

A Return to
'The Great Variety of Readers':
The History and Future
of Reading Shakespeare

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by
Robin P. Williams, MA

School of Arts
Brunel University

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ABSTRACT**A RETURN TO ‘THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS’:
THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF READING SHAKESPEARE**

For almost a century Shakespeare’s work has been viewed primarily under a supremacy of performance with an insistence that Shakespeare wrote his work to be staged, not read. This prevailing view has ensured that most responses in Shakespearean research fit within this line of enquiry. The recent argument that Shakespeare was a literary dramatist who wrote for readers—as well as audiences—has met with resistance.

This thesis first exposes the very literate world Shakespeare lived in and his own perception of that world, which embraces a writer who wrote for readers. The material evidence of readers begins in Shakespeare’s own lifetime and grows steadily, evidenced by the editorial methods used to facilitate reading, the profusion of books specifically for readers of general interest, and the thousands of lay reading circles formed to enjoy and study the plays. Readers of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries are shown to have spontaneously responded to the works as literature, as reading Shakespeare aloud within a family or social circle has a tenacious history. For three hundred years after Shakespeare’s death it was readers and Shakespeare reading groups who created and maintained Shakespeare’s legacy as a literary icon and national hero.

The history of millions of lay readers reading aloud in community was engulfed by the transition of the texts into academia and performance criticism until by the 1940s Shakespeare reading groups were virtually non-existent. A new genre of editorial practice can support a re-emergence of community reading and point toward a greater acceptance of Shakespeare as a literary dramatist, enlarging the field of Shakespearean scholarship and criticism. A prototype of a Readers’ Edition of a Shakespearean play specifically edited and designed for reading aloud in groups is included with this thesis.

CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	4
Abbreviations	5
List of Illustrations	6
Preliminary Notes	7
Introduction	12
PART I THE FOUNDATIONS OF A LITERARY POSSIBILITY	
1 Literacy in Shakespeare's World and Plays	28
2 Seventeenth-Century Readers	55
PART II EDITING AND READING THE LITERARY SHAKESPEARE	
3 The Growth of Shakespearean Editions	71
4 The Growth of Shakespearean Readers	96
5 Shakespeare for the Rest of Us	116
6 Reading Shakespeare in Community	154
PART III EDITING AND READING SHAKESPEARE TODAY	
7 The Rise of Scholars and Demise of Readers	187
8 The Development of Readers' Editions	207
PART IV CONCLUSION AND BACKMATTER	
9 Conclusion	238
Appendix A: Readers' Editions Layout and Features	246
Appendix B: Readers' Editions Apparatus Samples	248
Bibliography	251

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Fig. 1:</i> Preface to Shakespeare's First Folio	11
<i>Fig. 2:</i> Printed and handwritten title, <i>The Taming of a Shrew</i>	33
<i>Fig. 3:</i> Clipping from First Folio, <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	221
<i>Fig. 4:</i> Clipping from Oxford Shakespeare, <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	221
<i>Fig. 5:</i> Clipping from Riverside Shakespeare, <i>Comedy of Errors</i>	223
<i>Fig. 6:</i> Clipping from Readers' Edition, <i>Comedy of Errors</i>	223
<i>Fig. 7:</i> Stage directions, <i>Believe as you List</i>	227

PRELIMINARY NOTES

The words *Shakespeare* and *Shakespearean* have been spelled in a variety of ways in the past four hundred years. Throughout this thesis I have used the spelling as found in the original citation or title. It may appear as Shakespear, Shakspear, Shakspere, Shaksper, Shackspeare, Shakspearean, Shakspearean, Shakespearian, Shakespearean, etc.

Research is limited to England and the United States. Although there were active publishing industries in Scotland and Ireland supplying Shakespearean texts to the colonies, they are beyond the scope of this thesis. This thesis is limited to Shakespeare's plays and does not reach to the narrative poems or sonnets.

Some of the research in chapter six first appeared under my pseudonym, Thane Whetstone, with William Leahy as 'Women's Clubs and Shakespeare in America' in *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 15 (Oct 2011): 193–204.

DEFINITIONS

This section clarifies how certain words are defined and used in the argumentative narrative of this thesis.

The term *literature* is used as the OED 3.b defines it: 'written work valued for superior or lasting artistic merit', with the specific adjunct in this thesis that as 'written' work it is therefore to be read, and as 'lasting', generally read more than once. *Literary* is also used as the OED A.1 defines it: 'of or relating to the writing, study, or content of literature, especially of the kind valued for quality of form; of the nature of literature'.¹ This definition also explicitly refers to the written work as read, as opposed to a performance of a written work.

The phrase 'page versus stage' is used often in the context of Shakespeare's supposed

1. A quotation under this definition provides a very interesting and pertinent division of *literature*: '1852 A. Edgar *Tusculana* 111—Literature may be divided into two great classes, the popular, and the learned or exclusive. Many persons who consider the matter superficially will no doubt regard the former as a very insignificant division; but to us it appears to be by much the more important, and to be that which really and substantially constitutes literature'. This is a reminder of the remarkable situation of Shakespeare's works that, for three centuries, crossed the boundary between 'popular' and 'learned'.

intentions, whether he wrote his plays to be performed on stage or read on the page, or in the context of our interaction with the text, either through performance on the stage or through reading the page. In this thesis, *page* refers to its material function as a vehicle for reading the text as a literary object, a permanent vehicle. For centuries readers have had access to essentially the same texts and thus have had similar experiences, creating a communal history of readers silently bound by an appreciation for the same literary object. The term *stage* refers to the work as performed, a transitory vehicle for the text and—unless recorded in some form of media only available in recent years—irretrievable for posterity and often inaccessible for those who do not live near a playing space or cannot afford to attend. The stage performance is of necessity an interpretation and the original text is routinely cut, thus people viewing two different productions have two different experiences of the play, especially across time and eras. Each experience of the text, page and stage, is valuable but dissimilar.

The OED defines a *playwright* as ‘an author of plays, a dramatist’ and defines a *dramatist* as ‘a writer or composer of dramas or dramatic poetry; a play-wright’. This thesis emphasises the difference in that a *dramatist* composes ‘dramatic poetry’, poetry for drama, for the stage, a dramatic branch of literature in which a story is related by means of dialogue and action. For this thesis, a theatre playwright writes plays and a dramatist writes poetry for the stage. Shakespeare, then, as a *literary dramatist*, is recognized both as a playwright who writes for transitory stage presentations and also as one who writes literature on the page for renewed and continuing existence.

Lay readers as used in this thesis refers to those who are non-experts in the field of Shakespeare, although they may certainly be experts in other fields. The OED defines *lay*, *adj. and n.*, 1.a, as ‘belonging to the “people”’, in this sense distinguished from the clergy. The term *general reader* is used synonymously in the sense that a general reader is ‘not belonging or confined to some limited or special class’, as defined by the OED A.1.7. A *community reader*, however, in this thesis specifically refers to an adult who reads within a community of people, a social circle, and reads aloud. *Readers* and *reading* are not used theoretically unless otherwise noted.

A *playbook* is defined in the OED as ‘a book containing the text of a play or plays’, although in this thesis it refers specifically to a book containing a single play.

The issue of a *critical* text or edition versus a *popular* text or edition of Shakespeare is

complex. A strict definition of a *critical* text might include both an insistence that every word in the text has been determined by a team of critics and scholars based on extensive research in a number of related fields such as palaeography, bibliography, criticism, and editing, plus that the critical edition is not based on a text already in existence.² It is the second criteria, that it not be based on an existing text, that muddies the distinction as during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries hundreds of editions were based on previous texts. At the same time, until the late nineteenth century, all collections were edited by men and women who are today considered to have been amateurs, although some were well versed in palaeography and editing practice. For the purpose of this thesis, a *critical* edition is one that has been edited and has apparatus that appeals to a specialist; it might include textual variants, discussions of cruces, word origins, publication and performance history, or other features.

Popular when referring to texts of Shakespeare follows the OED definition: 4) ‘Of cultural activities or products: a) Intended for or suited to the understanding or taste of ordinary people, esp. as opposed to specialists in a field; *spec.* (of literature, etc.) intended for and directed at a general readership.’ Popular Shakespearean texts are thus those that have been edited with features designed to make the plays accessible to the non-specialist. This includes expurgated and expunged texts, texts with added stage directions, clarifications of characters, annotations for the non-specialist, limited apparatus with a focus on perhaps the plot or Shakespeare’s life, and those features designed for reading groups as described in chapter six.

Finally, this thesis uses the terms *critic*, *scholar*, and *academic* specifically. A *critic*, OED 2, is one who is ‘skilful in judging of the qualities and merits of literary or artistic works; one who writes upon the qualities of such works.’ A critic, for this thesis, is not necessarily a specialist or even specifically educated in the field, but someone who tends to emphasize aesthetic approaches to the text and speaks to the popular media. In the nineteenth century, critics were willing to help make Shakespeare accessible to groups in homes and halls, speaking to non-academic clubs and writing in popular magazines.³

A *scholar*, OED 2.a, is ‘one who studies in the “schools” at a university; a member of a university, esp. a junior or undergraduate member.’ Scholars specific to Shakespeare studies,

2. David C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 347.
 3. Anne Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U. S. Women’s Clubs, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 212–13.

in this definition, did not evolve until the late nineteenth century, as discussed in chapter seven, although there were very skilled autodidacts. In this thesis, however, *scholar* is also applied to those pre-twentieth-century men and women, such as the ex-lawyer turned independent gentleman Edmund Malone, writer Mary Cowden Clarke, or attorney Howard Horace Furness, who were not members of universities in English or literature schools, but who perhaps drew on philology, attempted to be intellectually rigorous, emphasized mental discipline, and contributed significantly to Shakespearean scholarship.

An *academic*, OED 3, is ‘A member of a university or college, now *spec.* a senior member, a member of a university or college’s teaching or research staff’. Most editors of Shakespeare’s works today are academics. In this thesis, academic is used in this sense of having close ties to a university or college, as a specialist trained in a particular branch of advanced study, or to describe something as a scholastic tool.

The distinction between *scholar* and *academic* in this thesis is merely to acknowledge the important participants in early studies of Shakespeare who are today sometimes labelled as ‘dilettantes’ or ‘amateurs’ because they had no formal academic training.⁴ There is no judgement in either term; they simply clarify values within the different eras of Shakespearean studies. The more important distinction is between *critics* and *scholars/academics* as it highlights the transition from Shakespeare in popular culture to Shakespeare in academia, as Anne Ruggles Gere points out:

Critics emphasized aesthetic approaches and, accordingly, tended to blur distinctions between amateurs and professionals. Scholars, however, drew on philology, emphasized mental discipline, and sought to make English studies intellectually rigorous enough to justify its place in the academy. . . . In speaking regularly to women’s clubs, these men [such as Corson, Rolfe, Clapp, Higginson] underscored their interest in extending English studies to groups in parlours and halls outside universities, while those in the scholars’ camp aimed to separate the two.⁵

A final distinction to be clarified in this thesis is *reading* versus *performance*. Although a group reading can be considered a form of performance, the difference in this thesis is quite distinct and critical. A performance, even if staged by a reading group as an adjunctive

4. Hanmer is considered a ‘literary dilettante’ in the ODNB article: D. W. Hayton, ‘Hanmer, Sir Thomas, fourth baronet (1677–1746)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, May 2005), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/12205. Andrew Murphy considers all of the early editors to be ‘gentleman-amateurs’; Andrew Murphy, ‘Birth of the Editor’, in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 107. An alternate self-identification today might be ‘independent scholar’.

5. Gere, *Intimate Practices*, 212–13.

event, predominantly includes a passive audience uninvolved in the presentation; in staged readings, as well, the audience is typically non-participatory. Most performances involve memorization and interpretation, plus an audience who sits on the other side of the fourth wall (or in the pit of a thrust stage) absorbing what is presented outside of themselves. A group reading, on the other hand, is made up entirely of participants. Contrary to a performance, there is no single interpretation in a group reading; the readers discuss the possibilities of the text and can hold various interpretations simultaneously. In a typical performance there is a clear demarcation between those on stage and those in seats, those presenting the text and those hearing the text, those interpreting the text and those absorbing what is presented; in a reading group, every person is part of the process. No one needs to be excluded from a reading because of difficulty in memorizing or fear of being on stage, nor for lack of time or lack of a suitable part for one's age, appearance, ability, or gender. This thesis maintains that participating readers are engaged in a learning and discovery process and therefore the postmodernist idea of performativity does not apply; that is, group reading is an internal process done within community, not an external presentation of identity. This democratic approach to Shakespeare, of discussion and interaction, has waned in the past hundred years and is the focus of this thesis. This does not imply that reading is better than performance, but simply that it is different and valuable and deserves to be included in the panoply of ways to interact with Shakespeare.

WOMEN AND SHAKESPEARE

Throughout this thesis there may appear to be an emphasis on women's interactions with Shakespeare and with women's reading groups. This is not due to a preconceived agenda to focus on women but merely to the undeniable evidence that, although women generally appear in the historical register much less often than men, in the case of Shakespeare it is women who have left extensive records of their reading, reading groups and activism. A substantiation of their inordinate involvement is ironically showcased in the reluctance to allow English literature into higher education, as discussed in chapter seven, because literature was perceived as feminine. It is when Shakespeare transitioned into universities and away from popular culture that men's participation begins to eclipse women's. As Gere points out, 'This tendency of men to take over territory claimed by women when professional interests are at stake has played itself out in other fields.'⁶

6. Ibid., 214.



To the great Variety of Readers.



From the most able, to him that can but spell: There you are number'd. We had rather you were weigh'd. Especially, when the fate of all Bookes depends vpon your capacities: and not of your heads alone, but of your purses. Well! It is now publique, & you wil stand for your priuiledges wee know: to read, and censure. Do so, but buy it first. That doth best commend a Booke, the Stationer saies. Then, how odde soeuer your braines be, or your wisdomes, make your licence the same, and spare not. Iudge your sixe-pen'orth, your shillings worth, your five shillings worth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the iust rates, and welcome. But, what euer you do, Buy. Censure will not driue a Trade, or make the lacke go. And though you be a Magistrate of wit, and sit on the Stage at *Black-Friers*, or the *Cock-pit*, to arraigne Playes daillie, know, these Playes haue had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeals; and do now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of Court, then any purchas'd Letters of commendation.

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to haue bene wilhed, that the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to haue collected & publish'd them; and so to haue publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued the. Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarce receiued from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our prouince, who onely gather his works, and giue them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your diuers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: And if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to vnderstand him. And so we leaue you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can bee your guides: if you neede them not, you can leade your selues, and others. And such Readers we wish him.

Fig. 1: Preface to Shakespeare's First Folio, 1623

INTRODUCTION

To the great Variety of Readers, from the most able, to him that can but spell. . . .
It is not our province, who onely gather his works, and give them to you, to praise him.
It is yours that reade him. . . . Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe. . . .
And so we leave you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can bee your guides:
if you neede them not, you can leade your selves, and others.
And such Readers we wish him.

John Heminge and Henrie Condell, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, 1623

This thesis is a result of the interest generated from more than a decade of formal and informal research observing the enthusiastic responses of non-specialists reading Shakespeare aloud in community, while noting that their enthusiasm conflicts with the widespread message from scholars, instructors and actors that one should not *read* Shakespeare—one must only see it on stage.¹ The history of the conflict between the stage and the page is lengthy and the division has intensified in recent years; indeed, Martin Buzacott describes it as ‘one of the liveliest debates in Shakespearean history.’² The past

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1. Gary Taylor: ‘Shakespeare intended his words to be acted: to be heard, not read.’ *William Shakespeare: Textual Companion*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (1987; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3. | Susan Spangler, State University of New York: ‘To be fully appreciated, Shakespeare’s plays must be experienced as they were intended—produced by actors on a stage and watched by an audience. It’s a fact we English teachers often forget: Shakespeare was meant to be seen, not read.’ ‘Speaking My Mind: Stop Reading Shakespeare!’, *The English Journal* 99 (Sept. 2009), 131. | Duncan Fewins, Warwick University, Drama Lecturer, as well as Programme Manager with the Royal Shakespeare Company, states: ‘If you speak the text aloud and move with it, Shakespeare’s writing suddenly stops being a *dead literary text* on the page and becomes a living thing. . . . These are plays at the end of the day, so you need acting skills to bring the texts alive.’ Italic added. Lee Jamieson, ‘An Interview with Duncan Fewins’, About.com, http://shakespeare.about.com/od/interviews/a/No_Fear.htm. | An online search for *Shakespeare “not intended to be read”* shows the ubiquity of this cliché.
 2. Martin Buzacott, *The Death of the Actor: Shakespeare on page and stage* (1991; repr., Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 5.

century has witnessed an increasing emphasis on the primacy of performance. Nevertheless, the twenty-first-century scholarship of Lukas Erne, Patrick Cheney, Charlotte Scott and others contends that Shakespeare originally intended the plays as literary works to be read as well as performed.³ Erne comments on the current dominance of stage-centered criticism: ‘Statements such as “These plays were scripts originally, and remain so today” or “A play has to be seen and heard in order to be understood” miss part of a more complex truth.’⁴ This thesis does not presume to know what Shakespeare intended, but the authors noted above have opened the debate on the literary quality of the texts.

Erne specifically points to Shakespeare as an active participant in publishing his plays during his lifetime, indicating that Shakespeare believed his work should be viewed as literature to be read as well as plays to be performed. Erne summarizes four mutually reinforcing assumptions that have distinguished Shakespearean research and interpretation for centuries, assumptions that he challenges:

1. The quartos represent mere ephemera.
2. The playwright had no interest in the publication of his plays.
3. The texts that we have are as they would have been performed, even the very long plays.
4. The longer texts that were published are for performance and the shorter ones ‘represent anomalies of some kind’, usually as ‘bad quartos.’⁵

Erne argues for an alternative to a writer who is concerned merely with stage performance and indifferent to the afterlife of his plays and instead looks toward a literary writer whose literature takes the form of playbooks. He draws attention to the importance of published playbooks in the book trade, as well as literary publications of the collected works of several writers, including closet drama and translations, that were legitimating English drama. The progressive habit amongst individual printers of adding playwrights’ names to the title pages indicates a growing precedence of the playwrights’ names over the acting companies

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3. Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Patrick Cheney, *Shakespeare’s Literary Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Charlotte Scott, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Richard Meek, Jane Rickard, and Richard Wilson, eds., *Shakespeare’s book: Essays in reading, writing, and reception* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008). David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
 4. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 47. Erne cites Herbert R. Coursen in *Reading Shakespeare on Stage* and John Russell Brown in *William Shakespeare: Writing for Performance*. Erne also affirms that ‘the courage’ of Harry Berger, Jr., ‘to “state the case against the stage-centered approach” is very much swimming against the current today’, 50.
 5. Lukas Erne, ‘Reconsidering Shakespearean Authorship’, *Shakespeare Studies* 36 (2008): 28.

and venues, challenging the historical speculation of the players' alleged oppositions to print, according to Erne.⁶ He identifies fifty-eight editions of Shakespeare's individual plays in print before the 1623 First Folio and remarks that by the early seventeenth century Shakespeare could look back upon his brief but extremely successful career in print as the best-published dramatist with his name on far more title pages than any other English playwright dead or alive, again suggesting a strong interest in the publication of his plays.⁷ Erne calls on the theme of immortality in the sonnets to suggest a writer profoundly aware of his own literary endurance. He points out that Francis Meres' famous praise in 1598 of Shakespeare as one of the literary giants of the age—based on twelve plays but before his name appeared on a single one—could not have gone unnoticed by the author, nor the fact that his name was attached to apocryphal plays, perhaps indicating a growing marketability.⁸

Andrew Gurr reminds us that, 'It has long been argued that the maximal written texts are too long to be staged in the limited time usually ascribed to Elizabethan plays.'⁹ One of Erne's central theories is that the shorter quarto versions are stage texts; the longer plays, two-thirds of the canon, are the literary editions meant for a reading audience and include the purple passages that were deleted from performance, descriptive stage directions that cannot be performed, and complex or static exposition that is unnecessary or even unwieldy on stage but that make for more poetic, literary reading. Alan H. Nelson's research into contemporary private libraries, those which contained at least twenty books, shows Shakespeare's literary standing in his own time:

I conclude, against the grain of much modern criticism, that Shakespeare's poems and plays ought to be approached, if we are to respect history, not as documents of politics, theology, religious controversy, philosophy, or anthropology, but as 'poesy': that is to say, as objects of delight, as verbal and dramatic art, as—dare I think it?—English Literature.¹⁰

Today's argument that Shakespeare was a literary dramatist interrupts a century's influence of what eventually came to be called *performance criticism*, an influential approach that obscures the history of both solitary and communal reading of Shakespeare's plays as it

6. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd ed., 139–52.

7. *Ibid.*, 135. Table of identified published plays, 272–73.

8. Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (1598; repr., New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1938), 282.

9. Andrew Gurr, 'Maximal and Minimal Texts: Shakespeare v. the Globe', *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 77.

10. Alan H. Nelson, 'Shakespeare and the Bibliophiles: from the earliest years to 1616', in *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (London: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), 70.

seeks to stress the primacy of performance over reading. John Russell Brown summarizes this concept: ‘The play on the stage expanding before an audience is the source of all valid discovery. Shakespeare speaks, if anywhere, through his medium.’¹¹ Sigurd Burckhardt was an early complainant of the movement toward the pre-eminence of performance. Burckhardt was convinced that we could understand Shakespeare more truly if we treat his work as literature:

I am also convinced that to be understood he must be read . . . There is an odd superstition abroad that nothing can be part of Shakespeare’s intention that cannot be communicated directly across the footlights. First and foremost, we are told, he was a ‘man of the theatre’; the implication is that what we see when we see a play of his acted is the unmediated thing itself. Of course this is nonsense; what we see is an interpretation.¹²

Erne notes that the ‘obsession with close readings that turned plays into poems needed a corrective’, hence he sees performance criticism as one of the correctives that led us ‘to consider Shakespeare’s plays exclusively as scripts to be performed’.¹³

An example of an issue that showcases the tensions between stage and page in the late twentieth century is the theory of ironic readings.¹⁴ In René Girard’s ironic interpretations of the plays he explains there is a surface level, the apparent meaning which Girard calls ‘differentiation’, a meaning that the ‘ignorant multitude’ understand, but there is also an underlying layer, the ‘undifferentiation’, or real meaning, for the knowledgeable few.¹⁵ In an article exploring the masked significations in *Macbeth*, Harry Berger clarifies Girard’s two meanings—the apparent and the real, the non-ironic and the ironic—as developing, not from the ignorant masses and the intelligent few, but from the variant processes of being

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11. John Russell Brown, quoted by J. L. Styan, in *The Shakespeare Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 235.
 12. Sigurd Burckhardt, *Shakespearean Meanings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), vii.
 13. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 23. A return to close reading has been advocated in recent years, which is particularly interesting as community readers thoroughly enjoy this process in albeit an amateur fashion. See Frank Occhiogrosso, ed., *Shakespeare Closely Read; A Collection of Essays* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011); Jane Gallop, ‘The Historicization of Literary Studies and the Fate of Close Reading’, *Profession* (2007): 181–86; Frank Lentricchia and Andrew Dubois, eds., *Close Reading: The Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
 14. As early as 1817 William Hazlitt had proposed ironic interpretations in *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays* (London, 1817). Gerald Gould initiated another era of new readings with his 1919 pronouncement that *Henry V* is ironic in ‘A New Reading of *Henry V*’, *English Review* 29 (1919): 42–55. Harold Goddard in 1951 persuasively proposed ironic readings in *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), particularly 215–268. Obviously the topic has resonance as it continually resurfaces.
 15. René Girard, ‘To Entrap the Wisest’: A Reading of *The Merchant of Venice*, in *Literature and Society 1978*, ed. Edward Said (Baltimore: Selected papers from the English Institute, 1980), 116–17.

a [non-participatory] spectator or a [close and active] reader.¹⁶ Richard Levin has a strong response to both Girard and Berger in which he takes umbrage at the idea that those who do not see the real meaning, as defined by Girard, are somewhat lesser.¹⁷ One of his main objections to ironic readings is what Levin considers ‘so obvious and so elementary that I am almost embarrassed to bring it up. But the fact is that Shakespeare, so far as we know, took no interest in the publication of his plays.’¹⁸ Levin expresses disbelief that Shakespeare could ‘reserve his real meaning for readers of the play text . . . when he apparently did not know or care if that text would ever be available.’¹⁹ This illustrates how the long-standing assumption of Shakespeare’s indifference to print has influenced scholarship and imposed a severe limitation on Shakespeare by narrowing his influence to merely the stage.

Harriet Hawkins supports Levin’s argument and further layers the limitations. She also states that Shakespeare ‘showed no interest in publishing the text’, then asserts that he ‘could not have taken it for granted that anyone in his audience would see *Antony and Cleopatra* more than once, much less study the script in advance of seeing it, or subsequently read—and re-read—to ponder its subtleties.’²⁰ Levin published a follow-up article in which he protests that ironic ‘interpretations of the plays of this period are often so far removed from theatrical experience that they could not be conveyed in any performance.’²¹ The irony in Levin’s statement is that ironic readers do not argue with that point, since that is precisely the point. The irony and ambiguity can be read in the text but are difficult and sometimes impossible to perform. Regarding specifically *Henry V*, Stephen Greenblatt concurs with and accepts the contention that ironic interpretations which are developed from reading the text are difficult to apply to performance: ‘The apparent subversion of the glorification of the monarch’ in *Henry V*, ‘in the wake of full-scale ironic readings . . . , it is not at all clear

16. Harry Berger, Jr., ‘Text Against Performance in Shakespeare: The Example of *Macbeth*’, *Genre* 15 (1982): 49–50.

17. Richard Levin, ‘The New Refutation of Shakespeare’, *Modern Philology* 83, no. 2 (1985): 123–41. Levin severely criticizes ironic readings, apparently taking issue with being one of those who has never noticed the underlying layers of a Shakespearean play. He claims that in the long tradition of ‘eminent commentators’, no one has suggested these multiple interpretations before, which indicates Levin is unaware of Ben Jonson’s similar critique in 1616 in the preface to *The Alchemist* in which Jonson describes mere Spectators who laugh at the antics of the actor, Pretenders who pretend to understand but are cozened by the art, and Understanders who understand everything. Ben Jonson, ‘To the Reader’, *The Alchemist*, in *Ben Jonson: Five Plays*, ed. G. A. Wilkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 254.

18. *Ibid.*, 128.

19. *Ibid.* This is also an example of how suppositions about Shakespeare impact scholarship for years.

20. Harriet Hawkins, *The Devil’s Party: Critical Counter-interpretations of Shakespearean Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 110–11. It is severely limiting to insist that viewing a single performance of a play, most likely staged by amateurs, is to inform the totality of our experience of Shakespeare.

21. Richard Levin, ‘Performance-Critics vs. Close Readers in the Study of English Renaissance Drama’, *Modern Language Review* 81 (July 1986): 545.

that *Henry V* can be successfully performed as subversive.²²

Given the value in both performance and text, it is surprising that critical debate often seems to land on one side or the other. Berger tries to accommodate both concepts in *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* in which he challenges what he calls the ‘New Histrionicism’, an exclusionary stage-centric vision, with an ‘invention’ of his own called ‘imaginary audition’, which involves ‘an attempt to reconstruct text-centered reading in a way that incorporates the perspective of imaginary audition and playgoing.’²³ Berger had recognized that his original depiction of the problem of performance versus reading was a conflict ‘not between reading and audition but between two interpretive emphases within reading.’²⁴ He thus develops two models of stage-centered reading—the theatrical and the literary:

The theatrical model does not by any means ignore the text, but it regulates scrutiny in accordance with the constraints and opportunities of performance. The literary model initially ignores this regulation and gives permission to readerly techniques that may produce effects that seem too minute or too complex to be digested in performance.²⁵

Berger, however, does not claim that Shakespeare had a realized intention to publish his own work as he believes ‘the scope of literacy’ was too small to warrant Shakespeare’s interest in publication.²⁶ This assumption will be examined further in chapter one.

David Bergeron returns to the idea that the plays were meant to be read even in Shakespeare’s time with a particular focus on the dedication from Heminge and Condell in the First Folio encouraging buyers to ‘Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe’:

This ringing plea for a reader response also underlines a crucial matter of interpretation: the continuous, ongoing process of reading. I find this an extraordinary argument from two actors; it should put into healthy perspective the legitimate activity of reading and interpreting Shakespeare without insisting that he can only be known through performance. Shakespeare has moved from being an active dramatist

22. Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Invisible Bullets’, in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, 2nd ed., ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (1994; repr., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 43. In 1948, however, S. L. Bethell believed in ‘the audience’s ability to respond spontaneously and unconsciously on more than one plane of attention at the same time’, in *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition* (London: Staples Press, 1948), 29.

23. Harry Berger, Jr., *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* (Berkeley: University of California, 1989), xiv. This is essentially a response to Levin.

24. *Ibid.*, xiii.

25. *Ibid.*, 139.

26. *Ibid.*, 159.

to the position of author of a book, collected by his friends and now available to a reading public.²⁷

Bergeron's concept that Shakespeare's printed plays were collected by friends and available to a reading public adumbrates the idea of a Shakespeare who actively participated in the publication of his plays.

Peter Blayney opens a discussion of the popularity of playbooks as saleable commodities, establishing that, 'Not one in twenty would have paid for itself during its first year—so publishing plays would not usually have been seen as a shortcut to wealth.'²⁸ His results have subsequently been challenged by Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser in that 'one cannot determine whether Blayney's data indicate the relative *unpopularity* of playbooks (as he claims) or the relative *popularity* of playbooks, unless one knows how they compare to the reprint rates of other books. . . . Once we make these comparisons, it turns out that Blayney's figures actually point quite impressively toward the popularity of playbooks.'²⁹ Farmer and Lesser note that Blayney's essay effectively changed the historical record, and whereas earlier scholars saw plays as useful and lucrative products, since Blayney's article in 1997 playbooks were no longer considered viable commodities.³⁰ This theory has reinforced the negative perception of Shakespeare's intentions of publication.

Richard Dutton, however, advocates for Shakespeare as a publishing author: 'Too many reputable Shakespeare texts found their way into print for it to be entirely credible that they did so as a result of ad hoc company decisions.'³¹ Dutton takes to task long-standing speculations, such as E. K. Chambers' conjecture in 1923 that competing acting companies might subversively buy published playbooks for their own performances, thus Shakespeare's company would not allow his scripts to be printed.³² Or that, despite the academic

27. David Bergeron, 'Reading and Writing in Shakespeare's Romances', *Criticism* 33 (Winter 1991): 93.

28. Peter W. M. Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks', in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 389. Wealth is not the only reason an author might want to publish.

29. Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2005): 1–32. *Italic in original.*

30. This argument was continued in Peter W. M. Blayney, 'The Alleged Popularity of Playbooks', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56 (Spring 2005): 33–50, and Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'Structures of Popularity in the Early Modern Book Trade', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56 (Summer 2005): 206–13. Lukas Erne addresses the argument in 'The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print', *Shakespeare Survey* 62: *Close Encounters with Shakespeare's Text*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 16. Erne finds 'confirmation in the work by Farmer and Lesser'.

31. Richard Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship, and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 99.

32. *Ibid.*, 91–92. See also Roslyn L. Knutson, 'The Repertory', in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 461–480.

agreement that Shakespeare personally supervised the printing process of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, it has been understood for centuries that Shakespeare never took his own plays to press: ‘This is one of those “facts” about Shakespeare’s career usually taken quietly for granted.’³³ Dutton argues that the plays, many being too long and complex for contemporary performance, indicate that the two sides of Shakespeare’s career—the stage and the page—were less disparate than has been generally assumed. He suggests that by writing plays that in some respects are unplayable, Shakespeare ‘was effectively writing for a readership no different in essence from that of his sonnets and epyllia.’³⁴

This early conflation between stage and page can be seen in the introduction or publicity statement in the second 1609 quarto of Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*, which is addressed ‘to an ever reader’. It begins, “Eternall reader, you have here a new play, never stal’d with the Stage, never clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulgar . . .”³⁵ The writer compares this play to the classical works of Terence and Plautus, and the reader is warned to ‘refuse not, nor like this the lesse, for not being sullied, with the smoaky breath of the multitude.’³⁶ David Bevington points out that ‘this publisher’s preface goes out of its way to flatter a discriminating readership that prefers literature to stage performance.’³⁷ The insistence that one of the play’s most compelling attributes is that it has not somehow been ruined by performance becomes a puzzlement when compared with an earlier version of the quarto that same year which announces on the title page, ‘As it was acted by the Kings Majesties servants at the Globe’. Nevertheless, this dual publication is a manifest example that suggests the publication of Shakespeare’s plays for both audience and reader. The current declaration that Shakespeare’s plays were written only to be performed needs reconsideration.

Erne notes a peculiarity during Shakespeare’s time of active involvement in London theatre in that ‘plays stopped having a public existence confined to the stage.’³⁸ He states the obvious but often ignored: ‘Early modern theatrical scripts of Shakespeare’s plays have not survived, whereas printed texts have; and the very existence of these printed texts

33. Ibid., 90.

34. Ibid., 111.

35. British Library, ‘Treasures in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto’, *Troilus and Cressida*, quarto b 1609, A1^v, BL C.34.k.61, provenance Halliwell-Phillipps, <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/troilusbibs.html>.

36. Ibid.

37. David Bevington, ed., *The Arden Shakespeare: Troilus and Cressida*, 3rd series (Walton-on-Thames, Surrey: Arden Shakespeare, 1998), 1.

38. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 14.

means that they were not only written to be performed but also printed to be read'.³⁹ Levin pointed toward future scholarship in his earlier research on Shakespeare's contemporary playwrights who left records showing they believed their plays were meant to be read. In Levin's claim that Shakespeare is 'not at all typical' of Elizabethan playwrights because 'he was so indifferent to the publication' of his work, Levin inadvertently supports current scholarship on Shakespeare as a literary dramatist by pointing out the importance of printed playbooks:⁴⁰

So far as we can tell, most people in this period, and certainly most of the dramatists themselves, believed that plays existed, first and foremost, in the written texts, which contradicts the claims of the extreme performance-critics that the plays really exist only on the stage.⁴¹

Levin recognizes the importance of publication and also recognizes that it would be unusual if Shakespeare did not see his plays as readable and publishable as his peers apparently believed their own plays existed most importantly in the written texts.

The defining image of the theatre man enlarges certain aspects of Shakespeare and occludes others at various points in history. Julie Stone Peters provides an example of this, exposing another assumption that has had repercussions in scholarship:

Shakespeare's career has helped to produce one of those enduring lies so convenient to the history of progress: that Renaissance dramatists were unconcerned with the circulation of their work on the page; that the press kept aloof from the stage and the early stage kept aloof from the press. But nearly a century before Shakespeare was born, there began, in fact, to develop a relationship that would help create the theatre for which he wrote. Printing, far from being marginal to the Renaissance theatre, was crucial at the outset.⁴²

Peters' example of playwrights who were, from the outset of printing, 'deeply invested in the new technology' supports Erne's argument that Shakespeare, like other playwrights, actively published his work, looking forward to a readership.⁴³ The importance of the printing press to a proliferation of Shakespeare's literary presence is a continuing relationship that is

39. Lukas Erne, 'Shakespeare for Readers', in *Alternative Shakespeares 3*, ed. Diane E. Henderson (New York: Routledge, 2008), 81.

40. Levin, 'Performance-Critics', 549.

41. *Ibid.*, 558.

42. Julie Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book, 1480-1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4-5.

43. *Ibid.*, 5.

examined throughout this thesis.

It is questionable whether we can ever know for certain that William Shakespeare *intended* his plays to be read as literature, but what this thesis reveals is that people *have* been reading the plays as literature, regardless of Shakespeare's intention. It has been readers who legitimated Shakespeare as a cultural presence. Upon examination of the historical record of reactions to and interactions with Shakespeare as exposed in this thesis, it seems odd that today he must be defended as a literary dramatist. A respect for the history of the profound movement of readers can establish more respect for the view, evidently held for three hundred years, that Shakespeare wrote to be read as well as performed.

It should be stated that the emphasis on the history of Shakespeare readers does not imply that there is no difference between reading then and now. Obviously there are historical and technological changes that impact or are impacted by reading habits, attitudes, cultural trends, societal values, and more. History makes an argument for the present in the case of reading specifically Shakespeare because today the overwhelming emphasis is to discourage the reading of the texts, especially by lay persons. By familiarizing the prodigious interest held for centuries in the reading of Shakespeare, particularly in social groups, this thesis provides the necessary permission for today's readers to once again take up the custom with all of its attendant satisfactions as recorded by participants.

THE IMPACT OF READERS

As one of the arguments against Shakespeare publishing his work as literature is the presumed low level of literacy with consequently too few readers to make publication worthwhile, the first part of this thesis establishes a basic foundation for a literary possibility. The first chapter uses studies in early modern literacy to clearly establish the existence of a reading populace. A remarkably industrious and professional publishing environment as well as evidence of a prolific number of people with reading literacy situates Shakespeare in a market potentially receptive to his work. Coincidentally and perhaps more importantly, the indication that Shakespeare himself believed the world was literate is evinced through an examination of a multitude of references to literacy in his plays, indicating an expectancy of a literate audience for his printed work and a futurity in print. The second chapter in this part produces evidence of the early modern readers who have read the plays as literature in Shakespeare's own time or shortly thereafter. The actuality that the canon

was published—for readers—should not be minimized. Records of marginalia, commonplace markers and commonplace books in the seventeenth century are early indicators of Shakespeare's readers, as well as carefully bound volumes in private libraries that show the works were respected, collected and read.

Chapter three begins the second part with the history of the editorial practice amongst Shakespeare's editors and the kinds of editions produced for readers. A variety of responses to the works have developed over the centuries as each era edits to their own contemporary standards and mores, which is predictable, as Stephen Orgel notes: 'Any truth about Shakespeare will be true at most for a generation.'⁴⁴ Much is to be learned from the changing processes. A great deal of scholarly attention has been given to the major Shakespearean editors, particularly in the foundations of the editorial work created in the eighteenth century, and this chapter examines the groundwork they laid especially as it applies to the readerly attributes incorporated into their editions. But there are also multitudes of little known or anonymous editors and legions of editions that have been created, purloined and reproduced. Amongst a plethora of possibilities, this thesis is primarily concerned with the influences between editors and editions for lay readers and reading groups, as opposed to scholastic editions for students and scholars.

After the foundations of the editorial tradition, the focus in chapter four moves to the popular Shakespearean publications that have appeared, nestled between the major critical editions. The attention is on what Andrew Murphy calls 'Shakespeare for the people': the cheap editions, the specialist editions for specialty markets, the family editions, and particularly those for lay readers.⁴⁵ Study continues of the typographic details that editors and publishers over the years have manipulated in order to clarify the text for readers, as well as the physical presentation of the printed plays that determined whether they were on display on library pedestals, cherished in the sitting room for family reading circles, held in the hands of Shakespeare reading group members, or tucked into the pockets of train commuters. Intimately connected to the various editions are the actual readers. Records of an eighteenth-century Shakespeare reading group is an early indicator of how reading had valuable influences on the propagation of Shakespeare's original text, critical reputation,

44. Stephen Orgel, 'What is an Editor', *Shakespeare Studies* 24 (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 26.

45. Andrew Murphy, *Shakespeare for the People: Working-Class Readers, 1800–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

theatrical performances and enduring legacy.

Through the centuries, publishers and editors have held the power to present Shakespeare's work to the world in a more permanent form than does theatre. Chapter five argues that the profusion of books for readers clearly indicates not only a remarkable number of readers but also that readers have been the primary guardians and nurturers of Shakespeare's cultural reputation. The significant number of expurgated editions throughout Shakespeare's history is shown to have been instrumental in infiltrating the works into families, mixed social circles and elementary schools. The astonishing proliferation of portable and inexpensive individual plays and collected works particularly in the first three hundred years after Shakespeare's death bespeaks the existence of many readers as it simultaneously created more readers. Evidence is abundant of the extensive reading club movements in which community readers, adults who read the plays aloud together in social circles, perpetuated Shakespeare's reputation across the English and American nations.

Printing technologies is another area tied to the multiplicity of Shakespeare readers. Technological advances in printing and paper production have reinforced Shakespeare's presence in the world as material substantiation, allowing more books to be printed less expensively and thus creating a broader market. The printing press, the fascicule process, stereotypes, wood pulp paper, digital and interactive editions and print-on-demand (POD) publications not only provide a massive paper (or e-paper) trail that confirms readership, but each advance has had an influence on readership, providing an ever-widening range of options to a reading public.

The third and final part of this thesis examines the transition of Shakespeare away from popular culture in the late nineteenth century. As Shakespeare slowly moved into an elite atmosphere and was included in the academy, community readers read the works less and less. In addition, the development of performance studies in the early twentieth century began to place a priority on stage performance, leading to the 'controversial, even revolutionary' edition of Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor in 1986 that attempts to recreate in the text what Shakespeare intended for the stage.⁴⁶

The penultimate chapter posits that a resurgence of modern community readers can be encouraged and served by an edition designed specifically for adult readers in groups who

46. Ann Thompson et al., eds., *Which Shakespeare? A User's Guide to Editions* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1992), 4.

read the text together, aloud. Modern Shakespeare reading groups are a manifestation that Lois Potter considers to be a 'largely unexplored art form'.⁴⁷ As one of the editors of *Which Shakespeare? A User's Guide to Editions*, Potter is well-qualified to note, 'I don't know of any contemporary edition that is specifically designed for reading aloud'.⁴⁸ This chapter includes contemporary editing theory and practice in order to situate a Readers' Edition within this specialised field, with an overview of the editorial and design details intended to enhance the experience of community readers. An argument by Erne provides the context for not only a general return to the 'Great Variety of Readers' but also for the editorial and design decisions of a Readers' Edition:

An editorial practice that encourages readerly engagement with the fictionally represented seems all the more appropriate as Shakespeare's early modern play texts contain not only theatrical but also fictional stage directions What this means is that an editorial practice that adds not only theatrical but also literary stage directions does better justice to a Shakespeare who was not only a playwright but also a literary dramatist.⁴⁹

The design and readerly or literary attributes of a Readers' Edition are grounded in the historical accomplishments of yesterday and the available technology of today, in the history of the editorial tradition and the needs of modern readers. The intention is to present Shakespeare in a new way for a new readership, to produce an edition with the focal point of Shakespeare as a literary dramatist for adult community readers. A material example of what an updated version of a literary Shakespeare might look like in the form of Readers' Editions is included with this thesis, a printed copy of *The Comedy of Errors*.⁵⁰

There is surprisingly little to no current research which has a focus on modern community Shakespeare readers. A search for theses comparable or touching on the subject of the history of Shakespeare readers and their impact, particularly in reading groups, found nothing except those specifically on women's reading groups. As shown in chapter six, much has been written recently on the Women's Clubs in America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that reveals Shakespeare well embedded in literary societies. In general, however, cultural research on Shakespeare historically is

47. Lois Potter, 'Reading in and of Shakespeare', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 2 (Fall/Winter 2006), abstract.

48. *Ibid.*, ¶3.

49. Erne, 'Reconsidering Shakespearean Authorship', 33.

50. See chapter nine and the attached physical copy of *The Comedy of Errors*, ed. Robin Williams.

predominantly performance based. This thesis shows another and arguably more crucial measure of Shakespeare—readers and their impact.

In the past few decades several populist books have been written for readers of Shakespeare: Maurice Charney's 1992 *How to Read Shakespeare* emboldens non-specialists to take up and enjoy reading Shakespeare. Charney assumes throughout the book 'that Shakespeare is accessible to intelligent readers and spectators without any special training. We must remember that Shakespeare wrote his plays for a popular audience.'⁵¹ Nicholas Royle's 2005 *How to Read Shakespeare* is also written for the non-specialist and focuses on the 'literary dimensions' of the works, admitting that he is thus proceeding in 'a somewhat different and perhaps unfashionable spirit.'⁵² His comment summarily expresses the current dissatisfaction for the act of reading Shakespeare purely for literary enjoyment. Neither Charney nor Royle address reading groups, apparently assuming a Shakespeare reader is a solitary reader. In *How to Read a Shakespeare Play*, David Bevington does make a nod to reading groups.⁵³ The premise of Michael Alexander's *Reading Shakespeare*, a book for 'students and other readers', is that 'a single reader fully counts as an audience.'⁵⁴ *Teaching Reading Shakespeare* by John Haddon is specifically for secondary teachers in the classroom.⁵⁵ None of these books displays research on Shakespeare's lay readers or community reading. In three years of research on the history and future of reading Shakespeare in community, nothing specific to this end has been found. Perhaps the readiness is now.

This thesis builds on Erne's argument that Shakespeare wrote as a literary dramatist for both the page and the stage by exposing a broad historical context of readers who have continually viewed Shakespeare's work as literary without question. The insistence that performance is the only authentic expression of the texts is a primary resistance to the perception of Shakespeare as a literary dramatist: if one fully believes the plays are not meant to be read, then it becomes almost foolish to believe that Shakespeare himself believed the plays should be read. This thesis interrupts the primacy of performance by

51. Maurice Charney, *How to Read Shakespeare* (1971; repr., New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 113. It is telling, perhaps, that Ann Thompson's review of this book displays an academic uneasiness at Charney's encouragement 'to persuade intelligent persons to return to the plays with spontaneous, unacademic enthusiasm', ix. Ann Thompson, review of *How to Read Shakespeare* by Maurice Charney (New York: Peter Lange, 1992), *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45 (Winter 1994): 484–85.

52. Nicholas Royle, *How to Read Shakespeare* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 4. Italic in original.

53. David Bevington, *How to Read a Shakespeare Play* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 1.

54. Michael Alexander, *Reading Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9.

55. John Haddon, *Teaching Reading Shakespeare* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

providing a strong historical foundation of publishers, editors and general readers who naturally and automatically saw the Shakespearean works as literature and treated them as such. Although a new look at the historical significance of readers can point a more nuanced light on Shakespeare's possible intention as a writer, this thesis is primarily concerned with the community readers than with Shakespeare's intent; the work of Erne et al. opens a door to new possibilities in the realm of readers and reading. Recognizing and respecting the historical traditions of reading Shakespeare, especially in community, can legitimate the practice yet again and support a new image of Shakespeare with resonance for both reading and performance. It can also support a renewed image of Shakespeare that once again takes the works into the non-academic and non-theatrical arenas, developing a more spacious base of inquisitive interaction while providing additional dimensions for study, research and understanding.

PART I
THE FOUNDATIONS OF A LITERARY POSSIBILITY

CHAPTER ONE
LITERACY IN SHAKESPEARE’S WORLD AND PLAYS

Blessed be he who forms man with knowledge
and teaches humans understanding,
who amplified His grace with a great invention,
one that is useful for all inhabitants of the world,
there is none beside it and nothing can equal it in all the wisdom and cleverness
from the day when God created man on Earth.

A special blessing in praise of the printing press, Rabbi David Gans, 1592

To develop a fuller understanding of the plausibility of Shakespeare as a literary dramatist and of the plays being read by the general public, this chapter demonstrates that the state of publishing at the time of Shakespeare’s writing confirms that producing texts to be read was a significant business and Shakespeare an important part of it; the publishing industry reinforces an author who had a purpose to create literature. This evidence challenges Berger’s statement in the introduction of this thesis that ‘the scope of literacy was more limited and not many members of the audience in public theatres could have been expected to have read the plays they saw’.¹ Despite today’s general impression of illiteracy in the early modern era, especially when limited to ‘writing literacy’, it will be shown that ‘reading literacy’ was surprisingly widespread. The first part of this chapter demonstrates the progress of both printing and literacy that provides a foundation to support Shakespeare’s possible intention to publish his work; the second part of this chapter illuminates, through hundreds of examples in his plays, how profoundly confident Shakespeare was in a literate readership.

