre*, and those derived from it, by Orr, Limentani, Lecoy and others, draw on several different witnesses to fill in presumed lacunas in the *meilleur manuscrit*. In the absence of a general genealogical classification, however, it is impossible to know if these are truly lacunas or, on the contrary, interpolations. Sometimes it is even impossible for the reader to understand whether the text he or she is reading, which is in fact a “reconstructed” one, is actually in the real historical manuscript chosen as base witness. In particular, in his 1913 edition Bédier, following A, makes 34 corrections to the base text, including the filling in of what are presumed to be extensive lacunas, and in his 1929 edition he corrects E in 26 cases and suspends judgment in another 10 (BÉDIER 1928–1929, 98; BOURGAIN and VIELLIARD 2002, 17).

6. See also LEONARDI 2011, 9–12.

Reusing Leonardi's observations on recent editions of Arthurian prose novels, we could argue that the text offered by the editors of the *Lai de l'ombre*, including Bédier, "stands in an ambiguous and heterogeneous position, in an indistinct hinterland of the base MS" and "ends up oscillating between the conservation of the manuscript and the reconstruction of its model, without making up its mind for either of these two alternatives" (LEONARDI 2011, 17). Still in Leonardi's words, we could argue that "the editorial formula of adopting the base MS unless there are manifest errors *actually leads to a reconstructive edition, but without the application to this reconstruction of a method* capable of dealing with the dynamics of variants and account for them in the edition" (LEONARDI 2011, 26; my emphasis). The impression, however, is that even in French Romance studies—which are Bédierist by tradition, sometimes without even realizing it (as Frédéric Duval has noted)—the wind is changing.

An interest in editing methods alternative to Bédierism, and especially in a "lachmannisme modéré", is particularly evident, for example, in some recent French manuals or companions such as BOURGAIN and VIELLIARD (2002, 14–22, 40 ff.), and Duval, who goes as far as to argue:

La malaise tient à l'analyse des principes exposés dans les introductions. Repris de génération en génération, ils n'ont pas suivi l'évolution des pratiques, souvent moins nettement bédieriste que ce qui est affirmé [ . . . ]. L'insuffisance de la réflexion méthodologique conduit à revendiquer un pragmatisme qui n'est souvent que de façade. En effet, quelle que soit la configuration de la tradition textuelle, les éditeurs français ont tendance à suivre des règles identiques, alors qu'il pourraient se situer davantage par rapport à l'archétype en cas de tradition reserrée (DUVAL 2006, 149).

\* \* \* \*

In conclusion, let us briefly return to the *Lai de l'ombre*. In my opinion, the classification of the witnesses of this work does not pose the insurmountable problems lamented by Bédier, and taken for granted by his followers (TROVATO 2013b). One of the aspects of the problem I subjectively find most instructive is that, in spite of the profusion of alternative stemmata found in Bédier's 1928 study, the stemma which in my opinion is most likely to be correct (or, as Contini would put it, the most parsimonious working hypothesis about the surviving tradition) is radically different from all those that have been proposed so far, which are mostly abstract and more

or less baroque elaborations on the stemmata drawn up by Bédier and Paris in 1890, and are not founded on a real re-examination of tradition.

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# Book Reviews

*Edited by Heather Allen*

LESSER, ZACHARY, *'Hamlet' After Q1: An Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-8122-4661-2. Pp. 304. Hardbackback \$59.95.

In the field of Shakespeare studies an extraordinary amount of ink has been expended on the topic of the “bad quartos”: those short versions of a handful of plays, which vary—sometimes significantly—from their longer counterparts. Theories as to their origins have proliferated for more than two centuries. Are they stenographically transcribed texts, imperfectly copied down during performance? Have they been “memorially reconstructed” by bit part actors? Are they texts that have been cut down for performance? First drafts? Simplified versions created for specific audiences? No theory quite fits all the evidence—and certainly no theory commands universal agreement among scholars.

Enter, then, to the fray, Zachary Lesser. Lesser has established a very considerable reputation as a textual scholar in recent years, not least with his masterful study *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication: Readings in the English Book Trade* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). In his latest book, Lesser offers an analysis of one of the most famous of the “bad quartos”—the short text of *Hamlet* published in 1603. Its most notable variations from the received text are well known: the compressed nature of this first published quarto (known as Q1) has the effect of “speeding up” the play, drawing it generically closer to a conventional revenge tragedy; the queen acknowledges Claudius’s guilt and agrees to assist in his unmasking; a number of characters bear different names (Polonius becoming Corambis, for instance); and, most famously, perhaps, “To be, or not to be, that is the question” becomes “To be, or not to be, I there’s the point”.

Lesser adopts an approach to Q1 which is wholly different from that of all previous scholars. Where his predecessors have endlessly speculated as to the provenance of the short quarto, Lesser attends to its greater history—and to the significance of that history for our engagement with the text of *Hamlet* (however constituted). Lesser’s starting point is a very

simple—but often overlooked—fact: Q1 was not actually discovered until 1823. Its existence had been suspected, since the edition of *Hamlet* published in 1604/5 announced on its title page that it had been “Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie”, but, before 1823, no copy of Q1 had ever come to light. By focussing on Q1’s moment of discovery, rather than its moment of origin, Lesser brings a new perspective to the text. In his view, “the seemingly endless quest for the origins of Q1 has been part of why we have failed to grasp the significance of its history” (22–3). His analysis works forwards, investigating the impact that the discovery of Q1 had on Shakespearean textual studies in the nineteenth century and beyond, but it also works backwards, shedding new light on the relationship among the various texts of the play in their own time.

At the heart of Lesser’s book is a set of intelligent close analyses of a series of much debated moments in the text of *Hamlet*: the meaning of the phrase ‘country matters’ in Hamlet’s exchange with Ophelia just prior to the performance of *The Mousetrap*; the question of whether Gertrude’s “closet” is a bedroom or an antechamber; the meaning of the word “conscience” in the “To be, or not to be” soliloquy. In each case, Lesser demonstrates—fascinatingly—that these issues largely became editorial and analytical cruxes after the appearance of Q1 early in the nineteenth century. So these aspects of the text can be seen as something like retrospective creations from the appearance of the early text in a late period. Lesser’s exploration of these textual moments is shrewd, compelling and provocative. To take one instance: the presence of Gertrude’s bed in the closet scene in theatre and film productions of *Hamlet* is conventionally linked to the Oedipal reading of the play advanced by Freud’s biographer Ernest Jones early in the twentieth century. Lesser demonstrates, however, that reading the closet as a bed chamber has a much longer history—and that anxiety over this issue can in fact be traced back to the appearance of the stage direction “Enter the ghost in his night gowne” in Q1. Lesser offers intriguing suggestions as to why Q1 should specify a nightgown here, when the other texts do not.

The conclusion to Lesser’s book opens up his analysis to encompass a more general discussion of Shakespeare editing in the wake of the “New Textualist” movement of the 1990s. Lesser closely examines the Arden 3 edition of *Hamlet* (2006), edited by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, in some detail. The edition included a fully-edited text of Q1, offering it as an independent entity and, effectively, declining to present a definite theory as to the relationships among Q1, Q2 and the text of the First Folio. In this way, Thompson and Taylor broke with traditional editorial practice,

though Lesser feels that simply opting out of making editorial choices is not wholly the answer to the problem either. Thus, he calls for a significant rethinking of the way in which we conduct textual history and editorial practice. His own book points the way toward a productive new approach in these matters. *'Hamlet' After Q1* is an intellectual tour de force—lively, engaging and very convincing. It should be required reading for all Shakespeareans.

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LIVINGSTON, Michael and John K. Bollard, eds. *Owain Glyndŵr: A Casebook*. Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013. ISBN 978-0-85989-883-6. Pp. xvi + 619. Hardback £95.00; Paperback £25.00.