1. Berger, *Imaginary Audition*, 159.

To begin at the beginning—the printing press—imparts a sense of the rapid impact of this new technology of printing, both as an aid to and a result of literacy. As Peters reveals:

It is not mere coincidence that theatre and printing emerged as central forms of cultural communication during the same period [of the Renaissance theatrical revival] The printing press had an essential role to play in the birth of the modern theatre at the turn of the fifteenth century. As institutions they grew up together.²

Johan Gutenberg began developing the movable-type printing press in Mainz, Germany, in 1450 and by 1455 the first book was printed, the Gutenberg Bible; by 1500, less than fifty years later, more than twenty million books were in print.³ Although Paris and Strasbourg were famous medieval markets for buying and selling manuscripts, Frankfurt became the destination for the early Mainz printers, only a twenty-mile journey away. By 1485 the Frankfurt book fair, with all its related craftsmen such as paper makers, mould makers, illuminators, woodcut artists, binders, ink makers, and later the type founders, was an active centre of book commerce.⁴ In 1476, barely twenty-five years after the press was invented, William Caxton brought the first one to England and set it up in Westminster. Although the European presses produced an abundance of Latin works, 'production of printed books in England was focused, from the very beginning, on books in the vernacular', indicating a plentiful audience of English readers as opposed to readers of Latin, French or Greek classics.⁵ By 1500 there were five printers in London, and by 1550 there were twenty.⁶ By the time William Jaggard printed Shakespeare's First Folio in 1623, a conservative estimate is that 150–200 million books were in print in Europe and England; of these, almost 26,000 editions were printed in England in the English language, as well as an unknown number of individual books.⁷ 'The point is that by the sixteenth century the printed book had been produced in sufficient quantities to make it accessible to anyone who could read'.⁸ As Blayney

2. Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, 3.

3. Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, transl. David Gerard (1958 in French; 1976 in English; repr., New York: Verso, 2000), 248.

4. Mathilde Rovelstad, 'The Frankfurt Book Fair', *Journal of Library History, Philosophy, and Comparative Librarianship* 8 (Jul.–Oct. 1973): 116. It continues today as the largest and most important book fair in the world.

5. John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (2006; repr. with corrections, London: Routledge, 2006), 21.

6. David Scott Kastan, 'Afterword(s): The Great Variety of Readers', *Critical Survey* 14 (Jan. 2002): 114.

7. Febvre, *The Coming of the Book*, 262.

8. *Ibid.*

reminds us, of both the common misconception and the reality regarding the sales of books:

The early modern book trade was not the primitive cottage craft that some have imagined, hawking its meagre wares from open-air market stalls. It was an advanced industry of mass production, with a well-developed infrastructure for distribution and marketing.⁹

A similar misconception is that England at this time—and most of the world—was a wilderness of illiteracy. In reality, the availability of printed books inspired literacy and literacy inspired the publication of books. A commercial book trade exists because of the underpinnings of a literate society. By 1527 John Rastell was able to proclaim that ‘the unyversall people of this realm had greate pleasure and gave themselves greatly to the redying of the vulgare englysshe tonge’.¹⁰ H. S. Bennett points out the oft-cited Act of 1543 for the Advancement of True Religion and the Abolishment of the Contrary which forbid reading of the Bible by ‘women, artificers, apprentices, journeymen, servingmen of the rank of yeoman and under, husbandmen, and labourers. Noblewomen and gentlewomen might read it to themselves, but not to others. Only noblemen, gentlemen, and merchants might read it to their families.’¹¹ This law would only have been presented and ratified if reading was common enough, even among women, to have become an issue. One must wonder what was it about reading that deemed its power too awful for any but the elite.

In 1548, a writer named Philip Nicolls remarked on the number of book that are in every man’s hands, greedily devoured ‘of a greate sort’, books of diverse and sundry matters.¹² That books were written for the lower classes as well as elites is evidenced by Andrew Borde in 1552 regarding his *Breviary of Healthe*: ‘I do not wryte these bokes for learned men, but for simple and unlearned men that they may the better have some knowledge to ease themselves in theyr diseases and infirmities.’¹³ Wyn Ford agrees in the estimation that manuals and other practical literature from the early sixteenth century forward provide evidence that an ability to read and comprehend print was widespread among tradesmen and craftsmen.¹⁴

9. Blayney, ‘Publication of Playbooks’, 413–14.

10. *The Statutes Prohemium Johannis Rastell* (London, 1527), sig. A2r, as quoted in Kastan, ‘Afterword(s)’, 114.

11. Henry S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1475–1557* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), 27. Act of 1542: 34 & 35 Henry viii.c.1.

12. Philip Nicolls, *Here Begynneth a Godly Newe Story of .xii Men that Moses Sent to spye Owt the Land of Canaan* (London, 1548), sig. A3v, as quoted in Kastan, ‘Afterword(s)’, 114.

13. Andrew Borde, *The Breviary of Healthe, for all maner of sicknesses and diseases the which may be in man or woman*, 1552, quoted in Henry S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1558–1603* (1965; repr., Cambridge: University Press, 1969), 183.

14. Wyn Ford, ‘The Problem of Literacy in Early Modern England’, *History* 78 (Feb 1993): 29.

Bennett shows, based on the material produced by printers in England, that in the early sixteenth century the variety of literary wares available to the reading public include religious works, legal works, educative material, medical information, informational works (e.g., husbandry, surveying, cooking, gardening, hunting), arithmetic, astronomy, popular science, geography, history, news, as well as literature, including ballads, romances, interludes and plays.¹⁵ The quantity and breadth of subjects indicate the wide-ranging interests of readers. Bennett discusses books and pamphlets printed in England during the period of Queen Elizabeth's reign, books of religious works, including controversies and attacks, homilies, meditations and private devotions; stories of murders and scenes at gallows; legal text books, year books and collections of pleadings; the Absey (AB-C) books, more than 50,000 of which had been piratically printed; textbooks of Latin, logic, rhetoric and foreign languages; a broad variety of herbals and medical and surgical books for the lay person; treatises on agriculture and husbandry for the farmer; outdoor sports; arithmetic, astronomy and physical sciences; almanacs and prognostications; geography, voyages and exploration, as well as travel guides and aids to navigation; chronicles and modern history; government news, local news, contemporary events and rumour; foreign news; sensational pamphlets and witchcraft.¹⁶ William Lily's Latin grammar, *Rudimenta Grammatices*, first published in 1534, was selling 20,000 copies a year by 1650, clearly demonstrating an ever-growing market of readers.¹⁷

Margaret Spufford's work on popular fiction, 'cheap print', as she defines it, in seventeenth-century England demonstrates that plentiful reading material reached into the rural villages. Her argument goes so far as to critique the historians of literacy for being far too conservative in estimates of the spread of reading ability. Indeed, the humble reader was 'exposed to a steady hail of printed pamphlets of news, political and religious propaganda, astrological prediction and advice, songs, sensation, sex and fantasy'.¹⁸ Most pertinent to this thesis and the reading of Shakespeare is that between 1560 and 1600, 266 editions of books of literature, not including playbooks, were published—21 editions in

15. Henry S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1558–1603* (1965; repr., Cambridge: University Press, 1969), 65–151.

16. *Ibid.*, 112–258.

17. Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900*, 2nd ed. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 20.

18. Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), xviii.

1560, but four times that number in 1600.¹⁹ Of playbooks published during Shakespeare's active career, from 1584 to 1616, Shakespeare's 'bibliographic presence compared to that of his contemporaries was massive', 45 playbooks compared to 148 total published by the top ten playwrights of London.²⁰ It is perhaps unwise to assume this is accidental and went unnoticed by Shakespeare; more likely it suggests a writer aware of his creative skill and anxious to become known by his written work in a literate sphere.

Records and stories abound that indicate the importance of literacy in everyday life. David Cressy, however, whose statistics are regularly cited to establish high rates of illiteracy, is disinclined, for reasons he does not explicate, to use these exempla in establishing a case for literacy. He admits, 'Remarks by seventeenth-century conservatives are also suggestive of widespread popular literacy' even among chambermaids, religious sects, working women, weavers, murderers and others, yet his statistics remain based entirely on whether a person wrote a signature and thus is presumed literate or signed with a mark and presumed illiterate, in which he conflates reading with writing.²¹ By this standard, Cressy insists that women were almost 100 percent illiterate.²² Spufford challenges this picture in several ways, one in direct conflict with the mark as a sign of illiteracy: 'The evidence of many school curricula, like that of Orwell school [in Suffolk], in which boys were taught to read, write, and cast accounts, whereas girls were taught to read and sew, knit and spin, shows that girls were not usually taught the skill that is capable of measurement at all.'²³ The coauthors of *Reading Women* agree: 'Signature literacy, the standard measure which equates a signature with literacy and a mark on a public document with its absence, does not begin to reveal the extent of women's literacy not only because these measures conflate reading and writing but also because they conflate reading and signing in public.'²⁴

Cressy's remarkably low statistics of literacy based on marks seem at odds with his own solid documentation of the acquisition of reading skills as a process discrete from the more difficult one of acquiring writing skills. He confirms that many children, even in a regulated

19. Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1558-1603*, 248.

20. Erne, 'The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print', 25-26.

21. David Cressy, *Literacy & the Social Order: Reading & Writing in Tudor & Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 45.

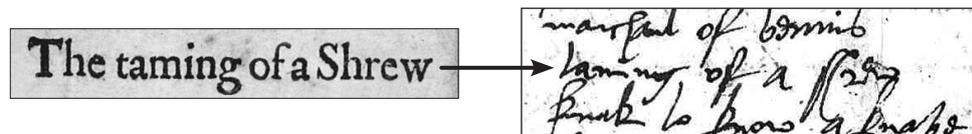
22. Cressy, *Literacy*, 176.

23. Spufford, *Small Books*, 34.

24. Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine E. Kelly, 'Introduction', in *Reading Women*, ed. Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine E. Kelly (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 3-4.

institution, did not carry on into the writing phase: 'The business of teaching writing was much more complicated than teaching to read and involved the making and mastery of special equipment' such as a pen knife and quill pen.²⁵ Another contraindication to Cressy's statistics is that in the early modern period students learned to read from hornbooks and other printed material (fig. 2). The characters in print are markedly different from the handwritten characters one learns to write, making the transition from reading to writing a significantly different study.

Fig. 2: A printed title (left) compared with the same title handwritten (right).



The field of literacy studies is wide, deep and idiosyncratic, but acknowledging the evidence of readers that survives in the anecdotal records, the remarkable numbers of books, pamphlets and ballads in print, as well as the weakness of statistics based on signatures, it is possible to presume a startlingly literate environment in which to establish a reading market for literary output, including Shakespeare's. Indeed, Feather states that 'by the middle of the sixteenth century perhaps half the adult population of England could read English to some extent, following a period of significant growth in the literacy rate.'²⁶ This not only signals an active market of readers, but also a viable environment in which to produce literature intended for immortality. As a reader himself who used more than 200 books as source materials for his own work, Shakespeare was manifestly aware of the book trade and its value both to readers and to posterity.²⁷ A decision by Shakespeare to publish would be the natural result of a literary ambition, with confidence of a reading audience.

The question remains as to whether Shakespeare himself believed his world to be literate enough to warrant publication of his plays. Although obviously we can never know what Shakespeare actually thought, there are clues to be found in his own work. The following section examines this possibility and finds that Shakespeare's references display a remarkably

25. Cressy, *Literacy*, 24.

26. Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 11.

27. Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957–75). Also G. Blakemore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 77–87.

consistent pattern of an expectancy of literacy, a disdain for illiteracy and a competent knowledge of the publishing business.

LITERACY IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

An important corroboration not only to a viable market of readers for his plays but also to the very foundation of printing and literacy is a careful look at Shakespeare's own affirmation of literacy as shown in the plays themselves. The act of reading typically denies a physical memorial, as opposed to the materiality of the evidence of performance, and thus it is difficult to find substantiation of the activity in the records. Steven N. Zwicker observes, "The event often vanishes without a trace."²⁸ However, Zwicker discusses at length an important area in which traces can be found, which is in subject matter for art, both two-dimensional and what appears 'frequently and emblematically on the early modern stage', citing Hamlet entering, 'reading on a Booke'.²⁹

Confirming the text itself as potential for social discovery, Sigurd Burckhardt reminds us that in Shakespeare's plays, 'In every dialogue the social order is a silent but essential partner'.³⁰ Janet Eldred and Peter Mortenson strengthen this view in demonstrating how literacy narratives can be found in the character constructs of literary texts and can thus reveal significant details about the fundamental social functions of literacies in a given sphere. Although literacy narratives can include explicit depictions of education, teaching and its associated materials, it is often the peripheral images and ideas used by an author that can 'both challenge and affirm culturally scripted ideas about literacy'.³¹

Examining the mimesis of literacy in the narratives Shakespeare creates, the images developed and the figurative language present in the plays and sonnets, it becomes apparent that Shakespeare perceived literacy as a familiar way of life for both men and women—every play includes books, letters, and/or writing, while two-thirds of the plays reference literacy in the very first scene; every play references literacy within the first act. Hence the objective of the following litany of literacy references in the plays is to situate

28. Steven N. Zwicker, 'Habits of Reading and Early Modern Literary Culture', in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern Literature*, ed. David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller (2002; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 175.

29. *Ibid.*, 176.

30. Burckhardt, *Shakespearean Meanings*, 262.

31. Janet Eldred and Peter Mortenson, 'Reading Literacy Narratives', *College English* 54 (Sep. 1992): 512–13.

Shakespeare's perception and representation of literacy in his own time. If Shakespeare's world is filled with literate people—men and women of all strata—it can lend strength to the perception of his determination to write for publication. Literary studies have long noted Shakespeare's own expressions of the immortality of print and particularly of his own work, as articulated in this one example from J. B. Leishman:

This poet, who is commonly supposed to have been indifferent to literary fame and perhaps only dimly aware of the magnitude of his own poetic genius, has written both more copiously and more memorably on this topic [of the eternal life of his own poetry] than any other sonneteer.³²

A renewed look at how profoundly literate Shakespeare believed his audience or his market to be can serve to substantiate a desire for the immortality of his own printed work. Some specificity is revealed in a word search of the plays and sonnets that shows books and volumes are mentioned 144 times, read and reading 233, and editorial stage directions for reading aloud appear 114 times.³³ A library, academe, or school and schoolfellows are referenced 75 times. Of writing and writers, 327; of scribes, scribblers, bards, poets and poetry, 39; scrolls, 15; pens, inks, pencils, paper and parchment, more than 286 times. Tables (writing tablets) and table-books for writing upon, as well as note-books, are mentioned 17 times, and remarks to 'set down' or 'set it down' in reference to writing, 45. This tally does not include recipes/receipts, records, pamphlets, chronicles, challenges, contracts, proclamations, indentures, conveyances, wills, testaments, deeds or inventories, nor the words and their cognates of author, note, language, print, press or impression because of the variabilities of their meanings.

Beyond the mere counting and categorising of words, however, and more significant to this purpose is the way in which Shakespeare observes and presents literacy. It acts as a conduit for communication of all sorts in which love missives abound, heralds read announcements and indictments, wars are arranged, rebellion is fomented, trade is transacted and state business is conducted. In Alan Stewart's monograph on just the letters of communication with which Shakespeare saturates the plays, he comments, 'Indeed, an account focused on the sheer incidence of these letters in the plays might well conclude that

32. J. B. Leishman, *Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 22.

33. All statistics in this paragraph were collated by searching OpenSourceShakespeare, based on the *Globe* edition, <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.com/search/search-advanced.php>.

Shakespeare was admitting the priority of written documents.³⁴ Characters search archives to determine whether past events can be used to challenge or authorize current events.³⁵ Books are read, of course; books provide 'base authority' and 'the light of truth' (LLL).³⁶ Brutus anachronistically looks for his book and finds it in the pocket of his gown; the leaf is turned down to save his place (JC). Benedick takes a book to the orchard (ADO). Ophelia reads a book to provide a reason for being alone, and Hamlet enters reading a book (HAM). Imogen reads a book, portentously, of a play about Tereus for three hours before sleeping and asks Helen to turn down the leaf to hold her place; later, her husband Posthumous wakes from a dream to find Jupiter has left him a book (CYM). Abraham Slender wishes he had his *Book of Songs and Sonnets* about him (WIV).³⁷ Achilles interrupts Ulysses reading a book of philosophy which they discuss, and Ulysses speaks of 'the author's drift' (TRO). Young Henry VI, when pressured to marry, argues that, 'Alas, my years are young: / And fitter is my study, and my Books, / Than wanton dalliance with a Paramour' (1H6). Later, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, claims that Henry's 'bookish Rule hath pull'd fair England down' (2H6). Richard uses a supposed prayer book as a prop in his pretence of piety, and a prayer book lay on the pillow of the two young princes as they were murdered (R3). A book is a critical prop for young Lucius and Lavinia; later, reading is a source of solace and mutual commiseration:

Come, take away: Lavinia, go with me,
I'll to thy closet, and go read with thee
Sad stories, chanced in the times of old.
Come boy, and go with me, thy sight is young,
And thou shalt read, when mine begin to dazzle. (TIT 3.2.81–85)

Shakespeare's specific use of the book has been explored at length in Charlotte Scott's monograph, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book*, as well as in several essays within *Shakespeare's book*.³⁸ Heidi Brayman Hackel draws attention to scenes of reading in Shakespeare

34. Alan Stewart, *Shakespeare's Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 300.

35. H5, 1H6, 2H6, MV, R3, SON 123, and others.

36. List of abbreviations as set by the Modern Language Association is in the preliminary matter.

37. This book is 'a specific reference to the collection of poems entitled *Songs and Sonets written by the . . . Earle of Surrey, and other* (1557), known as *Tottell's Miscellany* from the name of its publisher Richard Tottell, which was very popular and frequently reprinted in Elizabeth's time.' Giorgio Melchiori, ed., *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Walton-on-Thames, Surrey: Arden Shakespeare, 2000), 137 nn183–84.

38. Scott, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book*. Meek, *Shakespeare's book*.

that 'suggest contemporary habits, expectations and transgressions.'³⁹ Hackel demonstrates the material evidence in early modern books that indicates many qualities of the staged readings referenced in the plays were common practice among those in the audience. One example of this is in the quotation above, where Titus refers to his daughter's private reading closet.

The consideration of literacy itself broadens from the physicality of books in the plays to the myriad displays of literate devices in more subtle processes. In Shakespeare, books and reading are commonly metaphorical rather than specific. Consequently they are often more profound in their display of literacy because they exhibit the naturalisation of literacy entwined with more expansive aspects of life than might be revealed in merely the surface of a book's materiality. As P. K. Ayers points out in an examination of the reading and writing in *Hamlet*, 'A distinction between literal and figurative reading/writing is of course itself misleading, since textuality and legibility clearly define the condition of existence in the play.'⁴⁰ Orlando, who has no library in the forest, proclaims, 'These Trees shall be my Books, / And in their barks my thoughts I'll character' (AYL). Juliet protests that Romeo kisses 'by the book' (ROM). Iago sneers at Cassio as a 'bookish theoretic' and at Othello's jealousy as 'unbookish' (OTH). Buckingham reviles Cardinal Wolsey's rise to power: 'A beggar's book / Outworths a noble's blood' (H8). Hamlet charges Polonius to see the players well bestowed and invests the actors themselves as the texts, 'for they are the Abstracts and brief Chronicles of the time. After your death, you were better have a bad Epitaph, than their ill report while you lived' (HAM).

The lack of a clear demarcation between literal and figurative reading and writing is also affirmed in Shakespeare's largest cluster of literacy images in which the human body is a book to be read or paper to be written upon. Cadences of literacy are synonymous with life and living, as when Menenius Agrippa claims, in regard to Coriolanus, that 'I have been / The book of his good Acts, whence men have read / His Fame unparalleld, haply amplified' (COR). Richard III claims of Hastings: 'So dear I loved the man, that I must weep. I . . . / Made him my book wherein my soul recorded / The history of all her secret thoughts' (R3). In a mirror, Richard II sees himself as a book: 'I'll read enough, / When I

39. Heidi Brayman Hackel, "The "Great Variety" of Readers and Early Modern Reading Practices", in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 147.

40. P. K. Ayers, 'Reading, Writing, and *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (Winter 1993): 423.

do see the very book indeed / Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself' (R2). Othello agonizes over his misreading of Desdemona: 'Was this fair paper, this most goodly book, / Made to write "whore" upon?' (OTH). Lady Macbeth admonishes her husband that, 'Your face, my thane, is as a book where men / May read strange matters' (MAC). Bassanio hands a letter to Portia and tells her, 'Here is a letter, lady; / The paper as the body of my friend, / And every word in it a gaping wound, / Issuing life-blood' (MV). Laertes describes Ophelia herself as 'a document in madness' (HAM). As King John dies of poison, he describes his body: 'I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen / Upon a parchment' (JN). Similarly, old Egeon, saddened because his sons do not recognize him, bewails that 'Time's deformed hand / Have written strange defeatures in my face' (ERR). Octavius claims that the records of Cleopatra's injuries to the Romans are 'written in our flesh' (ANT), and most horrifyingly and literally, Aaron the Moor brags that he would dig up 'dead men from their graves' and carve messages 'on their skins, as on the bark of trees' (TIT). Northumberland notes of a messenger, as if he is a book with a title page: 'Yea, this man's brow, like to a title-leaf, / Foretells the nature of a tragic volume' (2H4). Vincentio remarks, 'There is written in your brow, Provost, honesty and constancy', whilst Claudio admits that, 'The stealth of our most mutual entertainment / With character too gross is writ on Juliet' (MM). Don Adriano de Armado, upon falling in love, declares, 'Devise, wit; / Write, pen; for I am for whole volumes in folio' (LLL). Julia begs direction of Lucetta, who is 'the table wherein all my thoughts / Are visibly character'd and engraved' (TGV). Polonius insists that he had never 'play'd the desk or table book' to condone Ophelia's love for Hamlet, whilst Hamlet tells his father's Ghost that 'thy commandment all alone shall live / Within the book and volume of my brain' (HAM). Sonnet 122 memorialises, 'Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain / Full character'd with lasting memory'. The gaoler tries to comfort Posthumous as he is about to be hanged: 'Your neck, sir, is pen, book, and counters; so the acquittance follows' (CYM). Belarius tells his boys that his body is so marked that, 'this story / The world may read in me' (CYM). Much matter is read in the eyes as books, as when Lysander mistakenly woos Helena and tells her, 'Reason . . . leads me to your eyes, where I o'er look / Love's stories written in love's richest book' (MND). The young Prince Lewis protests that he never loved himself till 'I beheld myself / Drawn in the flattering table of her eye' (JN). The Old Shepherd tells Florizel's father that the young prince does 'stand and read / As 'twere my

daughter's eyes' in the same way that the moon gazes upon the water (WT). A letter from Berowne to Rosaline is intercepted in which he claims that study leaves its bent 'and makes his book thine eyes'; Berowne most eloquently argues against avoiding women:

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the Books, the Arts, the Academes,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world. (LLL 4.3.324-27)

Hamlet dissects his body as a table or commonplace book as he swears to the Ghost that he will remember:

Yea, from the Table of my Memory,
I'll wipe away all trivial fond Records,
All saws of Books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy Commandment all alone shall live
Within the Book and Volume of my Brain,
Unmixt with baser matter. (HAM 1.5.99-105)

Humans are at times viewed as books to be bound, identifying individual persons as containing whole volumes that must be carefully protected and preserved much like the precious volumes in one's library. This creates profound expressions of appreciation for not only the physical properties but the futurity and value of books, as when Perdita worries that Prince Florizel's father will see him dressed as a swain: 'How would he look, to see his work so noble, / Vilely bound up?' (WT). Juliet tries to understand that Romeo has killed Tybalt: 'Was ever book containing such vile matter / So fairly bound?' Lady Capulet develops a lengthy metaphor of Paris's body as book to be bound by Juliet's own self, including a reference to marginalia, when she exhorts her daughter to marry him. Juliet becomes the cover and gold clasps that contain Paris as story, and thus in a book metaphor husband and wife become one:

Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight, writ there with Beauty's pen:
Examine every several lineament,
And see how one another lends content,
And what obscur'd in this fair volume lies,
Find written in the Margent of his eyes.
This precious Book of Love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him, only lacks a cover. . . .
That Book in many's eyes doth share the glory,

That in Gold clasps, Locks in the Golden story:
 So shall you share all that he doth possess,
 By having him, making your self no less. (ROM 1.3.82–95)

Shakespeare implies it is the woman who completes the man, who beautifies him, this male 'Book of Love' who is unfinished so long as he lacks a feminine cover. This binding of a book metaphorically transferred to a human reveals a maximal value placed on books, as well as intimate knowledge of the early modern process of buying books unbound, to be completed by the owner and to the owner's specifications.

The act of reading human bodies is used recurrently as an axiom of literacy embedded in prosaic thoughts, as Theseus 'reads' much 'from the rattling tongue' of nervous clerks (MND); Romeo deplors that women's beauty is 'a note / Where I may read' (ROM); Fabian reads Sir Andrew by his form (TN); Othello's Egyptian charmer could 'almost read / The thoughts of people' (OTH); Buckingham worries because he can 'read in [Richard's] looks / Matter against me' (R3); Henry V reads treason in the cheeks of the traitors (HV); Achilles bemoans that men can 'read in the eyes of others' their own declining (TRO); upon finding the infant Perdita, the Old Shepherd declares he can 'read waiting-gentlewoman in the scape' (WT); Proteus can read Valentine's fortune in his eye, and Sylvia suggests that Proteus 'read over Julia's heart' (TGV).

All is not metaphor; the physical tools of literacy are used repeatedly. As Jonas Barish notes of Shakespeare, 'He never loses sight, either, of the material conditions of composition, of ink and paper, wax and parchment'.⁴¹ Malvolio twice calls for 'some ink, paper, and light' (TN). Richard III twice calls for ink and paper, as does Richmond, just hours before the final battle (R3). Dogberry calls for Francis Seacoal to bring his 'pen and inkhorn to the gaol' (ADO), and Titus calls for 'pen and ink', although at one point he writes in blood (TIT). Suffolk tells Margaret he will 'call for pen and ink, and write my mind' (1H6), whilst the Clerk is hung 'with his pen and inkhorn about his neck' (2H6). Ferdinand reads a letter from the Spaniard Armado who waxes eloquent on an event 'that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebon-coloured ink' (LLL). But consistent with Shakespeare's stylistics, even the tools of literacy are used figuratively, as when Rosencrantz prophetically decries

41. Jonas Barish, "'Soft, here follows prose": Shakespeare's Stage Documents', in *The Arts of Performance in Elizabethan & Early Stuart Drama*, ed. Murray Biggs et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 34.

that 'many wearing Rapiers, are afraid of Goose-quills' (HAM). Sir Toby encourages Sir Andrew to write a challenge 'in a martial hand', to 'taunt him with the license of ink', and to make sure 'there be gall enough in the ink, though thou write with a goose pen' (TN).⁴² Posthumous swears to Imogen that 'with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send / Though ink be made of gall' (CYM). 'Inky' describes Hamlet's cloak (HAM) and Phoebe's brows (AYL). News is 'black as ink' (TGV), and paper is damned as 'Black as the ink that's on thee' (CYM). Leonato despairs of his daughter Hero: 'O, she is fallen / Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea / Hath drops too few to wash her clean again' (ADO). Troilus compares the hand of Cressida in inky terms: 'O that her Hand / (In whose comparison all whites are ink) / Writing their own reproach' (TRO). As often as the metaphors of ink imply darkness and foreboding, it is refreshing to hear Berowne declare that, 'Never durst poet touch a pen to write / Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs' (LLL). Shakespeare acknowledges the power of printed words when the scoundrel Proteus duplicitously advises Thurio, in his futile wooing of Sylvia, to 'tangle her desires / By wailful sonnets' and 'composed rhymes' and to moisten his ink with tears:

Say that upon the altar of her beauty
 You sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart:
 Write till your ink be dry, and with your tears
 Moist it again, and frame some feeling line,
 That may discover such integrity. (TGV 3.2.72-76)

Shakespeare does not limit the composition process to ink and paper, but expands its potential with unusual implements for writing, as if literacy cannot be restricted to the use of traditional tools. Biondello describes Petruchio's disastrous riding outfit that includes a woman's velour crupper with her initials on it 'fairly set down in studs' (SHR). Titus declares that he 'will go get a leaf of brass, And with a gad of steel will write these words' because the devastating accusation that Lavinia just wrote in the dirt is too transitory and will be blown by the wind (TIT). Most gruesomely, 'sweet Warwick' swears he will 'Write up [York's] title with [Lancaster's] usurping blood,' but later the Yorkist Edward IV warns Warwick:

42. Since the ancient Romans, oak galls have been used to make ink, thus allowing Shakespeare to pun on the word 'gall'.

This Hand, fast wound about thy coal-black hair,
 Shall, whiles thy Head is warm, and new cut off,
 Write in the dust this Sentence with thy blood,
 "Wind-changing Warwick now can change no more." (3H6 5.1.54–57)

As in the quotation above, elsewhere the earth itself is also employed as paper: Richard II muses with melancholy, 'Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes / Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth' (R2). Titus cries, 'For these, Tribunes, in the dust I write / My heart's deep languor, and my soul's sad tears,' and Lavinia, with a stick, literally writes the names of her ravishers in the dust (TIT). Marcus bemoans, 'There is enough written upon this earth / To stir a mutiny' (TIT). Archbishop Scroop, discussing the rebellion, describes, 'The dangers of the days but newly gone, / Whose memory is written on the earth / With yet appearing blood' (2H4).

As shown, and to continue, Shakespeare is so comfortable with literacy in the world that it is used figuratively as often as it is referenced materially. Romeo reflects: 'Love goes toward Love as school-boys from their books, / But Love from Love, towards school with heavy looks' (ROM). Kent describes Edmund as, 'Thou whoreson zed, thou unnecessary letter' (LR). Iago verbally 'writes praises' of women (OTH), and Orsino claims he has 'unclasp'd / To thee the book even of my secret soul' (TN). Macbeth when, interrupted in his rapt thoughts, he turns back to his soldiers and replies, 'Kind gentlemen, your pains / Are register'd where every day I turn / The leaf to read them' (MAC). Even the slave Dromio of Ephesus berates his master in a metaphor of literacy: 'If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave were ink, / Your own handwriting would tell you what I think' (ERR).

Literacy is personified and acts on its own. A letter can 'tell black tidings' (R2) and 'steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek' (MV). Rosaline knew, says Friar Laurence, that Romeo's 'love did read by rote and could not spell' (ROM). Pisanio curses a letter that tells him to murder Imogen:

Oh damn'd paper,
 Black as the ink that's on thee: senseless bauble,
 Art thou a feodary for this act, and look'st
 So virgin-like without? (CYM 3.2.19–22)

Pisanio watches as Imogen reads the letter and laments, 'What shall I need to draw my Sword, the Paper / Hath cut her throat already?' (CYM). Julia talks to a torn letter for twenty-six lines and ends with folding the torn pieces together so the words can 'kiss,

embrace, contend, do what you will' (TGV).

Shakespeare habitually imbues literacy with various forms of power, recognizing and thus perpetuating the power that literacy can wield, as when John of Gaunt bewails that England 'is now bound in with shame, / With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds' (R2). A letter convinces Hotspur to carry on his rebellion, whilst other letters relate that his allies have abandoned him (1H4). A writ condemns Clarence to die; the countermand is tardy (R3). Geraldo U. de Sousa claims that Shakespeare explores this issue particularly in *2 Henry VI*: 'Questions of literacy are thus inextricably bound up with questions of power. Shakespeare . . . closely studies the connection between writing, history and power'.⁴³

This line of enquiry is not limited to government and history in its obvious forms, however—the power of literacy manifests in many situations. It is the capacity in education that provides Horatio with the ability to speak with the Ghost, because 'thou [Horatio] art a scholar' (HAM), and for this same reason Doctor Pinch the schoolmaster is believed to have the power to perform an exorcism (ERR). Prospero, who professes that 'my library / Was dukedom large enough', derives his power from the 'volumes that / I prize above my dukedom', and Caliban claims that without his books, Prospero 'is but a sot, as I am, nor hath not / One spirit to command' (TMP). Stephano uses his bark-bottle of sack as a book to swear upon, transferring the power of the written Bible metonymically to the liquor: 'Come, swear to that; kiss the book' (TMP). Jack Cade deplores the agency of the written word in that 'parchment, being scribbled o'er, should undo a man' (2H6). The Duchess of Gloucester's penance involves walking barefoot through the streets wearing a white sheet, whilst written papers pinned to her back have the power to extol her shame (2H6). Poetry read from scrolls shapes the futures of the lords Morocco, Aragon and Bassanio (MV). Young Arthur reads the warrant for his own impending torture (JN).

Apparently there is power invested in the written words as they are read either silently or aloud, as when Roger Bolingbroke reads a written conjuration aloud and spirits appear (2H6). Benedick talks of 'paper bullets of the brain' (ADO). Letters from Macbeth have the force to stir Lady Macbeth into action: 'Thy letters have transported me beyond / This ignorant present, and I feel now / The future in the instant' (MAC). Imogen wants to *hear* the bad news as it may lessen the potent impact of the written text if she were to see and

43. Geraldo U. de Sousa, 'The Peasants' Revolt and the Writing of History in *2 Henry VI*', in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David M. Bergeron (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 179–80.

read it herself: 'Speak, man, thy Tongue / May take off some extremity which to read / Would be even mortal to me' (CYM). A letter exerts a hold over Bertram, 'for on the reading it he changed almost into another man' (AWW).⁴⁴ A letter provides the disguised Portia the power to act as an attorney and another letter reveals her deception (MV). An undelivered letter, as the friar messenger is quarantined by a plague upon a house, spells the doom of Romeo and Juliet (ROM). Letters act as evidentiary documents, as the three letters found in Roderigo's pockets that incriminate Iago (OTH), Romeo's letter that confirms the friar's story (ROM), or the letter found on Oswald that exposes Goneril's betrayal (LR). Letters can be treacherous, as Edmund's forged letter of Edgar's plot to kill his father, or Gloucester's letter that Edmund uses to betray him (LR). The Duke of York finds a dishonourable letter on his son, Aumerle, and runs to the King to accuse his own son of treason (R2). Wolsey's 'letters to the Pope miscarried', thus knowledge of his own shady dealings destroys him: 'I must read this paper: / I fear the story of his anger. 'Tis so: / This paper has undone me' (H8).

The publication process translates into various metaphors, such as Leonato's insistence that his daughter Hero must surely be guilty for, 'Could she here deny / The story that is printed in her blood?' (ADo). King Leontes sees the published repetition of his childhood friend in Prince Florizel: 'Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince; / For she did print your royal father off, / Conceiving you' (WT). The Chorus speaks of the impression of metal letters into paper when encouraging the audience to imagine, 'Think when we talk of horses, that you see them / Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth' (H5). Published words are so important that Mopsa believes in their infallibility: 'I love a ballad in print o' life, for then we are sure they are true' (WT), as does Speed: 'All this I speak in print, for in print I found it' (TGV).

Death is encompassed in a multiplicity of literate events—relating it, ordering it, lying about it, denying it, faking it. Aaron's forged note ensures the beheadings of Quintus and Martius (TIT), and Hamlet's forged commission arranges his childhood friends' sudden deaths with 'not shriving time allow'd', even as he destroys the commission for his own

44. 'No play exhibits a richer interplay between words and letters and reading and writing, between proleptic oaths and their various fulfillments, than *All's Well that Ends Well*'. Robert S. Knapp, 'There's Letters from My Mother; What th' Import Is, I Know Not Yet', in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David M. Bergeron (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 271–72. This might be an overstatement when one considers the importance of letters in *King Lear*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Cymbeline*, or *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

death (HAM). Caesar refuses to read the schedule from Artemidorus that would save his life (JC), and Henry V traps the three traitors with their own letters and then remarks, 'What see you in those papers that you lose / So much complexion? Look ye, how they change! / Their cheeks are paper' (HV). In response to a letter from Posthumous to murder Imogen, Pisanio writes to Posthumous, falsely, that Imogen is indeed dead (CYM). Enobarbus is so touched with guilt and grief over the tender missive from Antony, 'This blows my heart', that he finds a ditch and falls dead into it (ANT). The scrivener spends eleven hours writing a false indictment of Hastings that seals his death, whilst in Clarence's dream his soul passed 'the melancholy flood / With that grim Ferry-man which Poets write of, / Unto the Kingdom of perpetual night' (R3). Hermione is indicted by one document read aloud and exonerated through the words of the oracle read aloud (WT). A letter from Antonio pressures Bassanio to witness his death, whilst a later letter returns 'life and living' to Antonio (MV). A letter hoodwinks Malvolio into not death but dark captivity, and his own letter sets him free (TN).

In a similar manner, literacy is used to memorialise, as mentioned above when Titus wants to write on 'a leaf of brass' about Lavinia's revelation (TIT). The text on Timon's tombstone, which a soldier copies in wax, identifies Timon (TIM). Macduff plans to emblazon Macbeth as a traitor, 'Painted upon a pole, and under-writ, / "Here may you see the Tyrant"' (MAC). Talbot vows to engrave upon Salisbury's tomb, 'that every one may read', of 'the treacherous manner of his mournful death' (1H6). Troilus plans to divulge his passion 'In characters as red as Mars'; the purpose of Hector's challenge is described by Nestor as 'perspicuous even as substance, / Whose grossness little characters sum up', whilst Cressida swears to be true until 'mighty States characterless are grated / To dusty nothing' (TRO).⁴⁵ John of Gaunt, on his deathbed, reflects that the ends of men's lives are 'writ in remembrance more than things long past' (R2), whereas Griffith observes, 'Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues / We write in water' (H8). Caesar would 'bade the Romans / Mark him and write his speeches in their books' for posterity (JC). Vincentio craftily belies Angelo in a metaphor that again speaks to the immortality of written words:

Oh your desert speaks loud, and I should wrong it,
To lock it in the wards of covert bosom
When it deserves, with characters of brass,

45. The word 'character' in Shakespeare always refers to handwriting or inscriptions.

A fortified residence 'gainst the tooth of time,
And razure of oblivion. (MM 5.1.10–14)

Perhaps most poignantly, Shakespeare understands that his own writing has the power to immortalise a person: 'Your monument shall be my gentle verse, / Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read' . . . 'So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this and this gives life to thee' (SONNET 18).⁴⁶ 'Not marble, nor the gilded monuments / Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme' (SONNET 55), and 'That in black ink my love may still shine bright' (SONNET 65). Yet again it is written words that triumph over Time.

My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent. (SONNET 107.10–14)

Frequently Shakespeare uses literacy as recognition and identification in either documents or character (handwriting) itself. Letters identifying the abandoned newborn Perdita are used again sixteen years later to distinguish her to her parents, whilst Camillo promises to write remembrances that will identify Florizel as the son of Polixenes, assuring their futures (WT). Gloucester asks Edmund, regarding the forged letter, 'Know you the character to be your brother's?' (LR). The Provost identifies the handwriting of a letter that the supposed friar holds: 'Here is the hand and seal of the Duke: you know the character, I doubt not', and the Provost agrees, 'I know them both' (MM). Upon receiving a letter from her husband, delivered by Pisanio, Imogen cries, 'O, learn'd indeed were that astronomer / That knew the stars as I his characters' (CYM). When Claudius reads a surprising letter and Laertes asks, 'Know you the hand?', Claudius replies, 'Tis Hamlet's character' (HAM).

Shakespeare uses literacy both as metaphor and remembrance in telling conceits of imaginary book titles in which various life lessons, philosophical thoughts or memorable ideas are described as if they are actual books, providing an indication of how easily Shakespeare translates life into literacy.⁴⁷ Autolycus claims his name has been put in *The Book of Virtue* (WT); Rome's gratitude is enrolled in *Jove's Own Book* (COR); King John describes Blanche as *This Book of Beauty* (JN); Mowbray swears if ever he were traitor to

46. It has been a source of unending exasperation that Shakespeare never told us who that someone is to whom he promised immortality.

47. The capital letters of the 'books' have been added merely as identifiers.

have his name blotted from The Book of Life (R2). When accused of 'grievous crimes', King Richard tells Northumberland that his own offences would be marked with a blot in The Book of Heaven (R2). Westmorland talks of a Lawless Bloody Book of Forg'd Rebellion (2H4), whilst Othello speaks of The Bloody Book of Law (OTH). Hector taunts Achilles: 'O, like A Book of Sport thou'lt read me o'er' (TRO). Hamlet famously speaks of The Table of my Memory (HAM). York tells Somerset and Pole that he will note them in his Book of Memory in order to scourge them later (1H6), whilst Duke Humphrey worries that the consequences of the King's marriage to Margaret will blot noble names from The Books of Memory (2H6). Mercutio rails that Tybalt fights by The Book of Arithmetic, and later Romeo mourns that Paris's hand will be writ with Romeo's in Sour Misfortune's Book (ROM). When Falstaff claims that he is 'in the vaward of youth', the Chief Justice exclaims, 'Do you set down your name in The Scroll of Youth, that are written down old, with all the characters of age?'; later in that play, Prince John speaks of The Books of God, whilst King Henry speaks of God's Book when condemning Dame Cobham, and later wishes he might read The Book of Fate and what it holds for the future (2H4). Worcester tells his nephew Hotspur that he will 'unclasp A Secret Book' and 'read you matter deep and dangerous' (1H4). The soothsayer has a similar volume from which he reads, 'Nature's Infinite Book of Secrecy' (ANT).

A literacy narrative in the plays that is in direct contradiction to Cressy's statistics is established in the complete lack of illiterate women in Shakespeare's canon, with the possible ambiguous exception of Jacquenetta in *Love's Labour's Lost*.⁴⁸ Tutors are hired and books brought in for the teaching of Greek, Latin, poetry, philosophy, and music for two young townswomen, Katerina and Bianca, and Bianca engages in witty banter with a suitor in Latin (SHR). Portia studies the law books of Dr. Bellario to trap Shylock in a devastating court case, and Jessica secretly exchanges letters with her lover to escape her house (MV). Helena has studied her father's medical books and is in possession of a receipt that enables her to cure the king's fistula after all the male doctors have failed, and Diana's letter exposes Bertram in his faithless dealings (AWW). Lavinia reveals her story in the book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and accuses her rapists in written Latin (TIT). Beatrice is accused of having

48. Cressy, *Literacy*, 106. Cressy believes that women were 'massively illiterate', but Spufford, *Small Books*, 34–35, shows evidence that, 'As many as three-quarters of the women making marks could read, since writing was frequently omitted from the school curricula of girls from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries', thus they do not appear in Cressy's tables of signatures as indicators of literacy.

gotten her 'good wit' by reading the *Hundred Merry Tales*, whilst later she betrays herself with her own poem written to Benedick (ADO).⁴⁹ Love letters from Falstaff incense the merry wives, in which discourse it is apparent that Mistress Page is aware of the iterability of the printing press and the differentiation of separate editions; the two wives devise their own letter to entrap and humiliate the fat knight (WIV). Maria crafts a letter designed to make a 'contemplative idiot' of the steward, Malvolio (TN). Rosalind derides the quality of the poetry that Orlando pins on trees (AYL). Imogen reads the story of Tereus (apparently in Greek) before bed, and later, whilst living in a cave, carves vegetables into shapes of the alphabet (CYM). Goneril and Regan arrange love and treachery and betrayal through their letters (LR), and Lady Macbeth writes on folded papers in the depths of her sleep-walking (MAC). Sylvia, clever young lady, is fearful of being caught trading love letters and so, 'Herself hath taught her love himself to write unto her lover'; indeed, a letter is later sent to Sylvia with intent to enfranchise her, but it is intercepted by her father the Duke (TGV). Suffolk intends a letter to the young Margaret (1H6) and Cleopatra twice calls for 'ink and paper' (ANT).

It is in Shakespeare's representation of the literacy abundant in women of the menial class that differs most markedly from Cressy's statistics. Juliet's Nurse prattles of several letters in the alphabet (ROM). Perdita, raised in a shepherd's hut, writes out a shopping list (WT). Shakespeare portrays the shepherd girls Mopsa and Dorcas as not only reading aloud, but also reading music to sing along with Autolycus; Mopsa exclaims that she particularly likes ballads in print because (as mentioned above) they must surely be true (WT).⁵⁰ Phoebe the shepherdess writes a taunting letter—in rhyme and with a quill pen; Shakespeare makes a point of the fact that Silvius watched her write it, although Rosalind berates the leathern hand of she who wrote it (AYL). Joan la Pucelle, a shepherd's daughter, compares Sir William Lucy's pompous rhetoric with the tedious writings of the Turk (1H6). Master Slender, a foolish young man, has loaned his *Book of Riddles* to Alice Shortcake of Windsor, whose name implies a working woman in the village (WIV). Thus Shakespeare assumes

49. *The Hundred Merry Tales* is 'a collection of crudely comic tales Despite its crudities it cheered Queen Elizabeth during distress in her last year.' A. R. Humphreys, ed., *Much Ado About Nothing* (1981; repr., London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), 116 n120.

50. Peter Blayney points out that, 'Works aimed at the barely literate—at those who had learned their hornbook [which was often in blackletter] but had not graduated to Latin [which was generally in roman or italic]—were usually printed in blackletter: jestbooks . . . certain kinds of sensational news pamphlets, and above all, ballads.' Peter M. Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks', 414.

literacy for not only women of the upper classes, but for female servants, townswomen, and even shepherd girls, a class that Cressy claims to be most assuredly illiterate.⁵¹ The women in the plays range from peasant girls and servants to the daughters and middle-aged wives of merchants and up through queens, yet Shakespeare assumes literacy in each one. The playwright apparently views literacy as a natural attribute in both males and females.

Also provocative are Shakespeare's general depictions of literacy in the men of the lowest classes. The tailor from a rural town, a trade that Cressy defines as fifty-two percent illiterate when in the city, reads aloud the handwritten description of Kate's garment (SHR).⁵² The pedlar Autolycus sells ballads and table-books at village fairs, implying readers and writers in villages; the Clown, a shepherd's son, reads aloud the handwritten shopping list that his foster-sister Perdita wrote (WT). The Clown in *Twelfth Night* (who is only named 'Feste' in one line) speaks some Latin, has knowledge of the classics, and reads aloud; the servant Fabian reads as well (TN). Speed and Launce, both 'clownish servants', make a great show of reading: Launce reads a handwritten catalogue of the condition of the milkmaid with whom he is in love, a catalogue he has written himself, and dares Speed to show his literacy by reading it aloud, which he does (TGV). Two watchmen, Hugh Oatcake and George Seacoal, are preferred as potential constables of the watch specifically because they 'can write and read' (ADO). Dogberry, who is illiterate, states his impression that 'to read and write comes by nature'; perhaps this is an excuse for himself, or perhaps Shakespeare actually considers reading and writing to be as fundamental as nature (ADO). Francis, the 'puny drawer' put upon by Hal, might or might not be literate but still insists that, 'I'll be sworn upon all the books in England' (1H4). Most interesting might be the 'rude mechanicals', the 'hempen homespuns', in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—a theatre carpenter, a joiner (fine woodworker), a weaver, a bellows-mender, a tinker, and a tailor, as delineated in the text.⁵³ Every one of them, even Snug the Joiner who claims he is 'slow of study', can read handwritten characters. Peter Quince draws up the bill of properties they will need

51. Cressy, *Literacy*, 134. Although Cressy admits that 'several popular books were aimed specifically at a female audience', he insists that privileged daughters only learned to read to please their fathers, and wives to match their husbands; 128.

52. *Ibid.*, 131.