It would be impossible to do justice to what Michael Livingston and John K. Bollard have achieved with their *Owain Glyndŵr: A Casebook* in a review of any length. This book is an unprecedented and invaluable record—as comprehensive as could be contained within a single volume—of the rebellion of the Welsh leader Owain Glyndŵr (1357–9 to 1415) against Henry IV from 1400–1415 and its historical, literary, and popular legacy. This collection will be indispensable to those in a broad range of fields, from the expected (Celtic studies, fifteenth-century history and politics, Shakespearean studies, Anglo-Welsh relations) to the surprising (folklore, military history, the history of the English language). We are indebted to the editors and contributors of this volume for its comprehensiveness and accessibility, and this *Casebook* will undoubtedly remain the definitive collection of documents pertaining to Owain Glyndŵr for generations to come.

The *Casebook* contains 101 primary documents related to the life and rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr in the original languages with facing-page translations (6–255), textual notes (257–422), eleven critical essays on the rebellion and its textual afterlives (423–584), a chronology (1–4), and comprehensive bibliography (585–99). The sources themselves span three centuries (1370–1597), six languages (Middle English, Welsh, Anglo-Norman, Latin, French, and Early Modern English; with both poetry and prose represented in most), and a broader range of genres than this reviewer could tally: prophecies, praise poems, legal documents, land grants, royal proclamations, letters, rolls of parliament, chronicles, eyewitness accounts of battles, and genealogies, to name a representative sample. The accompany-

ing notes are extensive and helpful, and it is clear that great care was taken to make each document accessible to non-specialists: every note includes a list of manuscript sources, a general introduction, and line-by-line commentary that explain such intricacies as prophetic allusions, translation choices, geographical references, and features of poetic style. The notes also cross-reference other documents in the *Casebook* and include relevant photographs and images.

As Livingston explains in the Preface, “given the complexities inherent . . . it seems most helpful to present the sources collected here in something close to chronological order” (xiv). While readily acknowledging its perils, the editors’ decision to proceed chronologically has created a volume that provides an accessible overview of Glyndŵr’s life and legend while facilitating unprecedented comprehensiveness across the Anglo(Norman)/Welsh divide. While some readers (this reviewer is not one) might object to separating Part 1 of Adam of Usk’s *Chronicle* from Part 4 by one hundred pages and fifty intervening documents, the decision to arrange sources chronologically opens the door to moments of cross-cultural comparison which would not otherwise be possible. It is impossible to do the breadth of these sources justice; a few examples must suffice. On the same page of the *Casebook*, we find the opening line of a Welsh poem by Iolo Goch (#27), “Behold a world caused by English arrogance!” a few lines below another document, the Anglo-Norman *Rolls of Parliament* (#25), which coolly states that “no Englishman married to . . . any other Welshwoman since the rebellion of the said Owain, or who in future marries any Welshwoman, should be appointed to any office in Wales, or in the march of Wales” (71).

While this example is sympathetic to a Welsh perspective, the *Casebook* is evenhanded, a testament to its editors’ goal “to present a balanced (i.e., neither pro-Welsh or anti-Welsh) perspective” (xiv). Indeed, another benefit to arranging sources chronologically is that the striking contrast between the cool and calculated political rhetoric of *ex post facto* narrations of the rebellion (by both Welsh and English), and the very real terror (English) and urgency (Welsh) felt at the time of the revolt itself, is clearly evident. Thus while the rebellion was occurring, we can read English pleas from besieged castles—as in Jankyn Havard’s *Plea for Aid* (#33): “a siege has begun . . . that is a great peril for me and all that are within, for they have made their vow that they will have us all dead therein . . . we are running out of food and men—especially men” (85)—alongside Welsh texts (#27) which even in the fifteenth century remember a history of English oppression stretching back to the Anglo-Saxon period, praising Owain as “Lord who kills in the battle-bog / four hundred thousand of Horsa’s line” (73).