53. Charles H. Shattuck, 'Shakespeare's Plays in Performance from 1660 to 1971', in *The Riverside Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 1906. Shattuck discusses the Restoration playhouse stage hands who are called 'carpenters', a title that applies to Peter Quince: Quince expresses intimate knowledge of the process of play production and rehearsal, the use of scrolls of player parts as well as cues, the theatre tiring house, the drawing up a bill of properties, etc.

for their production. Bottom and Quince understand rhythm and metre: Quince plans to compose a prologue in eight and six, alternating lines of eight and six syllables which is the traditional metre of the English ballad, but Bottom wants eight and eight, a more courtly, polished style. It eventually gets written in iambic pentameter, evincing the creative writing ability of these supposedly uncultured actors. Later, Bottom plans to have Quince write a ballad for him (MND). Beyond the humans, even fairies are given literate capacities in a sense, in that, 'Fairies use flowers for their charactery' (WIV), and Lady Fortune writes 'her fair words still in foulest letters' (2H4).

Nor are the outlines of literacy always presented in English: Lucius and Lavinia read Ovid in Latin, the scrolls that Titus shoots into the sky to petition the gods are in Latin, and Chiron recognizes a Latin verse from Horace that he read in Lily's *Rudimenta Grammatices* (TIT). Bianca and her suitor natter in Latin (SHR). Falstaff reads Galen, which was only available in the original Greek or in Latin translations (2H4).⁵⁴ Hamlet's play of *Gonzago* is 'written in very choice Italian' (HAM), and Mrs. Page has young Will questioned on his Latin 'accidence' or grammatical morphology (WIV).

Shakespeare implies a civility inherent in literacy, without which the world becomes savage. This is shown in the Earl of Westmorland's extended analogy in which he decries the noble rebels who in 'the harsh and boist'rous tongue of war' are 'Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood, / Your pens to lances' (2H4). At the few points of illiteracy in the canon, Shakespeare appears to address the dangers and foolishness, even barbarity, of a bookless existence, and in so doing delineates a stark contrast between the lettered and the unlettered. Sir Nathaniel rails against Constable Dull's small Latin, insinuating that one is bestial if illiterate:

Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book.
He hath not eat paper as it were:
He hath not drunk ink.
His intellect is not replenished, he is only an animal,
only sensible in the duller parts . . . (LLL 4.2.24–27)

Orlando berates his older brother Oliver for not educating him properly, comparing his keeping as less than Oliver provides for the animals on his dunghills—although Orlando is

54. Until the twenty-first century, 'no more than 25 percent of [Galen's] work [had] been translated into a modern language', and that 25 percent was in the twentieth century. Wellcome Trust, 'Philip van der Eijk: Translating Galen', <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Medical-humanities/funded-projects/major-initiatives/wtdvo30244.htm>.

certainly capable of writing love sonnets (AYL). The Archbishop of Canterbury is surprised and pleased that Henry V developed into an admirable ruler, considering his youthful companions were 'unletter'd, rude, and shallow' (HV). Launce berates Speed before he realizes Speed can read: 'Oh illiterate loiterer!' (TGV). There are only four characters in the canon, all male, who are irrefutably illiterate: Dogberry, famously unlettered, whose illiteracy makes him an ass (ADO); a young page with six lines who is chastised by Apemantus (TIM); a servant in the house of Capulet, although this is merely a plot device to enable Romeo to read the list of invitees (ROM); and Jack Cade (2H6). This is an intriguing comparison to the female servants and shepherdesses who can read and write.

Jack Cade in *2 Henry VI* is worthy of more attention as he is Shakespeare's most direct expression of illiteracy. Contrary to the historical record of which Shakespeare was aware, Cade's illiteracy in this play is developed as a character trait to display an ignorance and tyrannical stupidity. In the play, Cade orders the clerk hanged who admits, 'Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name' instead of using an illiterate mark 'like an honest, plain-dealing man'. Cade has his men smite off the head of Lord Saye because the nobleman 'most traitorously erected a grammar school, to infect the youth of the realm', and that Saye has men about him who habitually 'talk of a noun and a verb and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear'. Saye is also accused of having 'caused printing to be used' and 'built a paper-mill'.⁵⁵ Cade saves his greatest vitriol for last:

Moreover, thou hast put [poor people] in prison; and because
they could not read, thou hast hanged them; when, indeed,
only for that cause they have been most worthy to live. (2H6 4.7.41-44)

Cade's reference is to those who could read Latin and thus claim exemption from prosecution through 'benefit of clergy'.⁵⁶ The effect, however, of his harangue is to imply that

55. This is an anachronism that Shakespeare was surely aware of, making it even more important to question Shakespeare's message in all this. Jack Cade died in 1450. | William Caxton brought the first printing press to England in 1476. N. F. Blake, 'Caxton, William (1415x24-1492)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Jan. 2008), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/4963. | John Tate established the first—and anomalous—paper mill in England as early as 1476. Richard L. Hills, 'Tate, John (c.1448-1507/8)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Jan. 2008), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/58376. | It was 1588 before a commercially successful paper mill was established in Dartford, England, by John Spielman. 'Dartford Town Archive', <http://www.DartfordArchive.org.uk/technology/paper.shtml>.

56. David Bevington, ed., *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 6th ed. (New York: Pearson Education, 2009), 589 n42.

these rebels who cannot read and do not know a noun from a verb are the sort of people who will arbitrarily smite off the heads of noblemen in exchange for Cade's promise to make the conduits run 'nothing but claret wine' and that all food and drink shall be free in Cade's new realm that has no use for money.⁵⁷ Dick the Butcher, sidekick to Jack Cade, claims to spurn literacy as much as Cade, yet Dick recognizes that the Clerk of Chatham's name, Emmanuel, is used as a heading for certain legal documents. Although Cade interprets the red marks in the clerk's book to indicate he is a conjurer, Dick the Butcher understands that this shows that the clerk can make 'Obligations' or contracts. Dick is able to identify the specific type of hand that the clerk uses—court hand—a variation of handwriting used only in the courts of law. Perhaps Dick the Butcher is doing a poor job trying to hide his illiteracy, or perhaps Cade's ignorance of Dick's knowledge and what it indicates is part of the point. Perhaps Shakespeare sees literacy as so fundamental that he is inexorably drawn to include it without even noticing when it might be inappropriate. Shakespeare seems to use illiteracy as a character trait to show the depths to which one might succumb if one chooses to remain illiterate. Obviously one cannot project what the playwright believes by what his characters say, yet it is conspicuous that Shakespeare creates a situation in which illiteracy is proudly extolled by a character portrayed as one of the most ignorant and reprehensible men of the lower class, directly contrary to the historical records of Hall and Holinshed from which Shakespeare worked; whether or not Shakespeare himself believed literacy to be fundamental, he as a writer puts that intention forward into the world.

In spite of only four explicitly illiterate roles in the canon, two of which are inconsequential (the servant in *Romeo and Juliet* and the page in *Timon of Athens*), Hackel maintains, "Throughout Shakespeare's plays, we witness the commonplace nature of illiteracy."⁵⁸ Her conclusion can be challenged based on the preceding inventory of literacy in the plays. Hackel analyses only the Cade incident and the Capulet servant, with an innominate nod to Jacquenetta (LLL), who is not decisively illiterate.⁵⁹ Shakespeare demonstrates that illiteracy makes a man a beast—every remark regarding illiteracy is deprecatory. Clearly there is an underlying aversion to illiteracy in the Shakespearean canon, which is difficult not to ascribe to the author who wrote the material.

57. As Shakespeare typically uses the lowerclass behaviour to shine a light on the upperclass behaviour, one must look carefully at this exhibition.

58. Hackel, "The 'Great Variety' of Readers", 142.

59. *Ibid.*, 144.

Although the preceding litany often appears to be simply a catalog of references without a prioritizing discrimination, the very abundance of references to literacy creates its own value. As has been shown, Scott produced a monograph on just one aspect of literacy in the plays, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book*; Stewart's monograph, *Shakespeare's Letters*, explores only the written letters that appear in the plays, as does Knapp's essay; Hackel's essay has a focus on just two instances of illiteracy.⁶⁰ Obviously the catalog delineated might be worthy of a monograph of its own with in-depth analysis, but the point in this thesis is merely the reality of literacy in Shakespeare's personal world as evidenced by his remarkably copious and omnipresent references in sometimes literal but routinely metaphorical allusions. It can be argued that this very copiousness indicates an innate consciousness of day-to-day literacy.

The plays may also be said to specifically embrace metaliteracy; that is, literate works which display a manifest sense of the literate world in which the playwright lived, worked and wrote for. It has often been noted that many of Shakespeare's plays are metadramatic in that they self-reference the theatre, and Erne adds that they are 'also metatextual and metabibliographical, dramatic texts published as play-books which are recurrently concerned—at times almost obsessively concerned—with texts and books'.⁶¹ Kastan reminds us that Shakespeare's engagement 'with his own world is the most vital record we have of that world's struggle for meaning and value'.⁶² This catalogue of many of the literacies in the plays demonstrates how essential and extensive reading and writing is to the human experience in Shakespeare's community.

Barish is puzzled by the paradox he sees in the playwright Shakespeare being 'so notoriously indifferent to the printing of his plays' yet so inventively engrossed with multitudinous forms of written communication that profoundly permeate the blood and bone of his plots.⁶³ The paradox can be resolved by finally recognizing that the playwright was deeply heedful of the value of literacy as well as the publication and fate of his plays and their place in the world. If we let go of the notion of indifference to print—a notion that has always

60. Scott, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book*; Alan Stewart, *Shakespeare's Letters*; Robert S. Knapp, 'There's Letters from My Mother'; Heidi Brayman Hackel, 'The "Great Variety" of Readers'.

61. Erne, 'Afterword', *Shakespeare's book: Essays in reading, writing, and reception*, ed. Richard Meek, Jane Rickard, and Richard Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 257.

62. David Scott Kastan, 'Shakespeare and the "Element" he Lived in', in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 4.

63. Barish, 'Soft, here follows prose', 34.

been speculative—then the profusion of written communication in all its variant forms in the plays appears normative.

It is difficult to determine whether the world was genuinely as literate as Shakespeare presents, or that perhaps his body of work helped to create a more literate world. Either way, Shakespeare presumes literacy and a literate reading public. He is embedded in a world that is rapidly become more literate by the day, and he has told us that he recognizes that the printed word will outlast monuments. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Erne authenticates forty-five editions of his playbooks in print during his active career (1584–1616). Not only was Shakespeare the most published playwright compared to his exact contemporaries, but ‘no two playwrights together saw as many editions of their plays reach print as Shakespeare did alone.’⁶⁴ This chapter adds to the argument that Shakespeare wrote to be read as well as performed. Being the most successful published dramatist of his time, fully aware of a literate public, it is peculiar today to assume that Shakespeare could have been utterly unconscious of and unconcerned with this popularity in print and that he did not participate in its formation.

Shakespeare's death in 1616 was not the end of his publication history—*Othello* was published in quarto in 1622, the 36 plays in the collected works in the First Folio in 1623, and by 1642 there were 39 published plays of Shakespeare's (including *Pericles*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *Edward III*) in 144 editions. It is only natural that Shakespeare is being reconsidered as a literary dramatist, cognizant of the importance of his work on the printed page. The following chapter confirms evidence of actual readers of that work in the seventeenth century, beginning the long tradition of reading the literary dramas on the page. The evidence accumulated in the next five chapters asserts an extensive interest in the written plays, an interest which, it can be argued, might be considered highly unusual if not predetermined by the author himself.

64. Erne, ‘The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print’, 26.

CHAPTER TWO

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY READERS

Reading is an activity that we are ill-equipped to understand:
at once corporeal and ethereal, private and intersubjective,
reading is in many ways an irrecoverable process.

Janice Radway, 1994¹

One would expect that if the claim were true that Shakespeare was conscious of writing literature for reading, readers could be found. By the time Shakespeare's First Folio was published in 1623 with the exhortation from Heminge and Condell to, 'Read him, therefore; and againe, and againe', fifty-six quartos of plays by or attributed to Shakespeare were already in print—for reading.² The actuality that they were read in the seventeenth century can be traced in various ways as shown in this chapter: quotations from the plays transcribed into commonplace books, marginalia in various books and records, emendations and annotations written into published plays, and playbooks appearing as treasured collections in bound personal library collections.

Personal commonplace books provide one type of record of those who read Shakespeare. The word 'commonplace' declares that the virtues in the moral sententiae recorded in the book are to elevate the common good—virtuous principles to be shared with and practised by everyone. Kevin Sharpe summarizes the consensus of the process in that when copying important passages from the most learned authors, the note-taker 'shares in the wisdom of

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1. Janice Radway, 'On the Activity of Reading and Practices of the Popular', lecture at University of California at Berkeley, 7 April 1994, as paraphrased in Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 140.
 2. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (2013), 272–73. This does not include all apocrypha.

all literate humanity.³ Early readers used commonplacing as a proactive approach to their texts. In publications ranging from Bibles, published sermons and transcripts of lectures to academic works, travelogues and poetry:

Underlinings and marginalia marks and annotations often indicated passages that were to be entered into commonplace books. During the Renaissance period, indeed perhaps from the twelfth century to the eighteenth century, the keeping of a commonplace book was a normal habit of reading.⁴

Zwicker also speaks to the ubiquity and importance of this habit in demonstrating that commonplacing is observed across the social spectrum and throughout the early modern period as readers of all types marked and copied, ‘revolving, reducing and digesting to practise—the text that lay before them.’⁵ This ubiquity also testifies to more widespread literacy than is generally recognized. The importance of the Shakespearean quotations appearing in seventeenth-century commonplace books shows that the folios and quartos were being read by the literary-minded well before the development of the eighteenth-century culture of editorial editions of the works. Erne observes that the evidence shown in commonplace books and annotated copies during Shakespeare’s lifetime signifies the reading of the plays as literature.⁶

The commonplace book of Edward Pudsey (1573–1613) is an example of a reader who viewed the Shakespearean plays as literature. Pudsey surely never considered that he might be eternalised because of the excerpts from Shakespeare’s plays that he wrote into his book between 1600 and 1602, along with extracts from books of history, philosophy and current events. Pudsey was a reader of published contemporary plays and includes quotations in his commonplace book from Jonson, Marston, Dekker, Lyly, Nashe, Chapman and Heywood, as well as from seven plays by Shakespeare: *Merchant of Venice*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and the second quarto of *Hamlet*.⁷ Richard Savage notes that a page heading is labelled ‘Pl. Shakesp. Joh’ on a page

3. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 191.

4. *Ibid.*, 277. This combination of reading *and* writing is another indication of the extent of practical literacy.

5. Zwicker, ‘Habits of Reading’, 183.

6. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 251–52.

7. David Kathman, ‘Pudsey, Edward (bap. 1573, d. 1612/13)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Jan. 2008), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/71298.

that contains sententiae from both Shakespeare and Jonson.⁸

James Halliwell-Phillipps (1820–1889) mutilated an extensive seventeenth-century manuscript commonplace book, ‘Hesperides’, one part of which he claimed was from the 1660s and another part from the 1670s.⁹ This book is noted for its unusual use of early modern rather than classical sources. Gunnar Sorelius shows that two manuscripts at the Folger Shakespeare Library are part of the same manuscript commonplace book that Halliwell-Phillipps interspersed cuttings of throughout his own sixty-odd volumes—he literally cut the ‘Hesperides’ manuscript into hundreds of pieces and pasted the slips of Shakespearean sententiae into his own scrapbooks, with no mention of provenance. The extensive citing of Shakespearean quotations in ‘Hesperides’—194 from the comedies, 254 from the histories, 290 from the tragedies, with *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra* missing—shows an extremely active reader of Shakespeare’s plays shortly after the Restoration.¹⁰ Commonplace books are not only indicative of the tastes of the time, but one of their greatest values is that they reveal what seems to be spontaneous editing, containing as they do some of the earliest extant examples of numerous emendations of Shakespearean lines.¹¹

Late in the sixteenth century it had become popular to publish the more extensive commonplace books as they were considered ‘methodicall collection[s] of the most choice & select admonitions and sentences.’¹² One of these books, Francis Meres’ *Palladis Tamia, Wit’s Treasury* (1598), the second of four volumes in a series, is justifiably famous for identifying Shakespeare as the author of twelve plays before his name ever appeared on one, although it does not contain quotations from the plays.¹³ Two others in the series include lines from printed Shakespeare plays: John Bodenham’s *Bel-vedere, or, the Garden of the Muses* (1600) quotes freely from seven Shakespearean works, and *England’s Parnassus*

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8. Richard Savage, *Shakespearean Extracts from ‘Edward Pudsey’s Booke’* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1887), ix. Although in 1992 J. Rees claims that newly discovered missing leaves from the Pudsey book contain extracts from *Othello* (predating the quarto by twenty years), the similarities are too thin to have elicited credence. J. Rees, ‘Shakespeare and “Edward Pudseys booke”’, 1600+ variations from quarto text in Pudsey, Edward, *Hamlet* and *Othello* extracts, *Notes and Queries* 39, no. 3 (1992): 330–31.
 9. ‘Hesperides’, Folger MSS V.a.75, V.a.79–80, V.b.93, as noted in Gunnar Sorelius, ‘An Unknown Shakespearean Commonplace Book’, *The Library* 28 (Dec. 1973): 301.
 10. *Ibid.*, 296.
 11. *Ibid.*, 298.
 12. Nicholas Ling, dedication to *Politeuphuia wits common wealth* (1707), STC 15685, sig. A2r. Quoted in Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade*, 172.
 13. Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (1598; repr., New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1938), 282. Meres mentions two plays that were not in print until 1600 (MND, MV) and two plays that were not in print until the 1623 First Folio (TGV, ERR).

(1600) includes twenty-nine passages from five Shakespeare plays and sixty-five from the poems.¹⁴ The extent of the quotations indicates a fairly broad awareness of Shakespeare's works during his lifetime and an appreciable respect. It is worth a reminder that the lines are from printed plays, obviously denoting readers.

Commonplace markers drawn into manuscript books or as marginalia in published works appear as small flowers, fancy asterisks, astrological symbols, three dots (···), the pilcrow (¶), a pointing hand or manicule (☞), and other symbols. It is an old practice of using symbols to both draw attention to and classify items of some importance, often marking lines that would later be written into personal commonplace books.¹⁵ Because of the popularity of these markers, representations of them found their way into print, most particularly in books for the scholar or learned reader. Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass propose that the markers in the first printed quarto of *Hamlet* (1603) indicate its literary use. The markers, in this case in the form of double inverted commas at the beginnings of some lines, 'alert the reader to sententious passages suitable for transcription into a commonplace book, a readerly practice deriving from humanist pedagogy and one that marks Q1 *Hamlet* as a play for reading and even for study', the first such instance of a practice that will be shown to continue to this day.¹⁶ Sonia Massai reinforces their theory, that 'both the paratextual features of this edition of *Hamlet* and the literary ambitions of the agents involved in its publication were aimed at presenting it as a literary text'.¹⁷

Marginalia, annotated reading matter and the commonplace books help to establish the presence of active readers.¹⁸ Zwicker makes an extended study of the lengthy tradition of reading with pen in hand:

From marks and underscoring, from the highlighted or cross-hatched and even, at times, wholly obliterated pages, from pointing fingers and marked commonplaces, and especially from annotations in the margins of books we might, then, achieve at least a partial recovery of early modern reading, that often silent, seemingly ephemeral, and most intimate form of intellection and engagement.¹⁹

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14. David Frost, 'Shakespeare in the Seventeenth Century', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 16 (Winter 1965): 87.
 15. William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 27.
 16. Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59 (Winter 2008): 378.
 17. Sonia Massai, 'Early Readers', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 152.
 18. Zwicker, 'Habits of Reading', 176.
 19. *Ibid.*, 177.

Massai notes the importance of annotations and marginalia made by early modern readers and concurs with Robert Darnton's statement: 'How can we recapture the mental processes by which readers appropriated texts? . . . One of the best strategies lies through marginalia.'²⁰ Well-known examples include Gabriel Harvey's note in his edition of Chaucer, advocating *Hamlet* and *Lucrece* over *Venus and Adonis* for serious readers, prescribing a Shakespearean play to be as worthy of close attention as a poem.²¹ William Prynne's note in the margins of his own book, *Histrion-Mastix*, deplores that 'Shackspeers Plaies are printed in the best Crowne paper, far better than most Bibles', indicating that even Prynne was familiar with the printed First Folio.²² Massai's research shows that although annotations and marginalia more frequently appear in books that teach practical skills, there also exists a genre of annotations that betray attention to printed playbooks as theatrical or reading scripts: lists of dramatis personae are included, missing or wrong speech prefixes are corrected, and stage directions are added and emended.²³ Most marginalia that Massai found in the 107 Shakespeare quartos digitized by the British Library and posted online consists of commonplace markers and editorial corrections, 'thus suggesting that early readers . . . read [the text] as a source of profitable and memorable quotations, as well as a record of a theatrical event.'²⁴

Several early readers signed their copies of Shakespearean quartos or folios. In one of the First Folios, Sasha Roberts identifies Mary Lewis's autograph as owner in the late seventeenth century, validating that the annotations in the book belong to her and reveal 'a careful and active reader of the plays.'²⁵ Roberts wonders if some of these books were annotated with a view to performance which, as elaborated below, might actually be annotations for—or as a result of—a reading group. Roberts also reports on the annotations to Shakespearean folios autographed by Olivea Cotton (c. 1675), Elizabeth Hutchinson (c. 1700) and an Isabella, whose notes show 'the development of women's active, critical and contestatory use of

20. Robert Darnton, 'Seven Bad Reasons Not to Study Manuscripts,' *Harvard Library Bulletin* 4 (1993): 40.

21. Andrew Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print: A History and Chronology of Shakespeare Publishing* (2003; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 31.

22. *Ibid.*, 43.

23. Massai, 'Early Readers', 149.

24. *Ibid.*, 150, 150 n33. The quartos can be found at the British Library site, <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/treasuresinfull.html>.

25. Sasha Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 58–59.

Shakespeare later in the seventeenth century.²⁶ It is rather remarkable that any marginalia survives at all, considering the history that William H. Sherman uncovers of aggressive practices of cleaning marginalia from books—bleaching, scraping, trimming, remounting the live area onto new frames of paper, rebinding, pressing—and thus destroying all traces of historic ownership and use: ‘Such operations seem to have been common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and they are by no means unknown in the twentieth.’²⁷ Though relatively few, the limited and partial existence of surviving Shakespearean marginalia remains vital evidence of active readers of the plays.

Besides commonplacing and marginalia, records also exist of general readers of the plays. On 21 January 1638/39, Miss Ann Merricke wrote to her friend Mistress Lydall of a missed opportunity at the London theatre to see ‘the Alchymist’ newly revised, plus a new play; ‘but for want of these gentile recreations, I must content my selfe here, with the studie of Shackspeare, and the historie of woemen, All my countrie librarie.’²⁸ Miss Merricke makes an equation between play-going and play-reading—both of a ‘gentile recreation’, with an indication that Shakespeare was already considered worthy of ‘studie’. That women were reading—and reading plays—is made evident in Humphrey Moseley’s preface to the 1647 folio of Beaumont and Fletcher. Moseley explains why the folio is restricted to plays not previously in print because else it ‘would have rendred the Booke so Voluminous that *Ladies* and *Gentlewomen* would have found it scarce manageable, who in works of this nature must first be remembred.’²⁹ Peter Blayney remarks that the phrase, ‘must *first* be remembred’ suggests that ‘Moseley envisaged a readership in which women outnumbered men.’³⁰

Naturally, not all readers were women. Helen Kaufman writes of a young English courtier, Colonel Reymes (1613–1672), travelling through Italy with ‘Shakpers booke’ and ‘Shakespeares playes.’³¹ Reymes records in his journal of reading the book aloud with a friend. This evidence of reading Shakespeare aloud together should not be undervalued as it is clearly indicative of what can be considered an early private reading group, much like

26. *Ibid.*, 59.

27. Sherman, *Used Books*, 163.

28. Heidi Brayman Hackel, ‘“Rowme” of Its Own: Printed Drama in Early Libraries’, in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 118.

29. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 31. Italic in original.

30. Blayney, ‘The Publication of Playbooks’, 415. Italic in original.

31. Helen Kaufman, *Conscientious Cavalier: Colonel Bullen Reymes 1613-1672: The Man and His Times* (Oxford: Alden Press, 1962), 137.

the Club of Two described in chapter six. The desire to read Shakespeare's text aloud with companions is seen to be a natural inclination.

Complaining of one who read too much Shakespeare is John Cooke, presiding over the trial of Charles I, who exclaimed, 'Had the king read the Scriptures more, and Shakespeare less, . . . he would have known that it was his duty to avenge his father's death.'³² Another record of a male reader was recently discovered by Stanley Wells, who gave an account of a fair-copy manuscript of William Scott (c. 1599→1611), a great-grandson of Sir Thomas Wyatt, the poet who is credited with introducing the sonnet form into the English language.³³ In Scott's manuscript, 'The Model of Poesy or the Art of Poesy', he never refers to Shakespeare by name, but quotes directly from his writings, including critiques on line 935 from *The Rape of Lucrece* and a number of lines from *Richard II*.³⁴ As a reader, Scott may also 'with justice be called Shakespeare's first serious critic.'³⁵ At the least, Scott's notes indicate he read Shakespearean quartos alongside the Latin classics; at the most, Erne points out that Scott treats Shakespearean drama as dramatic poetry just twenty years after Sir Philip Sidney decried the scurrility of live theatre in his *Defence of Poesie*.³⁶ Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle (1623–1673), goes further than William Scott, and in 1664 publishes the first critical essay on Shakespeare.³⁷ An author herself of nineteen closet dramas and an enthusiastic patron of the theatre, Cavendish nevertheless repeatedly refers to Shakespeare's 'readers' and his 'book', indicating that she was familiar with the works in print and used them as reading material, rather than referring to them as stage plays.³⁸ This natural propensity to view the plays as literature will recur for the next three hundred years.

Perhaps the binding of playbooks into volumes for sale as collected works displays the

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32. John Cooke, *King Charles His Case*, London 1649, quoted in James Sutherland and Joel Hurstfield, *Shakespeare's World* (London: Edward Arnold, 1964), 191. His father was rumoured to have been poisoned by his own favourite, the Duke of Buckingham.
33. For more on Sir Thomas Wyatt, see H. A. Mason, *Sir Thomas Wyatt: A Literary Portrait* (London: Bristol Classic Press, 1986).
34. Stanley Wells, 'A new early reader of Shakespeare', in *Shakespeare's book: Essays in reading, writing and reception*, ed. Richard Meek, Jane Rickard, and Richard Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 237.
35. *Ibid.*, 240.
36. Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 225.
37. Brian Vickers, ed., 'Margaret Cavendish on Shakespeare's Wit, 1662', in *William Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage 1623–1692*, vol. 1 (1974; repr., London: Routledge, 2009), 42–44. Cavendish's original is Letter 113, from *CCXI Sociable Letters, written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and Excellent Princess, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle*, published 1664, 224–28.
38. Ann Thompson and Sasha Roberts, eds. *Women Reading Shakespeare, 1660–1900: An Anthology of Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 11–13.

most tangible model of an awareness of their inherent literary value. In 1619 Thomas Pavier, publisher and bookseller, gathered ten quartos by or attributed to Shakespeare, created a separate title page for each play, and published them as a collection. Regardless of the fact that most of the title pages apparently display false dating and printing information, ‘Pavier imagined a collection of plays that, like the First Folio, had as its organizing principle a single author: the professional playwright, William Shakespeare.’³⁹ Although Stallybrass and Chartier claim that Pavier’s project ‘was the first serious attempt to materialize Shakespeare as a dramatic author in the form of a bound book’ for a reading public, this statement must be qualified in light of the collection of Frances Stanley Egerton, below, in that Pavier’s was the first attempt at a *marketable* product.

Nineteen-year-old Frances Stanley (1583–1636), before her marriage to her step-brother John Egerton, went to the trouble and expense of having her collection of Shakespeare’s quartos bound, along with a number of her other folios, quartos and octavos. Hackel establishes that the young woman’s library was of her own agency—not inherited, and discrete from her husband’s library.⁴⁰ Her Shakespeare collection, bound in 1602, contained twelve plays, ‘in fact almost all of Shakespeare’s plays available at the time’, only excepting the supposedly ‘bad’ quartos of *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.⁴¹ Thus the distinction of the Pavier Quartos of 1619 as the first attempt to materialize Shakespeare as a dramatic author should, as Erne identifies, go instead to Frances Egerton.⁴² This encourages Erne to recognize that, ‘The 1602 volume . . . may invite us to reconsider some of our prejudices about the cultural status of dramatic authorship among readers and collectors in Shakespeare’s own time.’⁴³ Apparently Frances Egerton was not concerned about any alleged low status of early modern dramatic playbooks, nor did she consider them to be ephemera. Frances also bound ‘Diurse Playes in 5 thicke Volumes in velum’, ‘A Booke of Diurse Playes in Leather’, ‘A booke of Diurse Playes in Velum’, and a separate volume of Fulke Greville’s *Tragedy of*

39. Peter Stallybrass and Roger Chartier, ‘Reading and Authorship: The Circulation of Shakespeare 1590–1619’, in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 42.

40. Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 245.

41. Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade*, 204. It is A. W. Pollard in 1909, *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos: A Study in the Bibliography of Shakespeare’s Plays 1594–1685* (London: Methuen, 1909), 64–80, who theorized that certain quartos are ‘bad’. His research has since been challenged and it has become standard procedure to recognize ‘bad’ in quotation marks. See Paul Werstine, ‘Narratives about Printed Shakespeare Texts: “Foul Papers” and “Bad” Quartos’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (Spring, 1990): 65–86.

42. *Ibid.*, 205.

43. *Ibid.*, 206.

Mustapha. She also owned a copy of *The Workes of Ben Jonson*, as well as a published copy of Mary Sidney's closet drama *Antonie*.⁴⁴

Sir John Harington (1560–1612), toward the end of his life, created a list of the playbooks he owned—a collection of 135 published plays, 130 of them bound into eleven volumes. The binding indicates, as it does for Frances Stanley Egerton, that he chose to preserve them as part of his personal library. Stallybrass and Chartier claim that Harington's lack of categorisation by author 'reveals that authorship played no role in the organization of his collection.'⁴⁵ Regardless of authorship, the twenty-one Shakespearean plays in Harington's library—of the twenty-four playbooks then in existence by or attributed to Shakespeare or W. S.—indicate the plays were for reading pleasure, that the author was held to be collectible and that the quartos were important enough to preserve.

T. A. Birrell considers Edward Conway (1594–1655) to have been 'definitely a reader and not a collector.'⁴⁶ Viscount Conway, a politician, professional soldier and professional sailor held 8,000 books in his private library in Ireland, plus a separate library in his London home. His catalogue shows 619 plays, a remarkable 350 of which are English quartos, as well as 343 romances in various languages, indicating 'that there was no aristocratic disdain for romances' or playbooks.⁴⁷ Arthur Freeman and Paul Grinke determine that there are twenty quartos in Conway's collection attributed to Shakespeare (three previously unknown), more than any other single playwright. Freeman and Grinke see this as a statement that Shakespeare's 'popularity with readers as well as theatre-goers in his own era was never in question.'⁴⁸ Regrettably, Conway's library containing these playbooks, along with his home, was burned by Irish rebels in 1641.

The Royal Library of King Charles I held a bound volume of Shakespearean apocrypha, apparently bound in the early 1630s, possibly as early as 1631, that contains eight plays attributed to Shakespeare: *The Puritan*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, *The London Prodigal*, *Mucedorus*, *Fair Em*, *1 Sir John Oldcastle*, as well as the

44. Hackel, *Reading Material*, 262–67.

45. Stallybrass, 'Reading and Authorship', 41.

46. T. A. Birrell, 'Reading as Pastime: the place of light literature in some gentlemen's libraries of the 17th century', in *Property of a Gentleman: The formation, organisation and dispersal of the private library 1620–1920*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1991), 123.

47. *Ibid.*, 124.

48. Arthur Freeman and Paul Grinke, 'Four new Shakespeare quartos?' *The Times Literary Supplement* (5 April 2002). This article was followed up by a statement in the TLS, 14 June 2002, 'Shakespeare Quartos', in which they explain they were mistaken about one of the four quartos.

canonical *Love's Labour's Lost*.⁴⁹ There are, of course, a number of reasons why this volume is important to Shakespearean research, but the germane issue for this thesis is that, as Peter Kirwan argues, 'as a one-off compilation for an individual library rather than a publishing project, the volume's attribution to Shakespeare has readerly rather than commercial implications,'⁵⁰ providing another insight into how and by whom even Shakespeare's attributed works were being read.

Frances Wolfreton (1607–1677), a woman of the minor gentry in the English Midlands, owned a large library consisting mainly of English literature and drama. Her collection includes plays by John Heywood, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Dekker, Philip Massinger, James Shirley and Shakespeare, as well as theological and historical works, plus medical and current affairs.⁵¹ Paul Morgan reflects that her books 'represent the leisure reading of a literate lady in her country house' and notes that among the playbooks are no fewer than ten Shakespeare quartos.⁵² Erne also identifies an unknown physician in Cambridge who owned an octavo playbook of *Richard Duke of York* (an early variant of Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI*) in 1595/96; Henry Oxinden (1609–1659) inherited or acquired a collection of 122 playbooks that included almost a dozen attributed to Shakespeare; Humphrey Dyson (1582–1633) owned one Shakespeare playbook, *Troilus and Cressida*, amongst sixteen playbooks.⁵³ The list of books and manuscripts belonging to Scipio Squyer (1579–1659), an antiquarian, shows 699 titles. Along with *Venus and Adonis*, Squyer listed *Romeo and Juliet* under the category 'Poesy', an indication of how he considered it in his reading pleasure as literature, not merely a stage play. Squyer also owned a 1600 quarto of *Richard Duke of Yorke*. Most intriguingly, Squyer not only signed and dated (160<9>) his 1609 quarto of *Pericles*, he also emended the text in five places, making him the first named person known to have made textual corrections in a Shakespearean poem or play.⁵⁴ Obviously, Squyer was

49. Peter Kirwan, 'The First Collected "Shakespeare Apocrypha"', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 62 (Winter 2011): 598. Kirwan explicates a mistake made by George Steevens in the 1793 'First Variorum' that states that this volume belonged to 'Charles the Second'; this mistake has been perpetuated by critics and scholars for 350 years. 'Critics have been content to repeat information about the volume without cross-checking its provenance and constitution.' Kirwan, 595.

50. *Ibid.*, 601.

51. Jason McElligott, 'Wolfreton, Frances (bap. 1607, d. 1677)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/68912.

52. Paul Morgan, 'Frances Wolfreton and "Hor Bouks": A Seventeenth-Century Woman Book-Collector', *The Library* 11, 6th series (Sep. 1989): 200.

53. Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade*, 198–99.

54. Nelson, 'Shakespeare and the Bibliophiles', 63–64. Nelson qualifies his statement with 'I think'.

a reader of the dramatic works and thus the first of many a reader-cum-critic.

William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585–1649), made famous by Ben Jonson's perambulatory visit in 1618/19, listed his 'Bookes red be me', indicating that he was not only a proud and diligent collector but also an enthusiastic reader.⁵⁵ His list drawn up in 1606 mentions four Shakespearean plays—*Romeo and Juliet*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the apocryphal *Lochrine*—as well as four other playbooks by other writers. Although Drummond did not note Shakespeare's name in this list, when he donated his books and manuscripts in 1626/27 to the University of Edinburgh, included was his copy of *Love's Labour's Lost* attributed to 'William Shakespeare'.⁵⁶ Thus the University of Edinburgh is the first known university library to list a Shakespearean quarto in a printed catalogue. In the copy of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Drummond's autograph name appears on the title page, he has overscored a number of lines that are 'literary conceits rather than theatrical highlights, poetically ingenious rather than dramatically effective', indicating an active reader of the playbook, one who understands the drama on the page as a literary work.⁵⁷ Although Erne mentions the oft-cited injunction of Thomas Bodley to exclude 'riff raff books', including most *but not all* plays, from his library, an injunction that is routinely used to assert the ephemerality and discardable nature of *all* plays, Erne does not specifically reveal that the Bodleian Library is the first recorded institutional purchaser of the First Folio: a copy was delivered from Jaggard's print shop to William Wildgoose, the university binder, on 17 February, 1623/24, although Bodley had died by this time.⁵⁸

As community reading groups are a primary focus of this thesis, in which chapter four documents an important eighteenth-century Shakespeare group and chapter six substantiates the proliferation of thousands of reading groups, there are significations that the process of reading Shakespeare aloud in a group has seventeenth-century origins. Similar to Colonel Reymes mentioned above, another community reading group appears in the activities of Sir Edward Dering (1598–1644) of Surrenden in Pluckley, Kent. He was 'a

55. Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade*, 195.

56. The second quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* was included in Drummond's donation but is listed under 'R'; all quartos of *Romeo and Juliet* during Shakespeare's lifetime are anonymous.

57. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 252.

58. Robert M. Smith, 'Why a First Folio Shakespeare Remained in England', *Review of English Studies* 15 (July 1939): 257. Bodley's original notes states, 'Haply some plays may be worthy the keeping, but hardly one in forty', as published in Anthony Panizzi (1797–1879), *Private and Confidential on the Collection of Printed Books at the British Museum, Its Increase and Arrangement* (privately printed, undated), 70.

notable antiquary and an unfortunate politician', who not only recorded 'seeing a play' in London 27 times between 1619 and 1626, but also collected up to 240 playbooks and 2 First Folios—'2 volumes of Shakespear's playes'.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the titles of the quartos are not mentioned in his records. His payment for the First Folios was on 5 December 1623; since these volumes came off the press only four weeks earlier, Dering might be the first recorded purchaser of Shakespeare's First Folio. His interest to this thesis is not just as a collector of playbooks and folios, but in the discovery of what T. N. Lennam considers private performances 'by his household and neighbouring gentry at Surrenden of plays by Shakespeare' and several others.⁶⁰

Dering and his friends at Surrenden can perhaps be considered the first organized Shakespeare reading group, widening the incidents of private reading into community reading. Dering's records document the purchase of multiple copies of several plays, suggesting that he acquired them 'with an intended domestic presentation in mind'.⁶¹ His manuscript copy of an adaptation of 1 and 2 *Henry IV* seems to be marked for performance or reading as it is 'abridged and adapted into one five-act play'.⁶² G. Blakemore Evans makes a strong case that quartos of *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter's Tale*, also marked for performance or reading, originally belonged to Dering.⁶³ On 29 August 1630, Dering sent a second invitation to Robert Sidney (1595–1677), 2nd Earl of Leicester, to whom Dering is related by marriage and who lived only thirty miles from Surrenden, for an unknown event.⁶⁴ It is easy to imagine that the event was one of these productions. Although the default inference from the marked playbooks is that the household and neighbouring gentry created performances from these playbooks, it is more feasible that what was presented was more like a staged reading, given the difficulty or lack of desire or time for non-

59. T. N. S. Lennam, 'Sir Edward Dering's Collection of Playbooks, 1619–1624' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 16 (Spring 1965): 145–48. Dering's notations of 'seeing' a play contradict the oft heard statement that Elizabethans did not go to 'see a play', but went to 'hear a play', as mentioned thrice by Shakespeare. Dering's notes confirm Gabriel Egan's argument that 'Shakespeare's unusual way of putting it has, wrongly, been taken for the period's norm.' 'Hearing or Seeing a Play?: Evidence of Early Modern Theatrical Terminology', *Ben Jonson Journal* 8 (2001), <http://www.gabrielegan.com/publications/Egan2001k.htm>.

60. *Ibid.*, 145.

61. *Ibid.*, 148.

62. Arthur F. Marotti and Laura Estill, 'Manuscript Circulation', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 63.

63. G. Blakemore Evans, *Shakespearean Prompt-Books of the Seventeenth Century* (Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1960), 1, 4, 8–11.

64. Michael G. Brennan and Noel J. Kinnamon, *A Sidney Chronology 1554–1654* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 244. Sidney lived in Penshurst, Kent.

professionals to memorize and perform the lines of an entire play.

Another possible reading group is indicated in a seventeenth-century manuscript copy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, based on the 1632 Second Folio. Evans persuasively argues that the text is a 'literary' manuscript prepared for readers rather than a copy intended for actors in a playhouse. It is, he claims, 'quite unsuitable for a potential prompt-book' in that it has no prompt notations, is not always easily legible, is written in two columns mimicking a mini-folio page even to the point of attempting to imitate the type, and it includes the commendatory verses from Hugh Holland that appear in the First Folio.⁶⁵ The manuscript contains the earliest list of dramatis personae. Characters are provided with their Christian names that have been gleaned from sporadic references in the text and are described in greater descriptive detail than any prior list: Master Ford is 'A rich jealous Curmudgeon of Windsor' and Falstaff is 'A Fat old decayed lecherous Court Officer.'⁶⁶ The text includes 'massed entries' at the beginnings of scenes which are stage directions that list everyone who will appear in that scene, but massed entries are not useful to actors who need to know at exactly what point in the scene they are to appear. Evans argues that these details indicate what he calls a 'literary intention.'⁶⁷ Arthur F. Marotti and Laura Estill agree that the character descriptions in particular display clarification that was not available to early modern theatregoers or even to those reading early print versions.⁶⁸ In terms of a literary text for readers, it should be considered that, along with the massed entries that tell a reader to be alert for their lines in this scene, this character list with descriptions would facilitate a reading group rather than an individual reader, elucidating the parts for potential members who have not had the benefit of performance rehearsals to understand the characters.

Another intriguing literary collection of Shakespeare's plays, copied separately and bound into a single volume near the end of the seventeenth century, are the Douai manuscripts, apparently based on the Second Folio.⁶⁹ They are today held in France in the Douai Public Library, which claims the transcripts are associated with one of the English Roman Catholic

65. G. Blakemore Evans, 'The Merry Wives of Windsor: The Folger Manuscript', in *Shakespeare: Text, Language, Criticism, Essays in Honour of Marvin Spevak*, ed. Bernhard Fabian and Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador (Hildesheim: Georg Olms AG, 1987), 59.

66. *Ibid.*, 60.

67. *Ibid.*

68. Marotti, 'Manuscript Circulation', 63.

69. G. Blakemore Evans, 'The Douai Manuscripts—Six Shakespearean Transcripts (1694–95)', *Philological Quarterly* 41 (Jan 1962): 159.

foundations at Douai, an indication that someone in England cared enough for the texts to take them to Europe.⁷⁰ These six complete copies of Shakespearean plays were possibly for performance use, although the added stage directions illuminate the text for literary readers, possibly as a group. The plays—*Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It*—have been shortened and emended to suit the Roman Catholic school and to ‘reflect Restoration tastes by making the plays more decorous’,⁷¹ perhaps the earliest example of bowdlerism.

All told, there are nine known complete or close to complete manuscripts of Shakespearean plays in the early seventeenth century and more than thirty separate manuscripts of extracts, as in commonplace books, often with editorial changes.⁷² There are numerous early owners of playbooks for reading, many with annotations or marginalia, plus a number of bound collections. Provocative performance markings are suspicious of early reading groups or staged readings, consistent with what is known of closet drama performance. The documents still extant must necessarily be a minute part of what was once available and thus are fraught with meaning and significance.

H. R. Woudhuysen proposes that there are gains to be made . . .

. . . by thinking about Shakespeare’s texts in fresh ways. Quartos may not have been the ephemeral items we generally take them to have been. Shakespeare’s general lack of interest in print has been exaggerated. . . . It is possible to argue, on textual as well as aesthetic or historical grounds, that distinct authorial versions of the plays were produced for reading rather than performance.⁷³

As has been shown, by the time Shakespeare was writing there was a finely tuned and prominent infrastructure of industry and printing technology for publication. Also, despite Cressy’s well-known statistics of illiteracy, these opening chapters argue that there was a ready and literate market of readers, apparently eager for printed matter, including literature. The compelling references to literacy and denigration of illiteracy in Shakespeare’s works have been shown to be too varied, widespread and consequential to be ignored, challenging Hackel’s claim of the commonplace nature of illiteracy in Shakespeare’s plays.

70. Ibid., 164.

71. Marotti, ‘Manuscript Circulation’, 63–64.

72. Of course, none of these manuscripts is by Shakespeare himself.

73. H. R. Woudhuysen, ‘The Foundations of Shakespeare’s Text’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 125, 2003 *Lectures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 99.

Shakespeare's works were widely printed and sold—for readers. Evidence indicates the plays were read, including in reading groups, aloud. The numbers of play readers continued to grow. By the early eighteenth century, editors began to shape the reading texts for this larger following. Precisely how these editors altered and emended the text for a reading public not only provides substantiation of readers but is also a foundation on which to build a new Readers' Edition for a new reading public.

PART II
EDITING AND READING THE LITERARY SHAKESPEARE

CHAPTER THREE

THE GROWTH OF SHAKESPEAREAN EDITIONS

If we wish to know the force of human genius, we should read Shakespeare.
If we wish to see the insignificance of human learning,
we may study his commentators.

William Hazlitt, a Shakespearean commentator, 1821

Shakespeare's early collectors and readers, discussed in the previous chapter, were soon followed by a relatively small band of eighteenth-century men who laid the foundation of the Shakespearean editorial tradition. The design, layout and typographic decisions during this time set the precedent for today's material presentation of Shakespeare's plays. As the Shakespearean works do not enter the university until the late nineteenth–early twentieth century, as considered in chapter seven, the concern of publishers and editors at this time was to make the plays accessible specifically for the reading public. The remarkable proliferation of editions during the eighteenth century not only authenticates the growing numbers of lay readers, but also attests to the perception of Shakespeare's texts as literary.

By 1700, four Shakespearean folios were in print with various imprints, plus more than 120 quartos.¹ Only a hundred years later there existed fifty collected editions with London imprints, a university edition from Oxford, and uncounted individual plays.² Why so many different editions, and who read them? This chapter includes the development of the early

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1. The First Folio was published in 1623, the second in 1632, the third in 1664, and the fourth in 1685. There are two impressions of the third folio, with six apocryphal plays added to the second impression.
 2. Murphy, 'Chronological appendix', in *Shakespeare in Print*, 287–310. Between 1709 and 1821, Murphy counts only collected-works editions; after 1821 he is selective in both collected works and individual publications. Only half of the plays in the First Folio were in print as quartos by 1623.

editions of the plays for the more critically minded reader alongside the development of popular editions for the general reader, although the distinction between the two remains blurred until the late nineteenth century. Also, the proposal in this thesis for Readers' Editions of the plays designed specifically for the non-specialist benefits from an examination of the original eighteenth-century editorial practises and the readerly advantages that were implemented.

EDITING FOR READERS

The impact the early editors and publishers had on Shakespeare's text for readers, as well as the response from general readers to Shakespeare, are both integral to the establishment of the works in popular culture. In the mid-twentieth century, Ronald B. McKerrow privileges the reading public in securing Shakespeare's current place in the world:

In spite of the work of the last 150 years, Shakespeare . . . is still in the main the Shakespeare of Rowe, Pope, Theobald, Johnson, and the other eighteenth-century editors; and let me emphasize that if it had not been for the less careful, I might almost say less respectful, treatment accorded to him by these earlier editors, he might never have reached the position in the world's esteem which has made the later scholarship seem worth while.³

Although Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718), attorney, poet and playwright, is usually credited as Shakespeare's first editor with his 1709 edition, *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear; in six volumes*, consideration should also be given to the editors of the previous four folios of Shakespeare's collected works published in the seventeenth century.⁴ The publishers' attentions to the earlier quarto title pages, speech prefixes, stage directions, some act and scene divisions, etc., are signs of the typical care given most publications, but the 1623 First Folio 'was just the kind of compilation that involved activities that we can properly characterize as "editorial"'.⁵ Gary Taylor notes that John Heminge and Henry Condell, long-time actors with the King's Men whose names are displayed at the bottom of 'The Epistle Dedicatorie' in the First Folio, are unlikely to have shouldered the entire burden of editing the folio as they were 'old men, with many other responsibilities, and with more experience of

3. Ronald B. McKerrow, *The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text by his Earlier Editors, 1709–1768* (London: Annual Shakespeare Lecture, April 26, 1933), 2.

4. Nicholas Rowe is the first editor whose name we know.

5. Trevor H. Howard-Hill, 'Shakespeare's Earliest Editor, Ralph Crane', *Shakespeare Survey* 44: *Shakespeare and Politics*, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 113.

the theatre than of publishing'.⁶ David Riggs argues that Ben Jonson had a strong hand in editing the First Folio, not only because of a number of technical similarities to his own published works, such as abandoning the 'playhouse punctuation' of Shakespeare's quartos and adopting the 'so-called logical pointing' that Jonson employed in his collected works, but also that 'the extensive use of parentheses, semicolons, and end-stopped lines in the 1623 folio owes more to Jonson's example than to Shakespeare's habits of composition'.⁷

The comment on Jonson's example draws attention to the state of editorial practise at this point, which can be as simple as attending to spelling, punctuation and other scribal and typographic details, work assumed to be primarily performed by those working in the print shop.⁸ In comparison to this routine activity, T. H. Howard-Hill is able to fix Ralph Crane (c. 1555–1632), a professional scribe and poet, as Shakespeare's primary first editor because Crane's known work is far beyond the typical scope of editorial activity as seen in contemporary copiers or print shop employees. Howard-Hill carefully compares the editorial idiosyncrasies of Crane's work on manuscript copies of two of Thomas Middleton's plays, *A Game at Chess* and *Women Beware Women*, and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, and from it finds signatures of Crane's style on several of the plays in the comedies section of Shakespeare's First Folio.⁹ Howard-Hill claims that the extent of Crane's authority over the text displays 'the application of a literary intelligence to familiar material'.¹⁰ Crane's decorous ornamentation and arrangement, his use of italics and parentheses as textual markings for accentuating or de-emphasizing, textual emendations for clarification of meaning, as well as attention to and adjustments of metrical issues show that he clearly functioned as an actual editor. Crane also demonstrates an awareness of matters that specifically impact readers; in fact, some of his treatments produce texts which could not be used in theatres as scripts for performance, particularly in the use of classical instead of theatrical scene

6. Gary Taylor, 'General Introduction', in *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (1987; repr. with corrections, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 36.

7. David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 276.

8. Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing*, eds. Herbert Davis and Harry Carter (1683–84; repr., Dover Publications, Inc., 1978), 191–93.

9. Howard-Hill, 'Shakespeare's Earliest Editor', 128.

10. *Ibid.*, 124.

divisions and the massed entries of characters with no individual entrances or exits.¹¹ Thus Howard-Hill claims, referring to the transcripts that Crane prepared for the First Folio: ‘These texts were literary by design, not accident.’¹²

Sir Sidney Lee (1859–1926), one of the best-known early biographers of Shakespeare, pronounced his verdict on these Folios in 1925: ‘The second Folio was reprinted from the first. A few corrections were made in the text, but most of the changes were arbitrary and needless and prove the editor’s incompetence.’ Lee believes the third folio is merely a reprint of the second, and that the fourth folio reprints the third without change ‘except in the way of modernizing the spelling, and of increasing the number of initial capitals within the sentence.’¹³ Sonia Massai traces this common assumption back to Lewis Theobald’s preface to his 1733 edition in which he states that, ‘for near a Century, his Works were republish’d from the faulty Copies without the assistance of an intelligent Editor.’¹⁴ Despite the work of Matthew W. Black and Matthias A. Shaaber in the 1930s, below, and the earlier work of A. Nicoll and A. W. Pollard, Massai observes the following:

The transmission of Shakespeare’s works following the printing and publication of the first substantive quarto and folio editions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and prior to the official rise of the editorial tradition at the beginning of the eighteenth century is still widely regarded as a process of progressive textual degeneration.¹⁵

Although Massai notes that by the beginning of the twentieth century divergent views began to emerge on this issue of the derivative and degenerative nature of the folio texts, it is not difficult to find Lee’s comment still present in the work of scholars such as Charlton Hinman who state that the three later folios are ‘wholly without value’ and that ‘the history of the text in the seventeenth century after the publication of the First Folio is essentially

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11. Ibid., 127. Classical scene divisions are created every time an actor enters or leaves a scene, creating a new grouping of characters; theatrical scene divisions occur only when the setting changes. As mentioned above, in a massed entry the stage direction lists every character who will appear in the entire scene, which is adequate for a reading edition, but in a performance script the actors need to know more precisely at which points they enter and exit.
12. Ibid., 128.
13. Sir Sidney Lee, quoted in Matthew W. Black, ‘Shakespeare’s Seventeenth-Century Editors’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 76:5 (1936): 708.
14. Lewis Theobald, *The Works of Shakespeare in Seven Volumes*, 1733, vol. 1, xxxix, quoted in Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 207 n14.
15. Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 180. See also Allardyce Nicoll, ‘The Editors of Shakespeare from the First Folio to Malone’, in *Studies in the First Folio: 1623–1923*, ed. M. H. Spielman and Israel Gollancz (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 157–78; and Pollard, *Shakespeare’s Folios and Quartos*.

one of progressive deterioration'.¹⁶ Or from Samuel Schoenbaum: 'As editor, Rowe has obvious enough deficiencies, the most glaring of which is his choice of the derivative Fourth Folio of 1685 for his copy text'.¹⁷ Black and Shaaber, however, question this legacy of belief that the text is derivative and degenerative and have shown that more important and extensive editorial work was done on the second (F2), third (F3), and fourth (F4) folios than has previously been recognized, to the extent that they could be considered (almost) critical editions rather than imperfect reprints.¹⁸ Black and Shaaber also reveal that the havoc engendered by printers has been underestimated for two hundred years. Sorting out printer issues and the truly 'mistaken' folio changes, they estimate that half of the editorial changes, about two per page in F2 alone, have been 'exactly adopted by present day authority', indicating the recognized value of the modifications.¹⁹ An example is in the F1 *As You Like It*, 2.1.59, where a Lord states, 'The body of Countrie, Citie, Court.' The line is metrically irregular as scanned; if *body* is elided into one syllable to make it scan properly, the line is a foot short. The 1632 F2 inserts 'the' into the line to make it regular: 'The body of the Countrie, Citie, Court,' and this modification has been retained in virtually every edition since.

These unknown workers attempted to emend cruces that continue to stymie modern editors. They supplied missing words crucial to meaning, corrected inconsistencies and textual corruptions, redressed stage directions, restored rhyme in defective passages, remedied grammatical mistakes and modernized the style. Black and Shaaber assert that no one outside the hierarchy of the well-known eighteenth-century Shakespearean editors such as Lewis Theobald, George Steevens and Edward Capell 'excel the folio editors in brilliance'.²⁰ Black considers the 1685 F4 to have the most readable text and the most masterly printing with typographic consistency, stage-direction placement, initial caps for verse and improved punctuation. At the same time, Black believes the compositor of F2 had more poetic and literary sensibilities than the following two compositors, with 'an

16. Charlton Hinman, 'Shakespeare's Text—Then, Now, and Tomorrow', in *Shakespeare Survey 18: Then Till Now*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 23.

17. S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 86.

18. Matthew W. Black and Matthias A. Shaaber, *Shakespeare's Seventeenth-Century Editors 1632–1685* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1937).

19. *Ibid.*, 710.

20. *Ibid.*, 710–11.

appreciation of the plays as drama and as verse which the later editions match but seldom.²¹

Massai questions Black and Shaaber's conclusions regarding the idiosyncratic textual variations in F₄ that they believe stem from three different press-correctors. She claims her theory in which 'correctors of early modern dramatic copy for the press are best described as "annotating readers"' is most on display in the F₄ text of *Coriolanus*, where an anonymous annotator of a printed version corrected speech prefixes, sporadically emended nonsense readings in the dialogue and refined many stage directions.²² The 'annotating readers' are those as discussed in the previous chapter, readers who emend the text in their printed books. Certainly this is not the most common occurrence, but in this possibility Massai inheres early readers as another form of editorial agent—generally anonymous, but still actively contributing 'to the production of early modern printed texts as material artefacts.'²³

The work of Nicholas Rowe on the 1709 edition of Shakespeare's collected works, a product of what is commonly called the Tonson publishing cartel, is considered the beginning of the rise of the great editorial tradition. Nonetheless, a closer look at the genesis of the readerly attributes and intentions of Rowe's edition demonstrates that the publisher himself can take much of the credit. An early example of the importance of the publisher in the presentation process is Jacob Tonson the elder (1655–1736). He was founder of one of the most formidable publishing houses in the late seventeenth century which grew to become the foremost publisher of all the major multivolume editions of the collected works of Shakespeare for most of the next century. His publishing house in the early 1700s experimented with distinctive design, formatting, layout, ornamentation, typographic style and size of volume. Tonson's instinct for what appeals to readers can be seen in his publication of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, all the rights to which Tonson had bought by 1690. He not only made important emendations to the text of *Paradise Lost*, consulting Milton's manuscript and three previous editions, but printed it in folio 'with careful and attractive typography.'²⁴ He hired the artist John Baptist Medina (1659–1710) to illustrate the poem and hired Patrick Hume (*fl.* 1695), literary scholar and poet, to annotate

21. *Ibid.*, 717. Whether this is actually the work of the compositor, the printer, the publisher or a specially designated person acting in the capacity of an editor is unknown. The term 'editor' was not used in the sense of 'one who prepares the literary work of another person' until 1712, according to the OED.

22. Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*, 182, 190.

23. *Ibid.*, 31.

24. Raymond N. MacKenzie, 'Tonson, Jacob, the elder (1655/6–1736)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Jan. 2008), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/27540.

it. These attentions to the presentation combined to make ‘a possibly daunting poem more immediately interesting and accessible’ for readers.²⁵ The result was not only a lucrative investment, but Tonson’s production of the poem as a national classic in edited form and large format is recognizable as the foundation of the Tonson house style.²⁶ By the last decade of the seventeenth century, Tonson emerged as what Robert Hamm describes as ‘perhaps *the* leading English literary bookseller.’²⁷ The word ‘literary’ is the key in Hamm’s statement as it reveals that Tonson saw Shakespeare as a literary author to add to his catalogue along with his editions of *Paradise Lost*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and John Dryden’s *The Works of Virgil*, all published as illustrated folio editions, and later Racine’s *Oeuvres* in quarto. Tonson’s publications for the Cambridge University Press also display readerly attention, striving for clarity and quality; he relocated the extensive notes, annotations, and other apparatus to the backs of the volumes, thus providing readers with what Hamm observes as ‘generous margins for their own notes or annotations.’²⁸

A 1623 folio book is about fourteen inches tall, ten inches wide, and heavy—Shakespeare’s First Folio weighs a stone. These heavy folios are not easy to hold and were presumably read from a stand. Jacob Tonson changed the nature of this interaction with Shakespeare by producing the collected works for the first time in an octavo set, small books about four by six inches. The cultural prestige of the monumental folio gave way to the development of what Hamm terms ‘vernacular classics.’²⁹ He draws attention to a crucial phenomenological issue of the move away from large and hefty folios:

Smaller formats transform the reader’s relationship to the book, for the size of a volume affects the ways (and places) in which one uses it. Economic factors may have compelled booksellers to use smaller formats more liberally, but this change had a significant impact on reading habits.³⁰

Some additions to the play are apparently due to Rowe’s editorial work with his background as a dramatist himself. Rowe modernized spelling and updated the

25. Ibid., Tonson, ODNB.

26. Marcus Walsh, ‘Editing and Publishing Shakespeare’, in *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 22.

27. Robert B. Hamm, ‘Rowe’s Shakespear (1709) and the Tonson House Style’, *College Literature* 31 (Summer 2004): 181. Italic in original.

28. Ibid., 182. The first book from the Cambridge University Press was in 1584. Tonson’s publications for this press were not Shakespearean editions.

29. Ibid., 180.

30. Ibid., 186.

punctuation; regularized the plays into five acts and scenes, as only some division had been done in the folios; and translated the Latin headings in the folios to English. He prefixed lists of *dramatis personae* to each play, ordering them according to social rank and gender, thus establishing the tradition of listing monarchs first and women, regardless of class, last. Rowe also added literary details to this list, as in *Cymbeline* where Leonatus Posthumous is described as ‘A Gentleman in Love with the Princess, and privately Married to her’. Other specifically readerly touches were added such as expanded stage directions, including exits and entrances, as well as scene locations to assist readers in visualizing the action.

Yet most of the remarkable new formatting issues of Shakespeare’s collected work is due to Jacob Tonson’s publishing insights—Tonson hired Nicholas Rowe to effect Tonson’s own vision. The new product was a convenient matched set of six octavos that includes forty-five illustrations for the forty-three plays.³¹ Also at Tonson’s request the first biography of Shakespeare was written, for which Rowe drew on anecdotes collected by the actor Thomas Betterton (1635–1710), thus setting the playwright in context.³² Although Rowe’s edition is generally seen as the single greatest determinant in the way Shakespeare’s plays appear in collected editions until the late twentieth century, credit for the radical change in Shakespeare’s presentation to the world must also be given to this material house style developed by the publishing company. Michael Bristol sees Tonson’s process as an important example of the use of the current technology of an era impacting the culture of Shakespeare, an idea that has importance for the proposed Readers’ Editions: ‘Understanding Tonson’s solution to the contemporary problem of cultural technology is far more important in the long-term history of Shakespeare’s reception than any quibbling over the precision of Rowe’s textual scholarship.’³³ As Bristol makes clear, Tonson developed a product that enabled buyers to engage with Shakespeare’s plays as readers without having to struggle to recreate the dramatic narrative from the characters’ speeches alone and without the ‘tedious’ scholarship that was already a hallmark of the classics.³⁴ In this way Tonson and Rowe together, product designer and textual editor, made Shakespeare more accessible to a wider reading public through the unique presentation of a convenient and illustrated

31. Tonson and Rowe include the seven apocryphal plays that were added to the second impression of F3.

32. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 59–60.

33. Michael D. Bristol, *Big-Time Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1996), 75.

34. *Ibid.*

octavo edition. By including Shakespeare in his series of vernacular classics, Tonson situates the plays in the context of the early development of an English literary canon. As this format was similar to other editions of the collected works of popular authors, it situated Shakespeare into the literary market rather than the playbook market.³⁵ Nicholas Rowe, in being hired to edit the text and fulfil Tonson's requirement for a literary publication, became part of the forward momentum of Shakespeare's reputation in print.

Tonson acquired the existing rights to Shakespeare's work between 1707 and 1709; the Tonson firm was never the exclusive owner of all of the plays, but it was very much the dominant partner within the cartel that published Shakespeare.³⁶ The 1709 Rowe edition and the second impression that same year sold out, but the set was expensive and aimed at an elite market. By 1714 Tonson developed a less costly edition designed to appeal to a larger segment of the reading public.³⁷ Tonson published not only less expensive editions of the set of collected works, but also individual copies of the most popular plays. The rational conclusion is that these copies were bought to be read, not to be displayed on a pedestal:

In the large mansions in town and country the 1709 edition reposed in state in the library, but often the owners of these were again customers for the smaller and cheaper edition, either for their own use or for the amusement of the then large household staff attached to their residences: some copies do turn up marked specifically for 'The Housekeeper's Room'.³⁸

The 1714 edition was sold at theatres as well as through hawkers or 'running booksellers' in outlying areas.³⁹ Bristol reminds us that Tonson's 'pioneering editions of Rowe supplied the basic infrastructure for a bookish appreciation of Shakespeare's works'.⁴⁰

A little over a decade later Tonson apparently realized there was no reason for owners of the Rowe edition to purchase a new copy of the same set. Bristol points out that the well-made, expensive books of the eighteenth century do not wear out, but the Tonsons 'demonstrated the importance of obsolescence and novelty in the sale of cultural goods' in

35. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, 86.

36. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 58.

37. Bristol, *Big-Time Shakespeare*, 75.

38. H. L. Ford, *Shakespeare 1700–1740: A Collation of the Editions and Separate Plays with some account of T. Johnson and R. Walker* (1935; repr., New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 3–4. Ford's observations indicate that servants were expected to be literate.

39. Jonathan Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism 1730–1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 23.

40. Bristol, *Big-Time Shakespeare*, 76.

their intention to create and promote a cultural obsolescence.⁴¹ To develop a new edition for a new market, Tonson hired Alexander Pope (1688–1744). Tonson had published Pope's first work, including the poem *Pastorals* in 1709, and Pope had grown to become an important and exciting literary figure. As the field of literary scholarship was yet to be established, Pope is an example of the named editors of the eighteenth century who were hired in the roles of editors, not because of any academic qualifications, but because of their public profiles as cultural figures.⁴² Bristol theorizes that if Tonson could use Pope to make Rowe appear superannuated and unfashionable, he could bring out an updated edition.⁴³ To invest in such another large project, Tonson must have been acutely aware of a burgeoning market of Shakespeare readers.

Pope based his edition mainly on Rowe's, literally marking up a published copy of Rowe to provide the printer with text. He did some collation with quartos and two other folios, but his primary concern was to adapt Shakespeare to conform to Pope's own standards of 'metrical regularity and linguistic decorum.'⁴⁴ Much has been written about Pope's conviction that many lines in the plays were 'compos'd of the lowest and most trifling conceits, to be accounted for only from the gross taste of the age he liv'd in', and had surely been interpolated by lowly players for performance or by the impertinence of his first printers.⁴⁵ To save Shakespeare's good name, as he saw it, Pope excised more than 1,500 lines, 220 from *Love's Labour's Lost* alone, relegating many to footnotes with 'marks of reprobation upon them', and others silently eliminated.⁴⁶ He also removed anachronisms and regularised the verse metre when he felt it necessary, creating what he considered a more measured and pleasing monotony by changing the syntax, substituting words or adding and deleting words, and altogether making verse emendations numbering into the thousands.⁴⁷ Pope eliminated what he considered to be wretched plays, the seven apocryphal plays that had been added to the second impression of F3, including *Pericles*. All was done out of great respect for the

41. Ibid., 77.

42. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 56.

43. Bristol, *Big-Time Shakespeare*, 77.

44. Ibid.

45. Alexander Pope, ed., *The Works of Shakespear*, six vol., (London, 1725), 1.157, quoted in Peter Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 62.

46. Ibid., 143. Ronald B. McKerrow notes that these 1,560 lines comprise only 1.5 percent of the total number of lines in the plays, which is 'much less than has been rejected by many more recent writers'. McKerrow, 'The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text', 20.

47. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 66.

author's reputation, and Pope certainly did his part in enhancing Shakespeare's renown.

Since the printed volumes were not the theatrical editions that represented what was actually seen on the stage for theatre attendees, Pope's concern was for the general reader. He provides glosses, as Rowe had not, identified in the text by superscript numerals following the word, with the glossed word or phrase repeated in the footnote. Also for the reader's enjoyment, he identifies Shakespeare's 'most shining passages' by commas in the margins at the beginnings of appropriate lines, and 'where the beauty lay not in particulars but in the whole, a star is prefix'd to the scene' as a better means of 'pointing out an Author's excellencies'.⁴⁸ Pope particularly favours, according to the marginal commas, 'pastoral descriptions, and protestations of love; . . . passages of pathos and melodrama'.⁴⁹ In a posthumous edition, the commas are replaced with raised, inverted commas and the stars replaced with double inverted commas, as shown in these lines from *The Tempest*:

Pro. You look, my son, in a mov'd sort,
As if you were dismay'd; be chearful, Sir:
Our revels now are ended: ' these our actors,
' As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
' Are melted into air, into thin air;
' And, like the baseless fabrick of th' air-visions,
' The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
' The solemn temples, the great globe it self,
' Yea, all, which it inherit, shall dissolve;
' And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
' Leave not a rack behind! we are such stuff
' As dreams are made on, and our little life
' Is rounded with a sleep.' ——— Sir, I am vext . . . (TMP 4.1.146–58)

.....

Cal. "All the infections, that the sun sucks up
"From bogs, fens, flats, on *Prosper* fall, and make him
"By inch-meal a disease! his spirits hear me,
"And yet I needs must curse.⁵⁰ (TMP 2.2.1–4)

These marks have no meaning to an actor, a theatrical production or even to an early Shakespearean scholar. They have relevance only for a general reader.

48. J. M. Newton, 'Alive or Dead? Alexander Pope on Shakespeare's Best Passages: A Check-List', *The Cambridge Quarterly* 3 (1968): 267.

49. P. Dixon, 'Pope's Shakespeare', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 63 (Apr. 1964): 203.

50. Alexander Pope, ed., *The Works of Shakespear: Volume the First* (London, 1747), F2^r–F3^r and D5^r.

Whereas by today's academic editorial standards Pope's work on Shakespeare is considered to be hardly competent, John Hart reminds us that Pope's edition, 'which was directed primarily to the general reader of his time, had to be comprehensible if it was to succeed, and Pope was certainly trying to make the text clear'.⁵¹ Lewis Theobald (1688–1744) in 1726 published *Shakespeare restored: or, a Specimen of the Many ERRORS, as well Committed, as Unamended, by Mr. POPE in his Late EDITION of this Poet, Designed not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the True READING of SHAKESPEARE in all the Editions ever yet publish'd*, a 194-page work of 'detailed and strenuous critical analysis which already reflects Theobald's qualifications for the task of Shakespearean editing'.⁵² Theobald's title expresses his consideration of Shakespeare not as a playwright but as a 'Poet'. He carried on to create his own annotated eight-volume edition of the collected works which came off the press in 1733, also published by Tonson. His pages, bulky with textual and explanatory notes, are the foundations of the voluminous commentary found in later eighteenth-century publications. He identifies glossed words or phrases by numerals in parentheses or brackets at the ends of the lines, with the word or phrase repeated in the footnote. Richard Bentley (1662–1742), a classical scholar long accustomed to complex textual issues, contributed a great deal to Theobald's process. Bentley's influence leads Murphy to comment, 'The dispute between Pope and Theobald betokens, to some extent, the migration of advanced textual disputation from the classical and biblical realm into the arena of national literature, as eighteenth-century culture began to shift towards the secular and the vernacular'.⁵³ Tonson published a second edition of Pope seven years later, even smaller and less expensive, again indicating an ever-growing market of lay readers.

Within a decade, two more complete editions were in process. If today's commentators mention the six volumes of Sir Thomas Hanmer (1677–1746) published in 1743–44, it is usually with critiques ranging from, 'an utterly unremarkable edition' to 'one of the worst in the eighteenth century'.⁵⁴ Hanmer was a baronet, a speaker of the House of Commons,

51. John A. Hart, 'Pope as Scholar-Editor', *Studies in Bibliography* 23 (1970): 46.

52. Marcus Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton & Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing: The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 133. Famously, Pope responded by ridiculing Theobald as the hero in *The Dunciad*.

53. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 69.

54. Taylor, *Textual Companion*, 54.

an influential horticulturist and a literary dilettante.⁵⁵ He describes himself as ‘one of the great Admirers of this incomparable Author [who] had made it the amusement of his leisure hours’ to edit the plays.⁵⁶ Hanmer states his intention in his third-person anonymous preface: ‘What the Publick is here to expect is a true and correct Edition of *Shakespeare’s* works cleared from the corruptions with which they have hitherto abounded; and claims to have used ‘the best of his judgement to restore the genuine sense and purity of it.’⁵⁷ Hanmer marked up a published copy of Pope’s edition for the printer and used Theobald’s emendations as well. This was an expensive edition, nine guineas, with magnificent print and binding and forty illustrations by two leading artists, published by Oxford University—a deluxe edition for gentlemen of his own class. He degraded not only all the passages that Pope had earlier relegated to footnotes, but more besides, such as ‘that wretched piece of ribaldry’ in *Henry v* between the princess and her gentlewoman.⁵⁸ He was disturbed, as many have been, by the reference in *The Winter’s Tale* to a coast in the landlocked Bohemia and consequently changed the locale to Bithynia, an ancient Roman province in Anatolia on the shore of the Black Sea. The second edition in 1771, also published by Oxford, was even larger and more expensive, contrary to the publishing histories of most other collections, indicating a solid market of upper-class readers—or at least upper-class people who wanted the impressive book on their shelves.

Although Hanmer’s edition is almost always spoken of derisively if at all, its publication, printed in the midst of the available editions of Pope, Theobald, William Warburton, and others, had a substantial impact in several respects. One is that it is the first time Shakespeare is printed by a university press, and it is the first English edition printed outside of London. Another is the reaction of the Tonson cartel who appropriated Hanmer’s text and reissued it under their own imprint. Most importantly, Murphy details a profusion of reprints of Hanmer’s edition by several other publishers in a variety of sizes and qualities. The original edition and particularly its many afterlives were enormous commercial successes, with the various renditions serving non-scholarly readers of all strata of society by

55. D. W. Hayton, ‘Hanmer, Sir Thomas, fourth baronet (1677–1746)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, May 2005), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/12205.

56. Brian Vickers, ed., ‘Sir Thomas Hanmer, preface to Shakespeare, 1744’, in *William Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage 1733–1752* (1975; repr., London: Routledge, 2009), 118.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., 119.

their mere abundance and accessibility. Alexander Pope's edition is much more celebrated in the history of editing and is widely significant in context, but its retail performance was 'a dismal flop'; forty years later unsold stock was auctioned for one tenth of the original price.⁵⁹ Even though McKerrow dismisses Hanmer's edition by stating, 'the work as a whole can hardly be regarded as a serious contribution to Shakespearean scholarship',⁶⁰ one can claim that the Hanmer reprints had a larger and more sprawling impact on establishing Shakespeare among common readers.

While Hanmer was working with Oxford University on his publication, Jacob Tonson III hired the Reverend William Warburton (1698–1799), a close friend of Alexander Pope, to edit yet another edition, which also came out in 1744. Warburton was disgruntled with Pope because he felt his contributions to Pope's edition were not duly acknowledged, and he attacked his recently deceased friend in the preface. Warburton carried on with legions of changes, a 'riot of emendation', including many of lines that were already perfectly intelligible.⁶¹ Warburton made so many 'aesthetic' changes that by 1748 Thomas Edwards (1699–1757), critic and poet, published a satirical document entitled *A Supplement to Mr. Warburton's Edition of Shakespear, Being the Canons of Criticism, and Glossary, Collected from the notes in that celebrated work, and proper to be bound up with it*. The 'canons of criticism' are the bulk of the publication, a facetious set of textual principles for an editor, such as, 'CANON II: He has a right to alter any passage which he does not understand', and 'CANON IV: When he does not like an expression, and yet cannot mend it, he may abuse his author for it'.⁶² Edwards' book was reprinted seven times in the next two decades. Nor was Edwards the only one who complained of the popularity of seemingly arbitrary and excessive emendations. Peter Whalley, in protesting that Shakespeare was 'transmitted to Posterity full of Errors and Corruption,' observed in 1748:

Can it be any longer a Wonder why certain Adventurers in Criticism have so ardent an Esteem for *Shakespeare*, when he gives them the most delightful Opportunity of trying their Skill upon his Plays, and of indulging a Disposition for Guesses and Conjecture, the darling Passion

59. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 8.

60. McKerrow, *The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text*, 25.

61. David Nichol Smith, 'Edmund Malone', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 3 (Oct. 1939), 29.

62. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 77–78.

of our modern Critics.⁶³

Around the same time a writer named John Holt complains: ‘No Author has suffered more than our deservedly admired Shakespear: Who, though a Modern, has been explained into Obscurity, and though he wrote in a living Tongue, has been rendered unintelligible by his commenting Editors.’⁶⁴

Emendations were taken to an unprecedented height when Jacob Tonson III published another entirely new edition and, as his great-uncle before him, chose as editor a leading literary figure of the day, this time Samuel Johnson (1709–1784). Johnson believed the earliest texts of Shakespeare’s plays had priority because ‘they who had the [original manuscript] copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we who read it only by imagination.’⁶⁵ This originated a tradition impacting all future emendations as it became absolutely fundamental to editorial theory to presume that the text ‘closest to the author’s own original has an authority which outweighs that of all other editions.’⁶⁶ But even though Johnson’s editorial method advanced Shakespearean editing more decisively toward an authorial orientation, Johnson could not or would not break away from the traditional custom of building on the previous editions—he used printed copies of Warburton’s edition and Theobald’s 1757 fourth edition as the bases for his own text, making his collection ‘the last of the old school of editing.’⁶⁷ Despite Johnson’s theoretical insistence on using the earliest texts so as to be closest to the author’s intention, Arthur M. Eastman conservatively estimates that Johnson made as many as 15,000 changes. Eastman does qualify the emendations as two different types: ‘those which totally change the meaning and those which only modify or shade it.’⁶⁸ An example of an emendation which totally changes the meaning is Theobald’s alteration of ‘invisible’ in Othello’s line, ‘O thou invisible spirit of wine’, to ‘invincible’. An example which only modifies or shades the meaning is Johnson’s alteration of ‘ne’er’ to ‘not’ in Iago’s line, ‘See suitors following

63. Peter Whalley, *An Enquiry into the Learning of Shakespeare, with Remarks on Several Passages of his Plays* (London, 1748), 16.

64. John Holt, *An Attempt to Rescue that Aunciente, English Poet, and Play-Wrighte, Maister Williaume Shakespere . . .* (London, 1749), quoted in Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 99.

65. Samuel Johnson, ed., *The Plays of William Shakespeare, in Eight Volumes, with the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators; to which are added Notes by Sam. Johnson*, vol. 1 (London, 1765), D8^v.

66. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 82.

67. Alice Walker, ‘Edward Capell and his Edition of Shakespeare’, in *Studies in Shakespeare: British Academy Lectures* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 132.

68. Arthur M. Eastman, ‘Johnson’s Shakespeare and the Laity: A Textual Study’, *PMLA* 65 (Dec. 1950): 1117.

and ne'er look behind'.⁶⁹ Judging by his text, Johnson has an aversion to the colon and a predilection for the dash. He states his method for punctuation in his preface:

In restoring the author's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences. Whatever could be done by adjusting points is therefore silently performed, in some plays with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.⁷⁰

Johnson uses dashes of varying and apparently random lengths to indicate a shift from an aside to a direct address, a typographic distinction still used in most editions today. A dash might also indicate a change of tone, or more often a change of addressee, as in the opening scene from *The Tempest* where the Boatswain firstly addresses the noblemen who are getting in the way, next the sailors, and thirdly again the noblemen.

Boats. . . . If you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap. — Cheerly, good hearts. — Out of our way, I say.⁷¹
(TMP I.I.24–28)

Sometimes Johnson specifically clarifies the addressee using character name abbreviations and sometimes he leaves it for a reader to figure out, sometimes both in the same speech as in *The Tempest*:

Pro. [To Ferd.] Follow me ———
[To Mirand.] Speak not you for him: he's a traitor. —
Come,
I'll manacle thy neck and feet together . . .⁷² (TMP I.I.463–65)

Glosses are cued in the text with superscript numerals. Johnson generally adds directions for asides and annotates some of the action. Eastman observes that this type of pointing enables a reader 'to perceive the physical movement that accompanies the script of the play as rapidly as if he were witnessing it'.⁷³ However, Johnson adds this type of notation no more than others and less than some. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, when Launce

69. Ibid.

70. Johnson, *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, E1r–E1v.

71. Ibid., 4.

72. Ibid., 28.

73. Eastman, 'Johnson's Shakespeare and the Laity', 1119.

describes a woman he loves, the stage direction is exactly the same as Pope's edition had used in 1747, Theobald's in 1733, and Rowe's in 1709:

Laun. . . . She hath more qualities than a water-spaniel, which is
much in a bare christian. Here is the cat log [*Pulling out a paper*]
of her conditions . . . (TGV 3.1.270–73)

Johnson's edition of Shakespeare is the most annotated version up to 1765, and by 1778 the Johnson-Steevens edition of *Measure for Measure* opens the first scene with two lines containing three words of dialogue on the page and the rest is notes.⁷⁴ This makes Johnson's preface to his edition rather ironic, even as it becomes clear that he expects the reader to interact with the play as a novel, as literature:

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of *Shakespeare*, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of *Theobald* and of *Pope*. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasure of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.⁷⁵

Eastman points out that Johnson's criticism has been recognized 'as permanently acute and useful', but despite the extravagant emendations and annotations, his text is now 'relegated to the limbo of unscholarly editions already populated by those of Pope and Warburton'.⁷⁶ This is an interesting comment in that it distinguishes a demarcation between the scholarly and the popular markets, with the implication that the texts for the general reader are less valuable than the texts for the scholars. Eastman acknowledges, 'The scholarly readers have been the judges of the eighteenth-century Shakespeare'.⁷⁷

If Johnson's edition is considered unscholarly, at the same time it can be seen as no less than a bridge transitioning toward the critical tradition. George Steevens (1736–1800)

74. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, *The Plays of William Shakespeare, Volume the Second* (London, 1785), B2^r. Today, the Arden edition of this play is remarkably similar, with three lines of text and the rest notes.

75. Johnson, *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, E4^r. Italic in original.

76. Eastman, 'Johnson's Shakespeare and the Laity', 1112.

77. *Ibid.*, 1121.

took over the editing of Johnson's second edition and began the process that ultimately developed into the great variorum editions, combining the annotations of many of the previous editors with his own: *The Plays of William Shakspeare in Ten Volumes with the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators; to which are added Notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, second edition, 1778*. It was Steevens' innovation to indent the second half of a shared line of verse, creating a visual presentation of the metrical structure, as in this example from *1 Henry VI* as the Messenger announces Talbot to the Countess of Auvergne:

Count: And he is welcome. What! is this the man?
Mes. Madam, it is.
Count. Is this the scourge of France?
 Is this the Talbot, so much fear'd abroad
 That with his name the mothers still their babes?⁷⁸ (1H6 2.3.15–17)

Steevens, as Pope, felt it desirable to point out the beautiful passages with inverted commas, and the lines most deserving of the reader's attention are awarded double inverted commas. This example from *3 Henry VI*, when Richard wonders about the fate of his father the Duke of York, shows both markers:

Rich. I cannot joy, until I be resolv'd
 Where our right valiant father is become.
 ' I saw him in the battle range about;
 ' And watch'd him, how he singled Clifford forth.
 ' Methought, he bore him in the thickest troop,
 As doth a lion in a herd of neat:
 " Or as a bear, encompass'd round with dogs;
 " Who having pinch'd a few, and made them cry,
 " The rest stand all aloof, and bark at him.
 " So far'd our father with his enemies;
 ' So fled his enemies my warlike father;
 ' Methinks, 'tis prize enough to be his son.
 See, how the morning opes her golden gates,
 And takes her farewell of the glorious sun!⁷⁹ (3H6 2.1.9–22)

This gnomic pointing, or marking of predominantly the aphoristic text, by the editors is similar to the earlier recognition of *sententiae* that led to copying published text into

78. George Steevens, ed., *The Plays of William Shakspeare, Volume the Seventh* (1778; repr., London: E. Harding, 1800), 34.

79. *Ibid.*, 278.

commonplace books. The pointing also implies either an expectation of readers who are not skilled at noticing the more delicate dimensions of literature and appropriately righteous verities, or perhaps a desire of the editor to become part of the reader's process of interpreting the text and thereby act as a guide or mentor. The markings might be felt to minimize the invisible interstice between editor and reader and bring the two closer together. This guidance can also be noticed in the conversational annotations that appear, such as this note of Johnson's explicating the use of the word 'pregnant' in a line of *Measure for Measure*: 'I rather think the Duke meant to say, that Escalus was *pregnant*, that is *ready* and knowing all the forms of the law, and, among other things, in the *terms* or *times set apart* for its administration.'⁸⁰ In discussing Johnson and this older school of editing, David Nichol Smith notes: 'The best and permanent results had been achieved by insight and common sense. The next school was to reinforce common sense with research.'⁸¹ If Johnson was the last of the old school of editors, Capell was the first of the new.

Edward Capell (1713–1781) had a marked impact on both the scholarly and the readerly forms of editing Shakespeare, even though his work was unpopular at the time. Capell's edition, ten small octavo volumes published in 1767–68, went to press shortly after Johnson's was complete. A solicitor and deputy inspector of plays, when his father died he became financially independent and turned to literary scholarship. Exasperated by the undisciplined editing of both Hanmer and Warburton, Capell spent most of three decades preparing for his own edition of Shakespeare's works, which included collecting all recent editions, the folios, and at least fifty-five quartos. He is the first to make use of the Stationers' Register, investigate Shakespeare's use of *Holinshed's Chronicles*, track the parallels in Plutarch's *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans* and drop Rowe's anecdotal life of Shakespeare, establishing a precedent that would be followed in the future documentary research of Edmond Malone (1741–1812) into biography and chronology. Perhaps most critically, Capell's was the first edition printed from a completely new and laboriously handlettered manuscript instead of a marked-up copy of a previously published edition. This initiated a change in editorial procedure in which meticulous collations of early

80. Samuel Johnson, ed., *The Plays of William Shakspeare, Volume the Second* (London, 1785), 265. Italic in original.

81. David Nichol Smith, *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 55.

quartos and particularly the First Folio are favoured over the existing received text.⁸²

Capell provides no gloss on the pages and allows ample white space for readers to record their own annotations. He does provide a few variants in the play text denoted by line number in the footnotes, although the lines themselves are not numbered; this requires a reader to manually count the lines to find the corresponding reference. One technique that Capell extended from Pope's typographic exemplar is the use of sigla to provide signposts for readers, functional marks to alert readers to stage business or literary concerns. He uses blackletter where he amends corrupt passages and describes 'new invented marks' in the preface to his *Prolusions; select Pieces of antient Poetry, compil'd with great Care from their Several Originals*, published separately and eight years earlier than the Shakespeare volumes.⁸³ Capell explains, for instance, the difficulty in understanding the 'single speeces that pass from one person to another, often to very many', and uses an underscore where Johnson uses a dash to indicate a change of address; 'if it be at all ambiguous to whom the words are spoken, a name is added'.⁸⁴ In this example from *Henry V*, Exeter arrests the three traitors:

EXE. I arrest thee of high-treason, by the name of *Richard* earl of *Cambridge*.__ I arrest thee of high-treason, by the name of *Henry* lord *Scroop* of *Masham*.__ I arrest thee of high-treason, by the name of *Thomas Grey* knight of *Northumberland*.⁸⁵
(H5 2.2.144-49)

A dagger with one bar 'is significant of a thing shown or pointed to; when two [bars], of a thing deliver'd'.⁸⁶ A single-bar dagger is seen in *Titus Andronicus* when Titus speaks to the disguised Tamora and her sons:

TIT. You are deceiv'd : for what I mean to do,
See † here, in bloody lines I have set down;
And what is written shall be executed.⁸⁷ (TIT 5.2.13-15)

A double-bar dagger is seen in *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1.5.41-43, when Alexas delivers a message from Mark Antony to Cleopatra:

82. Paul Baines, 'Capell, Edward (1713-1781)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Jan. 2008), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/4589.

83. Edward Capell, *Prolusions; or Select Pieces of Antient Poetry* (London J. and R. Tonson, 1760), v-vi.

84. Ibid.

85. Edward Capell, ed., *The Works of Shakespeare, Volume the Sixth* (London J. and R. Tonson, 1768), 28.

86. Capell, *Prolusions*, vi.

87. Capell, ed., *The Works of Shakespeare, Volume the Eighth* (London: J. and R. Tonson, 1768), 75.

ALE. Last thing he did, dear queen,
 He kiss'd, the last of many doubl'd kisses,
 This orient pearl † ; His speech sticks in my heart.⁸⁸ (ANT 1.5.41–43)

Capell provides literary stage directions that embody the action in the reader's mind. In the F1 *Julius Caesar* when Casca says, 'Speake hands for me', the stage direction is simply, '*They stab Caesar*,' and after Caesar's famous remark to Brutus, '*Dyes*.' Capell's painstaking stage directions based on Plutarch elaborate the action, making the text more literary as well as explicit:

CASCA: Speak, hands, for me. [*stabbing him in the Neck. Caesar rises, catches at the Dagger, and struggles with him: defends himself, for a time, against him, and against the other Conspirators; but, stab'd by Brutus,*

CAES. Et tu, Brute?___ Then fall, Caesar. [*he submits; muffles up his Face in his Mantle; falls, and dies. Senate in Confusion.*⁸⁹ (JC 3.1.77–78)

Alice Walker describes the typographical distinction as well as the design and layout of Capell's edition being years in the planning, in secret.⁹⁰ Capell explains how his marks differ from those of previous editors who might have used similar markings to call the reader's attention to sententiae or other particularly worthy lines: 'The most extensively useful of the marks introduc'd is, the double inverted comma; which do constantly and invariably denote in this work that the words they are prefix'd to are spoke apart or aside.'⁹¹ The example below shows Capell's distinct use of the double inverted commas at both the beginnings and the ends of lines for an aside. It is combined with an intriguing but rarely used mark which is 'a point ranging with the top of the letter' instead of its usual place on the baseline, in this example following the word 'sworder'. This enables the reader to easily 'distinguish irony; which is often so delicately couch'd as to escape the notice even of the attentive reader, and betray him into error.'⁹² Enobarbus speaks an ironic aside in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

ENO. "Yes, like enough; high-battl'd *Caesar* will"
 "Unstate his happiness, and be stag'd to the shew"

88. Ibid., 21.

89. Ibid., 43.

90. Walker, 'Edward Capell', 138.

91. Capell, *Prolusions*, vi.

92. Ibid., v.

“Against a sworder• I see, men’s judgments are”
 “A parcel of their fortunes ; and things outward”
 “Do draw the inward quality after them.”⁹³ (ANT 3.13.29–33)

Capell does not gloss words in the play text, as all that information is contained in three volumes of *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare*. Unfortunately for readers, these volume of notes were published separately from the plays and not until 1774, seven years after his Shakespeare edition. McKerrow notes that although Capell’s edition was never reprinted, it was repeatedly used by the editors who followed him, with Steevens in particular plagiarizing heavily from it in his future editions.⁹⁴

Capell’s insistence on the meticulous collation of quartos exponentially increased the issues in editing and eventually impacted all critical editions. Previous emendations generally ignored the quartos and depended mainly on a self-proclaimed editor’s unauthoritative and personal reading of the texts, all of which were heavy with layers of accretion. This typically resulted in what Richard Proudfoot calls ‘uncontrolled eclecticism which does not even accept the responsibility of offering reasoned defence of its decisions.’⁹⁵ The quartos added another layer of complexity that had to be dealt with. Capell had felt the quartos were particularly important because they were published while Shakespeare was alive as opposed to the posthumous First Folio, and he insisted that the folios and quartos after 1623 had no authority whatsoever.⁹⁶ Editors customarily make decisions about speech prefixes, act and scene divisions, indeterminate rhymes, foreign words and phrases, obscure words and obvious typographical errors, but in comparing quartos they must now make choices between individual words and decisions about additions or deletions of lines and entire scenes, many of which can impact the overall tone or meaning of a play. Two of the famous cruces in *Hamlet* provide small examples that have engendered fodder for editorial argumentation for centuries: Does Hamlet complain, as in the 1604 Q2, ‘O that this too

93. Capell, *Works of Shakespeare, Volume the Eighth*, 74.

94. McKerrow, ‘The Treatment of Shakespeare’s Text’, 29.

95. Richard Proudfoot, ‘Dramatic Manuscripts and the Editor’, in *Editing Renaissance Dramatic Texts: English, Italian and Spanish (Papers given at the eleventh annual Conference on Editorial Problems, 1975)*, ed. Anne Lancashire (Toronto: Dissertations-G, 1977), 35.

96. Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* (1989; repr., London: Vintage, 1991), 141.

too sullied flesh would melt’, or as in F1, ‘Oh that this too too solid Flesh, would melt.’⁹⁷ Is Hamlet silent after he says, ‘The rest is silence’, as in Q2, or does he cry out as in F1, ‘The rest is silence. O, o, o, o.’

Othello is a particularly thorny problem in that the first quarto was not registered and published until 1622, six years after Shakespeare’s death, yet the version published in the 1623 F1 includes 160 more lines than the quarto, is missing a dozen that the quarto includes, and contains more than a thousand minor differences in punctuation, capitalization and word choices. An editor must decide whether Desdemona gives Othello ‘a world of sighs’ in Q1 or ‘a world of kisses’ in F1. Does she defy her father with gentle strength in F1, ‘Nor would I there recide’, or does she speak with a little more vigour in Q1, ‘Nor I, I would not there reside’. This is one of three plays, the others being *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, that has such major differences in the variant texts as to be almost a different play.⁹⁸ The most popular solution until very recently has been to create conflated editions in which unique lines from all the variants are combined into one text.

Although Capell’s work was important, Taylor believes it did not have the immediate impact it deserved not only because of its fragmented nature but because of editorial politics—Capell was an outsider amongst ‘that privileged inner circle of literary London.’⁹⁹ It is with the edition of Edmond Malone (1741–1812), who actively collaborated in the suppression of Capell and his work, that the discipline and apparatus begin to have scholarly qualifications.¹⁰⁰ In 1780 Malone published notes and a two-volume supplement to Steevens’ 1778 edition, and in 1790 published his own ten volumes, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare*. After Malone’s death in 1812, James Boswell the younger completed a second edition, expanded and revised based on Malone’s notes into twenty-one volumes, published in 1820. Margreta de Grazia claims that new interests emerged in Malone’s edition that became fundamental and remained germane to Shakespeare studies: he articulated and integrated concepts such as the linguistic and poetic elements of Shakespeare’s

97. The oft-adopted option of ‘too too sullied flesh’ is not from the text but was first proposed by Edward Dowden in his 1899 Arden edition, page 21 n129, and promoted by John Dover Wilson as a minim-misreading in *The Manuscript of Shakespeare’s Hamlet and the Problems of its Transmission: Editorial Problems and Solutions*, vol. 2 (1932; repr., Cambridge University Press, 1963), 307.

98. For an excellent overview, see Ron Rosenbaum, *The Shakespeare Wars: Clashing Scholars, Public Fiascoes, Palace Coups* (New York: Random House, 2006), 29–101.

99. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 143.

100. *Ibid.*, 144.

time period, attempted the first full chronology of the plays, insisted on a dependence on actual facts in Shakespeare's biography, and forged a canonization of the Sonnets, which had not previously been included in any of Shakespeare's collected works.¹⁰¹ Taylor asserts that Malone 'synthesized, climaxed, and canonized the eighteenth-century tradition.'¹⁰² Malone's work, both in its material form and in its impact on all editorial studies since then, is often seen as the highest point of a certain type of editing in the long eighteenth century.

When discussing editing as far back as Rowe's 1709 edition, Bristol recognises the unremitting difficulty in resolving 'tense contradictions between a scholar's demand for scrupulous accuracy and the general reader's more lenient standard of intelligibility.'¹⁰³ A scholar may be deeply interested in the history of the critical analyses and attempted emendations to a First Folio remark from the Hostess in *Henry V* when she speaks of Falstaff's death: 'for his Nose was as sharpe as a Pen, and a Table of greene fields'. Lay readers are generally content to accept Lewis Theobald's eighteenth-century correction of the Hostess's line without question, as it is still used today, and to carry on reading: 'and 'a babbl'd of green fields'. At the same time, empirical evidence shows that lay and community readers extend their enjoyment to critical engagement as they grow more familiar and comfortable with the text, though rarely to an academic level. Eastman says of the scholarly critics: 'Their chief criterion has been accuracy, that is, fidelity to the Shakespearean manuscripts. But the lay readers, then and now, have a different standard—clarity.'¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, vigorous interest is shown by community readers in close reading, character development, structure, word origins, source material, themes and motifs, rhetoric, editorial decisions, ambiguities and other accessible features of the plays. The difficulty between text for academics and text for lay readers does not need to be resolved within one edition, as the history of Shakespearean publishing has been a history of myriad possibilities with the same text, as evidenced by the multiple editions produced by one publisher.

This chapter surveys the primary editors and the editorial processes from Rowe to Malone, both to recognize the literary emphasis for lay readers of Shakespeare and to provide underpinnings for new Readers' Editions. The combination of editor and publisher

101. Margreta de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim* (1991; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 2.