That the rebellion terrorized the English landscape—particularly the Marcher towns, which bore the brunt of the devastation—is reflected poignantly in Richard Kingston’s *Plea for Aid* (#37), a document which also showcases another of the *Casebook*’s strengths: its multilingualism. Kingston opens, in relatively formal and collected Anglo-Norman, “may it please your most gracious lordship to understand that to day, after noon [I was informed that] there had come into our country more than four hundred of the rebels of Owain Glyndŵr” (89), yet breaks into more personal—and frantic—Middle English several paragraphs later: “therefore, for God’s sake, think on your best friend, God, and thank Him, as He has deserved of you; and stop at nothing to come, whoever may advise you to the contrary” (91). As many of the volume’s contributors note, while “it is a kind of historical commonplace to disregard Owain Glyndŵr’s revolt today, to view the Welsh rebellion as an essentially inconsequential blip in the mainline history of England” (451), the sources included here make clear its real terror and political stakes.

The *Casebook*’s multilingualism lends richness to all its sources. Our understanding of the familiar Act III Scene I of Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV* (#101)—in which “*the Lady sings a Welsh song*” while Mortimer bewails his ignorance (255)—deepens when juxtaposed against the earlier *Poem of Warning to Owain Glyndŵr* (#90), which describes how, when Owain is about to be betrayed, “Iolo came in, for he was beyond suspicion, and he sang as a parable this warning *englyn* openly, lest the lord should suppose there was treachery in it, for though the lord could understand spoken Welsh, he did not understand our meter” (217). Likewise, a page juxtaposing Owain’s artfully crafted letters to potential allies in Scotland and Ireland (65, #22), written in elegant Anglo-Norman (Scotland) and Latin (Ireland), sheds new light on his status as a fifteenth-century statesman, far from an aimless spouter of “skimble skamble stuff” (252, Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV*, #101).

The *Casebook* is invaluable for its primary documents alone, yet offers even more in eleven critical essays. John K. Bollard’s “Owain Glyndŵr, *Princeps Wallie*” tackles the difficulties of Glyndŵr’s genealogy, while Gruffydd Aled Williams’s “Owain Glyndŵr: The Name” does the same for the question of the cognomen *Glyndŵr*. Two longer essays—Kelly DeVries’s “Owain Glyndŵr’s Way of War” and Michael Livingston’s “The Battle of Bryn Glas, 1402”—set the rebellion in its military-historical context. DeVries provides an overview of fifteenth-century warfare, enumerating the differences between Welsh and English battle tactics and leadership, and explains Glyndŵr’s initial success and eventual downfall. Livingston’s

gripping essay on the crucial Battle of Bryn Glas—in which Glyndŵr crushingly defeated a much larger English army under Sir Edmund Mortimer—carefully explores the battle site in order to explain its outcome using military, rather than moral, judgments; while his “An ‘Amazing’ Claim: *The Tripartite Indenture*” places Glyndŵr in his political context, exploring his proposed division of Britain into three confederated states as “a breathtaking step in his political efforts to stabilize an independent Wales” (491).

Helen Fulton addresses both Owain’s skill as a statesman and literary reputation in “Owain Glyndŵr and the Prophetic Tradition”, arguing that “rumors of Owain’s belief in prophecy have been greatly exaggerated” (475) and that he had, rather, “a keen awareness of the role prophecy played in the public imagination in conferring legitimacy on those who prepared to acknowledge its truth value” (485). The literature of the rebellion is also explored by Bollard’s “Owain Glyndŵr and the Poets”, a comprehensive survey of contemporary Welsh verse concerning Owain, while Williams’s substantial essay on “The Later Welsh Poetry Referencing Owain” traces his considerable literary afterlife. Alicia Marchant’s “A Narrative Approach to Chronicles” unpacks the partisanship and rhetorical sophistication of deceptively straightforward contemporary chronicles, while William Oram’s “What Did Shakespeare Make of Owain Glyndŵr?” surveys Glyndŵr’s perhaps most familiar characterization to the English-speaking world. Finally, Elissa R. Henken’s impressive “Owain Glyndŵr in Folklore and the Popular Imagination” traces collective Welsh memories of Glyndŵr’s rebellion through the twenty-first century.