102. Taylor, *Textual Companion*, 55.

103. Bristol, *Big-Time Shakespeare*, 74.

104. Eastman, 'Johnson's Shakespeare and the Laity', 1121.

in materializing an artefact that meets the needs of lay readers in understanding a complex literary work has been shown to be an ongoing process that is constantly experimental and incrementally progressive. The following chapter turns to the readers of these early publications and the abundance of inexpensive or specialized reading editions that began appearing in the early eighteenth century which had powerful reverberations on Shakespeare's literary legacy. It is this eighteenth-century profusion of inexpensive editions for general readers that are actually of greater importance in the historical record of Shakespeare's wide circulation in the culture. Jonathan Bate agrees in that, 'From the point of view of Shakespeare's reputation, the landmarks are not so much the expensive new editions as the cheaper reprints'.¹⁰⁵ It will also be shown how the readers of the literary editions instigated more Shakespeare on stage and, most importantly, more original Shakespeare on stage.

105. Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions*, 22.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE GROWTH OF SHAKESPEAREAN READERS

Plays have a double life, in the mind as read, and on the stage as acted;
reading a play and seeing it acted
are two different but equally valid and valuable experiences.

R. A. Foakes, 1997

Marcus Walsh voices a common contemporary complaint about the early editors: ‘They failed to understand that Shakespeare’s plays were written for performance.’¹ This comment corroborates the argument that the editors and publishers—as well as readers—in previous centuries instinctively perceived the texts as literary. Rather than failing to understand that the plays were written for performance, they simply had a different understanding, ignoring the performance issues in the desire to create a readable, literary text. The very fact that editors persistently treated the text in this way substantiates the presence of a majority body of readers and that it was these readers who perpetuated the interest in Shakespeare. If the natural instinct has been to recognize Shakespeare’s works as literary, it is justifiable to consider that Shakespeare himself may have considered the plays literary.

This chapter argues that Shakespearean criticism in the eighteenth century is primarily based on textual study and tends to be concerned with explication and annotation for general readers rather than historical accuracy of the text for academics. It is also important to note here that the readers most prevalent in the historical archives happen to be women, as shown in this chapter and others; what might appear to be an emphasis on women is merely a reflection of the available evidence and the active participants. This chapter also

1. Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton*, 112.

argues that Shakespeare's works, as those of a literary dramatist, were growing popular in colonial America at this time and had a more pervasive influence than could have been effected by occasional performances.

During the eighteenth century the reading of plays was carried out increasingly for its own sake and not as a way to re-imagine a performance. Harold Love demonstrates that prologues and epilogues, satire and incisive criticism were no longer limited to a theatre performance but were generally valued as published poems in their own right: 'With the novel still in embryo and much poetry confined to manuscript, drama was acknowledged not simply as a form of literature worthy to be read with attention, but as the pre-eminent form of vernacular literature.'² Taylor, in fact, argues that the popular rise of the novel in eighteenth-century England actually heightened Shakespeare's reputation.³ He cites a character in Goethe's novel, *Meister Wilhelm's Lehrjahre*, who claims that all Shakespeare's plays belong to 'a literary genre halfway between drama and novel'.⁴ A contemporary critic wrote: 'The plays of our SHAKESPEARE are many of them formed on the plan of novels, and of novels more evidently romantic.'⁵ This speaks to an early lack of controversy between the page and the stage, a time when more than one form of a dramatic piece could be fully embraced. It also speaks to Shakespeare being perceived as a literary dramatist long before Erne's discussion, one of the major arguments of this thesis.⁶

Samuel Johnson wrote in his preface that 'A play read, affects the mind like a play acted', which Walsh notes was an idea that represents a general phenomenon of the eighteenth century:

[Johnson's words represent] the growth of a literary and scholarly tradition of Shakespearean editing independent of a dramatic tradition, embodying a concern for the values of the printed book as against oral tradition and the spoken word. . . . It celebrates Shakespeare as a literary hero, as an English literary classic, as a *poet*.⁷

Another indication of the reading of literary Shakespeare is in the recurring parodies of the text in eighteenth-century periodicals such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*, *London*

2. Harold Love, 'Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 113.

3. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 137.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Edward Burnaby Greene, *Critical Essays* (London, 1770), 226.

6. Herein, introduction, 22.

7. Johnson, *Shakespeare*, 1765, B6^r. Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton*, 124. Italic in original.

Magazine, *Monthly Review* and others. These indicate a popular familiarity with Shakespeare through reading as opposed to theatre attendance; that is, one might be hard pressed to recognize the parodies below after seeing a performance, whereas if the text had been read and marked it would be more likely remembered:

PARODY

I do remember a cook's shop—
And hereabout it stands—him late I noted
In tuck'd-up sleeves, with nightcap o'er his brows,
Cutting up joints . . .⁸

ORIGINAL

I do remember an Apothecary,
And hereabouts he dwells, which late I noted
In tatter'd weeds, with overwhelming brows,
Culling of Simples . . . [ROM 5.1.37–40]

PARODY

Her father loved me—oft got drunk with me,
Captain (he'd cry) come tell us your adventures,
From year to year, the scrapes, intrigues and frolics
That you've been versed in. . . .⁹

ORIGINAL

Her Father loved me, oft invited me:
Still question'd me the Story of my life,
From year to year: the Battles, Sieges, Fortune,
That I have passed. . . . [OTH 1.3.130–32]

Parodies, of course, are only effective if one's audience is familiar with the originals. Hence the popularity of Shakespearean parodies may be seen as indicative of the popularity of Shakespeare within the reading culture.

EDITIONS OF OUR OWN: CHEAP PRINT FOR LAY READERS

As early as 1711 an English bookseller named Thomas Johnson (1677–1735), operating out of the Netherlands to evade copyright, was smuggling into London octavos of what he describes as 'all the best English Plays neatly and correctly printed in small Volumes fit for the pocket', including a dozen of Shakespeare's individually priced at 6 shillings or

8. *Gentleman's Magazine* 62 (1792), 943, quoted in Robert Witbeck Babcock, *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry 1766–1799* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), 31.

9. *Gentleman's Magazine* 62 (1792), 1132, quoted in Babcock, *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, 31.

8 pence.¹⁰ Ford believes the small, inexpensive Dutch printings may be what prompted the Tonson cartel to reissue their edition of Rowe in 1714 in a competitive duodecimo version (about 6 x 4 inches).¹¹ Arthur Scouten reveals a connection between the new abundance of these reading editions and a commensurable wave of Shakespearean popularity in the London theatre, a coincidence that will recur. The theatrical seasons following these rival Tonson and Johnson editions, from autumn 1717 to spring 1723, record a proliferation of Shakespeare productions on stage: twenty-six Shakespearean plays were represented, with nine being adaptations. Shakespeare was especially popular at Lincoln's Inn Fields during the 1720–21 season when 16 different plays were performed on 66 nights, and the theatre was only open 164 nights in all.¹² Scouten proclaims, 'This is an amazing record'.¹³ He registers a decline in productions over the next eleven years until, coincidentally, the next profusion of reading editions appeared for the masses, as discussed below.¹⁴

The larger segment of the reading public was served even more fully after the changes to copyright protection began to take effect. It had started in 1695 when the end of the licensing system freed booksellers and publishers from prepublication censorship; this also terminated the government's role in punishing print piracy.¹⁵ Just as importantly, the 1710 Statute of Anne limited copyright, previously allowed for perpetuity, to twenty-one years for work that a publisher already had in print and fourteen years for new books. If the author of a new book was still alive, the copyright could be renewed for another fourteen years.¹⁶ However, the limits of the copyright were made murky by the vague proviso, 'that nothing in this act contained shall extend, either to Prejudice or Confirm any Right that . . . any Person or Persons have, or claim to have, to the Printing or Reprinting of any Book or Copy already Printed, or hereafter to be Printed'.¹⁷ The publishing houses took this to mean that the new copyright law applied only to books published after 1710, but they

10. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 128–29.

11. Ford, *Shakespeare 1700–1740*, 3.

12. Arthur M. Scouten, 'The Increase in Popularity of Shakespeare's Plays in the Eighteenth Century: A Caveat for Interpreters of Stage History', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 7 (Spring 1956): 195.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, 196.

15. Robert B. Hamm, Jr., 'Walker v. Tonson in the Court of Public Opinion', *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (2012): 97.

16. Jeffrey M. Gaba, 'Copyrighting Shakespeare: Jacob Tonson, Eighteenth-Century English Copyright, and the Birth of Shakespeare Scholarship', *Journal of Intellectual Property Law*, SMU Dedman School of Law Legal Studies Research Paper No. 92 (2011): 11, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1933980>.

17. Giles E. Dawson, *Four Centuries of Shakespeare Publication* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1964), 11–12.

apparently did not want to put it to the test. The end of the legal requirement to license print shops in 1695 also ended the limit on the number of printers and pressmen allowed to run publishing houses, and by 1724, seventy-five print shops were established in London and almost thirty outside the city.¹⁸ Essentially, a great deal of previously copyrighted material was now available to publish, and publishing was no longer controlled by the crown.

As a direct result of these rulings, a small, upstart publisher, Robert Walker (c. 1709–1761), effected an inadvertent yet surprising impact on the future of Shakespeare in popular culture through readers. Walker leapt into the copyright opening in 1734 and challenged the murky proviso by reprinting every Shakespeare play, including the apocrypha. Walker, in his print shop called Shakspear's Head, used a relatively new system called *numbers* in which a book is printed in successively numbered *parts*, each part being a *fascicule*, or number, and costing very little. As his sheets set in duodecimo pages came off the press every two or three days, he sold them for a penny apiece; each play was four or four and a half sheets.¹⁹ This new system allowed Walker and other small publishers to operate with a minimum amount of type and a quick return on the investment. The complete publication eventually included Rowe's account of Shakespeare's life. Every five or six plays Walker produced a free title page in red and black so the pages could be bound in a volume and even promised delivery within sixty miles of London.²⁰ Walker was the most successful publisher of numbers and sold more than any other single bookseller before 1750.²¹ Walker and his peers made it possible for the poor to buy from a robust collection of standard works of literature, history and religion on a form of instalment plan.²²

The popularity of these books is evidence that many of the poor were literate and desired to own books. As R. M. Wiles notes, 'It had been discovered that people were really eager to buy books in small, inexpensive editions.'²³ Indeed, in 1748 Henry Fielding said of the fascicule process that, 'the heavy, unread, folio lump which long had dozed on the dusty shelf, piecemealed into numbers, runs nimbly through the nation.'²⁴

18. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 102.

19. Dawson, *Four Centuries*, 13–14.

20. Arthur Brown, 'The Great Variety of Readers', in *Shakespeare Survey 18: Then Till Now*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 16.

21. R. M. Wiles, *Serial Publication in England before 1750* (1957; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7.

22. Dawson, *Four Centuries*, 13.

23. Wiles, *Serial Publication*, 106.

24. *Ibid.*, 7.

The Tonson firm struck back at what they deemed to be piracy, although they were never willing to actually test it in court nor even request a restraining injunction. Walker dared them to take him to court and denounced Tonson's unfair practices, even pouring 'contempt on his editions.'²⁵ Claiming that Walker was pursuing a 'vile Practice' and the actual 'Ruin of the Proprietors of the Copy-Right of the said Plays,' Tonson, by then Jacob Tonson II, flooded the market with his own collection of cheap, individual copies and sold them to hawkers for one penny per play, losing money but undercutting Walker.²⁶ Walker stubbornly continued to print his entire collection of Shakespeare plays, which eventually made an eight-volume set. The fierce battle between the Tonson empire and Robert Walker's small press clearly demonstrates the demand for reading Shakespeare. Don-John Dugas points to a popular engraving in 1735 titled 'The Rival Printers' that illustrates this price war and its effect on the reading public: competing piles of playbooks are rifled by consumers, two printshop workers spar with inking balls labeled 'Walkers Shakespear' and 'Tonsons Shakespear', Theobald and Pope carry enormous copies of their editions with a caption explaining that the editors are 'offering their performances for waste paper', and Shakespeare's ghost rises from the ground between the competitors.²⁷ 'The Rival Printers' is a remarkable indication of just how transparent, public, and popular was the competition for readers of the publications.

This Walker-Tonson Shakespeare war had several far-reaching consequences. For one, as mentioned above, the literate poor had access to Shakespeare for the first time. Tonson's entire collection could be had for about four shillings, assuming the hawkers had a small mark-up, and even Walker's collection, at more than double the cost, was very inexpensive, much less than any quarto had been. Very abruptly, all the plays were available to any buyer. As Robert Hume remarks, 'No single factor can be said to account for the Shakespeare boom of the eighteenth century, but the availability of cheap and semi-authentic texts of the whole (expanded) canon must have been a crucial factor in making Shakespeare much more widely and more truly known.'²⁸ This implicitly gives credit to the readers of

25. Dawson, *Four Centuries*, 14.

26. *Ibid.*, 13–14. Hawkens resold the books, but it is not known at what price they were sold.

27. Don-John Dugas, *Marketing the Bard: Shakespeare in Performance and Print 1660–1740* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 225–27.

28. Robert D. Hume, 'Before the Bard: Shakespeare in Early Eighteenth Century London,' *English Literary History* 64, no. 1 (1997): 54. In stating 'more truly known' Hume acknowledges the difference between the printed texts and the appropriations and adaptations then prevalent on stage, as discussed more fully later in this chapter.

these abundant, small books for ensuring that Shakespeare became part of the common culture. The small and cheap copies also open a path to the future popularity of reading groups, which would broaden the act of reading Shakespeare from a solitary process to a widespread activity of reading aloud with others, as will be shown.

Giles Dawson sees a possible cause-and-effect relationship between this specific ‘battle of the books’, this time between Tonson and Walker, and the noticeable increase in the demand for Shakespeare performances about five years later.²⁹ Compared to the best performance records of the earlier decades, the percentage of Shakespeare plays on stage doubled in the 1730s, the period of the Tonson-Walker proliferation of portable, inexpensive reading editions. Scouten details the 155 separate printings of thirty-seven different plays in 1734 and 1735, of which seven had not been printed individually since the Restoration, six had not been printed individually in a faithful text since 1660, and nine had never been printed individually at all.³⁰ Comparing the copious reading editions with the revival of Shakespeare plays on stage, Scouten, himself a stage historian, writes: ‘At the risk of being charged with heresy by stage historians, I would like to suggest that the publication record of Shakespeare’s plays in the second quarter of the century had a strong connection with the increased offering of the plays upon the stage.’³¹ The apparent cause-and-effect is a recurrence of the similar situation in 1717–1723 of the imported cheap editions and increased stage performances, as discussed above. This attributes a significant importance to the act of reading Shakespeare’s plays that should not be dismissed.

The issue of performance raises a contradiction pertinent to reading Shakespeare—the issue of stage adaptations and appropriations. The famous Restoration adaptations of Shakespeare by John Dryden (1631–1700), Nahum Tate (1652–1715), Colley Cibber (1671–1757) and David Garrick (1717–1779) were sometimes published by booksellers as theatrical copies that claimed to reproduce the text of plays as actually performed. These are plays in which the plots have been rewritten to the extent that Cordelia marries Edgar at the end of *King Lear*, and Prospero in *The Tempest* has two daughters, Caliban has a sister and a young man has secretly grown up in a cave on the other side of the island. In the published theatrical editions of non-appropriated Shakespearean plays, passages that had

29. Dawson, *Four Centuries*, 15.

30. Scouten, ‘The Increase in Popularity’, 197–98.

31. *Ibid.*, 197.

been omitted on the stage were sometimes included in the booklet and marked, but just as often the printed text simply deleted those passages.

It is important to distinguish this genre of published Shakespeare play from the edited reading editions that may have generated endless emendations but did not make substantial abridgements or overall changes to the plots.³² Editorial decisions about the text and explicatory annotation are typically engaged with issues of denotation and phrasing, thus editing and annotation should be distinguished from the more evidently appropriative activities, such as the theatrical versions with plot additions and adjustments. Specifically, Walsh suggests, ‘there is a distinction to be made between theatrical adaptation as appropriative, and textual editing, as at least potentially non-appropriative.’³³ The reading texts of *King Lear*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet* were often conflated out of veneration to avoid losing a word that came from Shakespeare, but they were not intended to create a new textual play in the manner of theatrical versions. Simon Jarvis also emphasises the need to recognise the relative autonomy of textual criticism from the theatrical appropriations with which they are sometimes combined.³⁴ Although theatregoers experienced the modified plays, readers had in their hands the text as close to the original as could be had at the time. These editions and their readers eventually had a significant impact on the theatre, as will be discussed. Taylor describes it this way: ‘In the seventeenth century, the popularity of Shakespeare plays with audiences had stimulated the publication of reading editions. In the eighteenth century, their popularity with readers stimulated new [stage] productions.’³⁵ The statistics collected by Don-John Dugas support this assertion: ‘From 1660 to the mid-1730s, publication was largely a function of performance. After the mid-1730s, publication began to influence performance—as least insofar as Shakespeare was concerned.’³⁶ The term ‘publication’ of course means readers. Shakespearean readers engendered more Shakespearean performances, and the material evidence for readers is seen in the market for the cheap editions that proliferated. This is made evident most clearly by the impact of the earliest decisively documented Shakespeare reading group, the Shakespeare Ladies Club.

32. Marcus Walsh, ‘Eighteenth-Century Editing, “Appropriation”, and Interpretation’, in *Shakespeare Survey 51: Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 129.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Simon Jarvis, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Shakespearean Textual Criticism and Representations of Scholarly Labour, 1725-1765* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 8.

35. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 94.

36. Dugas, *Marketing the Bard*, 182.

THE IMPACT OF A SHAKESPEARE READING GROUP

Women have a long history with Shakespeare. The first published critical response to Shakespeare—from male or female—is that of Margaret Cavendish in 1664, in part of which she praises Shakespeare's ability to transform himself into the female character:

Nay, one would think that he had been Metamorphosed from a
Man to a Woman, for who could Describe *Cleopatra* Better than
he hath done, and many other Females of his own Creating . . . ,
too many to Relate?³⁷

Michael Dobson situates Cavendish's criticism near Aphra Behn's 1673 preface to *The Dutch Lover*, one of her comedy stage plays, in which 'by the same gendered logic . . . [Behn] is able to claim [Shakespeare] as an ally, an honorary woman writer'.³⁸ The presence of women readers is also revealed in Lewis Theobald's 1726 preface to his *Shakespeare Restored*: 'And there is scarce a Poet, that our *English* Tongue boasts of, who is more the Subject of the Ladies Reading'.³⁹ Evidence is profuse, as Taylor points out, that a bountiful number of Shakespeare's eighteenth-century lay readers were female, and their enthusiasm for his plays was critical to creating and nurturing his status as a popular writer.⁴⁰ The tradition of associating Shakespeare with women was first institutionalized by the Shakespeare Ladies Club in London in the 1730s.⁴¹ The club first made its existence known in 1737, an apparent consequence of the recent proliferation of the portable Shakespeare publications as a result of the Tonson-Walker printing war. The contemporary stimulus to stage productions of previously unseen Shakespeare plays has been attributed directly to these reading women, who have also been proposed not only as the link between the increase of Shakespeare performances in general, but to setting the stage for David Garrick's dazzling debut as a Shakespearean actor in 1741.⁴²

It is not known exactly how many women were involved in the club, how often they

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37. Margaret Cavendish (née Lucas), Duchess of Newcastle, 'Letter CXXIII' in *CCXI Sociable Letters* (London: William Wilson, 1664), in *Women Reading Shakespeare 1660–1900: An anthology of criticism*, ed. Ann Thompson and Sasha Roberts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 11.
38. Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660–1769* (1992; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 31.
39. Lewis Theobald, *Shakespeare restored: or, a Specimen of the Many Errors, as well Committed, as Unamended, by Mr. Pope in his Late Edition of this Poet* (London: R. Francklin, 1726), v. Google Books PDF.
40. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 91.
41. Dobson, *National Poet*, 147.
42. David Garrick, theatre manager, producer, playwright, actor and famous egotist, achieved almost immediate stardom particularly as a result of a shockingly new style of acting: naturalistic instead of bombastic. He is the first actor honoured with a burial in Westminster Abbey.

met, what exactly they did at their meetings or who they all were, but the first trace of their impact is in their influence on stage productions.⁴³ The headings of a number of playbills in early 1737 for Shakespearean performances state, ‘At the Desire of several Ladies of Quality’, which in itself is not unusual for the time, except that it appears on every announcement of every performance of a Shakespeare play at the Drury Lane theatre in January 1737.⁴⁴ The Shakespeare Ladies Club exhibited a determination to raise the standards of theatre in that they petitioned theatre managements to reintroduce more Shakespearean plays in place of both ‘the libertine excesses of Restoration comedy and the irrational insipidity of Italian opera.’⁴⁵ To this end they managed to actuate hundreds of new performances. Fiona Ritchie maintains that these women ‘began a movement which restored many neglected Shakespearean plays to the stage, increased the frequency in which several stock plays were performed, [and] attracted great attention to Shakespeare’s works in a very short space of time.’⁴⁶ Taylor notes a critical interdependence between the page and the stage in that the specific plays the women insisted be produced were plays that had not been performed in decades, thus ‘their knowledge of them could have come only from reading.’⁴⁷ The impact of the Shakespeare Ladies Club is attested by voluminous material evidence, one example of which is a letter in the March 1737 *Grub Street Journal* that purports to be from four dead dramatists—Shakespeare, Jonson, Dryden and Rowe. It is addressed to theatre-goers and acknowledges:

’Tis a great Pleasure for us to hear, that the Ladies begin to encourage
Common Sense; which makes us in hopes that the Gentlemen will
follow their example.⁴⁸

‘WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR’ himself wrote from ‘Elisium’ to the *Daily Advertiser* to thank ‘the Ladies of Great Britain [who] were so earnest to prop the sinking State of Wit and Sense, that they form’d themselves into a Society, and revived the Memory of the forsaken Shakespeare.’⁴⁹ The New Haymarket Theatre posted that a revival of an unaltered *King John* would

43. For more information on the Shakespeare Ladies Club and specific women involved, see Katherine West Scheil, ‘Rouz’d by a Woman’s Pen’: The Shakespeare Ladies’ Club and Reading Habits of Early Modern Women, *Critical Survey* 12, no. 2 (2000): 106–127.

44. Emmett L. Avery, ‘The Shakespeare Ladies Club’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 7 (Spring 1956): 154.

45. Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, 147.

46. Fiona Ritchie, ‘Women and Shakespeare in the Restoration and Eighteenth Century’, *Literature Compass* 5, no. 6 (2008): 1159–60.

47. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 93.

48. Avery, ‘The Shakespeare Ladies Club’, 155.

49. *Ibid.*, 155–56.

include, 'A new Prologue in the Characters of Shakespear's Ghost . . . concluding with an Address to the Ladies of the Shakespear's Club.'⁵⁰ The fact that it is an 'unaltered' *King John* is critical, as noted by Scouten when he attributes the readers of the Shakespeare Ladies Club with being responsible 'for the first time [that] authentic versions outnumbered the adaptations' on stage.⁵¹ This represents another pivotal impact of reading Shakespeare: it assisted in the transition from the performances of Restoration adaptations to the original plays as printed in the reading editions.

One known reader in the club and perhaps a leader was Mary Cowper (1719–1800), an elder cousin of William Cowper the poet. She composed a poem, 'On the Revival of Shakespear's Plays by the Ladies in 1738', in which she not only credits the Ladies Club women with representing the wisdom of the goddess Minerva and partaking of her power, as well as being solely responsible for bringing Shakespeare back to life, but she also insinuates that intelligent women 'will redeem Britain from its servile cultural dependence on the Continent.'⁵² In this poem that Elizabeth Eger calls 'a vibrant celebration of women's critical acumen,'⁵³ Cowper also includes what appears to be a gibe at the males who do not always seem to understand Shakespeare:

In vain to Pope *Minerva* lifts her *Eyes*,
 (He yet *untainted* the *Contagion* flies) . . .
 At last the Goddess *her own Sex* inspires,
 Fills with her *Strength*, & warms with all her *Fires*,
 See *Wisdom*, like a *Stream*, whose rapid *Course*
 Has long been stopp'd, now with redoubled Force
Breaks out—the softer Sex redeems the Land
 And *Shakespear* lives again by their *Command*.
 For *Fashion's* Sake the very *Beaux* attend
 And by their *Smiles* would seem to *comprehend*.⁵⁴

James Ralph (*d.* 1762), historian, political writer and poet, wrote in a nationalistic vein, acknowledging the vitality of the Shakespeare reading group in helping to maintain the British spirit:

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50. Ibid., 155.
 51. Scouten, 'The Increase in Popularity, 198.
 52. Dobson, *National Poet*, 150.
 53. Elizabeth Eger, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism* (2010; repr., Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 126.
 54. Mary Cowper, BM Add. MSS 28101, 93^v and 94^v in as quoted in Dobson, *National Poet*, 151. Italic in original.

Our great Concern therefore in this Respect ought to be, encouraging old Plays, that abound with a truly *British* Spirit, and which, if ever Foreigners come to understand them, may speak us a brave, honest, and free People. This is still in our Power, and the Ladies of the *Shakespear* Club, gave a very noble Instance of its being their Inclination. Indeed, if ever the Theatre receives new Life, it must come from this Quarter. The Ladies have been always the best Patrons of Wit, and have distinguished themselves by a true Taste in public Diversions.⁵⁵

These comments by Cowper, Ralph and others indicate the extensive influence of a group such as the Shakespeare Ladies Club, of the kinds of changes that can be effected by readers of the plays and to what extent readers can impact the cultural expansion of Shakespeare as literature and theatre and, apparently, as part of a growing empire. These readers should not be underestimated. Bate sees the results of the publishing competition of reading editions between Tonson and Walker plus the consequent establishment of the lay readers of the Shakespeare Ladies Club as a combination that ‘marked a turning point in the history of Shakespeare’s popularity.’⁵⁶

Both female readers and female actors were responsible in another way altogether for both inspiring more Shakespeare on stage and for putting more viewers in seats. Since the Restoration in 1660 women were allowed as actors on stage, which places females in the Shakespearean roles of women pretending to be men.⁵⁷ *As You Like It*, which had not been produced in the original text since Shakespeare’s time, was performed 28 times in the 1740–41 winter season at the insistence of the Shakespeare Ladies Club.⁵⁸ Seeing women in snug male breeches was evidently a most enticing visual display that caused a rivalry among theatres, and for a time Shakespeare’s plays could often be seen on the same night at two of the three London theatres.⁵⁹ The women, in their multipronged charge of reading, campaigning and acting effectively primed an audience for David Garrick’s rapid rise to fame in his debut as Richard III in October of 1741, when one in four London performances were of Shakespeare.⁶⁰

55. James Ralph, *The Case of Our Present Theatrical Disputes* (London, 1743), 44, quoted in Avery, ‘The Shakespeare Ladies Club’, 157–58. Italic in original.

56. Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions*, 25.

57. Rosalind in *As You Like It*; Olivia in *Twelfth Night*; Imogen in *Cymbeline*; Jessica, Portia, and Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice*; Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Joan of Arc in *1 Henry VI*.

58. Ritchie, ‘Women and Shakespeare’, 1157.

59. Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions*, 27.

60. *Ibid.*, 25.

The readers of the Shakespeare Ladies Club were also intrinsically involved in the planning and fundraising of the statue of Shakespeare in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, finally dedicated in January 1741. Eliza Haywood (c. 1693–1756) was an actress and prolific novelist, poet, playwright and publisher.⁶¹ In an early issue of her publication, *The Female Spectator*, Haywood attributes the Westminster Abbey monument to the readers of the Shakespeare Ladies Club:

Some ladies indeed have shewn a truly public Spirit in rescuing the admirable, yet almost forgotten *Shakspear*, from being totally sunk in oblivion:—they have generously contributed to raise a monument to his memory, and frequently honoured his works with their presence on the stage:—an action, which deserves the highest encomiums, and will be attended with an adequate reward; since, in preserving the fame of the dead bard, they add a brightness to their own, which will shine to late posterity.⁶²

It is most intriguing that Haywood claims Shakespeare to have been 'almost forgotten' and about to be 'totally sunk in oblivion' until rescued by, not performers, but readers. Twenty-five years later in a speech delivered at the 1769 Stratford Jubilee, David Garrick also credits the Shakespeare Ladies Club readers with the Abbey monument: '*It was You Ladies that restor'd Shakespeare to the Stage, you form'd yourselves into a Society to protect his Fame, and Erected a Monument to his and your own honour in Westminster Abbey*.'⁶³ Garrick's speech, delivered in the present tense, implies that the Ladies Club was still functioning and that members were present at the Jubilee.

The significance of what the reading group accomplished with this monument is noted by Bate in his remark on the statue, that 'it effectively marks the canonization of

61. Paula R. Backscheider, 'Haywood, Eliza (1693?–1756)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Sep. 2010), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/12798.

62. Eliza Haywood, *The Female Spectator*, 4 vols., 5th ed. (London, 1755), i, quoted in Dobson, *National Poet*, 147. The impression that a close association with Shakespeare adds to one's own cultural and intellectual brightness is a concept that will recur.

63. David Garrick, *M.S. Journal of Journey to France and Italy, 1763–64*, 124–6, at the Folger Shakespeare Library, quoted in Johanne M. Stochholm, *Garrick's Folly: the Stratford Jubilee of 1769* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1964), 91, 92n1. Italic in original. "The speech is pasted into the manuscript with the heading "After King's speech". The Stratford Jubilee in 1769 was a festival held in Stratford-upon-Avon under the direction of David Garrick which included theatrical and rhetorical festivities, fireworks, processions in costumes, a horserace, a dance and more, all to celebrate the life and works of William Shakespeare and the installation of a statue of Shakespeare (modelled on Garrick) in the town hall. No performances of Shakespeare were produced. It was a resounding failure due to extensive advance publicity that brought in twice as many visitors as expected who then lacked appropriate accommodations and food which resulted in exorbitant prices, added to torrential rains that ruined or prevented many of the entertainments.

Shakespeare.’⁶⁴ Dobson complicates Bate’s thought by observing, ‘The Abbey monument may birth the canonical Shakespeare, but it simultaneously enacts his funeral, relocating the corpus as it does so from the theatre to the study.’⁶⁵ The statue depicts Shakespeare aristocratically dressed, leaning on a pile of books atop a lectern, apparently in a library; this image of a strictly literary Shakespeare developed into one of the most popular library busts of the eighteenth century. Dobson suggests that the Shakespeare Ladies Club may have felt that the carved portrait of Queen Elizabeth on Shakespeare’s pedestal represented—more importantly than a symbol of constitutional loyalty—a symbol of Shakespeare’s dependence on specifically female patronage.⁶⁶

A number of contemporary prologues paid tribute to the Ladies and numerous testimonies appeared in print, making it clear that because of the advocacy of these readers the Covent Garden theatre became a hearty competitor to Drury Lane, some of Shakespeare’s plays were staged that had not been seen in that century, his statue was installed in Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey, and the Shakespeare Ladies Club ‘made Shakespeare fashionable.’⁶⁷ It can be argued that it was largely the readers who created an environment ripe for apotheosis into which David Garrick jumped with his portrayal of Richard III in 1741 and his directorship of the 1769 Jubilee. Dugas maintains that the popular (and erroneous) assumption today that Garrick was responsible for reestablishing Shakespeare’s theatrical preeminence disregards not only the publication records but ‘potentially blinds us to the process by which the material conditions of publication’ influenced performance.⁶⁸ This impact by readers should not be underestimated—it is another early indication of the interdependence of readers reading Shakespeare and consequently inspiring a demand for more performances of Shakespeare, as well as ensuring the Shakespearean works are intrinsically bound to the national cultural legacy. As Arthur Murphy remarked in 1753: ‘With us islanders, Shakespeare is a kind of established religion in poetry.’⁶⁹ Not only does Murphy see the plays as a cultural bond, but he refers to Shakespeare’s work as poetry, not as drama, another indicator of the historical propensity to see the play texts as literature and to be read.

64. Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions*, 27.

65. Dobson, *National Poet*, 160.

66. Ibid.

67. Avery, ‘The Shakespeare Ladies Club’, 157.

68. Dugas, *Marketing the Bard*, 182.

69. Brian Vickers, ed., ‘Arthur Murphy, Essays on Shakespeare’, in *William Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage 1753–1765*, vol. 4 (1976; repr., Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 93.

It can be argued that the reading of Shakespeare, often aloud and together in cultured female company, was significant in providing women the critical confidence to enter the arena of male commentary. With the exception of Margaret Cavendish, it was men who published commentary and adaptations and early criticism on Shakespeare that included topics such as Shakespeare's learning, views of Shakespeare's tragedy, artless tragedies, the mangling of Shakespeare's plays, the Three Unities, the Restoration stage, Shakespeare's genius, the life and works, Shakespeare and Francophilia, the Rules of Poetry, critical monographs of textual analysis, the actors defended, the decline in theatrical taste, Shakespeare's faults. But during this time of active readers, Charlotte Lennox (c. 1729–1804) also provided the more studious reader with a supplemental volume of the French and Italian romance sources of Shakespeare's plays in a three-volume edition, *Shakespear Illustrated: or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakespear are Founded, Collected and Translated from the Original Authors: With Critical Remarks*.⁷⁰ Lennox supported herself and her family by writing poetry, drama, novels, translations and as a magazine editor. Building on her extensive and close reading of the plays, Lennox prepared translations of pertinent plots with critical comments, comparing the source materials with Shakespeare's reworkings. Although Samuel Johnson later disagreed with a number of Lennox's 'critical points of view', he purloined many of her scholarly references for his own 1765 edition.⁷¹

In the same year as the 1769 Jubilee, Elizabeth Montagu (1718–1800), an organizer and leader of the bluestockings, published her *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare*, anonymously at first. Her *Essay* defends Shakespeare and the English who admire him, and attempts to refute the criticisms of Voltaire which had recently caused a stir. Eger maintains that Montagu defended Shakespeare with more ferocity than any male critic dared.⁷² Garrick praised her work, recommended it to readers, and published an encomium called 'The Dream'. In this poem he writes of Voltaire, 'The Gallic God of literary War!' poisoning his 'glitt'ring Lance' at Shakespear, when:

Out rush'd a Female to protect the Bard,
Snatch'd up her Spear, and for the fight prepar'd: . . .⁷³

70. Charlotte Lennox, *Shakespear Illustrated: or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakespear are Founded* (London, 1753).

71. Eger, *Bluestockings*, 127.

72. *Ibid.*, 145.

73. Thompson, 'Elizabeth Montagu (né Robinson), 1720–1800', *Women Reading Shakespeare*, 22–23.

Fortunately Pallas in the ‘form of Montagu’ was able to defeat the Gallic God. Montagu, as had Pope before her, excused the perceived indecencies and degradations in Shakespeare’s works by blaming them on the unlettered audiences he had to please and the ill-bred actors he had to work with. It was not fair of Voltaire, she claimed, to compare Shakespeare with the Greek dramatists because ‘Shakespear’s plays were to be acted in a paltry tavern, to an unlettered audience, just emerging from barbarity’; thankfully, Shakespeare, ‘by the force of his genius rose so much above the age and circumstances in which he was born.’⁷⁴ It is as a reader of Shakespeare that Montagu is able to particularly admire his character delineation, realism, originality, use of English subject matter and profoundly excellent passages, and she praises the unique resilience of English blank verse. In her statement, ‘We are apt to consider Shakespear only as a Poet; but he is certainly one of the greatest moral Philosophers that ever lived’, she prefigures the novelising of Shakespeare’s work as literature with principled overtones.⁷⁵

Inspired by Montagu, Elizabeth Griffith (1727–1793), an actress, epistolary novelist and playwright, published *The Morality of Shakespeare’s Drama Illustrated* in 1775, dedicating it to David Garrick. In her preface she praises Shakespeare as a literary writer and a poet, not a playwright:

Among the many writers of our nation, who have by their talents contributed to entertain, inform, or improve our minds, no one has so happily or universally succeeded, as he whom we may justly stile our first, our greatest Poet, Shakespeare. For more than a century and a half, this Author has been the delight of the Ingenious, the text of the Moralist, and the study of the Philosopher.⁷⁶

Griffith’s original plan was to point out the ‘moral fable’ in each play, but by the fourth play, *Measure for Measure*, she abandons that idea as many plays seemed to her to lack morals, and she concentrates on character. She writes a chapter on each of the thirty-six plays in the First Folio with summaries for most acts and scenes that tend to point out not only allusions to classical literature, but often generalisations on women, foreshadowing the next two centuries’ readerly interest in and publications about Shakespeare’s strong and virtuous females. Finding

74. Ibid., 25.

75. Elizabeth Montagu, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear, compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets*, 5th ed. (London, 1785), 37.

76. Elizabeth Griffith, *The Morality of Shakespeare’s Drama Illustrated* (London, 1775), v.

morals where she can, Griffith particularly applies them to women, as in this reaction to Mrs. Page upon reading the love letter from Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

This is a very natural sentiment for a delicate mind to conceive, upon meeting with an affront of this sort; and 'tis extremely proper, upon all such occasions, to enter into such a self-examination, by way of inquiring what part of our own conduct, or *unweighed behaviour*, as she expresses it, might have encouraged the offence; and upon an impartial scrutiny we shall generally find, that 'tis more our indiscretion than our charms which prompts the attack.⁷⁷

Griffith's criticism betrays men's unwarranted privilege in learning classical languages and their guardianship of access that was successful in excluding women. Consequently, a portion of Shakespeare's attraction for his earliest feminine commentators was his quality of 'unlearnedness' with which they felt *simpatico*. Eger suggests that the women, especially the bluestockings, 'contributed to a distinctly feminine critical tradition that focused on Shakespeare's powers of characterisation and his status as a poet of the vernacular.'⁷⁸ Again, this points to Shakespeare as a literary writer. Eger is unequivocal in her estimation of the role of reading women in the process of instilling Shakespeare in the English national identity as part of the literary—not specifically dramatic—pantheon:

As critics, patrons, and readers, women were strongly associated with Shakespeare's works during the eighteenth century, the period in which his identity as hero of the national literary pantheon was first established. . . . While several present-day critics are concerned to add women's writing to an existing canon of literature by men, few have considered women's role in forming that canon at its first inception or acknowledged their active critical presence. In the eighteenth century Shakespeare became associated with women, and vice-versa.⁷⁹

It was not only the intellectual women of the day who responded to the works of Shakespeare. Whether or not a lady consciously took up a feminist banner or attempted to insinuate herself into the male world of criticism or merely reacted emotionally to the text, a wide cross-section of women were affected. One eighteenth-century reader manifested another justification of women's attraction and devotion to the plays:

I am not going to write a panegyric on this immortal bard, but I shall forever

77. *Ibid.*, 127. *Italic in original.*

78. *Ibid.*, 128.

79. Eger, *Bluestockings*, 123, 127.

love and honour his memory, because he is the only poet (that I know of) who has delineated to perfection the character of a *female friend*. . . . Pray, pray, now, good lords of the creation, let us do justice to my favourite heroine: while David and Jonathan, Pylades and Orestes, Damon and Pythias, are so triumphantly held up on your side, let us at least erect one standard of friendship on our own, and inscribe it with the names of Celia and Rosalind.⁸⁰

Consistently women refer to Shakespeare as a poet, and consistently they expose their experience with Shakespeare on the page rather than the stage. Their encomiums strongly favour their reading proclivities over performance, as evidenced by another example from Hester Chapone, a bluestocking, who published the letters she wrote to her niece with suggestions for improving her mind. In a section on history, Chapone recommends reading Shakespeare as a historian:

‘Among other *historians*, do not forget my darling *Shakespear*—a faithful as well as a most agreeable one—whose historical plays, if read in a series, will fix in your memory the reigns he has chosen, more durably than any other history. You need not fear his leading you into any material mistakes, for he keeps surprisingly close to the truth, as well in the characters as in the events. One cannot but wish he had given us a play on the reign of every English King—as it would have been the pleasantest, and perhaps the most useful way of becoming acquainted with it.’⁸¹

If Erne had proposed his theory of Shakespeare as a literary dramatist at this point in time, he would have encountered very little resistance as it was already the position of this popular and influential body of readers.

READING SHAKESPEARE IN THE COLONIES

As Shakespeare was morphing into a national treasure in Britain, he was also making himself at home in the colonies across the Atlantic. His work first appears on the page in colonial America written into the commonplace books of such Puritans as John Cotton’s son Seaborn, and there is documentary evidence that Cotton Mather himself owned a First Folio.⁸² The 1699 inventory of Captain Arthur Spicer, a lawyer and justice of the peace

80. [Mrs. Apphia Peach], *The Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal* (London, Jan. to Jul. 1775): 433. Italic in original.

81. Hester Chapone, ‘On the Manner and Course of Reading History’, in *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady* (London: J. Walter, 1790), 227–28. Italic in original.

82. William H. Scheide, ‘The Earliest First Folio in America?’ *Shakespeare Quarterly* 27 (1976): 332–33.

in Virginia, records a *Macbeth* quarto in his list of books.⁸³ The puritanical issues with theatrical productions on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage apparently did not transfer to reading Shakespeare on the page, as evidenced by the number of Rowe's 1709 edition of Shakespeare found in the Puritan colonies, references cited in periodicals and commonplace books, and the records of playbooks sold by booksellers.⁸⁴ The first library catalogue issued by Harvard University lists a recent purchase of Rowe's 1709 edition, as does Yale University in 1743, while a Hanmer edition was purchased by Benjamin Franklin for the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1745.⁸⁵

The first recorded stage performances on the North American continent, 35 productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, took place in 1730; by 1770 there were 181 documented performances of Shakespeare plays.⁸⁶ From that period forward it is difficult to find a time when a professional, amateur or solo performance was not being performed somewhere on the seaboard.⁸⁷ Shakespearean actors travelled west across the country and were found performing in saloons, taverns, churches, lean-to theatres, hotel lobbies and around camp fires.⁸⁸

Reading Shakespeare was as popular as and even more prevalent than seeing it on stage, arguably creating the willing audience for performance. As early as 1764, Murphy explains, 'editions of Shakespeare were common enough in the colonies to be caught up in a moment of cultural circulation which might at one time have made a New Historicist literary critic weak at the knees', including a volume of Shakespeare's plays that was a gift from a Native American to Captain Thomas Morris of His Majesty's Infantry.⁸⁹ Up to this point in time, all editions of collected works were imported from Britain, but in 1761 a New York printer announced he had published *The Tempest* and *King Lear*, although

83. Esther Cloudman Dunn, *Shakespeare in America* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1939), 29.

84. Frances Teague, *Shakespeare and the American Popular Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 15–16.

85. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 143. Harvard University Library was founded in 1638 with the bequest of four hundred books from John Harvard.

86. Odai Johnson and William J. Burling, *The Colonial American Stage, 1665–1774: A Documentary Calendar* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2001), 66.

87. *Ibid.*, 66–67.

88. See Frances Teague, *Shakespeare and the American Popular Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Kim C. Sturges, *Shakespeare and the American Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Odai Johnson and William J. Burling, eds., *The Colonial American Stage, 1665–1774* (London: Associated University Presses, 2001); Michael D. Bristol, *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Nancy Webb and Jean Francis Webb, *Will Shakespeare and His America* (New York: Viking Press, 1964).

89. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 143. The record does not explain how a Native American acquired the volume.

extant copies have not been identified.⁹⁰ By 1794, American editions of abridged and theatrical texts of *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night* were in circulation.⁹¹ As mentioned earlier, the major British eighteenth-century collected works had become overly complicated with notes; the new republic, however, wanted the plays but without the obligations to English critics and without the ‘elaborate machinery’ on the page.⁹² In 1795 the first collected works in the United States was printed on an American-made press in Philadelphia. Its preface asserts that ‘the American reader is seldom disposed to wander through the wilderness of verbal criticism’ and alludes to the ‘inconvenient bulk’ of the British editions.⁹³ Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan assert that as Shakespearean theatre spread across the country, demand for the reading texts increased.⁹⁴ This assertion can be challenged in that, as shown historically, readers of the printed texts are the ones who create a demand for performance. By 1831 the young French historian, Alexis de Tocqueville, could say, ‘There is hardly a pioneer’s hut that does not contain a few odd volumes of Shakespeare. I remember that I read the feudal drama of *Henry V* for the first time in a log cabin.’⁹⁵

de Tocqueville’s comment exemplifies the state of reading Shakespeare at this time in both England and America as editors and printers supplied the demand for reading copies which were found in covered wagons, log cabins, parlours and tea rooms. Duelling publishers fuelled a public apparently keen for Shakespeare’s printed play texts, and evidence abounds of the influence of these book buyers. The readers in the eighteenth century established Shakespeare as a national hero in both nations, and his rise in print as a literary dramatist is only beginning. The readers in the nineteenth century will doubly ensure Shakespeare’s place as they eagerly buy the swelling numbers of books written to feed their enthusiasm for all things Shakespeare, as shown in the following chapter. The numerous volumes available to encourage ardent readers of the plays display the broad range of interest, and it becomes clear that Shakespeare on the page is an extremely valuable commodity to generations of readers.

90. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, eds., *Shakespeare in American Life* (Washington D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007), 15.

91. Alfred Van Rensselaer Westfall, *American Shakespearean Criticism, 1607–1865* (New York, London: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 81. Apparently the popularity of the adaptations lasted longer in the States than they did in England.

92. *Ibid.*, 79.

93. *Ibid.*, 80.

94. Vaughan, *Shakespeare in American Life*, 27.

95. Nigel Cliff, *The Shakespeare Riots: Revenge, Drama, and Death in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Random House, 2007), 13.

CHAPTER FIVE

SHAKESPEARE FOR THE REST OF US

How to read Shakespeare? The way to read Shakespeare is—to read him. The rest follows as a matter of course. If not having read before, you read anywhere, you will know a new delight; you will read more; you will go on; in your eager reading you will consume the book. Having read all you will read again, and now will begin to ponder, and compare, and analyse, and seek to fathom; and having got thus far, you will have found an occupation which lights with pleasure the whole of your leisure life.

Richard Grant White, *Studies in Shakespeare*, 1886

The history of reading is generally invisible. As the editors of *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading* observe, reading is ‘essentially an internalized and ephemeral occupation.’¹ The heroic efforts of the Reading Experience Database reveal 30,000+ records of reading by subjects of and visitors to the British Isles between 1450 and 1945, a period of almost five hundred years.² Considering that twenty million books were in print in the western world by 1500, and the eighteenth century alone produced almost one billion books, the database reveals that physical records of reading are frustratingly less than robust.³ As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, some past Shakespeare readers documented their reading in the form of carefully bound volumes or as notations in marginalia, in personal

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1. Robin Myers, Michael Harris and Giles Mandelbrote, *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), vii.
 2. The Reading Experience Database (RED), 1450–1945, <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/RED>. The database includes only one record of someone reading Shakespeare between 1500 and 1699, Sir John Suckling, indicating that the database will of course increase in time.
 3. Febvre, *The Coming of the Book*, 248. Eltjo Buringh and Jan Luiten van Zanden, ‘Charting the “Rise of the West”: Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, A Long-Term Perspective from the Sixth through Eighteenth Centuries’, *The Journal of Economic History* 69, no. 2 (2009): 409–45 (417, table 2).

letters, commonplace collections or references in their own published works, but most have left no record.

Another approach, however, to discovering the breadth of Shakespeare readers is through the numbers and varieties of books created specifically for them. This chapter has a focus first on the expurgated editions developed explicitly for families reading aloud together, then the school books that include recitations of the text and bring Shakespeare into secondary schools for the first time, the children's books of tales retold that introduce Shakespeare to the very young, the cheap editions for the adult mass market, the supplemental texts of interest to Shakespeare's readers, and the genre developed specifically for women, the most prolific demographic of readers. This chapter explores a cross-section of publications to show the ubiquity of these books, which in turn displays an amorphous glimpse at their readership. The remarkable variety of books illuminates and clarifies diverse reading practices.