While an enormous amount of work has gone into this *Casebook*, the volume itself makes clear how much exciting work on Owain Glyndŵr’s life, military legacy, and literary reputation remains to be done. This *Casebook* is, and will remain, the essential tool with which to do it.

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PHILLIPS, Kim M. *Before Orientalism: Asian Peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245–1510*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8122-4548-6. Pp. 314. \$79.95.

*Before Orientalism* addresses an important debate within cultural studies of East-West relations, specifically concerning the genre of travel writing during the medieval period (which Phillips limits to 1245–1510). Phillips

attempts to answer whether medieval travel writing on Asia can be considered Orientalist in nature, as per the theories laid out by Edward Said. Phillips argues that although it can surely be said that a type of medieval Orientalism did exist (especially in encounters between Christians and Muslims), medieval European representations of Asia were distinct, implying that Orientalist theories are not adequate here. It is essentially *before* Orientalism, hence the title.

The text is organized logically into two parts, making the whole of the argument easy to follow. The first part of the book is dedicated to theoretical, textual, and biographical information consisting of the following chapters: Chapter 1 “On Orientalism”, Chapter 2 “Travelers, Tales, Audiences,” and Chapter 3 “Travel Writing and the Making of Europe”. Some of the main authors and texts dealt with in *Before Orientalism* are John of Plano Carpini, *Ystoria Mongalorum* (1247), Marco Polo, *Le Divisament dou monde* (c. 1298), Ricold of Monte Croce, *Liber peregrinacionis* (c. 1301), John of Monte Corvino, *Letters* (c. 1305–06), Odoric of Pordenone, *Relatio* (c. 1330), Heteoum of Armenia, *La flor des estoires de la terre d’Orient* (1307), Niccolò dei Conti, *India Recognita* (1492), Ludovico de Varthema, *Itinerario* (1510), and *The Letter of Prester John*.

The time period that Phillips studies (1245–1510) is determined by the texts themselves: travel writing. One of the first and very important examples of travel writing in the medieval period, of someone that actually traveled to Asia is Carpini’s *Ystoria*, based on his journey of 1245 into Mongol territory. And all the works studied are either first-hand or dictated accounts of Europeans who either traveled or claimed to have traveled to Asia. Many of the books were the most widely disseminated and popular books of their time period. Given these factors, Phillips choice of texts, beyond being very extensive and complete, is very logical.

The second part of the text is divided into important themes in medieval traveler’s writings, with a chapter dedicated solely to each topic: Chapter 4 “Food and Foodways”, Chapter 5 “Femininities”, Chapter 6 “Sex”, Chapter 7 “Civility”, and Chapter 8 “Bodies”. Phillips also provides an afterword where she reiterates her arguments and conclusions, but also based on these, she posits a new branch of study called “precolonial studies”. She then closes her study modestly stating her hope that *Before Orientalism* has broken with traditional methods of studying the Medieval period that work only within a single literary tradition and which only focus on one language or culture; things that her text most certainly doesn’t do.

Phillip’s main argument is that Western perspectives in medieval encounters with the East were different from modern Orientalism because

medieval writers did not approach the East from the position of what would later become the supposed hegemonic European universal Self. That identification did not yet exist, nor had a colonialist impulse yet developed during that time period. Instead Phillips demonstrates throughout the book that medieval writers' representations of Asia are not only diverse but also contain moments of praise, recognition of oneself in the Other, curiosity, and a genuine desire to learn from the Other. Furthermore, in those moments where images of Asia could be mistaken for being Orientalist Phillips makes a worthy attempt, sometimes more convincingly than others, to discredit that idea by providing close readings of texts and thorough explanations of the historical context to show other possible motives behind that representation. For example, in her discussion of the medieval representation of food and eating habits of the Mongols (Ch. 4), Phillips shows that the repeated emphasis on Mongols going long periods of time without eating, and consuming vermin and 'filthy' animals when they did eat, confirmed an already established mindset towards the Mongols, the revered and feared invaders, as hardy and ferocious. The image, an interesting and complex mix of awe and disgust, worked as a warning to be wary of this tribe of people who, in that historical moment, could invade at any moment. Thus it did not function as a moralizing or civilizing trope.