The distinction between a critical edition with extensive apparatus for scholars and a general edition with minimal annotations for lay readers is indeterminate until the very late nineteenth century—Shakespeare was not yet a subject to be examined in universities, which is covered in chapter seven, while the reading groups often prided themselves on their programs of self-study. Thus until the turn into the twentieth century and the development of academic Shakespeare studies, most readers can be considered fairly general as the line between critic and lay reader was yet porous. Of necessity, this thesis highlights representative volumes that provide insight into the invisible history of reading the plays by community or lay readers. Today, with the emphasis on performance and the resulting dearth of general readers or community readers, there is nothing like this excess of published material for the non-professional community. It is perhaps worthy of attention that a dearth of lay readers seems to be commensurate with a resistance to Shakespeare being viewed as a literary dramatist.

THE BOWDLER HERITAGE

One visible manifestation of the extent of reading Shakespeare amongst non-specialists, either alone, in a social group or in a family circle, can be seen in the plethora of expurgated editions that blossomed throughout the nineteenth century, most notoriously those of the Bowdlers. Murphy calls the early nineteenth century a time abundant with 'an

interpenetration of religion, morality and a culture of home reading', and the bawdry, the tawdry and the licentious in the Shakespearean plays had long called attention to an ambivalence that, for many, needed resolution.⁴ It was during this time of abundant morality, thirty years before the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837, that Henrietta Bowdler was already considered 'something of a force' in religious and literary circles.⁵ As the first female editor of Shakespeare, Bowdler retained the original play format and the original text of twenty of the plays from the First Folio. She deleted any words or phrases that might offend a religious and virtuous mind, including what she considered to be distasteful Roman Catholic references, as well as scenes she regarded as trivial or uninteresting.⁶ The anonymously published title page in 1807 proclaims: *The Family Shakespeare; in which nothing is added to the original text; but those words and expressions are omitted which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a Family*. In the 1818 second edition, her brother Thomas edited the other sixteen plays from the First Folio and re-edited Henrietta's, cutting hundreds more selections and yet restoring 'all the boring passages that she had cut on aesthetic grounds.'⁷ Henrietta and Thomas were inspired by the family readings in their own home as children:

In the perfection of reading few men were equal to my father; and such was his good taste, his delicacy, and his prompt discretion, that his family listened with delight to *Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*, without knowing that those matchless tragedies contained words and expressions improper to be pronounced; and without having any reason to suspect that any parts of the plays had been omitted by the circumspect and judicious reader.⁸

The Bowdlers' story is indicative of the robust culture of home reading that was already popular in both England and America by the late eighteenth century, and it was into this culture that a profusion of family versions was warmly welcomed. The preface to *The Family Shakespeare* assures a parent that 'a word that is less objectionable is sometimes substituted for a synonymous word that is improper', and in a few instances, 'one or two words (at the

4. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 169.

5. M. Clare Loughlin-Chow, 'Bowdler, Henrietta Maria (1750–1830)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/3028.

6. Henrietta Bowdler, ed., *The Family Shakespeare*, four vols. (Bath, 1807). Thomas Bowdler and Henrietta Bowdler, eds., *The Family Shakespeare*, six vols. (London, 1818).

7. Noel Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy: A History of Expurgated Books in England and America* (1969; repr., Boston: Nonpareil Books, 1969), 81.

8. Thomas [Henrietta] Bowdler, ed., 'Preface to the First Edition', in *The Family Shakespeare*, 4th edition, vol. 1 (London, 1825), viii.

most three)' have been added to bridge gaps in expunged passages.⁹ The text of *The Family Shakespeare* includes summaries of the plots and sparse glossary notes. In some editions, the few glosses are identified in the text with different sigla, others use superscript numbers. That the intention is an edition to be used for reading aloud is clearly stated in the preface:

I can hardly imagine a more pleasing occupation for a winter's evening in the country, than for a father to read one of Shakespeare's plays to his family circle. My object is to enable him to do so without incurring the danger of falling unawares among words and expressions which are of such a nature as to raise a blush on the cheek of modesty.¹⁰

The account of readers begetting readers across generations is one that recurs. The evidence that Shakespeare was a topic that needed guidance also speaks to the assumed readership, even to the point at which it becomes a parenting matter. Richard Altick cites a review of the Bowdlers' *Family Shakespeare* in the *Christian Observer* in 1808 which maintains that when young people read Shakespeare, 'the mind is enervated and deranged at a time when it ought to be braced and organized. . . . It is scarcely possible for a young person of fervid genius to read Shakespeare without a dangerous elevation of fancy.'¹¹

The Bowdlers did not invent the expurgated edition; they merely actualised a widespread feeling that already existed about the plays. It should be remembered that many of the seventeenth-century editorial deletions and substitutions were concerned with decorum and what is proper for someone like a king, even a king on stage, to say out loud. In the 1681 'revived, with alterations' adaptation of *King Lear* by Nahum Tate (1652–1715), Lear does not say, 'Rumble thy belly full', but 'Rumble thy fill', presumably it being inelegant for the king to say 'belly'.¹² In the 1701 appropriation of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, called *The Jew of Venice*, George Granville, Lord Lansdowne (1666–1735) removed the perceived impropriety of the homoerotic undertones of the relationship between Bassanio and Antonio (while making explicit an erotic relationship between Shylock and his gold during a drinking scene of toasts to friendship and women in which Shylock pays tribute: 'My Money is my Mistress!').¹³ Alexander Pope in 1725 excised more than 1,500 lines from his

9. Thomas [Henrietta] Bowdler, ed., 'Preface', in *The Family Shakespeare*, vol. 1 (London, 1861).

10. Ibid.

11. Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900*, 2nd ed. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 112.

12. Nahum Tate, ed., *The History of King Lear, a Tragedy, Revived, with Alterations* (London, 1749), 29.

13. George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, *Three Plays, viz. The She-Gallants, a Comedy. Heroick-Love, a Tragedy. And The Jew of Venice, a Comedy* (London, 1713), 195.

reading edition that he felt might otherwise damage Shakespeare's good name. The edition edited by Francis Gentleman (1728–1784) in 1774, published by John Bell, tries to satisfy both the playgoers for reading along in the theatre as well as the home readers.¹⁴ Passages that Gentleman felt were worthy but that had been excised in performance he printed at the bottoms of pages. He removed lines of 'glaring indecency' that had been performed on stage, chastised others in footnotes, and 'pointed out the leading beauties, as they occur, without descanting so much as to anticipate the reader's conception and investigation'.¹⁵ Most curiously, in that Gentleman defeats his own purpose, he sets minor indecencies in italic as a signal for young readers at home to ignore those lines. Italic, however, has the opposite typographic effect—it calls attention to itself. Thus Gentleman inadvertently made it easier for prurient youth to scan for such titillating passages as Iago declaring to Desdemona's father: '*Even now, now, very now, an old black ram / Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise!*'¹⁶ Gentleman was not consistent in using italic to call out indecencies. In *Antony and Cleopatra* the entire scene of Cleopatra and her women with the soothsayer is set off with double quotation marks before each line, with a comment in a footnote warning the reader: 'The whole of this scene might well be spared in representation: it has a blameable relish of indecency.'¹⁷ Gentleman often presents strident opinions in the footnotes, but he does leave the original text on the page for the reader to peruse and inevitably to make up her own mind, as in this comment responding to a remark from Enobarbus in the same play: 'This reply to Antony should be suppressed, as conveying a fulsome, needless idea; impertinent to Antony, and totally beneath the subject of conversation'.¹⁸

Even the infamous young forger, William Henry Ireland (1775–1835), in 1795 expurgated his own forgery. In a desperate attempt to gain affection and respect from his father, Samuel Ireland, who was obsessed with finding something that had once belonged to Shakespeare, young Ireland forged dozens of documents, including one that pretended to

14. Theatrical editions tend to be quartos similar to theatre programs today in that the list of dramatis personae includes the names of the actors, plus the booklet provides the text of the play as it was actually performed.

15. Francis Gentleman, ed., *Introduction to Shakespeare's Plays, containing an essay on Oratory* (London: John Bell, 1773), 9.

16. Francis Gentleman, ed., *Bell's Edition of Shakespeare*, vol. 1 (London: John Bell, 1774), 215.

17. Francis Gentleman, ed., *Bell's Edition of Shakespeare*, vol. 6 (London: John Bell, 1774), 265. The method of setting a quotation mark at the beginning of each line in a multi-line quotation (plus one at the end) is standard typographic procedure for the time; essentially Gentleman has merely quoted a segment, although today the repetitive symbols appear excessive.

18. *Ibid.*, 271.

be the original manuscript of *King Lear*. Working from a rare quarto owned by his father, William Henry Ireland later admitted:

As I scrupulously avoided, in copying the play of *Lear*, the insertion of that ribaldry which is so frequently found in the compositions of our bard, it was generally conceived that my manuscript proved beyond doubt that Shakspeare was a much more finished writer than had ever before been imagined.¹⁹

Ireland, as others before and after him, disapproved of Shakespeare's low bawdry, especially in the tragedies where it was deemed inappropriate, and generally believed that it had surely been interpolated by actors or printers. Ironically, the expurgations led not only Ireland's father but many of the most powerful men of the day to insist the forgery must be a genuine manuscript because the refined and cultured style was absent of the folderol and vulgarity that had surely been interjected. Here at last they had Shakespeare's true and pure original.

The eighteenth-century practice of printing what publishers called 'beauties' and 'elegant extracts' from polite literature became a popular censorship device that continued through the nineteenth century.²⁰ An example of avoiding the necessity of expurgating the text is Reverend William Dodd's (1729–1777) *The Beauties of Shakspeare*, published in 1752, a volume that was Goethe's first exposure to Shakespeare.²¹ Dodd simply collects what he considers the most elegant, gay, passionate, sublime and even peculiar passages and organizes them with headings; essentially it is a published version of a well-ordered commonplace book. He states that he includes 'not one line extracted from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, one of Shakespeare's best and most justly admired comedies: whoever reads that play will immediately see there was nothing either proper or possible for this work.'²² Although Thomas Keymer argues that anthologies such as this disconnect the verse from the context that gave it meaning, thus readers who quote Dodd's *Beauties* invoke only a simulacrum fabricated by Dodd, it can also be argued that readers are able to appreciate

19. William Henry Ireland, *The Confessions of William-Henry Ireland, containing the Particulars of his Fabrication of the Shakspeare Manuscripts* (POD repr., London: Thomas Goddard, 1805), 118. Sadly, Samuel Ireland went to his death insisting his son was too stupid to have forged the manuscripts.

20. Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 126.

21. Philip Rawlings, 'Dodd, William (1729–1777)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Jan. 2008), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/7744. Dodd was executed for forging a £4,200 bond.

22. William Dodd, *The Beauties of Shakspeare*, vol. 1 (Baltimore: Wm. H. Hickman, 1835).

the verse more profoundly specifically because it *is* disconnected from its context.²³ Reading the line on the page, ‘The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve’, separate from the rest of the play allows a reader to revel in the imagery and connotations in a leisure that is impossible during performance and still cluttered in the process of reading the entire play. Keymer has a point, however, in his comment that, using Dodd’s *Beauties*, a reader ‘could now be *badly* read in Shakespeare and still cite him to apparent effect.’²⁴ Nevertheless, the book was quite popular as evidenced by the regular reprintings and imitations throughout the century.

As Hannah More (1745–1833) notes in *Hints towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess*, 1805, after extolling the virtues of the Shakespearean works:

But, with these excellencies, the works of this most unequal of poets contain so much that is vulgar, so much that is absurd, and so much that is impure; so much indecent levity, false wit, and gross description, that he should only be read in parcels, and with the nicest selection. His more exceptional pieces should not be read at all; and even of the best, much may be omitted.²⁵

These types of warnings and expunged publications are the historical underpinnings to the work of the Bowdlers, who were not the first, the last nor the most severe of the censors, even though it is their name that became a verb by 1836.²⁶ The reading of Shakespeare was not an unequivocal source of virtue and high-minded principles but needed prudent management, thus expurgated editions continued to be written, published and bought throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Through expurgators’ and anthologists’ use of discrete and appropriate passages, Shakespeare also found a permanent place in the primary and secondary school systems as poetry and literature to be read and as examples of oratory to be declaimed. These types of introductions at school in both England and America, the first appearance of Shakespeare in education, legitimised the reading of Shakespeare into more homes than ever before as the school books were

23. Thomas Keymer, ‘Shakespeare in the novel’, in *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 130, 132.

24. Keymer, ‘Shakespeare in the novel’, 130. *Italic* in original.

25. Hannah More, ‘Shakespeare’, *Hints towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess*, vol. 2 (London, 1805), 183. This was written anonymously for the young Princess Charlotte Augusta, daughter of George IV.

26. “bowdlerize, v.”: trans. To expurgate (a book or writing), by omitting or modifying words or passages considered indelicate or offensive; to castrate. First recorded use noted in OED 1836.

typically intended for home use as well; they were often advertised for both. Reverend J. R. Pitman in London makes this double purpose clear in his *School-Shakspeare; or, plays and scenes from Shakspeare illustrated for the use of Schools* where he states that the book is for the reading pleasure and edification of ‘young females both in schools and in families.’²⁷ Pitman did not feel the Bowdlers had gone far enough in expurgating the plays: ‘few of them are sufficiently purified from coarse and profane expressions’, and Dodd’s *Beauties* are ‘enfeebled in effect, from the total want of connexion.’²⁸ In *The School-Shakspeare*, Pitman assures parents and teachers that all ‘immoral language has been carefully excluded; so that taste may be cultivated, without offence to delicate and religious feelings.’²⁹ Pitman published what superficially appear to be Shakespeare’s texts, but severely cut; although the stories become disjointed and weak, that was less important than that they were decorous. Imagine *All’s Well that Ends Well* which includes the virgin Diana but with no reference to virginity, a bed trick, a ring transfer, or pregnancy. Pitman is only able to make twenty-six plays readable for young females in this manner. Of nine plays he supplies lines and speeches taken out of context and provided with headlines to exemplify their moral message—exactly the format for which he had disparaged Dodd—deeming it ‘unnecessary to present [these plays] in a continued and unbroken story.’³⁰ He sets an excerpt between Rosaline and Berowne from *Love’s Labour’s Lost* with a title of ‘Mode of Correcting a Gibing Spirit’. Other Shakespearean scenes are labelled ‘Defamation’, ‘Patience Easier Taught than Practised’, or ‘Description of a Murdered Person’. Pitman’s school book was quite popular, going through five editions in forty years. His book is typical of the ongoing desire to appropriate Shakespeare’s name to serve moral educational purposes.

Caroline Maxwell (*fl.* 1828) published *The Juvenile edition of Shakspeare: Adapted to the Capacities of Youth*, because ‘polite education cannot be complete without it’, while simultaneously ‘the perusal of the whole of Shakspeare’s dramatic works might be deemed improper for juvenile readers.’³¹ Shakespeare was clearly seen as an essential literary author

27. Rev. J. R. Pitman, ed., *The School-Shakspeare; or, Plays and Scenes from Shakspeare for the Use of Schools with Glossarial Notes, Selected from the Best Annotators* (London, 1822), v.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.* The nine plays in piecemeal are *The Comedy of Errors*, *Henry V*, all three parts of *Henry VI*, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Richard II*, and *Troilus and Cressida*. *Titus Andronicus* is utterly ignored.

31. Caroline Maxwell, ed., *The Juvenile Edition of Shakspeare: Adapted to the Capacities of Youth [Tales Founded Upon the Plays of Shakspeare]* (London, 1828), iii.

since the education of these young women was through reading, not theatrical performances. Maxwell writes into prose a selection of the plays which she feels can safely educate without compromising morals and aims at a slightly older and more sophisticated audience than young school children. Maxwell, unlike many authors of this genre, does not insist that her renditions are designed only for female readers but seems to believe that boys are just as needy of the precepts of ‘the superiority of virtue, of honesty, discretion and goodness of heart.’³² Her preface states that unexpurgated Shakespeare is inappropriate for the young, indicating that while Maxwell recognises the desirability of exposing Shakespeare to youth, she also recognises the necessity for mediation.³³ Unusual for this class of book, Maxwell includes *Titus Andronicus* as one of the eleven chosen plays, as well as two apocryphal plays, *Thomas Lord Cromwell* and *Sir John Oldcastle*.

In America, William Scott produced *Lessons in Elocution, or, a Selection of Pieces, in Prose and Verse, for the Improvement of Youth in Reading and Speaking*, which includes nineteen speeches from Shakespeare.³⁴ Ebenezer Bailey published *The Young Ladies’ Class Book: a selection of lessons for reading, in prose and verse* in 1835, a reader that contains appropriate Shakespearean passages for girls—minus the elocution lessons—such as ‘A Sister Pleading for the Life of her Brother’ and ‘Scene of Filial Affection’; in less than a decade this book was reproduced in twenty-six editions.³⁵ A series in England directed primarily to boys is *The Royal Readers* by Nelson Thomas & Sons. Interspersed between topics such as ‘The Tide Wave in the Bay of Fundy’ by John William Dawson or ‘The Siege of Torquilstone’ by Sir Walter Scott are prose retellings from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* as history and vocabulary lessons, along with a good portion of the oratorical speeches and original text.³⁶ In an edition for younger students, a series of ‘CHOICE QUOTATIONS — To be written from memory’ include many from Shakespeare, although there are no references to play titles so as to avoid the unsavoury implications of the stage.³⁷ This is a strong indictment of the stage and a strong promotion of the page. The quotations are given appropriate headings, such as ‘Perfection Needs No Addition,’ ‘Content,’ ‘The Blessings of a Low Station,’ ‘Submission

32. Ibid., iv.

33. Gail Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19.

34. William Scott, *Lessons in Elocution* (Montpelier, 1820).

35. Dunn, *Shakespeare in America*, 235. Ebenezer Bailey, *The Young Ladies’ Class Book: a selection of lessons for reading, in prose and verse* (Boston: Lincoln and Emands, 1832).

36. *The Royal Reader*, no. 6 (London, 1884), 183–196.

37. *The Royal Reader*, no. 5 (London, 1879), *passim*.

to Heaven of Duty' or 'The Cares of Greatness'.³⁸ Gail Marshall states, regarding these choice quotations, that 'they are geared primarily to the importance of knowing one's place,' another indication of the plays' breadth of educative value.³⁹

The McGuffey Readers, which include elocution lessons for male students in secondary school using Shakespearean excerpts, sold 120 million copies during their heyday from 1836 and into the early 1900s, surreptitiously extending Shakespeare's reach into millions more homes.⁴⁰ William Holmes McGuffey, among his other talents, was a licensed preacher in America. As with other school and home editions, the Shakespearean text in McGuffey's early readers, being edited for morality, led to the name of the play and even the author sometimes omitted so as not to offend students or parents by calling attention to the stage. Cassio's speech on his low tolerance for drink in *Othello* is titled, 'Folly of Intoxication' with no mention of *Othello*. The scoundrel Parolles in *All's Well that Ends Well* is renamed Delgrado and features in a scene titled 'The Knave Unmasked'. Perhaps it was the American antipathy toward aristocracy that led to the downgrading of titles, as evidenced by the Duke in the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice* who is no longer a Duke, but a Judge. As exercises in elocution, McGuffey uses a variety of sigla to denote upward inflections, downward inflections, monotones, emphatic words, emphatic pauses, secondary accents, even similes set in italic to be read in a lower tone, and parentheticals to be read more rapidly and also in a lower tone. One of Hamlet's soliloquies—completely ignoring Shakespeare's metrics—is thus set:

To be', or not' to be: that is the question':
 Whether 't is nobler in the mind to suffer'
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune',
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And by opposing' end' them? To die'; to sleep';
 Nô mōre⁴¹

The books exhibit how elocution and oratory were integral to education during this time and that Shakespeare's speeches lent themselves to this form. Not all books of this genre

38. Ibid., *passim*.

39. Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 28.

40. Findley B. Edge, review of *McGuffey and His Readers*, by John H. Westerhoff, 1978, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 12, no. 3 (1981): 181. Recently, because of their strong Christian bias, the McGuffey Readers have re-emerged as texts for the home-school movement among Christian conservatives in America.

41. William H. McGuffey, *McGuffey's New Sixth Eclectic Reader: Exercises in Rhetorical Reading with Introductory Rules and Examples* (New York: 1867), 110.

conceal Shakespeare's name. Many of these school texts pervade the home readings where the text is read together and aloud, and Shakespeare's name is blazoned on their title pages as appropriate for both school and family: Charles Kean (1811–1868), minor actor and son of the great actor Edmund Kean, bowdlerized an edition of his own, *Selections from the Plays of Shakespeare . . . especially adapted for Schools, Private Families, and Young People*. The Reverend D. Mathias edited several plays and published them in *The Prince's Shakespere*, proudly stating on the title page that it is *A Selection of the plays of Shakespere, Carefully Expurgated and Annotated for the Use of Families and School*. The first secretary of The Working Men's College, Thomas Shorter (1823–1899), created *Shakespeare, for Schools and Families, Being a Selection and Abridgement of the Principal Plays, for School, College, and Family Reading*. Charles Wordsworth (1806–1892), nephew of William Wordsworth, published *Shakspeare's Historical Plays, Roman and English, with Revised Text, Introductions, and Notes*. Wordsworth is pleased to relate, in the third volume, that in the matter of excising material a critic testified that although Wordsworth 'erred rather on the side of caution than of courage', he furnishes 'the family circle with a text of Shakspeare which will never offend the purest delicacy, and yet *sacrifices no literary beauty to mere prudery*'.⁴² This genre of Shakespeare testifies to the popular practise of reading Shakespeare aloud not only in secondary schools but also in homes and social circles. Shakespeare is naturally and ubiquitously accepted as a literary author.

Another example of a popular edition that displays not only the ongoing predilection for expurgation, but also an interest in reading Shakespeare aloud and women's particular attraction to Shakespeare is *The Boudoir Shakespeare*. It was published in six volumes by Henry Cundell and designed specifically for women reading aloud to each other in private spaces. The OED defines *boudoir* as a French term originally meaning, 'a place in which to sulk', which evolved in English into 'a small, elegantly furnished room, where a lady may retire to be alone or to receive her intimate friends'. *The Boudoir Shakespeare* evokes the close world of women, and indeed, 'Cundell designed his work for reading aloud in the privacy of the home'.⁴³ He states in his third-person preface that the purpose is to eradicate 'such passages as, after the lapse of three centuries, might grate harshly on the ear; his aim

42. Charles Wordsworth, ed., *Shakspeare's Historical Plays, Roman and English, with Revised Text, Introductions, and Notes*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh and London, 1883), 3. Italic in original.

43. Georgianna Ziegler with Frances E. Dolan and Jeanne Addison Roberts, *Shakespeare's Unruly Women* (Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1997), 13.

being to strip the text of all that might wound a feminine sense of delicacy'.⁴⁴ In *Romeo and Juliet*, Cundell removes the Nurse's iteration of her husband's remark to the toddler Juliet who, when learning to walk, fell forward on her brow: "Yea," quoth he, "dost thou fall upon thy face? / Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit, / Wilt thou not, Jule?" Correspondingly, Cundell also removes Juliet's blatant plea for the night to come so she *can* fall backward for Romeo: 'And learn me how to lose a winning match, / Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods'. Cundell proposes that three or four readers, presumably due to a limited number of copies of the book within the group, read aloud to the others. To enrich the process, he calls attention to the particularly worthy segments of the text, such as Lady Capulet's encomium of the County Paris, by using brackets. As in many of the earlier eighteenth-century editions, Cundell visually identifies rhymed couplets, in this case with two-line curly brackets at the beginnings of the appropriate pairs. An odd feature is the marking of asides—Cundell sets the word 'aside' in quotation marks, not at the beginning of an appropriate line so a reader can modulate her voice, but at the end of a line after it has already been spoken. The subtitle of the book—whether to encourage the feminine readers, smooth the reading activity or simply as a perquisite to the edition—proudly states that it is, 'Altogether Free from Notes'.

The first successful expurgation in America was in 1849, *The Shaksperian Reader: A Collection of the Most Approved Plays of Shakspeare, Carefully Revised . . . prepared expressly for the use of Classes, and the Family Reading Circle*, by a professor of elocution at Columbia University, John W. S. Hows. Hows explains that 'to extend [Shakespeare's] genial influences around the Domestic Hearth' and to allow the use of the book 'for reading aloud in the most refined and pure-minded Family, or Social Circle,' he has had the temerity, as he states, 'to exercise a severe revision of his language, beyond that adopted in any similar undertaking—"Bowdler's Family Shakspeare" not even excepted'.⁴⁵ To facilitate the reading aloud in a circle, Hows notes in his preface: 'To render the selections better adapted for *expressive* reading, I have also ventured to disencumber several passages of unnecessary

44. Henry Cundell, ed., 'Preface,' in *The Boudoir Shakespeare: Carefully Bracketed for Reading Aloud, Freed from All Objectionable Matter, and Altogether Free from Notes*, vol. 1 (London: Sampson Low & Company, 1876), 3–4.

45. John W. S. Hows, ed., *The Shaksperian Reader: A Collection of the Most Approved Plays of Shakspeare, Carefully Revised . . . prepared expressly for the use of Classes, and the Family Reading Circle* (New York, 1849), viii–ix.

circumlocution.⁴⁶ An example of his refinements are in *Othello*, where Hows skips the entire first scene with Iago and concludes the play at the end of Act 3; all of Acts 4 and 5 are summed up in five lines that begin simply, ‘The Catastrophe of this noble domestic tragedy, is foreshadowed in our extracts.’⁴⁷ Hows follows up his first edition with *The Historical Shakspearian Reader*, also proudly described as ‘carefully expurgated and revised’ for the Family Reading Circle, in which during the ‘necessary revision of the humours of the fat knight, we have endeavoured *in all earnestness* not to divest him of his inimitable characteristics.’⁴⁸

Jonathon Green deems the first scholarly attempt at expurgation was in London in *Chambers’s Household Edition of the Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by William Chambers and Robert Carruthers.⁴⁹ The book is typically written ‘with a view to perusal in the family circle . . . without any fear of pain or embarrassment’ as the editors firmly believe that if Shakespeare had lived to see his own book through the press, ‘some superfluities would have been retrenched.’⁵⁰ They make an important distinction to be transparent about which words are Shakespeare’s and which are their substitutions, the substitutions being marked with single quotation marks. Complete omissions, of which there are many, are silent. What Chambers and Carruthers consider objectionable is a bit peculiar. In *Titus Andronicus*, the rape of Lavinia proceeds in all its grisly repulsion, yet the word ‘damn’d’ becomes ‘foul’: ‘And so beguile thy sorrow, till the heavens / Reveal the ‘foul’ contriver of this deed’. In *The Comedy of Errors*, the editors have no problem with Antipholus of Ephesus calling his wife a dissembling harlot, but substitute “O, ‘then’, I must laugh” for “O, Lord, I must laugh”. In *The Winter’s Tale*, a ‘bawdy’ planet becomes a ‘pestilent’ planet. Typographically, however, the use of quotation marks creates confusion because the editors do not differentiate between setting quotation marks around substitutions versus setting them around normal remarks in the text. In *Julius Caesar* and in *Antony and Cleopatra*, quoted phrases actually spoken by the characters are signified with the same

46. *Ibid.*, ix. Italic in original.

47. *Ibid.*, 171.

48. John W. S. Hows, *The Historical Shakspearian Reader: Comprising the “Histories,” or, “Chronicle plays” of Shakspeare; carefully expurgated and revised . . . expressly adapted for the use of Schools, Colleges, and the Family Reading Circle* (New York, 1863), 107. Italic in original.

49. Jonathon Green and Nicholas J. Karolides, *Encyclopedia of Censorship* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 509.

50. William Chambers and Robert Carruthers, eds., *Chambers’s Household Edition of the Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, vol. 1 (London and Edinburgh, 1861), v.

marks as substitutions:

ANTONY: I shall remember:
When Caesar says, 'Do this,' it is perform'd. (JC 1.2.9–10)

CLEOPATRA: . . . and, as I draw them up,
I'll think them every one an Antony,
And say, 'Ah ha!' you're caught. (ANT 2.5.13–15)

A reader must wonder, in Chambers' edition, what Caesar really said to make people jump and what Cleopatra really said to those little fishes she drew up. This could have been easily solved by using double quotation marks versus single ones.

The most popular American equivalent to *The Family Shakespeare* was *The Hudson Shakespeare* edited by Henry Norman Hudson (1814–1886), an admired lecturer. Five million copies were sold between 1880 and 1930, an accomplishment envied by any author of a Shakespeare book today.⁵¹ Murphy notes that an 1881 edition of *The Hudson Shakespeare* is published under the title of *Harvard Edition* in which the text was 'set forth on conservative principles but without dotage or bigotry.'⁵² Expurgated editions made themselves clear that they had been censored by confidently announcing on their title pages that they were school versions or intended for the family or circle, youth or girls, or that they contained select, abridged or revised passages, revealing a sort of ratings code for parents.

But the line between censored and uncensored eventually begins to blur. Hudson's edition was continued after his death as *The New Hudson Shakespeare* in 1909 by two new editors, distinguished college professors who bowdlerize the text even further without admitting it.⁵³ William James Rolfe (1827–1910) had earlier practiced what might be seen as a small deception when he noted in the first of twenty volumes of his *Friendly Edition of Shakespeare* that 'the "expurgation" is limited to the very few words and passages which cannot be read aloud in the family,' yet the other nineteen volumes provide no such admission, nor do any of the volumes Rolfe edited for Harper & Brothers in an 1892 series in which the standard censorship is in place, such as in the Nurse's story about Juliet as a toddler.⁵⁴ Perrin claims that the 'unusually savage cuts' in Houghton Mifflin's *Riverside Shakespeare*,

51. Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy*, 109–10.

52. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 153.

53. Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy*, 111.

54. William James Rolfe, ed., *Shakespeare's Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Edited, with Notes* (New York, 1892).

edited by Richard Grant White in 1883, were never proclaimed at all.⁵⁵ An edition by the Scottish Professor of Theory, History and Practice of Education at St. Andrews, J. M. D. Meiklejohn (1830–1902), states in the preface to his *Hamlet* only that ‘the text has been as carefully and as thoroughly annotated as any Greek or Latin classic’. Although Meiklejohn hopes that the reading of Shakespeare will help to return ‘pithy and vigorous phrases’ back to pale, modern English and ‘to develop as well as to reflect vigour in the characters of the readers’, he has silently expurgated close to five hundred of those vigorous phrases.⁵⁶ As an expurgation, Meiklejohn recognizes that the potential use of his book lies in home and social reading circles, implying that not only is this market the most important one, but perhaps the only one for which it is worth editing Shakespeare at this point in history.

At no point do these editions affect to be precursors to an appreciation of Shakespearean theatre—they are precursors to further reading. Even Samuel Brandram (1824–1892), the most distinguished British reciter of Shakespeare of his time who could repeat from memory at least a dozen plays solo, encouraged readers to further study the plays on the page, not on the stage, in his edition of *Shakespeare, Certain Selected Plays Abridged for the Use of the Young*.⁵⁷ While maintaining the play form in acts and scenes, Brandram assures the reader that he has taken great care to clear the text of every objectionable expression and that with the introduction of these abridgements a reader ‘may thereby be encouraged to venture on a deeper study of them.’⁵⁸ This speaks to the use of his edition in the genre of reading circles in which the readers engage in amateur study, as discussed in the following chapter.

Mary Cowden Clarke is the second woman to edit an edition of Shakespeare, *The Works of William Shakespeare, Edited, with a Scrupulous Revision of the Text*. Contrary to the implication in the title, it is not expurgated in the least, ‘so as to give *the pure text of Shakespeare*’.⁵⁹ She also edited and annotated another illustrated edition with her husband Charles at the request of Cassell & Company, *Cassell’s Illustrated Shakespeare*, that is fully

55. Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler’s Legacy*, 113.

56. J. M. D. Meiklejohn, ed., *Shakespeare’s Hamlet* (London and Edinburgh, 1880), 2, 68.

57. G. Le G. Norgate, ‘Brandram, Samuel (1824–1892)’, rev. Nilanjana Banerji, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Jan. 2012), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/3269. Samuel Brandram, *Shakespeare, Certain Selected Plays Abridged for the Use of the Young* (Philadelphia, 1881).

58. Samuel Brandram, ed., *Shakespeare, Certain Selected Plays Abridged for the Use of the Young* (London, 1881), viii–x.

59. Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, eds., *The Works of William Shakespeare, Edited, with a Scrupulous Revision of the Text* (London, 1864), iii. *Italic in original.*

expunged of all improprieties.⁶⁰ Perrin notes that every major publisher in England and America had their own in-house Shakespearean censor, so important was the concern and so important was this body of readers.⁶¹ By 1887 in America, safe poetical selections from Shakespeare were published in more than eighty editions of secondary schoolbooks; by 1900 in England, one could choose from more than forty different expurgated editions of the collected works.⁶² A hundred years after the first Bowdler edition, the British poet laureate Robert Bridges (1844–1930) wrote in an essay prefaced to the 1907 *Stratford Town Edition* of Shakespeare:

Shakespeare could not be put into the hands of the young without the warning that the foolish things in his plays were written to please the foolish, the filthy for the filthy, and the brutal for the brutal; and that if, out of veneration for his genius we are led to admire or even tolerate such things, we may be thereby not conforming ourselves to him, but only degrading ourselves to the level of his audience, and learning contamination from those wretched beings who can never be forgiven their share in preventing the greatest poet and dramatist of the world from being the best artist.⁶³

Not everyone welcomed the cleansed editions. In an 1897 article in *Shakespeariana* on ‘Shakespeare as a Text-book’ for secondary school youth, Charles F. Johnson (1836–1931) speaks against the use of bowdlerized editions for those young males who are balanced and stable:

Of course if there were young women in the class the case might be different, but that any sane man can be hurt by the Shakespearian frankness, is too preposterous an idea As a moral teacher Shakespeare is based on sound ethical principles, and interprets chastity, honour, motherhood, loverhood, friendship, as our race has always interpreted them in its healthy developments. . . . Shakespeare is closely akin to us, and, as the creator of Imogen and Miranda, is one of our moral teachers.⁶⁴

Even though Johnson does not suggest that women should be allowed to read uncensored

60. Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, eds., *Cassell's Illustrated Shakespeare: The Plays of Shakespeare* (London, 1864).

61. Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler's Legacy*, 109.

62. Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 161 n46.

63. Robert Bridges, essay in *Stratford Town Edition of Shakespeare*, 1907, quoted by Brown, ‘The Great Variety of Readers’, 22 n21.

64. Charles F. Johnson, ‘Shakespeare as a Text-book’, *Shakespeariana* 4 (Philadelphia, 1887):496–97. This volume includes, ‘Course of Shakespeare Historical Reading: King John’, which states, ‘This is to be a course of *Reading* Shakespeare, though any one who wishes can turn it into a course of *Study* also’, 19–23. Italic in original.

Shakespeare, often the women themselves had nothing to do with expunged editions. The anonymous female author of *The English Gentlewoman: A Practical Manual for Young Ladies on their Entrance into Society*, 1861, declares: ‘Shakespeare, in an exquisite form and fashion, and accompanied with notes, that are, at any rate, less offensive than any previous ones, lies on our drawing-room table unfettered by Bowdler.’⁶⁵ Katherine Scheil’s research on nineteenth-century women’s Shakespeare reading groups in America discovers that some clubs took pride in rejecting censored editions: Mrs. Abbott, a member of a club in New Hampshire, remarks, ‘We put no trust in an expurgated edition. We read every word just as it is.’⁶⁶ Mary Cowden Clarke wrote in support of introducing Shakespeare to young girls firstly in the form of expurgated editions and advancing through various versions to the actual text:

Happy is she who at eight or nine years old has a copy of Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* given to her, opening a vista of even then understandable interest and enjoyment! Happy she who at twelve or thirteen has Shakespeare’s works read to her by her mother, with loving selection of fittest plays and passages! Happy they who in mature years have the good taste and good sense to read aright the pages of Shakespeare, and gather thence wholesomest lessons and choicest delights!⁶⁷

Although much disdain has been heaped on bowdlerized editions, it is hardly different from practice in twenty-first century schools as children are routinely given expurgated versions to read and perform. The use of expunged and abridged editions as well as selected compilations to introduce youth to Shakespeare is a traditional practice continuing today and is indeed a distinctive feature of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s programs for children, ‘Stand up for Shakespeare’ and ‘Young People’s Shakespeare’: ‘We adapt some of Shakespeare’s best loved plays and edit them especially for younger audiences to give them the best possible introduction to Shakespeare.’⁶⁸ Bowdlerized editions still serve a purpose.

65. Anonymous, *The English Gentlewoman: A Practical Manual for Young Ladies on their Entrance into Society*, third edition (London, 1861), 50.

66. Katherine West Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading: Women and Shakespeare Clubs in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 51–52.

67. Thompson, *Women Reading Shakespeare*, 103.

68. Royal Shakespeare Company, <http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/yps/>.

A PLETHORA OF EDITIONS AND SUPPLEMENTAL BOOKS

Not all popular editions were cleansed of perceived impropriety during this time. Forty expurgated editions by 1900, as mentioned above, may sound like quite a few, but this should be compared to the overall number of editions available. One library catalogue alone lists 800 separate collected-works editions published in the nineteenth century, equalling approximately one new complete edition every six weeks for a hundred years.⁶⁹ This is astounding and speaks to an astonishing numbers of general readers.

Parallel to the time of rampant sanitization of Shakespeare, Howard Horace Furness, an attorney, developed his mighty and completely unexpurgated variorum edition for the developing advanced scholarly audience. This was in addition to the dozens of editions by autodidactical experts—erudite amateurs but not yet professional scholars—such as Edmund Malone as posthumously packaged by James Boswell, William Hazlitt, Alexander Dyce, Charles Knight, Gulian C. Verplanck, John Payne Collier, William Aldis Wright and others. What the expurgated editions do show, however, is the broad base of readers, as even those who decried the wickedness of the stage or deplored the interpolations of a barbaric age could indulge in the best of Shakespeare in a so-called ‘friendly’ book without embarrassment in a family or social reading circle. The emphasis on reading Shakespeare reinforces the long-held practice of accepting the Shakespearean works as literature. The author of *The Analytic Sixth Reader* in the U.S. maintains that ‘the thoughtful reading of Shakespeare affords mental discipline of the highest order, for it fully taxes the thinking powers and brings the reader into contact with some of the most exquisite poetry to be found in literature.’⁷⁰ This statement exemplifies the pervasive stance—Shakespeare as reading literature, expunged or not, in community or independently—that has been uninterrupted since Shakespeare’s own time and growing exponentially.

With a steadily increasing interest in reading the plays, the nineteenth-century succession of books as supplemental material increased in proportion and variety. In addition to the array of volumes discussing textual issues and intellectual cruces for independent scholars or studious reading groups, there were books designed for lay and community readers to appreciate Shakespeare’s fine nature, heighten a reader’s appreciation for various aspects of

69. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 167. The catalogue is of the Shakespeare collection held at the Central Library in Birmingham, England.

70. Richard Edwards, *The Analytic Sixth Reader* (New York, 1866), quoted in Dunn, *Shakespeare in America*, 237.

the plays, enhance one's reading experience, allow for personal research, stimulate further discussion amongst groups or provide fictional backstories for characters. In discussing a representative sampling of these, it must be recognised that the bibliography of Shakespeare is voluminous. In 1862, Henry G. Bohn published *A Bibliographical Account of the Works of Shakespeare, including every Known Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, which comprises 615 pages of two columns of small type, 65 lines per column.⁷¹ By 1877, the Furness variorum bibliography lists more than a thousand items just on *Hamlet*; by 1936, 2,000 more had been added, an average of one book or article about *Hamlet* every twelve days.⁷² The *Index to the Shakespeare Memorial Library* in the City of Birmingham catalogues almost 14,000 publications in their own holdings as of 1900.⁷³ William Jaggard's 1911 *Shakespeare Bibliography* lists more than 36,000 distinct entries in the English language alone.⁷⁴ The prodigious printed output is a remarkable testament to readers and reading groups and to the understanding of Shakespeare as a writer devoted to literature. This data goes beyond displaying the mere popularity of Shakespeare in the nineteenth century; these statistics attest to the profound impact of readers.

By the end of the nineteenth century, readers could choose from more than ninety fully-illustrated editions to stimulate one's imagination, including some lavish special editions with frameable art such as Mary Cowden Clarke's edition for Cassell, mentioned earlier. Student editions appear in abundance; national editions, companion editions; household, library and family editions; editions with exhaustive notes and apparatus and editions proudly proclaiming they are free of notes; scholarly and expurgated editions; the *Boudoir Edition* for women and a *Cabinet Edition* for men; the *Rugby Edition*, *Temple Edition* and *Ideal Edition*; the *People's Shakespeare*, the *Shorter Shakespeare*, *Stratford Shakespeare*, *Plain-Text Shakespeare*, *Certificate Shakespeare*, *Junior Shakespeare*, *High School Shakespeare*, *University Shakespeare*, *Matriculation Shakespeare*, *Emerald Shakespeare*; the Cambridge edition which would become the first Arden edition; variorums

71. Henry G. Bohn, 'A Bibliographical Account of the Works of Shakespeare, including every Known Edition, Translation, and Commentary', in *The Biography and Bibliography of Shakespeare* (London, 1863).

72. Louis Marder, *His Exits and His Entrances: The Story of Shakespeare's Reputation* (London: John Murray, 1963), 126.

73. A. Capel Shaw, *An Index to the Shakespeare Memorial Library* (Birmingham, 1903).

74. William Jaggard, *Shakespeare Bibliography: A Dictionary of every known Issue of the Writings of our National Poet and of Recorded Opinion thereon in the English Language* (Stratford-on-Avon, Shakespeare Press, 1911).

and handy-volumes; the *Self-Study Shakespeare* series, the *Pocket Shakespeare*, the *Personal Shakespeare*; the *Prince's Shakespeare*; *Carmelite Shakespeare*, *Westminster Shakespeare*, *Imperial Shakespeare*, *Tutorial Shakespeare*, *Red-Letter Shakespeare* and *Swan Shakespeare*. The Shakespeare Society of New York produced the *Bankside Shakespeare, As presented at the Globe and Blackfriars Theatres, circa 1591–1623, being the text furnished the Players, in parallel pages with the first revised folio text*, edited by Appleton Morgan, while Mrs. Elizabeth Archibald produced *Twenty-four Plays of Shakespeare with Plates, Printed from the Prompt Books of the Theatres*. A replica of the First Folio is printed by J. Wright on paper specially made with a 'Shakespeare' watermark.⁷⁵ Sir Walter Scott endeavoured to edit a fourteen-volume edition for young people, and Charles Dodgson (better known as Lewis Carroll) endeavoured to edit a complete edition for girls because he considered the Bowdler edition much too indecent, although neither project was ever printed. John Payne Collier published an edition with the 20,000 emendations from the Perkins folio, forming the foundation of the Collier forgery controversy 'which for some years raged with no small amount of temper and spleen.'⁷⁶

There is a continuing supply of more scholarly books that dissect the metre and vocabulary, obscure passages and cruces, the complaints and the criticism, for both the small numbers in the critical community and the large numbers in the studious reading groups. There are also the unremitting books on Shakespeare's life for the non-specialist reader. The very plethora of these books substantiates the presence of literary Shakespeare in homes and reading clubs:⁷⁷ *The Hoax of the Shakspeare Birth-House*; his life as a boy, what he learned at school, his boyish adventures in the forest, *The Rogues and Vagabonds of Shakespeare's Youth*, his crab tree, the mulberry tree, his visit to Dursley in the Costwolds and an insistence that he was *No Deer Stealer*; Shakespeare and the public, Shakespeare and foreigners, his associates of pedigree, his travels, how to spell his name; Shakespeare's library, his gloves, his death mask, his funeral and shrine and *How Shakespeare's Skull was Stolen*; books confirming he was a Puritan, a Christian, a Catholic, a recusant, a Tory and a Gentleman; Shakespeare as an archer, a builder, an actor, an adapter, an artist, a soldier, an angler, a schoolteacher, but no dog fancier; *Shakespeare on Golf* and *Shakespeare's Rule of*

75. Henry Thomas Hall, *Shakspearean Statistics: A New and Enlarged Edition* (Cambridge, 1874), 48.

76. *Ibid.*, 57.

77. Unless otherwise noted, the following titles are listed without publishers and most often without author names in *An Index to the Shakespeare Memorial Library* (Birmingham, 1900).

Life, Shakspeare and his Phrenology, Shakespeare's Insomnia and the Causes Thereof, Shakspeare: His Inner Life as Intimated in his Works, as well as *Shakspeare and Typography: Shakspeare's Knowledge of the Art of Printing* proving that he must have passed some of his early years in a printing office. Shakespeare's precise knowledge of piscine lore, ornithology, entomology, equinology, flora and fauna, natural history, as well as the law, alchemy, medicine, antiquity, musical instruments and vocal music, fairy mythology and folklore, classical mythology, swordsmanship and castles have been worthy of a profusion of books, as well as *Shakspeare's Ignorance*. Especially popular are books and essays on Shakespeare's genius in all its various manifestations including the insanity and the tragedy of genius, not limited to his knowledge of psychology, lunacy, mania, melancholy, mad folk, imbecility, suicide and stupidity. A profusion of sermons were based on Shakespeare, as were a profusion of books on Shakespeare's use of the Bible. Notes, memoranda, pamphlets and books abound on the source materials and the historical plays; on individual plays, characters and plots; the origins of fables; maps, geography and topography in the plays; and the novelist in Shakespeare. In addition to publications on Shakespeare's characters, often as if they are alive—heroines, heroes, comic characters, moral characters, biblical, dramatic, tragic and remarkable characters—are assorted books on temperance, military misreadings, proverbs, taste, Falstaff's deathbed, Aristophanes, Shakespearean grammar and *Time and Truth Reconciling the Moral and Religious World to Shakespeare*.

Lectures by specialists were printed for those who could not attend in person. Books on the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy were popular, along with a few books on other alternative authorship candidates such as Christopher Marlowe and Sir William Shapleigh.⁷⁸ Quite prolific are books on the sonnets and various keys to their truths, as well as numerous collections of anthologies, gems, beauties, choice thoughts, phrases, miscellanies, wise saws and household words, treasuries of wisdom, religious and moral sententiae, sentiments and similes, apophthegms, mottoes and aphorisms, birthday and autograph books, gleanings from the comedies and *Conceits, Clinches, Flashes, and Whimzies*.⁷⁹

Of use to independent scholars and lay readers alike are the plentiful concordances and

78. Wilbur Gleason Zeigler, *It Was Marlowe: A Story of the Secret of Three Centuries* (Chicago, 1895). Justin Winsor, Librarian of Harvard College, ed., *Was Shakespeare Shapleigh? A Correspondence in Two Entanglements* (Boston, 1887).

79. See n75; these books are listed without author or publisher in *An Index to the Shakespeare Memorial Library* (Birmingham, 1900).

indices with fully descriptive titles such as Samuel Ayscough's *Index to Remarkable Passages and Words made use of by Shakspeare; Calculated to Point Out the Different Meanings to which the Words are Applied*, published as early as 1790, in which 42,000 individual uses of words are organized and each one cited with references to his edition of the complete works.⁸⁰ Francis Twiss, Esq., published *A Complete Verbal Index to the Plays of Shakspeare; Adapted to all the Editions, Comprehending every Substantive, Adjective, Verb, Participle, and Adverb, used by Shakspeare, with a Distinct Reference to Every Individual Passage in which Each Word Occurs*, in the hope that 'by the aid of a copious verbal Index many hitherto obscure passages in the plays of our great poet may be illustrated'.⁸¹ It is difficult to see how obscure passages are illustrated as Twiss merely notes the play and scene in which a word appears, unless it may be to compare usage if a word appears more than once.