It is this type of analysis that Phillips carries out in the entire book with great success. However, on some points, especially in relation to modern Orientalism, her approach seems narrow at times. Absent from her discussion of Said, for example, is his differentiation between *manifest* and *latent* Orientalisms. In her analysis of sex in medieval writing (Ch. 6), Phillips tends to only look at the topic in all its different manifestations through a binary lens: whether it is represented in a way that allows the Western writers to portray the East as inferior. What she doesn't talk about is how in modern Orientalism the East is not only seen as inferior but as often (sexually) desirable, and how that played symbolically into the Western psyche. Based on the common allegory of land/woman, in Orientalism there is created and justified at the same time in the subconscious the idea of conquering and possession of the desired sexual object/nation. When Phillips talks about the lack of desire to possess in medieval texts, she refers exclusively to Europe's inability to militarily possess colonies in the East. What about the fantasy or desire to possess land symbolically through the physical possession of Eastern women? How does that play out in medieval texts, if it existed, and how might it have carried over into modern forms of Orientalism?

Another criticism is that in arguing that all elements she investigates are pre-Orientalist, Phillips avoids the possibility that they are two things at the same time: pre-Orientalist *and* the beginning of Orientalist imaginings. In other words, she avoids talking about certain depictions as possibly being precursors to (the beginnings of) what would later become a more aggressive form of Orientalism. Instead of using the idea of medieval or “before Orientalism” as completely different from modern Orientalism, in certain cases it may be more productive to talk about “before Orientalism” as different, but also as the point from which modern Orientalism would grow. Aside from these small defects, *Before Orientalism* is an excellent study of medieval literary representation of Asia with well-researched argumentation that shows quite convincingly that what happens before modern Orientalism is truly a different phenomenon.

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## Notes on Contributors

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GEFFREY DAVIS is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Arkansas. His book project on modern and contemporary poetics is titled "Idiomaitcs: Between the Languages of Poetry and the Languages of Criticism". His first collection of poetry, *Revising the Storm*, won the A. Poulin, Jr. Poetry Prize and was published by BOA Editions in 2014.

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KATHERINE D. HARRIS (@triproftri on Twitter and <http://triproftri.wordpress.com>), an Associate Professor in the Department of English and

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PAUL J. HECHT is Associate Professor of English at Purdue University North Central. His essays have appeared in *Style*, *Spenser Studies*, and *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*. *Spenser in the Moment*, an essay collection coedited with J. B. Lethbridge, is forthcoming from Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. He is completing a monograph, *What Rosalind Likes*, on the Rosalinds of Spenser, Thomas Lodge, and William Shakespeare.

MATTHEW G. KIRSCHENBAUM is Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Maryland and Associate Director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH, an applied think-tank for the digital humanities). His first book, *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination*, was published by the MIT Press in 2008 and won the 2009 Richard J. Finneran Award from the Society for Textual Scholarship (STS), as well as other prizes. He is a 2011 Guggenheim Fellow. *Track Changes: A Literary History of Word Processing* is forthcoming from Harvard University Press in spring 2016.

EMILY LAUER is an Associate Professor of English at Suffolk County Community College on Long Island. She is also on the Northeast MLA Board of Directors in her capacity as President of the CAITY Caucus, representing Contingent and Adjunct Faculty, Independent scholars and faculty employed by Two-Year institutions. Professor Lauer has recently published a chapter in a book about young adult dystopian fiction, and an article about using different versions of Spider-Man in the composition classroom. She is currently co-editing a collection of essays about the Harry Potter generation with another City University of New York Graduate Center alum.

PAOLO TROVATO is a scholarly editor in the field of medieval and Renaissance Italian literature. Professor of the history of the Italian language at the University of Ferrara since 1994, he was a Fellow at the Harvard Center

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# The Society for Textual Scholarship

FOUNDED IN 1979, THE SOCIETY FOR TEXTUAL SCHOLARSHIP is devoted to providing a forum, in its biennial conferences and in its journal *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts, Interpretation* (formerly *Text*) for the discussion of the implications of current research in a variety of textual disciplines. The Society has also recently added a blog on its website and the option of smaller workshop conferences to be hosted by various institutes and universities during the years when the biennial conference does not take place. The 2012 conference at the University of Texas–Austin was organized by Matt Cohen and Coleman Hutchison. Steve Jones and Peter Shillingsburg served as organizers of the 2013 conference at Loyola University, Chicago. In 2014 the Society will be hosted by the University of Washington at Seattle. Jeffrey Knight and Geoffrey Turnovsky head up the organizing committee on behalf of the University of Washington and the Society. For future conference information, please see the Society's website

(<http://textualsociety.org>).

The Society is also now an Affiliated Member of the Modern Language Association, and hosts a session at the annual conference in January. Please consult the Society's website for announcements and additional calls for papers.

Topics subsumed under the Society's intellectual mission include: the discovery, enumeration, description, bibliographical and codicological analysis, editing, and annotation of texts in disciplines such as literature, history, musicology, biblical studies, philosophy, art history, legal history, history of science and technology, computer science, library science, lexicography, epigraphy, palaeography, cinema studies, theater, linguistics, as well as textual and literary theory. All of these fields of inquiry have been represented in the Society's conferences, sessions, workshops, and in its journal.

The Society's conferences encourage the exchange of ideas across disciplinary boundaries. While there are usually period- or author-centered

sessions, the plenary sessions address a general textual problem with contributions from speakers from various disciplines. Complementing the plenary sessions, STS members may also submit session proposals (for example, on specific topics or projects or on a theoretical problem).

At each biennial conference, the Fredson Bowers Prize is awarded for a distinguished essay in textual scholarship published in the previous two years. The 2011 Fredson Bowers Prize was awarded to Colbey Emmerson (Reid York College) for her 2007–2008 essay in *Florida Atlantic Comparative Studies* entitled “Mina Loy’s Design Flaws”. Alan Galey (University of Toronto) won the prize in 2013 for his 2012 essay in *Book History*, “The Enkindling Reciter: E-Books in the Bibliographical Imagination”.

The Society also confers the Finneran Award in recognition of the best edition or book about editorial theory and/or practice published in the English language during the preceding two calendar years. The 2011 Richard J. Finneran Award was presented at Penn State to Paul Eggert for his 2009 study devoted to editing and literary/artistic heritage, *Securing the Past. Conservation in Art, Architecture and Literature* (Cambridge University Press).

The Society offers an Executive Director’s Prize for the best article published in *Textual Cultures* during the two calendar years prior to the biennial conference. The inaugural award was presented to Michelangelo Zaccarello (University of Verona) for his essay on recent trends in textual editing, “Metodo stemmatico ed ecdotica volgare italiana” (*Textual Cultures* 4.1 [2009]). In 2013, the Executive Director’s Prize was given to Marta Werner (D’Youville College) for her articles “Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan: Writing Otherwise” in *Textual Cultures* 5.1 (2010) and “‘Reportless Places’: Facing the Modern Manuscript” in *Textual Cultures* 6.2 (2011).

The editors of *Textual Cultures* welcome submissions from specialists in diverse fields. All submissions are refereed, being evaluated both by members of the STS Advisory Board and by selected independent scholars.

All submissions must contain a complete list of works cited with full bibliographical data. Essays in English, French, German, Italian, or Spanish should be submitted to *Textual Cultures* by doing both of the following:

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and

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