Mary Cowden Clarke's concordance was twelve years in the compiling and four years on the press: *The Complete Concordance to Shakspeare: Being a Verbal Index to All the Passages in the Dramatic Works of the Poet*, 1845.⁸² Clarke provides 309,000 entries in a wholly useful format, as evidenced by its popularity for half a century, when it was superseded by John Bartlett's 1894 *New and Complete Concordance of Shakespeare*.⁸³ Clarke and her husband Charles collaborated on *The Shakespeare Key: Unlocking the Treasures of his Style, Elucidating the Peculiarities of his Construction, and Displaying the Beauties of his Expression; forming a Companion to "The Complete Concordance to Shakespeare"*, a remarkable work comprised of thirty years' worth of collected memoranda and essays of style.⁸⁴ After her husband's death, Clarke spent seven years finishing the book and published it herself. Shortly thereafter, James Halliwell-Phillipps felt a decided lack in the concordances of both Twiss and Clarke as they were remiss in not including the poems, a circumstance which he believed caused a great inconvenience, nor was he happy with the neglect of numerous important allusions

80. Samuel Ayscough, *Index to Remarkable Passages and Words made use of by Shakspeare; Calculated to Point Out the Different Meanings to which the Words are Applied* (London, 1790).

81. Francis Twiss, *A Complete Verbal Index* (London: T. Bensley, 1805), v.

82. Mary Cowden Clarke, *The Complete Concordance to Shakspeare: Being a Verbal Index to All the Passages in the Dramatic Works of the Poet* (London, 1845).

83. C. E. Hughes, 'Clarke, Mary Victoria Cowden (1809–1898)', rev. Betty T. Bennett, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/5521. John Bartlett, *New and Complete Concordance of Shakespeare* (London and New York, 1894).

84. Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, *The Shakespeare Key: Unlocking the Treasures of his Style, Elucidating the Peculiarities of his Construction, and Displaying the Beauties of his Expression; forming a Companion to "The Complete Concordance to Shakespeare"* (London: Sampson Low, 1879).

‘which are necessarily left unnoticed in a mere verbal index.’⁸⁵ Halliwell-Phillipps published his own collection of manuscript notes that he had originally compiled for personal use, protesting that ‘it must be accepted with all the crudities attending such a volume.’⁸⁶

Another project, one with no intention to supplant the existing indices and concordances, was compiled by the little-known scholar, poet and polyglot Evangeline Maria O’Connor: *An Index to the Works of Shakspeare giving References, by Topics, to Notable Passages and Significant Expressions; Brief Histories of the Plays; Geographical Names, and Historical Incidents; Mention of all Characters, and Sketches of Important Ones; Together with Explanations of Allusions and Obscure and Obsolete Words and Phrases*. As O’Connor states, ‘In order to make the book a convenient manual, and include information that a student of Shakspeare needs but would otherwise only find scattered through a great number of books, I have given short, outline histories of the plays, and sketches of the principal characters.’⁸⁷ At the time of her writing, 1887, ‘a student of Shakspeare’ would be a reader, most likely one of the members of a reading group. These books targeted the non-academic reader as Shakespeare had not yet been accepted in higher education, as will be covered in chapter seven.

It can be argued that the largest market for most of these publications was the readers in the Shakespeare clubs that proliferated in the second half of the nineteenth century, as described in detail in the following chapter. Mrs. Eliza Gotch provides material witness for the reading groups in her small book, *Two Indexes to the Characters in Shakespeare’s Plays: Chiefly Intended for the Use of Shakespeare-Reading Clubs*.⁸⁸ Having the management of a Shakespeare reading group in England in which it was one of her duties to divide up the play parts between sixteen or fewer readers, she developed Index No. 1. This index facilitates the process of allocating parts as the dramatis personae for every play shows specifically in which act and scene each character speaks and where each character is positioned in the order of his first speech. Thus with each appearance recorded, one can ‘note “their exits and their entrances” and decide, with comparatively little trouble, how the grouping may

85. James O. Halliwell, *A Hand-Book Index to the Works of Shakespeare, including References to the Phrases, manners, Customs, Proverbs, Songs, Particles, &c., which are used or alluded to by the Great Dramatist* (London: J. E. Adlard, 1866), v–vi.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Evangeline Maria O’Connor (née Johnson), *An Index to the Works of Shakspeare giving References, by Topics* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1887), iii.

88. Eliza Gotch, *Two Indexes to the Characters in Shakespeare’s Plays: Chiefly Intended for the Use of Shakespeare-Reading Clubs* (York: John Sampson, 1887).

best be contrived.⁸⁹ Index No. 2 is a list of every character in the canon, which play they are in and their discrete acts and scenes. Gotch occasionally adds helpful descriptions gleaned from the text, such as ‘ARTEMIDORUS of Cnidos, a teacher of rhetoric’ in *Julius Caesar*. She states, ‘Shakespeare-Reading Clubs are numerous both in this country and in America, and I venture to think that what has served one of them so well, may be fitly offered publicly for the service of them all.’⁹⁰

Several other nineteenth-century editions show specific readerly attention, such as Samuel Ayscough’s *The Dramatic Works of William Shakspeare with Explanatory Notes*, as he points specifically to lay readers travelling or at home:

The book now offered to the public may commodiously be taken into a post-chaise, for amusement in a journey: or if a company of gentlemen should happen, in conversation, to mention Shakspeare, or to dispute concerning any particular passage, a volume containing the whole of his Plays may, with great convenience, be fetched by a servant out of a library or a closet. In short, any particular passage may at all times and with ease be recurred to.⁹¹

Ayscough fully expects that any company of gentlemen is naturally conversant in Shakespeare, an assumption one cannot make today arguably as the result of an insistence on not reading the text. Charles Henry Wheeler also speaks to the reading traveller and tourist in his preface of *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*. This is the first collected works that reorders the plays within their categories of Comedy, History and Tragedy so they are presented in chronological order of the play’s situation in history, with the Greco-Roman histories separate from the British histories. This presumes a reader who starts at the beginning of the book and reads through to the end, at least within genres: ‘Thus the merry knights of Christendom are not associated with the sober demagogues of Rome; nor the belles and beaux of Venice confounded with the “worn and withered” phantoms of a Scottish heath.’⁹² To ensure that this edition ‘may conveniently accompany the traveller by a stage-coach, the tourist in his chaise or gig, and the pedestrian in his solitary ramble’, Wheeler is proud to announce there are minimal notes and a condensation of commentary,

89. Ibid., iii–iv.

90. Ibid., iv.

91. Samuel Ayscough, ‘The Preface to the First Edition’, in *The Dramatic Works of William Shakspeare with Explanatory Notes* (London: John Stockdale, 1807), A3^v.

92. Charles Henry Wheeler, ed., *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare with Glossarial Notes, a Sketch of his Life, and an Estimate of his Writings, Newly Arranged and Edited* (London: William Baynes and Son, 1825), iii.

while maintaining a sufficiently large type size and a convenient ‘meadow of margin’ for ease of reading and to allow for readers’ notes.⁹³

A paragraph at the beginning of each play provides literary and historical notes—just enough to help, not too many to hinder the reading, acknowledging both the reader’s studious interest and the probable lack of specialized knowledge. Glossed words are signified in the text with various sigla such as asterisks, daggers, double daggers, pilcrows, crosses, etc., positioned at the ends of the words in question rather than at the ends of the lines. Matching the mark in the text with the correct gloss at the bottom of the column allows a reader to find the appropriate definition at a glance without having to worry about a line number; marking the specific word also saves space because the publisher need not repeat the word in the gloss.

Charles Knight (1791–1873), publisher and writer, edited at least three of his six editions—the *National Edition*, *Cabinet Edition* and *Stratford Shakspeare*—with readerly attributes, including lists of ‘Persons Represented’ that exhibit the acts and scenes in which each character appears, geographical and historical references where necessary for reader edification, essays of manners and customs, scenery and costume, and facts of science and natural history, making it an ideal edition for members of reading clubs. Knight says of his *Stratford Shakspeare*:

I desire “The Stratford Shakspeare” to be “The People’s Shakspeare.” By “The People,” using the term with reference to literature, I understand, chiefly, that vast aggregate of persons who have become readers of books during the last quarter of a century. For this great class, who are sometimes called “The Million,” books must be provided that will not only economise Money but economise Time.⁹⁴

It is clear that Knight’s nineteenth-century vision of the reader is different from that of Alice Walker’s twentieth-century vision, discussed in chapter three, where Walker presumes a scholarly reader and Knight presumes a body of community readers. Knight also edited *The Student’s and Traveller’s Companion Shakspeare*, originally published in twenty monthly parts for one shilling each. An original layout is used in this edition: instead of one or two columns of play text with explanations and commentary at the bottoms of the columns,

93. Ibid.

94. Charles Knight, ed., ‘Prospectus,’ *The Stratford Shakspeare* (London: Thomas Hodgson, 1854), 722. Italic in original.

Knight sets the text in one wide column on each page with narrow columns on the outside edges for annotations and small woodcuts taken from his *Pictorial Edition*.⁹⁵ An advertisement in one of these volumes states that the editor ‘is desirous of producing a PORTABLE EDITION’ that would also ‘comprehend *all needful Commentary* for the assistance of the Student, and of the Traveller, who have not access to more elaborate Editions.’⁹⁶ The advertisement draws attention to the difficult task of solving the typographic issues with size of type and arrangement, providing evidence that discerning readers were particularly aware of the features that make a readable text.

Assumedly because many of the Shakespeare reading groups were predominantly female, there developed a particular genre of supplementary texts for women. Of course, publications were plentiful about the male characters in the plays, such as William Hazlitt’s essays on the *Characters of Shakespear’s Plays*.⁹⁷ Hazlitt does not need to specify ‘male’ characters in his title, as male writers of this time rarely discuss the women in the Shakespearean plays, uniformly finding them ‘intrinsically less interesting than men.’⁹⁸ Of the three women in *The Merchant of Venice*, to whom Shakespeare has given twice as many lines as Shylock, Hazlitt provides one short paragraph with the statement, ‘Portia has a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her.’⁹⁹

It was Anna Jameson’s (1794–1860) two-volume set in 1832 entitled *Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, and Historical*, an integration of Shakespearean criticism, feminism and conduct literature that became the first book to examine the female characters at length and as a legitimate category of criticism.¹⁰⁰ Jameson, a professional and prolific non-fiction writer, argues that Shakespeare’s female characters are ‘in truth, in variety, in power, equal to his men.’¹⁰¹ She provides the first critical notice of the remarkable character of Paulina in *The Winter’s Tale*. Her profiles of the women are not fictional backgrounds nor are they

95. Charles Knight, ed., *The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakspeare* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1838–1841).

96. Advertisement in Charles Knight, *The Companion Shakspeare* (London: Charles Knight, 1857), 227. Italic in original.

97. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear’s Plays*.

98. Julie Hankey, ‘Victorian Portias: Shakespeare’s Borderline Heroine’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45 (Winter, 1994): 426.

99. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear’s Plays*, 209.

100. Anna Jameson, *Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, and Historical* (1832; repr. under the title *Shakspeare’s Heroines, with Twenty-Six Portraits of Famous Players in Character*, London: George Bell & Sons, 1900). In her original title she does not particularize the women as ‘Shakespeare’s’ women.

101. *Ibid.*, 17.

unremitting heroine worship, but interpretations that allow political ambition, intellect, sexuality and passion as natural and acceptable facets of womanhood. Jameson is unafraid to portray Lady Macbeth's active agency in driving the reluctant spirit of her husband toward murder and ambition, yet Jameson appreciates: 'What would not the firmness, the self-command, the ardent affections of this woman have performed, if properly directed?'¹⁰² The title indicates a strong readership of, most assuredly, women, although it was honorifically reviewed by a John Wilson who notes that Ms. Jameson 'revealed to them truths which seem to have escaped the perception of us male critics . . . in these Characteristics the full beauties of Shakespeare's female characters have been for the first time understood.'¹⁰³ With the publication and popularity of Jameson's book, it became familiar to describe Shakespeare as the champion of women, 'their laureate, their brother, their friend', as can be seen throughout this thesis.¹⁰⁴ The book was published in more than twenty editions by 1905 in England and was similarly widespread in America.¹⁰⁵

As Julie Hankey states, 'The Victorians delighted in novelising Shakespeare's plays, in imagining the surroundings, the absent mothers, and the girlhoods and afterlives of their heroines.'¹⁰⁶ Books for girls and young women multiplied, such as *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*, by Mary Cowden Clark, in which she develops the lives of the women up to the point where they enter Shakespeare's plays. One discovers how Isabella in *Measure for Measure* 'learned to sigh for the pious calm of the votarist' when but a lovely, angelic, motherless child.¹⁰⁷ It is revealed how Katharina in *The Taming of the Shrew* came to be peevish due to the poor treatment from her father, and that the depth of her sister Bianca's 'sly pretences, mock-modesties and show-offs of meekness' inspired even her best friend to call Bianca a 'hollow, deceitful, treacherous toad'.¹⁰⁸

The celebrated actress, Helena Faucit, Lady Martin (1817–1898) wrote numerous letters to friends revealing her impressions and insights of the Shakespearean characters she had portrayed on stage, and these friends insisted that she publish the letters for the many

102. Ibid., 336.

103. Quoted in Thompson, *Women Reading Shakespeare*, 67–68.

104. Hankey, 'Victorian Portias', 427.

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid., 436.

107. Mary Cowden Clarke, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines in a Series of Tales*, 2nd series (New York, 1889), 88.

108. Ibid., 182.

female readers of Shakespeare. The result is *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, in which Lady Martin delves into the backstories and imaginings of the women as they grew to become the persons she depicts, elaborating each one into the rich human being Lady Martin believes she was intended to be.¹⁰⁹ Her years of acting these women led her to bemoan the Elizabethan stage on which female actors were not allowed:

Woman's words coming from a man's lips, a man's heart—it is monstrous to think of! One quite pities Shakespeare, who had to put up with seeing his brightest creations thus marred, misrepresented, spoiled.¹¹⁰

Women were reinforced in their connections to and affirmations of the heroines in Shakespeare's works. An anonymous Old Soldier compiled *The Sweet Silvery Sayings of Shakespeare on the Softer Sex*.¹¹¹ He was inspired by a note in *The Gentle Life: Essays in Aid of the Formation of Character*, by James Hain Friswel, which states:

If a man wanted to make a little sugar-sweet book, which young men in love, and young maidens who are enamoured of their own sex would buy, let him go through the plays of the great national Poet, and make an extract of those passages where he has exalted woman.¹¹²

The Old Soldier did just that. His book is more than 300 pages of Shakespeare's examples of women brave and strong, virtuous and sweet. Victorian women themselves felt a spirited and admirable connection to Shakespeare's female characters, as Mary Cowden Clarke writes:

In Shakespeare's page, as in a mental looking-glass, we women may contemplate ourselves. Of all the male writers that ever lived he has seen most deeply into the female heart; he has most vividly depicted it in its strength, and in its weakness. Of all of them, he has best asserted womanhood's rights; he has best put forth and maintained its claims; he has best admonished its failings, its errors, its faults, its guilt. Of all of them, he has best produced its capabilities, its magnanimity, its devotion, its enthusiasm, its fortitude, its patience, its endurance, its heroism, its constancy, its fullest worth.¹¹³

109. Helena Faucit, Lady Martin, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters* (1885; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

110. *Ibid.*

111. Old Soldier, *The Sweet Silvery Sayings of Shakespeare on the Softer Sex* (London, 1877).

112. James Hain Friswel, *The Gentle Life: Essays in Aid of the Formation of Character*, 16th ed. (London, 1886), 18.

113. Mary Cowden Clarke, 'Shakespeare—Studies of Women,' in *The Ladies' Companion*, 1st series 1 (1849), 25, quoted in Gail Marshall and Ann Thompson, eds., *Jameson, Cowden Clarke, Kemble, Cushman: Great Shakespearean* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 59.

In John Ruskin's (1819–1900) 1864 lecture 'Of Queens' Gardens', he discusses the questions of how, what and why to read and of the lessons that literature can teach, particularly as they can apply to and enable women to become greater than the 'shadow and attendant image of her lord . . . as if he could be helped effectively by a shadow'.¹¹⁴ The first works of literature to which Ruskin turns for inspiration is Shakespeare, with what has become a famous pronouncement: 'Shakespeare has no heroes—he has only heroines'.¹¹⁵ Ruskin's speech confirms and validates women's attraction to Shakespeare by detailing the flawed male characters and claiming there is not one entirely heroic male figure in all the plays:

Whereas there is hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it, steadfast in grave hope and errorless purpose: Cordelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Hermione, Imogen, Queen Katherine, Perdita, Silvia, Viola, Rosalind, Helena, and last, and perhaps loveliest, Virgilia, are all faultless: conceived in the highest heroic type of humanity. Then observed, secondly: The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and failing that, there is none.¹¹⁶

In *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, Marshall highlights the fact that Victorian girls first came to know Shakespeare through reading in the home or perhaps very late in the century through formal education, but almost never, unless a girl is from a theatrical family, do they discover Shakespeare first through the theatre.¹¹⁷ This again emphasises the prevalence of reading the texts as literature and in discussion with others as opposed to a familiarity via the stage. Far from a quiescent presence in Victorian women's culture, Shakespeare inhabits a space in their lives 'characterized by a discursive, interrogative energy'.¹¹⁸ Marshall maintains that Victorian women and Shakespeare had a symbiotic relationship in which the women accrued cultural status, an enriched language and psychological insights, whilst Shakespeare was indebted to the women for an ongoing recognition of his work in the nineteenth century and 'the considerable extent to which their witness of his acuity and complexity, their appreciation of his wisdom, actively contribute to his status'.¹¹⁹ It bears

114. John Ruskin, 'Sesame and Lilies. Lecture II.—Lilies: Of Queens' Gardens', in *Essays: English and American*, vol. 28 of *The Harvard Classics* (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909–14), Bartleby.com, 2001, www.bartleby.com/28/.

115. *Ibid.*

116. Ruskin, 'Sesame and Lilies'.

117. Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 13.

118. *Ibid.*, 4.

119. Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 9.

repeating that this active contribution to Shakespeare's cultural status came from readers who treated the play texts as literature and Shakespeare himself as a literary dramatist.

A succession of narrative versions ostensibly for children served to spread the reading of Shakespeare even more widely as families incorporated the stories, as they were designed to be, into the family reading circle.¹²⁰ Although the authors of these children's books regularly express intent to instil a love of the text into adolescents so they will later peruse the original text for themselves, the simple books must have also instilled an interest in the adults in the families who might not otherwise have been introduced to Shakespeare. Lois G. Hufford (*fl.* 1890–1910) recognizes the value of children's books in introducing reluctant adults to reading Shakespeare as she states in her preface to *Shakespeare in Tale and Verse*: 'In retelling these tales from Shakespeare, the author's purpose is to introduce Shakespeare to the young, and to such of their elders as find the intricacies of the plots of the dramas somewhat difficult to untangle.'¹²¹ Thus the genre of narrative versions for children including young girls can be seen to further expand the reading of Shakespeare. A note to this effect is found in the journal *Shakespeariana* in an 1884 review of Robert R. Raymond's *Shakespeare for the Young Folk*: 'Let not the reader gather from the title of the book that it is intended only for children; it will, we have no doubt, serve also as an introduction to the riches of Shakespeare to many children of a larger growth who have, from one reason or another, neglected to acquaint themselves with the plays.'¹²²

Marshall remarks on the trajectory of Shakespeare over the nineteenth century as 'quite extraordinary in terms of his relationship with girl readers.'¹²³ To facilitate—or perhaps to take advantage of—this relationship, the number of essays and books mushroomed. Taylor validates the impression that in the nineteenth century 'women and children shaped the prevailing image of Shakespeare. Most readers first encountered him in versions deliberately reshaped to make them fit for tender minds.'¹²⁴ One of the earliest and most famous books for young girls is the edition that the sister and brother, Mary Anne Lamb (1764–1847) and Charles Lamb (1775–1834), published as prose stories in 1807, *Tales from Shakespeare*:

120. I say 'ostensibly for children' because the first Shakespeare book I bought for myself as a young adult was Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare*.

121. Lois G. Hufford, *Shakespeare in Tale and Verse* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1902), vii.

122. Anonymous reviewer, 'Shakespeare for Young Folks', *Shakespeariana* 1 (Philadelphia, 1884): 31.

123. Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 18.

124. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 209.

Designed for the use of Young Persons, the same year that Henrietta Bowdler published her expurgated texts. Charles Lamb chose to rework what Mary calls in a letter, ‘the best stories,’ six of the tragedies, leaving the comedies and romances for Mary.¹²⁵ She wrote fourteen of the twenty novelettes, although only Charles’ name appears on the publications until the seventh edition. The preface, written primarily by Mary, states their wish ‘to make these Tales easy reading for very young children.’¹²⁶ The intention is chiefly to write for young ladies, those who are not allowed to use their fathers’ libraries at the very young ages at which boys have already memorised the best scenes, ‘before their sisters are permitted to look into this manly book’ with the result that the boys will need to explain the difficult parts to their sisters and eventually read the originals to them, ‘carefully selecting what is proper for a young sister’s ear.’¹²⁷ The Lambs’ entire emphasis is on reading, with not a word toward performance. They sum up their objective:

What these Tales shall have been to the *young* readers, that and much more it is the writers’ wish that the true Plays of Shakespeare may prove to them in older years—enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honourable thoughts and actions, to teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity: for of examples, teaching these virtues, his pages are full.¹²⁸

The tales were enormously successful; by the end of the nineteenth century, the book had been published in seventy-four editions and continues to sell today. As Perrin notes, ‘She rewrote the plays in such charming prose that Lamb’s tales became new objects in their own right.’¹²⁹

Marianne Novy recognizes that the interest in ‘claiming Shakespeare on behalf of women began—with Behn and Cavendish—before Shakespeare was a cultural hero.’¹³⁰ Perhaps because women were rarely allowed into the inner circles of male Shakespearean

125. Thompson, *Women Reading Shakespeare*, 49. Mary Lamb’s name is absent from the cover not only because she is a woman, but also because she had recently murdered her mother with a butcher knife.

126. Mary Lamb and Charles Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare: Designed for the use of Young Persons* (1807; repr., New York: Weathervane Books, 1975), viii.

127. *Ibid.*

128. *Ibid.*, ix. Italic in original.

129. Perrin, *Dr. Bowdler’s Legacy*, 63. An issue that is beyond the scope of this thesis is the question of whether these appropriated versions should still be considered ‘Shakespeare.’ That question is not relevant here as the concern is merely to show the extent to which the works of Shakespeare, in any form, were impressed into the family and the culture through reading.

130. Marianne Novy, ed., ‘Introduction,’ *Transforming Shakespeare: Contemporary Women’s Re-Visions in Literature and Performance* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), 2. See chapter four herein re Aphra Behn and Margaret Cavendish.

criticism, much of their energy and interest translated into the spate of books for youth and children as shown by the abundance of retellings by female authors: Mary Seymour, *Shakespeare's Stories Simply Told: Tragedies and Histories, with Numerous Illustrations*, consists of narrative outlines of the stories because 'the appreciation of the Plays themselves, and of their detailed beauties, belongs to more mature years.'¹³¹ Mrs. Valentine sets the stories of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Winter's Tale* in iambic tetrameter in *Shakspearian Tales in Verse for Children*.¹³² Adelaide Gordon Sim provides girls with narrative lessons of goodness and virtue from the plays in *Phoebe's Shakespeare*.¹³³ Edith Nesbit's *Children's Stories from Shakespeare* retells a number of the plays as fairy tales with rather disquieting illustrations, such as Romeo and Juliet as romantic three-year-olds.¹³⁴ The supply continues into the early twentieth century when M. Surtees Townsend wrote *Stories from Shakspeare*, from which a snippet of *The Tempest* includes: "It certainly is a terrible storm", said Miranda to herself. . . . She trembled with fear as she lay sleepless upon her little bed.'¹³⁵ Other early twentieth-century titles include Mary Macleod's *The Shakespeare Story-Book*, Alice Spenser Hoffman's *The Children's Shakespeare: Being Stories from the Plays with Illustrative Passage* and Mary Maud and Constance Maud with *Shakespeare's Stories*.¹³⁶

Children's books on the virtues of the male Shakespearean characters, comparable to those on the women, seem to be scarce, though one example is that written by Amelia E. Barr in America, *The Young People of Shakespeare's Dramas, for Youthful Readers*. The title-page epigraph states:

He who takes us from the smoke and stir of every-day toil, and laps us in the Elysium of our boyish days—blood-stirring and hopeful—is a benefactor to his species; and to no mortal do we more owe this reminiscence and gratitude than to WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.¹³⁷

131. Mary Seymour, *Shakespeare's Stories Simply Told: Tragedies and Histories, with Numerous Illustrations* (London, 1883), v.

132. Mrs. Valentine, *Shakspearian Tales in Verse for Children* (New York, 1882).

133. Adelaide Gordon Sim, *Phoebe's Shakespeare, arranged for Children* (London, 1894).

134. Edith Nesbit, *The Children's Shakespeare with Eleven Full-Page Illustrations* (Philadelphia, 1900).

135. M. Surtees Townsend, *Stories from Shakespeare* (London, 1899), 17.

136. Mary Macleod, *The Shakespeare Story-Book* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., 1902). Alice Spenser Hoffman, *The Children's Shakespeare: Being Stories from the Plays with Illustrative Passage* (London and New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1911). Mary Maud and Constance Maud, *Shakespeare's Stories* (London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913).

137. Amelia E. Barr, *The Young People of Shakespeare's Dramas, for Youthful Readers* (New York, 1882). POD reprint.

The epigraph may be a bit overstated. Barr cites lines from the plays and provides historical sketches of nine boys: Arthur Plantagenet from *King John*, who jumps off a castle wall and dies before his uncle can have him murdered; young Edward Plantagenet in *3 Henry VI* who is murdered by his uncles; Edward V and Richard Duke of York, children murdered in their beds at their uncle's behest in *Richard III*; the small son of Coriolanus who has two lines and whose father was about to let him get slaughtered by the Volscians; Guiderius and Arviragus in *Cymbeline*, grown men who had been kidnapped at birth by a courtier; and Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale* who died as a result of his father's cruel treatment of his mother. Barr assumes the Fool in *King Lear* is 'a boy who is a gracious emanation of all that is gentle and constant and cheerful and true.'¹³⁸ One girl is mentioned in this book of *The Young People*, Perdita, whose father ordered that as a newborn babe she be abandoned on a hillside in a foreign country. One must assume that nineteenth-century males had reasons for reading Shakespeare other than emulating the virtues of their sex.

The English actress and socialist Elizabeth Wright Macauley (1785–1837), in retelling her *Tales of the Drama*, acknowledges both the prevalence of the Shakespearean narratives for youth and the aversion of some parents to the stage when she prefaces her stories: 'It has been much the practice to dramatize Tales . . . for the purpose of rendering the real beauties of the British stage more familiar and better known to the younger class of readers, and even of extending that knowledge to family circles where the drama itself is forbidden.'¹³⁹ Macauley carefully signals Shakespeare's original text within the narratives by setting three asterisks at the ends of lines, which is visually superfluous since the original text is also in verse, a smaller point size and indented, clearly differentiated from her prose.

Although the authors of the youthful tales are predominantly women, there are of course a number of books in this genre by men. Examples are Thomas Carter's *Stories from Shakespeare Retold* and James Henry Flather's *Selection of Tales from Shakspeare*, in which he further edited six of the Lambs' tales.¹⁴⁰ Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch markets to a slightly older group of readers in his *Historical Tales from Shakespeare*, providing narratives of the

138. Ibid., 182.

139. Elizabeth Wright Macauley, *Tales of the Drama: Founded on the Tragedies of Shakspeare, Massinger, Shirley, Rowe, Murphy . . . and on the Comedies of Steele, Farquhar . . . and Mrs. Cowley* (London, 1822), v–vi.

140. Thomas Carter, *Stories from Shakespeare Retold* (London, 1910). J. H. Flather, ed., *A Selection of Tales from Shakspeare . . . by Charles and Mary Lamb, edited with Introduction, Notes and an Appendix of Extracts from Shakspeare* (Cambridge, 1898).

history plays chosen specifically because they are not included in the Lambs' editions.¹⁴¹ He combines all three *Henry VI* plays into one story, both of the *Henry IV* plays in one and includes *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*. Quiller-Couch justifies rewriting the chronicles and bowdlerising the text, such as eliminating Joan la Pucelle's insistence at her trial that she was pregnant of various men in *1 Henry VI*: 'For although even a very young reader may delight in Shakespeare, it takes a grown one and a wise one to understand his full meaning'.¹⁴²

These examples are not a comprehensive itemization of the available books but display only a modicum of this particular form, the children's books, to exhibit another avenue through which Shakespeare infiltrated the family reading and propagated an interest in the works as literature. Janet Bottoms maintains that these books appeared at a time of upwardly mobile expansion of the middle class, and thus stimulated Shakespeare's rise to the status of National Poet which 'occurred at the same time as a rapid increase in the reading public', the shopkeepers, clerical employees, the middle-class families, those who wished to participate in 'polite' society.¹⁴³ These books thus display, not just popularity of Shakespeare in general, but that the popularity was based on the page, on the printed works, on Shakespeare as a literary dramatist, and this popularity was acutely evident amongst non-specialists.

MORE CHEAP EDITIONS

Besides the bowdlerized and the scholarly, the children's retellings and the supplemental texts for readers, cheap print editions of original Shakespeare were alive and well during the nineteenth century and indicative of a massive reading market. The production of cheap books was facilitated by a technological advance in the late 1700s and early 1800s, one that led to profuse inexpensive reprinting: the stereotype. In this process a heavy paper mould is made of the finished metal type set in its form; from this mould, single-sheet lead plates are made of the entire page without having to reset the type. This is a remarkable advancement in that moulds can be reused for years, drastically reducing the expense, time and effort of reproducing a successful book. This technology had an impact on the availability of reading editions of Shakespeare, as exemplified by Giles Dawson's description of

141. Arthur Quiller-Couch, *Historical Tales from Shakespeare* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901).

142. *Ibid.*, viii.

143. Janet Bottoms, "'To read aright": Representations of Shakespeare for Children', *Children's Literature*: 32 (2004), 3, 1213.

an eight-volume duodecimo edition printed in 1823 whose title claimed it was *Accurately printed from the Text of the Corrected Copy left by the late George Steevens, Esq.* In reality, it was not printed from any copy left by the late George Steevens, but from the stereotypes of the first ten-volume edition of Alexander Chalmers in London, 1805, which itself was printed from the 1803 Steevens edition. Dawson details the life of this set through at least thirty-six different imprints between 1823 and 1892, and ‘there are probably many more. . . more numerous, all together, than any other family of Shakespeare texts ever produced anywhere.’¹⁴⁴

This new technology further encouraged enterprising publishers to invest in the belief that the common man was willing to read books if they were affordable, at the price of a few pennies. George Routledge launched his Railway Library in 1848, the same year in which W. H. Smith opened his first railway bookstall in Euston Station, London, and ordered a thousand copies of each Routledge title.¹⁴⁵ Routledge produced Shakespeare’s entire canon, although not part of the Railway Library series, in thirteen small volumes in 1866 called *The Handy-Volume Shakespeare*, based on the texts of Collier, Dyce and others. An advertisement makes clear that *The Handy-Volume* is designed expressly for a market of lay readers:

The present Edition is intended, in respect to its appearance and size—a clear beautiful type, and a page free from Notes—to form a handy readable series of Volumes, equally adapted for the Pocket, the Knapsack, and the Railway.¹⁴⁶

Later in the century another technological advance with immense ramifications in publishing truly expedited a resurgence in inexpensive and even ephemeral Shakespeare editions for lay readers: wood pulp paper. By the mid 1800s paper-making machines were able to mass-produce vast quantities of paper in ever-increasing sheet sizes and even in lengthy rolls for early web-fed printing, but there was a looming shortage of linen and

144. Dawson, *Four Centuries of Shakespeare Publication*, 19–22. This process of reproduction led to our current definition of a *stereotype* being a conventional image, a fixed or oversimplified idea.

145. James J. Barnes, Patience P. Barnes, ‘Routledge, George (1812–1888)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/24184. As with the Boni brothers and Scherman mentioned later, Routledge used books that were in the public domain or whose copyrights were insecure, such as American copyrights in England. His first volume—and most of the following—were pirated from books such as *The Pilot*, by James Fenimore Cooper.

146. *The Handy-Volume Shakespeare*, vol. 1 (New York: George Routledge and Sons, 1885), publisher’s note following the title page.

cotton rags as raw material. As early as 1666 the English Parliament had decreed that the dead could only wear wool when buried, saving approximately 200,000 pounds of linen and cotton per year for the papermakers.¹⁴⁷ It was the invention and mass production of paper made from wood pulp in the later nineteenth century that solved this material shortage which had challenged entrepreneurs for more than a century.¹⁴⁸ This was coincident with the demand of readers newly aspirant to acquire culture in general, as DeNel Rehberg Sedo notices: ‘These readers sought not leisure, but to gain cultural capital in an increasingly literate society.’¹⁴⁹ The multitudes of both readers and books buttressed each other:

The new capacity for putting out cheap, ephemeral books and the idea of books as utilitarian objects reinforced one another and together made possible the success of the new mode of production in the publishing world, one driven by publishers and readers rather than by authors.¹⁵⁰

Amongst the multitude of Shakespeare editions in the nineteenth century, two cheap publications in particular in the 1860s have histories that provide evidence of an extraordinary plenitude of readers: the ‘friendly’ and completely unannotated *Globe Shakespeare* edition and John Dicks’ *Shilling Shakspeare* for the public. The cost of single-volume Shakespeare editions were rapidly declining in the second half of the century when a Scotsman in London, Alexander Macmillan, allied his publishing company with the Cambridge University Press in the early 1860s. Macmillan wanted to produce an edition ‘with an eye to more popular uses than [Cambridge] felt themselves at liberty to consider in their critical and scholarly edition’, which was also in production at this time.¹⁵¹ He was hoping to sell 50,000 copies in three years, well beyond the expectations of most publishers of Shakespeare books today. Macmillan named it the *Globe Shakespeare* against the objections of the Cambridge editors because, as he stated, ‘I want to give the idea that we aim at great

147. Dard Hunter, *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft* (1943; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 311.

148. *Ibid.*, 377–82. Hunter describes a family-run paper mill in the state of Maine, U.S.A., in the mid-nineteenth century that imported shiploads of Egyptian mummies so as to use the linen wrappings for making paper pulp; 382.

149. DeNel Rehberg Sedo, ‘An Introduction to Reading Communities: Processes and Formations’, in *Reading Communities from Salons to Cyberspace*, ed. DeNel Rehberg Sedo (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3.

150. Kim Becnel, *The Rise of Corporate Publishing and Its Effects on Authorship* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 8.

151. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 175. It is essentially with this publication of the Cambridge scholarly edition that the editing process transfers to the realm of professional academics, although Horace Howard Furness, an attorney, carried on with his important New Variorum until his death in 1912.

popularity—that we are doing this book for the *million*, without saying it.’¹⁵² Macmillan wanted every Englishman ‘from the intelligent mechanic to the peer of the realm’ to own a copy.¹⁵³ His expectations presume an awareness of the breadth of lay Shakespeare readers, epitomized by an advertisement announcing the price of the large volume as 3 shilling 6 pence and exclaiming that the book is so inexpensive that ‘we have little doubt that large numbers of buyers will be found, who will purchase their six or eight copies for the purpose of placing one in every room in their house.’¹⁵⁴ The expectation that readers surely desire the collected works of Shakespeare in every room is painfully endearing. This is the world in which Macmillan imagines Shakespeare readers, and perhaps it was not merely advertising hype—upon its publication in 1864, sales doubled expectations; by the final print run in 1911, the *Globe* edition had sold 244,000 copies to both scholars and home readers.¹⁵⁵ By 1866, George Routledge produced an imitation called *Blackfriars* for a penny less, and more imitations followed. But the price had not yet reached rock-bottom.

By 1868, three publishers sold the collected works of Shakespeare for a shilling: Routledge, Frederick Warne (now owned by Penguin), and the most successful, John Dicks. Routledge sold his cheapest volume for less than a shilling, 8½ pence, almost one-thirtieth the price of Shakespeare’s original First Folio in 1623.¹⁵⁶ But it was Dicks who set a sales record: he sold four times as many copies in two years as the *Globe Shakespeare* sold in fifty years.¹⁵⁷ As Dicks tells his story, he was inspired by the tercentenary of Shakespeare’s birth and first published individual plays in penny numbers, selling 150,000 copies—this in the year when other publishers were also inspired by the anniversary and plentiful new editions of the collected works were published. He then reprinted, probably using stereotypes, bound those versions into cloth and sold entire volumes for two shillings, selling another 50,000. This being so successful, he reprinted and reissued the volume with a paper cover, selling another 700,000. As the Birmingham library catalogue records: ‘Total sales

152. Andrew Macmillan, quoted in Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 176. Italic in original.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid., quoting an advertisement in *The Bookseller*.

155. Reprints of the *Globe* are still sold today, and it is the only edited edition downloadable as text that is available free of charge. Its dated origins in the nineteenth century are evident in such editorial issues as punctuation: the F1 *Merchant of Venice* contains 5 exclamation marks, while the *Globe* edition uses 169.

156. This does not adjust for inflation over time. Scholars believe the First Folio sold for twenty shillings, or one pound, in 1623.

157. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 177–78.

of Dicks' *People's Edition*, April 1864 to July 1868, about 1,000,000 of copies.¹⁵⁸ This is an astounding testament to the numbers of lay readers eager to buy Shakespeare on the page.

By 1890, Ward & Lock published their *Sixpenny Shakespeare* for the cheapest price before or since: the entire works for six pence. As the average price of a folio edition of the collected works in the early part of the century was £38, these new, cheap editions are extraordinary and speak to the popularity of reading Shakespeare in the general community—as well as to the wholesale adoption of new technology.

The editions discussed in this chapter are merely representative specimens of the wide variety and vast numbers of books available. Shakespeare editions were repeatedly designed and produced specifically for reading as literature, either alone in silence or in groups aloud, and for adjunctive and stimulating illumination of many sorts.

Who was reading all these books? The combination of elements such as new printing technology, a readerly editorial focus, a growing interest in intellectual and cultural capital, and a strong sense of community and social engagement coalesced into a proliferation of Shakespeare reading groups on both sides of the Atlantic. The sheer numbers of readers showcases how deeply rooted Shakespeare became in social circles and the general adult community, as exhibited in the following chapter. The phenomenon of organized Shakespeare reading clubs is a powerful testament to the pleasure derived from reading Shakespeare, especially aloud in community, and to the commonplace and instinctive reaction to the plays as literary works. Acknowledging this manifestation—for centuries—of the plays as literature amongst non-specialists can point to an acceptance that Shakespeare himself might not have been ignorant of this crucial potential. It can lead to a less hostile reaction to lay readers today and thus encourage a return to this valuable form of interaction with the Shakespearean works.

158. A. Capel Shaw, *Index to the Shakespeare Memorial Library*, 24. The population of the United Kingdom in 1865 was 26.1 million people, according to the Wolfram|Alpha knowledgebase, 2014, wolframalpha.com.

CHAPTER SIX
READING SHAKESPEARE IN COMMUNITY

Society, saith the text, is the happiness of life.

Nathaniel, *Love's Labour's Lost*, 4.2

The recognition of whether and where Shakespeare was widely read becomes easier in the nineteenth century as plentiful documentation exists that includes the Working Men's College and the National Home-Reading Union in England, reports in the American journal *Shakespeariana* of Shakespeare reading circles in both England and the United States, the Women's Club movement that swept Shakespeare across America, as well as the books and articles published to help facilitate lay Shakespeare reading groups in both countries. It is in this chapter that we see where lies the practical utilization of the striking output of books shown in the previous chapter. It becomes clear that readers had perhaps the most powerful impact on Shakespeare's place in culture, ensuring an integration of the Shakespearean works into the social fabric of the general public that is enviable today. It is also shown that readers inadvertently participated in the transition of Shakespeare from the hoi polloi to the hoity-toity at the turn into the twentieth century.

SHAKESPEARE READING GROUPS

Although this chapter has a focus on reading circles, not all Shakespeare groups are reading circles. A long-lasting club in Stratford-upon-Avon is the Shakespearean Club that originated in 1824 as an all-male group at the Falcon Inn and is still, having taken a few hiatuses,

active today, now with women allowed.¹ They arranged occasional Shakespearean festivals and later assisted in the preservation of buildings related to Shakespeare. Although the group eventually had the patronage of King George IV and was permitted to call itself the Royal Shakespearean Club, its functions were limited to a few social events and the annual laying of a wreath on Shakespeare's grave. There are no records that it was ever a reading circle, and today it organises academic and theatrical lectures, a tangible reminder of the current emphases in Shakespeare. There were two other particularly consequential nineteenth-century Shakespeare associations in England that were not reading groups nor did they extend outreach to community readers. One is the all-male Shakespeare Society founded by John Payne Collier in operation from 1840 to 1853 that was specifically developed to issue publications for specialists. Almost two decades after that group disbanded, the all-male New Shakspere Society founded by F. J. Furnivall existed from 1874–1894. This group was formed primarily to promote scientific measures to determine the chronology of Shakespeare's plays and to determine the existence of coauthors or collaborators through metrical tests.² However, Furnivall did initiate an offshoot of the New Shakspere Society for enthusiasts in 1874 called the Sunday Shakespeare Society whose first meeting was a tour of places related to Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon.³ The group continues today in London and has evolved into a monthly coed play-reading club, with one reading a year of a contemporary of Shakespeare's.⁴

Social reading groups were plentiful in England in the 1800s. Hartley confirms, regarding the general British literary scene, that reading groups were well-established by the beginning of the century.⁵ The strictly Shakespeare reading groups are not as well documented as those in the States, discussed later in this chapter, but the ones we are

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1. Philip Styles, ed., 'The borough of Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespearean festivals and theatres,' *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 3: Barlichway hundred* (1945), 244–47, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=57017>. This Shakespearean Club is still in existence today as the Shakespeare Club of Stratford-upon-Avon, <http://www.StratfordShakespeareClub.org>.
 2. The methods used by the Society were lambasted as pseudoscience and eventually destroyed the Society. Frederick Gard Fleay insisted that to accurately determine the necessary metrics in Shakespeare's works a critic must have 'a thorough training in the Natural Sciences, especially in Mineralogy, classificatory Botany, and above all, in Chemical Analysis.' Frederick Gard Fleay, *Shakespeare Manual* (London, 1876), 108.
 3. John Munro, ed., *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), lix–lx.
 4. Shakespeare Associations, <http://www.touchstone.bham.ac.uk/associations/UK%20associations.html>. Sunday Shakespeare Society, <http://SundayShakespeare.weebly.com>.
 5. Jenny Hartley, 'Nineteenth-Century Reading Groups in Britain and the Community of the Text: an Experiment with *Little Dorrit*', in *Reading Communities from Salons to Cyberspace*, ed., DeNel Rehberg Sedo (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 44.

aware of are rarely gender-specific. Georgianna Ziegler identifies the St. Andrews Club for Women in the late 1800s, a group that included lectures and discussion as well as play reading, as the only all-female club in Britain that engaged in Shakespeare study.⁶

As has been noted in previous chapters, the capacity of popular reading to subvert as well as teach had become apparent in Victorian England, and the new ‘mass culture of comics, cheap newspapers and entertaining magazines’ created, as Robert Snape argues, a paradox in which reading itself became part of the leisure-time social problem it was intended to resolve.⁷ Consequently a number of Shakespeare reading groups developed from the British governmental attempts to academically engage working-class readers en masse so as to cultivate in them a taste for rational enjoyments, ‘lectures and books rather than gin parlours and bear pits’ where ‘habits of order, punctuality, and politeness, would be engendered’, as Altick describes.⁸

The Working Men’s College, formed in 1851 to provide a liberal education for the working-class male, lists its first course on an 1852 handbill as ‘The Historical Plays of Shakespeare’ by Reverend F. D. Maurice, founder of the college.⁹ Thomas Shorter, the college secretary mentioned earlier, expurgated his own edition of Shakespeare, equivocally called the *Shorter Shakespeare*. Shakespeare was an important component in the courses of study at the college, and Adrian Poole attests that ‘readings were thought more suitable than performance’, either echoing the still-perceived sinfulness of the stage amongst some groups or simply the result of the preference for the page.¹⁰ The nineteenth-century politician John Roebuck recorded a reminiscence of his participation in the college and describes the Shakespearian Reading Club that was formed in the early days: ‘The readers were “cast” for their parts, and after the reading, discussion of the play ensued. We derived both interest and pleasure from our meetings.’¹¹ Several college friends of George Tansley, also a student and sometimes a teacher at the college, presented him in 1888 with a three-volume edition of Shakespeare ‘as a memento of their pleasant Shakespeare readings with

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6. Georgianna Ziegler, ‘Women and Shakespeare’, in *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 215.
 7. Robert Snape, ‘The National Home Reading Union 1889–1930’, *Social Sciences: Journal Articles (Peer-Reviewed)*, Paper 3 (2002): 1, http://digitalcommons.bolton.ac.uk/socsci_journalspr/3.
 8. Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 189.
 9. J. M. Ludlow, ‘The Origins of the Working Men’s College’, in *The Working Men’s College: 1854–1904*, ed. J. Llewelyn Davies (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1904), 15.
 10. Adrian Poole, *Shakespeare and the Victorians* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), 218.
 11. John Roebuck, ‘Reminiscences of an Old Student’, in *The Working Men’s College: 1854–1904*, ed. J. Llewelyn Davies (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1904), 92–93.

him' on Sunday afternoons in his rooms on Dorset Street.¹² These are just two documented examples of the influence of the Working Men's College propagating Shakespeare outward into the leisure activities of young men in the form of communal reading.

Another program developed to guide reading and encourage extracurricular study in England was the National Home-Reading Union (NHRU), inspired by the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Reading Circle self-study program in America. Snape reinforces the Victorian need to regulate domestic reading that precipitated the Home-Reading Union and notes that as reading aloud was already a popular family pastime, the reading group format of the NHRU helped to establish the courses 'within circle practice'.¹³ Records are scarce on specific reading groups and mainly consist of the limited information in their monthly magazine, but Snape does report that of the known women's circles, which proved to be the most durable and successful, all of the female members 'insisted on taking a Shakespeare course whenever one was offered', yet another verification of the predominance of female readers in the cultural expansion of Shakespeare.¹⁴ In a pamphlet published by the NHRU to celebrate the tricentennial of Shakespeare's death, F. W. Moorman confirms that 'the National Home-Reading Union has established many Circles for, and devoted much time and thought to, the study of the poems and plays of Shakespeare' which included a three-year prescribed course of study on the comedies, histories and tragedies.¹⁵ It is acknowledged that the NHRU never did acquire its desired status of a mass movement and was declared defunct in 1930, yet during its operation it provided a format for Shakespeare reading circles for numerous towns across Britain.¹⁶

The Clifton Shakspeare Society, founded in 1876 in Bristol, is one group that provides material evidence not only for itself as an independent reading club but for the silent existence of other independent groups as well. Its members were frequent contributors to the 'Shakespeare Societies' column in America's journal, *Shakespeareiana*, which recounts that the Clifton group met monthly, and papers from both men and women were presented

12. C. P. Lucas, 'George Tansley', in *The Working Men's College: 1854-1904*, ed. J. Llewelyn Davies (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1904), 136.

13. Robert Snape, 'Reading Across the Empire: the National Home Reading Union Abroad', in *Reading Communities from Salons to Cyberspace*, ed. DeNel Rehberg Sedo (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 64.

14. Snape, 'The National Home Reading Union', 15. One might see these attempts to encourage all classes of citizens to self-educate as an early form of MOOCs.

15. F. W. Moorman, *Shakespeare 1616-1916*, National Home-reading Union Pamphlets Literature Series, No. 2 (London, National Home Reading Union, 1916), 3.

16. Snape, 'The National Home Reading Union', 18.

that cover a broad range of topics from authorship to apocrypha. A significant substantiation of the culture of reading Shakespeare in community is the extensive guide written by the Honorary Secretary of the Clifton Shakspeare Society, L. M. Griffiths, entitled *Evenings with Shakspeare: A Handbook to the Study of his Works with Suggestions for the Consideration of Other Elizabethan Literature and Containing Special Help for Shakspeare Societies*.¹⁷ He describes the problem with the two groups mentioned above, Collier's Shakespeare Society and Furnivall's New Shakspeare Society, in their attempts to create a National Shakspeare Society. Griffiths locates the problem in that both of those societies cater exclusively to the specialist, and 'neither of them has been exactly what is required to popularise and foster the study of Shakspeare'.¹⁸ This seems to reveal a pattern in which the all-male groups tend to serve a small group of specialists while the all-female or coed groups, of which there are thousands, evolved for the non-specialist.

Griffiths does not denigrate the value of the remarkable critical output of the societies, but aspires to develop a more popular national club to introduce Shakespeare and encourage study 'among people who are at present indifferent or lukewarm'.¹⁹ He outlines not only the structure for a proposed British Shakspeare Association, but also a comprehensive course for local reading clubs. Believing that the existing books and indexes did not provide enough information to secure the success of a reading club, Griffiths intends his book as an aid 'for the many Societies which exist for reading Shakspeare's plays', corroborating the existence of many clubs who left behind no records.²⁰ He recommends a program of eight plays a year for eight years, with a list that includes apocryphal Shakespearean plays such as *Lochrine* and *The London Prodigal* as well as contemporaneous plays such as *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* by Robert Greene and *A Woman Killed with Kindness* by Thomas Heywood. Griffiths includes tables of the numbers of lines per character per play to ensure appropriate distribution of parts among readers, as well as topics for discussion and quotations on which papers could be written. He provides a chart delineating the total lines per play and how they are apportioned between prose and verse, solo verse, dialogue verse, split verse in dialogue and a few other technical aspects. This is Griffiths' contribution to

17. L. M. Griffiths, *Evenings with Shakspeare: A Handbook to the Study of his Works with Suggestions for the Consideration of Other Elizabethan Literature and Containing Special Help for Shakspeare Societies* (Bristol and London, 1889).

18. *Ibid.*, 355.

19. *Ibid.*, 356.

20. *Ibid.*, 1.

the popular metrical tests that attempted to establish collaborative authorship at this time, but it is also useful data for the more curious reader. To encourage the formation of other groups, Griffiths profiles the simple beginnings of the Clifton Shakspeare Society, formed as a Reading Party, with seven ladies and eighteen gentlemen:

In 1876 the idea was suggested that it would be a pleasant way of spending some evenings if a few people could meet regularly at one another's houses to read Shakspeare's plays in parts. A small meeting of ladies and gentlemen to form a Society with this purpose was held at my house on March 11th of that year, and on March 25th *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was read from a cast drawn up by the Secretary and one of the principal promoters.²¹

Through trial and error this group settled on two meetings a month with a play read aloud at the first meeting and discussion and criticism at the second. Griffiths recommends that groups follow a set of sixteen rules they developed in Clifton and to which they strictly adhere that include how many members and associates best comprise a society; the officers and duties necessary to run the society; how to vote in new members and eliminate undependable ones; how to utilise corresponding or non-local members, of which there should not exceed ten and four of whom should reside outside the British Isles; a suggested annual subscription fee; a guide to developing and maintaining a library for members, plus a comprehensive list of recommended books it should contain; directions for preparing the cast list and discussion questions; and what to do if a member has a 'positive inability' to be present, including what sort of fine to impose for such an irresponsible imposition.²² Time is allowed at the beginning of each meeting for tea. Griffiths recommends the *Globe* edition as a reading version but sees the value in allowing readers to bring their own preferred editions, especially, he states, since the *Globe* typography is difficult to read for those over forty years of age. He insists that all bowdlerised editions be avoided as individual readers are fully capable of affecting the necessary expurgations themselves. In what seems to be an ingenuous contradiction, however, Griffiths notes that he has marked all of his plays so they can be read aloud in mixed company and offers them to any publisher who would print them, thereby conferring 'a boon not only on Shakspeare-Societies, but upon individuals wishing to read the plays aloud'.²³

21. Ibid., 21.

22. Ibid., 23–28.

23. Ibid., 33.

The lengthy and detailed explication in this 365-page handbook of every aspect of a proper reading society provides a valuable testimony to the popularity of Shakespeare reading groups in England, demonstrating that collective Shakespeare reading was a normative and respected practice, an identifiable constituent of the social climate and calendar. The publication of this book indicates a broad enough market to warrant the trouble and expense of publication as well as the expectation that there are many other readers desirous of starting their own groups.

Shakespeare reading groups flourished most visibly in the United States and provide the greatest documentation and validation of the phenomenon, although it can be assumed that these records in America might also reflect on the many undocumented readings in England. It was the lack of educational opportunities for women in the nineteenth century that had an unexpected and powerful long-term effect on Shakespeare's cultural legacy. An emphasis on literacy and the prominence given to higher education—although exclusive of females—frustrated women in both England and America. 'As late as the early [eighteen] seventies no college training was possible to a girl in New York City... except under precisely the same conditions as those which existed in Russia,' permission from a kindly professor.²⁴ Educational possibilities across the rest of America for girls past the age of twelve were nearly non-existent. A pivotal event in the imbricate history of women's education and the proliferation of Shakespeare occurred in 1868 when Jane Cunningham Croly (1829–1901), a professional journalist in New York City, was denied admission—because she was a woman—to attend a press dinner honouring Charles Dickens. In response, Croly formed Sorosis, a club for women only. From this propitious beginning Croly went on to form the General Federation of Woman's Clubs (GFWC), then effected a State Federation system to organize the individual groups across the country, and soon the GFWC had nearly 200 clubs and 25,000 women as members.²⁵ By the time Croly published the 1200-page *History of the Women's Club Movement* in 1898, there were more than 1,300 clubs across America, a large number of which were Shakespeare reading and study groups. Although the clubs involved themselves in a remarkable range of intellectual interests, Croly notes that the Shakespeare clubs were particularly long lived:

24. Jennie June Cunningham Croly, *The History of the Woman's Club Movement in America, Published under the Authority of the Council of the General Federation of Woman's Clubs of America* (New York, 1898), 1. The association was originally called 'Woman's Clubs' but is now called 'Women's Clubs'.

25. General Federation of Women's Clubs, <http://www.GFWC.org>.

The study is rarely given up, and new clubs are constantly formed to undertake it. Shakespeare Clubs all devote some time to book reviews, current events, and some new voice of to-day, for the study of Shakespeare stimulates the mind, broadens and uplifts it, and gives an interest in all vital questions, but to the greatest study of all, all return with renewed zeal.²⁶

Because these groups had official standing in an organized movement and kept voluminous records, significant information is known about them. Each Shakespeare reading group developed constitutions and bylaws, elected officers and chose Boards of Directors; they determined a weekly or fortnightly schedule; each had its own motto, signature flower and colours. In some groups, women could only be admitted as members through elections. When studying Shakespeare, each club developed its own system, as the Pacaha club secretary in Arkansas reported for her group: 'There is a leader appointed for each play, and she gives every member one or as many questions as she wishes, to be answered at the meeting. For assistance in the study of the play there is a form of analysis on the flyleaf of the programme that can be applied to each play.'²⁷ In most clubs, reports on various aspects of Shakespeare were assigned to every member and the members were the speakers. The oral presentations of papers to their peers 'taught us not to fear the sound of our own voices,' gave them confidence in their own ideas, and empowered women to embark upon even more rigorous programs of education.²⁸

From the late 1880s through the 1940s, Shakespeare was dispersed across the vast territories of America through women's reading groups, to thousands of towns across three thousand miles of states and territories, from east to west coast. Across the country one could find the Mary Arden Shakespeare Club, the Fortnightly Shakespeare Club, and the Avon Club, in New York City; the Sisters' Shakespeare Society of Elizabeth, New Jersey, who met weekly, memorized quotations every week, and imposed fines for tardiness and absence; the Ann Hathaway Club of Colorado Springs; the Avon Shakespeare Society in San Francisco; and the exclusive Dallas Shakespeare Club, still meeting today, which allotted six months to the study of each play. North Dakota, a state of 300,000 people in small towns dotted across a huge territory almost the size of England and Scotland

26. Croly, *History*, 914.

27. *Ibid.*, 212-13.

28. *Ibid.*, 59.

combined, listed thirty clubs before 1899.²⁹ Within fifty years of white women entering the state of Idaho—which was six years before General John C. Fremont forged a trail through the Rocky Mountains—the Idaho Springs Shakespeare Club began meeting every other Saturday. In the town of Concord, New Hampshire with a population of 9,800, there existed ten Shakespeare clubs.³⁰ After twenty years of reading Shakespeare together, in 1897 the women of The Shakespeare Club in Concord claimed that they had ‘met to perfection the requirements laid down by Portia’:

for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit.³¹ (MV 3.4.11–15)

A woman in the Stratford Club in Concord submitted a report to the *Shakespeariana* journal in which she described how the club operated, and noted that, ‘It is hardly necessary to add that nothing less than death or removal to another part of the world would induce any of the members to resign their places, for they know too well the difficulties of getting into the club.’³² As late as 1959, the Stratford Club was still meeting regularly, as noted by its diamond jubilee celebration that was announced in the ‘Notes and Comments’ section of *Shakespeare Quarterly*. It was also noted in 1959 that this group had made a ‘substantial contribution’ to the American Shakespeare Festival Theater and Academy in Stratford, Connecticut, yet another example of the impact of reading on stage performances.³³

The Houston Ladies Reading Club in Texas commenced on a period of Shakespeare study with a bit of trepidation:

This afternoon, March 6th, 1888, we knelt humbly, hesitatingly, with most womanly reluctance, before the shrine of the inimitable, the incomparable, the greatest, the mightiest of all, William Shakespeare, poet by the grace of God. As in the ancient days, Solomon’s mines must have startled the minds and dazzled the eyes of those who crept near enough to gaze upon the

29. By contrast, the population of New York state at this time was 7,268,894. Demographia, <http://www.demographia.com/db-state1900.htm>.

30. Rev. N. Bouton, ‘Table of Mortality in Concord, from 1825 to 1853, Records Kept by Rev. N. Bouton,’ (Concord: Benning W. Sanborn, 1856), 766, <http://www.ConcordNH.gov:80/books/bouton/ConcordHistoryDescandPersS8.pdf>.

31. Croly, *History*, 795.

32. Frances M. Abbott, ‘Shakespeare Societies,’ *Shakespeariana* 4 (Philadelphia, 1887): 328.

33. ‘Notes and Comments,’ *Shakespeare Quarterly* 10 (1959): 456.

wondrous plenitude of its fabled riches, so on this, our initial Shakespeare meeting, when quotations were called for, the depth of the mine opened was so great, the jewels so inexhaustible, so rare . . . that our ladies bring their tribute just a trifle timidly.³⁴

Although reluctant and reverent, in the process of incorporating the reading and studying of ‘the mightiest of all,’ each woman appropriated the cultural cachet of Shakespeare for herself as an individual and together as a collective, inducting themselves into the very sphere of his elite cultural status, just as the Shakespeare Ladies Club had done more than a century earlier.

With hundreds of women in some groups, they outgrew the home and hotel parlours they typically used and consequently bought existing buildings to be used as clubhouses or built their own. The Women’s Club movement—and with it, Shakespeare—swept over the country, part of the widespread educational movement of which ‘Chautauqua, summer schools, night schools, university extension, etc., are all manifestations. . . . The club is the postgraduate for the individual woman.’³⁵ It was not easy. In 1868 a well-known male journalist wrote that ‘if a women’s club held together for one year, a good many people would find it necessary to revise their opinion of women.’³⁶ Women’s clubs were caricatured in cartoons and satirized by male authors. Husbands fumed and pundits quipped, some members dropped out to keep peace in the home and neighbourhood, but most women carried on, ‘afire with the revolutionary desire for education and self-development’ and reading Shakespeare.³⁷

The women readers of the nineteenth century were encouraged, as the eighteenth-century women had been, by a number of facets: Shakespeare’s lack of formal education was inspiring and comforting, as they found themselves in similar predicaments. Women were invigorated, judging from the titles of essays they presented, by the number of heroines who are literate, challenge authority, take on men’s roles in their own feminine manner, yet maintain their honour and virtue. They used Shakespeare as an advocate for issues in their lives, raising contemporary concerns such as ‘marital relations, repression in the family, the

34. Elizabeth Long, *Book Clubs: Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 45.

35. Croly, *History*, x–xi.

36. *Ibid.*, 29.

37. Long, *Book Clubs*, 38–39.

education of women, women's access to the university and the professions, the ideal of Womanhood, ethnic difference, and the experience of civil war'.³⁸ Shakespeare became an opportunity for many women to enlarge their experiences of life and to develop ideas that could impact their families and communities.

The Shakespearean lectures and essays they researched, wrote and presented were not only about women. Topics itemised in the records are such as, 'Is Hamlet Insane?' 'Shakespeare's Use of Eleven', 'Was Oberon a Meddler?' 'Shakespeare's Manifestation of Abnormal Characters', 'Shakespeare's Historical Plays', 'Elemental Beings as Agents of Enchantment', or 'The History of Rome as it pertains to Coriolanus'.³⁹ As shown in the previous chapter, books about every aspect of Shakespeare, both the man and the works, were readily available to support the essays they were required to develop.

Anecdotes in the records of the Women's Clubs display the level of interest and involvement with the plays inspired by reading, such as that of Mrs. M. Wilmarth, 'an enthusiastic scholar of the immortal bard', who led her New England group in regularly scheduled extra sessions: on the 'Twelfth-day' they read *Twelfth Night*, accompanied by a 'Twelfth-cake'; on St. David's Day they read *Henry V*, previous to attending a public reading of the play by Dr. Furness; on 23 April they celebrated the birth and commemorated the death of Shakespeare with appropriate readings; on May Day they read *As You Like It*, followed with box lunches which they refilled with wild violets picked in the Forest of Arden, 'alias the garden of their leader'.⁴⁰

Excluded from the white women's clubs, American black women did not wait for the General Federation of Women's Clubs to start reading groups of their own. The Female Literary Association of Philadelphia, an all-black club, was founded in 1831, as well as two more societies in the same town within the next few years.⁴¹ By 1891 in Kansas there were enough black literary clubs to warrant a state convention of literary societies.⁴² Across America, it is evident that 'black club women recognized the cultural power inherent in reading Shakespeare and in claiming him as part of their educational agenda'.⁴³ In a 1901 survey of art and literature, Jerome Down inventoried twenty-five homes of black residents

38. Ann Thompson, 'A Club of our Own: Women's Play Readings in the Nineteenth Century', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 2 (2006).

39. Croly, *History*, *passim*.

40. *Ibid.*, 50.

41. Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, 192-193.

42. *Ibid.*, 104.

43. *Ibid.*, 97.

in Durham, North Carolina, and found fifteen volumes of Shakespeare's works.⁴⁴ This is a remarkable witness to not only literacy but to the popularity of reading Shakespeare in both clubs and at home. Frederick Douglass (c. 1818–1895), an escaped slave turned writer, orator, statesman, social reformer and avid Shakespeare reader references at least fifteen different Shakespeare plays in his own collected works.⁴⁵ Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862–1931), a black journalist and sociologist who studied and spoke against lynching, grew up with Shakespeare in her community in Memphis, Tennessee. *Macbeth* apparently resonated with her most particularly as quotations from it occur regularly in her work. She closed a vocal statement on the secret hangings of thirteen black soldiers by a military court in 1917 with a theatrical flourish: 'Lay on Macduff, and damn'd be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"'.⁴⁶ Because of the strict segregation laws prohibiting black patrons from attending most theatres, this familiarity with Shakespeare confirms a reading relationship, as also attested by the books in homes.

Very young women were encouraged to read as well. Clubs such as 'Shakespeare's Amateurs' or 'As You Like It' were developed for girls about twelve years of age, coinciding with the end of formal education. They began with reading the tales of Mary Lamb, at the time ironically assumed to be the work of Charles Lamb.⁴⁷ The girls were required to write papers on Shakespeare's life, analyses of the plays, 'their individual merits, critical studies of the characters, sketches of the places in which the scenes are laid, and of the times which they delineate'.⁴⁸

An emphasis on the importance of women in the history of reading Shakespeare is not unduly placed. Frances Teague points out that even in the early modern period the popular perception was that 'reading was feminine and writing masculine'.⁴⁹ In 1889 Thomas W. Higginson, a literary critic, abolitionist, and early feminist of a sort, observed that women had become the 'popular custodians of literature':

44. *Ibid.*, 99.

45. John C. Briggs, 'The Exorcism of Macbeth: Frederick Douglass's Appropriation of Shakespeare', in *Weyward Macbeth: Intersections of Race and Performance*, ed. Scott L. Newstock and Ayanna Thompson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 36.

46. Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 157.

47. For a discussion of Mary Lamb's authorship, see the previous chapter.

48. Croly, *History*, 913.

49. Frances Teague, 'Judith Shakespeare Reading', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47 (Winter 1996): 371. This also speaks to the difference in reading literacy as feminine and writing literacy as masculine.

It is a curious fact that, away from a few great cities, those Americans who do serious work in the study of literature are generally women. Whether it is due to more ample leisure or to the wish to superintend the education of their children, or from whatever source, the fact is unquestionable. Let the most accomplished critic of Shakespeare, as Professor Rolfe or Professor Corson or Mr. H. A. Clapp be announced to give a lecture on his favourite theme in a hall or a parlour, by day or evening, and it can be safely guaranteed that three-quarters and probably nine-tenths of his audience will be women.⁵⁰

Scheil states, 'It is impossible to give an exact number of the general women's clubs that read Shakespeare, but several thousand would be a conservative estimate.'⁵¹ Most of the Women's Clubs focused on or studied a variety of topics, but Shakespeare was usually included as a regular feature in almost every group in America, if only for a year or two as they cycled through topics. The Philomathic Club in Arkansas, for instance, spent four months on Homer and Plato, two months on field work in botany, a year of Shakespeare, then Italian plays and magazine study. The breadth of study testifies that reading Shakespeare was an integral component of literary education amidst a wide variety of intellectual topics.⁵² Although there were more clubs that did *not* focus exclusively on Shakespeare than those that did, the circulation of the works across America had an impact just as significant from the non-Shakespeare-specific groups because they introduced the works to women who otherwise would not have specifically chosen to study them.

The reading of Shakespeare by women had another and equally important secondary effect with its own long-term impact on Shakespearean scholarship. As shown in the previous chapter, from the late eighteenth century Shakespearean passages had been included in lessons of oratory as politicians and the public grew passionate about elocution, but girls were not taught elocution in schools as it was deemed an unnecessary skill for women. However, the Shakespeare reading groups required that every member be obliged not only to write compositions but read them aloud, enabling women to develop their writing and oratory skills in safe and comfortable environments, eventually giving them the confidence to compete with men in public places in both print and speech. By the

50. Thomas W. Higginson, 'Women and Men: A Typical Women's Club', *Harper's Bazaar* 22 (30 March 1889): 222–23. *Home Economics Archive*, <http://hearth.library.cornell.edu/h/hearth>.

51. Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, 145 n14.

52. Nan Jonson provides a strong and fascinating argument for rhetoric in the domestic sphere, particularly during the Victorian era in America, although she does not include the Woman's Club Movement. Nan Johnson, *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866–1910* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002).

end of the century, not only was there a larger market of readers for Shakespearean criticism, but in a field dominated by men, ‘women had made a significant contribution to Shakespearean criticism that was acknowledged, by men, to be important.’⁵³ This contribution occurred despite years of being ridiculed, discouraged and discriminated against. In 1883 the journal *Shakespeareana*, published in Philadelphia by the Shakespeare Society of New York, became the first and only Shakespearean magazine in the world, and its large market was predominantly the non-specialist.⁵⁴ Significantly, its first editor was a woman, Charlotte Endymion Porter (1857–1942), 26 years old. Porter went on to edit a forty-volume *First Folio Edition of Shakespeare*, as well as the twelve-volume *Pembroke Edition* with her partner, Helen Armstrong Clarke (1860–1926), with their names on the covers.⁵⁵ Ms. Porter’s position as editor was effected in part by the previous underlying support of two decades of reading Shakespeare through the Women’s Clubs, clubs that also dispersed an appreciation and greater knowledge of the works of Shakespeare—and, importantly for the launch of a magazine, an eager market—across the vast and open expanses of the United States.⁵⁶

Women were not the only readers of Shakespeare in America, of course. Outside the gender-specific General Federation of Women’s Clubs there was no lack of mixed-gender groups. The Ladies’ Coterie of Topeka, Kansas, founded by eleven black women, read primarily Shakespeare and studied current events. In their second year they joined with a Chautauqua study club men’s group, the Pleasant Hour Circle, although they did soon return to their original women-only group.⁵⁷ Scheil identifies a number of Shakespeare reading groups across the country in which women ‘were respected and valued on equal terms with those of men’, writing papers, making presentations, acting in male parts along with the men, leading discussions and managing the organizations.⁵⁸ An all-male Shakespeare Club

53. Thompson, *Women Reading Shakespeare*, 6.

54. ‘Anon., “The Drama” :36’ quoted in Thompson, *Women Reading Shakespeare*, 160.

55. ‘Helen Archibald Clarke and Charlotte Endymion Porter’, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1345793/Helen-Archibald-Clarke-and-Charlotte-Endymion-Porter>.

56. The General Federation of Women’s Clubs is still active today, 120 years later — there are more than 4,000 clubs and 100,000 members, many of them continuations of the original groups. They have been responsible for the building of seventy-five percent of the libraries in America and they continue to support libraries — between 1997 and 2002 the GFWC donated \$13.5 million to public and school libraries across the nation. <http://www.gfwc.org>. This is quite stunning considering the membership’s peak was in 1956, per Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 438.

57. Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, 104. The Chautauqua Institution promotes self-improvement through lifelong learning; see <http://www.ciweb.org>.

58. *Ibid.*, 6.

in Wheeling, West Virginia lasted several years, and in Woodland, California there was both a women-only club plus the Mutual Club of Woodland in which husbands and wives read Shakespeare together.⁵⁹ In a letter to the editor of *The New York Times* in 1898, a writer responds to a query on ‘how to conduct a Shakespeare Club’ in which he describes a club in Baltimore that he been leading for twelve years whose membership was limited to forty and evenly divided between men and women. He states: ‘We took good care that at least half the members were unmarried and that the men were bright and brainy and the women pretty and intelligent.’⁶⁰

The ‘Shaksper Apostles’, founded in Philadelphia in 1852 by four young lawyers as a reading and discussion group, mistakenly considered themselves the first all-male Shakespeare organization in the States. They were successful enough that Horace Howard Furness, editor of the *New Variorum*, joined in 1860. They incorporated in 1861 and became the Shaksper Society of Philadelphia, still meeting biweekly as of this writing. They have an elite membership that has varied, according to Henry Savage’s report and the 2013 minutes, from six to twenty members.⁶¹ Each member must be voted in with a unanimous election; Savage implies a spot opens only upon the death of a member.⁶² Savage’s history of the club shows that they were not interested in social activism, civic responsibility or self-organization as was typical of the Women’s Clubs. They did not manage to keep a library of their own books; others accused them of ‘meeting to dine rather than dining to meet’; and their most important tradition as of 1952 was to find appropriate quotations to toast the individual vintages of wine that came with each course during their annual high feast.⁶³ After a twenty-year process they did erect a memorial to Shakespeare and Furness in 1928, but with an inscription promoting the club that somehow escaped their notice and is now an ‘embarrassment.’⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Matt Kozusko attended a meeting in late 2006 and details how the Society eventually ‘established scholarship and fellowship as complements, rather than competitors, and it maintained each, not at the expense, but for the benefit, of the other.’⁶⁵ Regardless or perhaps because of the distinctively social character

59. Ibid., 4, 6.

60. Henry P. Goddard, ‘Letters to the Editor,’ *The New York Times*, 23 July 1898.

61. Shaksper Society of Philadelphia, ‘Philadelphia Reflections,’ <http://www.philadelphia-reflections.com/topic/104.htm>.

62. Henry L. Savage, ‘The Shaksper Society of Philadelphia,’ *Shakespeare Quarterly* 3 (Oct 1952): 342, 350.

63. Ibid., 346–48.

64. Ibid., 350.

65. Matt Kozusko, ‘The Shaksper Society of Philadelphia,’ *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 2 (Fall/Winter 2006).

of the meetings, the Shakspeare Society of Philadelphia continues today with a genuine interest in close and focused group readings of the plays.

The monthly journal *Shakespeariana* maintained a regular column called ‘Shakespeare [or Shakespearian] Societies’ in which the secretaries of clubs were encouraged to provide the minutes of their meetings or other items of interest for publication. In these columns the number and variety of mixed-gender or all-male groups becomes more visible. The journal includes reports from the Avon Shakespeare Society in Topeka, Kansas, which began in 1870 and carried on for decades. A group of professional men in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, devoted their attention to aesthetic study rather than textual criticism in the Greensburg Shakespeare Society. The Old Cambridge Shakespeare Association in Massachusetts held ninety mainly male members; the Norwich Shakespeare Club in Connecticut was an informal circle of fifteen men and women of all ages who gradually involved themselves deeper and deeper into study of the plays; the Shakespeare Society of Seneca Falls, New York, devoted two evenings to reading a play and two evenings to answering a comprehensive list of questions or reading original essays, with some of the longest plays being given more time. The Rufus Adams Shakespeare Class of Philadelphia was quite demanding—the ladies and gentlemen followed strict rules, a new reader could join the group only after a two weeks’ test of their reading ability to ensure s/he was not ‘found deficient in orthœpy’, a director was assigned for each meeting, and two critics were assigned each week, one for orthœpy and one for gestures.⁶⁶

The Rochester Shakspeare Society in New York began in 1865 and lasted at least several decades as a coed group; the Tremont Shakespeare Club in Omaha, Nebraska, regularly incorporated the local glee club to perform as part of their programme, while the Cooperstown Shakspeare Club in New York, founded in 1876, was comprised of six ladies and eight gentlemen and met every Monday evening.⁶⁷ The Atlanta Shakespeare Club considered itself a social society which met fortnightly. Its report is brief but encapsulates the essence of many of the reading clubs in that, ‘although its chief object is the mere reading of the play, and no pretence is made to a critical study of the text, yet incidentally much is learned, inquiries are awakened, and discussions ensue.’⁶⁸ The process of the thirty members of the Locke Richardson Shakespeare Club of Oakland, California, developed into reading

66. William Porter, ‘Shakespearian Societies’, *Shakespeariana* 1 (Philadelphia, 1884), 93.

67. ‘Shakespearian Societies’, *Shakespeariana* 1 (Philadelphia, 1884), 199–200.

68. E. G. Renick, ‘Shakespearian Societies’, *Shakespeariana* 1 (Philadelphia, 1884), 28.

a scene per evening, ‘rendered oftentimes with great individuality and spirit’, interrupted at convenient pauses with ‘question and answer, comment, criticism, and suggestions, the discussion thus started, often widening in its scope till it touches the deeper questions of soul and of art.’⁶⁹ Concord, New Hampshire, rich in women’s Shakespeare clubs, also held the Warwick Club which included men and women and met on Tuesday evenings.⁷⁰

A report from the fortnightly meetings of the New Shakespeare Society of Philadelphia (not to be confounded with the older Shakespeare Society of Philadelphia nor the Shakspeare Society of Philadelphia with Dr. Furness) is an example of the depths to which these groups of lay readers engaged with the text: ‘The play that was studied during the last winter was *The Tempest*; eighteen meetings were devoted to its perusal and thirty-eight essays were read on this and collateral subjects.’⁷¹ The essays were on such topics as ‘Dramatic Construction of *The Tempest*’, ‘Shakespeare and English Colonization’, ‘On the Unities in Shakespeare’, ‘Sources of the Plot of *The Tempest*’, ‘History of the Masque’, as well as a number of character studies and other topics.

Societies also formed in a number of colleges, such as the University of North Carolina Shakspeare Club whose members included professors, and the Shakespeare Society of Wellesley College in Massachusetts, whose forty members were admitted only from the upper undergraduate classes.⁷² The Winchester College Shakspeare Society formed in 1863 and consisted of about a dozen members from the highest division of the school; their meetings often included training in elocution, as well as incidental music on piano, violin or harp.⁷³ The Chautauqua Schools included Shakespeare in three different departments, all coed: in what they call the University as a correspondence course with examinations and graduation, in the Literary and Scientific Circle as regular readings and use of critical books for which a seal was granted, and a six-week summer course devoted to one play in its School of Languages.⁷⁴

The July 1891 *Shakespeariana* reports on a number of early reading groups in New York City. The earliest of these can claim the distinction as the first Shakespeare Society in the world, formed in 1779 in the newly independent province that was to become New

69. C. B. Bradley, ‘Shakespeare Societies’, *Shakespeariana* 4 (Philadelphia, 1887), 178–79.

70. Abbott, ‘Shakespeare Societies’, 327.

71. James M. Beck, Secretary, ‘Shakespearian Societies’, *Shakespeariana* 1 (Philadelphia, 1884), 28.

72. ‘Shakespeare Societies’, *Shakespeariana* 4 (Philadelphia, 1887), 514, 73.

73. ‘Shakespearian Societies’, *Shakespeariana* 1 (Philadelphia, 1884), 159.

74. *Ibid.*, 93.

York State. Founded by the British Major John André and fellow officers, it was called The Shakespeare Society and existed to promote Shakespeare performances for ‘the British officers and the pretty New York girls.’⁷⁵ The Society apparently ended when André was hanged on 2 October 1780 on Traitor’s Hill for conspiring with the American spy General Benedict Arnold. Even less is known of Robert Benson and his Shakespeare Society in New York City beyond having been a reading and social club. In April 1852 another New York Shakespeare Society was organized whose few records are still extant. The only female listed in this club is Mary Cowden Clarke as an Honorary Member, and the only meetings appear to be monthly dinners with a lot of drink, with the final dinner meeting held on August 1853. Yet another group incorporated themselves as The Shakespeare Society of the City of New York in 1873 with an almost equal balance of women and men in their list of officers.⁷⁶ Their business was to promote reading and study of the works of Shakespeare as well as the times and literature illustrative of the playwright. It is not clear how long this group existed, although both of these earlier New York societies are often confused today with the most significant club, the New York Shakespeare Society, which only allowed gentlemen and was not a reading group. It was incorporated in 1885 as a ‘publication society’ which to this end produced, among other publications, the twenty-volume *Bankside Shakespeare* edition, completed in 1906 with Appleton Morgan as the general editor.⁷⁷ Each volume presents the quarto and the First Folio texts of the plays (those for which both texts exist) set across from each other page for page. A note in *The Spectator* of 1888 comments on the recent edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: ‘The two forms of the comedy are given on opposite pages. One cannot help thinking that the fun of the thing is apt to evaporate in the midst of this laborious analysis.’⁷⁸

An intriguing variation of a group society is recorded in a letter to the editor of *Shakespeariana* entitled ‘A Club of Two’ in which the writer describes his club with one friend. At the time of writing they had been meeting for three years and had read and studied about twelve plays. When one member moved to another city, they continued their program with lengthy weekly letters. Their preferred edition was Furness’s variorum,

75. ‘Shakespeare Societies in New York City’, *Shakespeariana* 8 (New York, 1891), 175.

76. *Ibid.*, 176–177.

77. Shakespeare Society of New York, Articles of Association, Constitution, By-Laws, Lists of Trustees, Officers and Members, (1896; repr., Hong Kong: Forgotten Books, 2013), 12–3.

78. *The Spectator* (1 September 1888), 23, <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/1st-september-1888/23/we-have-received-the-first-volume-of-the-bankside->

and when particularly puzzled they wrote to a specialist. They each kept a modern form of a commonplace book that, when filled with their own notes and criticisms, they exchanged. The writer's inspiration for his Club of Two provides a testament to not only the power of Shakespeare study to create community—even between a group of two—but also to the popularity and dedication of lay readers. The writer states: 'To many persons the bare term "studying Shakespeare" calls up in the mind's eye visions of an ambitious reading club, or Shakespearian Society, and being unable or perhaps unwilling to join such an association they end by doing nothing.'⁷⁹ The creative solution of this club of two not only indicates the pervasive passion for the reading activity, but also provides an important witness to the realization that 'studying Shakespeare' at the time was commonly understood to take place amongst communities of general readers in their own parlours. 'Studying Shakespeare' was not yet taking place in universities. This is an important distinction. It needs to be acknowledged that this extensive network of Shakespeare study was entirely based in community readings.

Outside the clubs and societies, Richard Van Orman documents the extensive Shakespeare reading amongst the pioneers, soldiers, cowboys, miners and mountain men in the wild west of America during the nineteenth century.⁸⁰ Records of men such as Alonzo Delano show the value placed on the printed texts as he was forced to abandon most of his provisions on the way to the Feather River gold mines in California but retained 'two worthies'—*The Vicar of Wakefield* and the works of Shakespeare.⁸¹ When the rancher Philip Rollins sold his Montana ranch and offered his library to the cowboys, eighteen of the twenty-one cowhands requested the Shakespeare volumes.⁸²

This litany of community Shakespeare readers is a remarkable testament to not only the passionate interest in Shakespeare as literature by the general public, but also to the lack of intimidation in approaching Shakespeare without dependence on a perceived expert. Literally millions of people were willing to leap into the reading and self-study of Shakespeare with only their equally non-specialist peers to guide and accompany them. Their stories of engagement are inspiring and attest to the accessibility of the Shakespearean works without the necessity of an academic telling them how to think about the text or

79. A. R. D. K. L. G., 'A Club of Two', *Shakespeariana* 4 (Philadelphia, 1886), 406–07.

80. Richard A. Van Orman, 'The Bard in the West', *The Western Historical Quarterly* 5 (Jan. 1974): 29–38.

81. *Ibid.*, 35.

82. *Ibid.*, 36.

an actor interpreting it for them. This is in extreme contrast to a recent remark by Julian Fellowes, defending his adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* in which he claims that to view the original in its unchanged form, ‘a kind of Shakespearian scholarship’ is necessary, in addition to an understanding of the language and how to analyse it.⁸³ Fellowes declares: ‘I can do that because I had a very expensive education, I went to Cambridge.’⁸⁴ History shows this is a fairly recent attitude but one which has had an enormous impact on the general public and its approach to Shakespeare today.

PRINTED SUPPORT FOR READING CIRCLES

As described earlier in this chapter, L. M. Griffiths produced a handbook for Shakespeare reading societies in England. Toward the end of the nineteenth century a similar guidebook was written specifically for the reading club market in America: *How to Study Shakespeare*. William H. Fleming published this as a series of books that continued well into the twentieth century. William James Rolfe, himself an editor of Shakespeare, wrote the introduction to Fleming’s book in which he provides great detail about how various reading groups operate, consistently referring to Shakespeare as a ‘poet’ and of his work as ‘literature.’⁸⁵ Rolfe legitimates reading of the plays in an anecdote about a gentleman who was a college graduate as well as a graduate of a professional school and the author of several successful books, ‘who had six or eight of the standard editions of Shakespeare in his library, including Halliwell’s great folio edition, which cost him six hundred dollars,’ but the gentleman had never read a play of Shakespeare until taking up Rolfe’s *Friendly Edition of The Merchant of Venice*.⁸⁶

Rolfe’s anecdote supports an argument that the editorial presentation is critical to the success of a lay readers’ edition, even that a comfortable presentation can act as a precondition to reading. Rolfe goes on to describe how young people are eager to continue with Shakespeare after their school days are over, and their elders ‘are glad to learn more about him in this pleasant social way.’⁸⁷ He describes some ‘flourishing’ clubs that are limited ‘to the mere *reading* of the plays. No papers, no discussions, no literary exercises whatever,

83. Sabrina Sweeney, ‘Julian Fellowes’ views on Shakespeare “misguided”’, BBC News (11 October 2013), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-24489450>.

84. Ibid.

85. William James Rolfe, ‘Introduction’, in William H. Fleming, *How to Study Shakespeare* (New York, 1898), iv.

86. Ibid., v.

87. Ibid., v.

are combined with the reading.⁸⁸ Others include the reading of a contemporaneous but non-Shakespearean play once a year, and some clubs invite lectures from visitors, five- or ten-minute papers from members on various aspects of a particular play or introductions researched by members before the readings begin. In Rolfe's experience, parts in a play are assigned a fortnight in advance by the casting committee, and the texts are cut so they may be read in two hours. Rolfe recommends his own expurgated editions of the plays without mentioning they are censored, but states: 'Certain "expurgations" of the text of most of the plays is also generally considered necessary in clubs composed of both sexes, though I have heard of two such clubs in which it is agreed that no omissions of this kind shall be made.'⁸⁹ The ideal Shakespeare club in Rolfe's opinion is one which combines both reading and study, describing one long-standing group in England where a play is read at the first meeting of the month and discussed at the second meeting, surely a tacit reference to the Clifton Shakspeare Society. In the ideal club, members are assigned either character studies as special subjects for the upcoming discussion, at which they present five-minute papers, or any topic that is connected with the play at hand. Rolfe provides suggestions for incidental study or consideration appropriate to any Shakespeare play:

The list includes, among other subjects, the following: Aesthetic criticism; anachronisms; animals; arts and sciences; biblical and religious allusions; classical and mythical allusions; coins, weights and measures; demonology and witchcraft; early dramatic representations; fine art; geography; historical references; law and heraldry; meats and drinks; metre and authorship; music and ballads; oaths and exclamations; plants; puns and jests; rare words and phrases; similes and metaphors; sources and history; sports and pastimes; tradition and folklore, etc.⁹⁰

Rolfe recommends that groups vary the pattern of meetings by having anonymously written papers read by someone else on the committee, single scenes read and discussed at length instead of an entire play, the rhetoric of speeches parsed and debated, or musical evenings to take the place of readings in which settings from the many available books which he lists could be practised and performed. Rolfe writes to adult lay readers, not teachers or professors, which indicates the depth of interest in these reading groups and their ubiquity in communities. In the accompanying set of fifteen volumes in the *How to*

88. Ibid., v–vi. *Italic in original.*

89. Ibid., viii.

90. Ibid., ix. Rolfe adopts this list from Griffiths' *Handbook* without attribution.

Study Shakespeare series, Fleming does not provide the texts of the plays but supplemental material to be used alongside a reading edition, preferably Rolfe's *Friendly Edition*.

For each play Fleming furnishes a table of acts and scenes in which each character appears, as other reading editions have done, but adds the number of lines for each character, which is extremely useful in allocating parts. He also provides a table of the 'grouping of minor characters, to be read in a reading club by one person' to allow doubling of parts while ensuring participants do not end up talking to another of her own characters at any point.⁹¹ For each play Fleming includes a pronunciation guide, a consideration of the source materials, 'Collateral Reading' for further study and explanatory notes referenced by line number for the entire play, 'sufficiently full and complete, and yet not exhaustive or highly critical', designed to meet the needs of a group of lay readers, not professional scholars.⁹² At the end of each play chapter is a lengthy list of questions 'to direct attention to every important subject suggested by the play', with particular attention to what Fleming believes is of primary importance: dramatic construction.⁹³ His lists of hundreds of questions per play are divided at one point by asterisks to separate the objective questions from the subjective. For instance, in *Othello* Question 88 is simply: 'What is Othello's description of the handkerchief?' Question 180, after the asterisks, asks a more complex question: 'Shakespeare is a master of Contrast. What were some examples of Contrast in this drama—e.g., Character-Contrast, Passion-Contrast?'⁹⁴ Thus Fleming provides valuable supplemental texts for the large numbers of community Shakespeare reading groups. He does not mention gender nor cater to females, and Rolfe's introduction specifically refers to mixed groups of readers, indicating a plethora of undocumented Shakespeare reading societies.

Editions continued to be developed specifically for the reading club market in the early twentieth century, such as the *Shakespeare Edition De Luxe* from Harcourt Publishing Company in Boston in 1901. Each portable book in the series contains four plays with the text in strikingly readable type and no notes on the pages to interrupt the readings. Each play includes around one hundred scene-specific discussion questions, detailed prefaces in case a reader is required to write up a preliminary study, as well as separate notes, glossaries

91. William H. Fleming, *How to Study Shakespeare* (New York, 1898), 31.

92. *Ibid.*, 'Preface', xiii.

93. *Ibid.*, xiv.

94. *Ibid.*, 39, 47.

and full-colour illustrations.

The appetite for higher education, still largely inaccessible and unattainable for most even into the early twentieth century, promoted ‘a vigorous and varied movement for the household diffusion of a high lights of a university education,’ generating yet another series for self improvement, the extensive Home University Library of Modern Knowledge.⁹⁵ Its second volume is *William Shakespeare* by John Masefield, 1911, intended as a supplemental text for reading groups and individual self-help. Masefield provides a brief background on the Elizabethan theatre and a few pages on each play in which he provides the assumed date each was written, when it was published, the sources of the plots, a synopsis and brief criticism. Masefield’s opinions permeate the slight analyses: ‘Legends about Shakespeare began to spring up in Stratford as soon as there was a demand for them. Legends are a stupid man’s excuse for his want of understanding.’⁹⁶ Regardless, the book was used by the Women’s Clubs in the United States and was recommended by the National Home-Reading Union in Great Britain.⁹⁷

As late as 1913 bowdlerized editions were still being created for and used by reading groups, as displayed by a series of small, individual plays published in both London and New York titled *The Shakespeare Reading Circle . . . Arranged for Reading Aloud with Introduction & Notes*, by Alfred Perceval Graves (1846–1931). Graves states, ‘Indeed, it is the opinion of many, due, no doubt, to the failure of stage presentations of Shakespeare nowadays, that Shakespeare is only for private reading and not for the stage.’⁹⁸ His perception of the primacy of the text over performance as late as 1913 is notable. Graves deplores the practice he has witnessed in several Shakespeare reading societies in which to adjust for time and ‘to prevent any awkwardness arising in a mixed company of men and women,’ a secretary, ‘not always possessed of the highest selective taste,’ sends around a list of lines to be marked in their books as ‘cut,’ causing disagreements and dead pauses in the readings.⁹⁹ Thus Graves developed his series for Shakespeare reading circles and claims all such difficulties would be satisfied by adoption of his edition. He provides apparatus specifically for group readers, such as a chapter of character studies to ‘enable the reader

95. Eric Glasgow, ‘The Origins of the Home University Library,’ *Library Review* 50, no. 2 (2001): 95.

96. John Masefield, *William Shakespeare*, The Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, no. 2 (New York: William Holt & Co., 1911), v. Kindle book.

97. Moorman, *Shakespeare 1616–1916*, 31.

98. Alfred Perceval Graves, *The Shakespeare Reading Circle, The Merchant of Venice, Arranged for Reading Aloud with Introduction & Notes* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1913), 5–6.

99. *Ibid.*, 6–7.

to throw himself into his part with added sympathy, and therefore enhanced effect', and costume suggestions for the very eager with 'valuable hints for dressing up'.¹⁰⁰ He includes a few suggestions on the elocutionary aspects of reading dramatic prose and verse, a seating chart showing the best relative positions of the readers taking part, and ten separate lists of parts divided up for varying numbers of readers, depending on how many people plan to attend the reading. The *dramatis personae* includes the acts and scenes in which each character appears, simplifying the task of dividing up parts between readers. This series is a most complete and practical edition for reading groups, if one does not mind such cuts as the final eight lines of *The Merchant of Venice* in which Gratiano remarks, 'I'll fear no other thing / So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.' Robert Graves (1895–1985), the British poet and classicist, is the son of *The Shakespeare Reading Circle* author. He provides an intimate glimpse into his father's personal experience with his reading group in 1911:

It went on for years, and when I was sixteen, curiosity finally sent me to one of the meetings. I remember the vivacity with which my utterly unshrewish mother read the part of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* to my amiable father's Petrucio. . . . I remember the lemonade glasses, the cucumber sandwiches, the *petits fours*, the drawing-room knickknacks, the chrysanthemums in bowls, and the semi-circle of easy chairs around the fire.¹⁰¹

The *Shakespeareana* hosted a regular column by Professor William Taylor Thom, 'A School of Shakespeare', in which Thom outlines schemes for courses of study for individuals and particularly for reading groups, each month a new 'school' with an essay and often discussion questions on individual plays. Judging by the reports of the reading circles, Professor Thom was quite popular. Thom himself recommends the Irish professor Edward Dowden's *Shakspeare Primer* to societies, the bulk of which provides introductions to the plays and poems and includes a list of 'Books Useful to Students of Shakspeare'.¹⁰² Another study guide in 1914 was published by Porter and Clarke as a series of *Shakespeare Study Programs* for the reading club market, a continuation of their popular programs that originally appeared in the magazine they founded, *Poet Lore*. Porter and Clarke provide no synopses of the plays or prefaces, assuming the reader of this book has read the play herself, with a few references to their own edition of the text, the *First Folio Edition*. Their discussion

100. Ibid., 10.

101. Robert Graves, *Good-Bye to All That: An Autobiography* (1929; repr., New York: Random House, 1998), 2. *Italic in original.*

102. Edward Dowden, *Literature Primers: Shakspeare*, ed. John Richard Green (New York, 1877), 166–67.

questions tend to be more introspective and reflective than those in the Harcourt edition. For instance, of Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, the anonymous editor of the Harcourt version states only, 'Compare Portia's and Jessica's comments on their masquerading as men.'¹⁰³ In contrast, Porter and Clarke ask a number of questions about Jessica that indicate they consider her an integral part of the dramatic action with a purpose in existing, among them:

Why is Jessica's story intertwined with Portia's? What dramatic purpose does it serve? Are Jessica and Launce alike justified in leaving Shylock? Why? (See Introduction to the Play in *First Folio Edition* for suggestion.)
Is the Jew's lament for his daughter although piteous, inadequate? . . .
Do you like Jessica? Why? In what ways are Portia and Jessica alike in the generousness of love though opposite in circumstances? Is Jessica's elopement to blame for her father's joy in the wreckage of Anthonio's ships and his final exaction of the bond?¹⁰⁴

The Harcourt edition never asks the sort of question asked by Porter and Clarke: 'Do you think Shylock is wronged?'¹⁰⁵

The continuing existence of these types of publications maintains evidence of the popularity of reading, discussion and critical interaction with the literature of Shakespeare amongst communities of lay readers and that the study of Shakespeare takes place in the parlour. Although today the largest demand for Shakespeare editions is tertiary education and academia, Louis Marder estimates that by the mid-nineteenth century in America there were available almost 250 different printings of more than sixty editions of Shakespeare, concluding: 'We can be sure that most of the editions printed went to readers of Shakespeare who might not necessarily have been students.'¹⁰⁶ This is especially true considering that Shakespeare was a not a legitimate topic of study in most schools of higher education in the late nineteenth century and only as elocution exercises for younger students. It is argued that the extraordinary prevalence and diversity of community Shakespeare readers throughout the three centuries after Shakespeare's death was not only intrinsic to Shakespeare's continued place in culture, but it also shows an accessibility rarely acknowledged today. It is clear that The Million simply accepted Shakespeare as a literary dramatist and responded accordingly with the establishment of thousands of reading and

103. *Shakespeare Edition De Luxe* (Boston, New York: Harcourt Publishing Co., 1901), 152.

104. Charlotte Endymion Porter and Helen A. Clarke, *Shakespeare Study Programs: The Comedies* (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1914), 80.

105. *Ibid.*, 82.

106. Marder, *His Exits and His Entrances*, 324–25.

study groups. The recognition of Shakespeare's well-established place in a broad range of social circles should provide encouragement for a continuation of this reading practice that was apparently so joyful and satisfying. It is not an idle thought to aspire to a return to this great variety of readers and to wonder what that might look like, what the repercussions might be, how would or could the phenomenon reverberate in today's society.

A MARKET FOR EPHEMERA AND EPHEMERA FOR A MARKET

The ubiquity of Shakespeare as evidenced by the reading groups and the editions of plays for readers is described not merely to display Shakespeare's general popularity, which is already well known, but to argue that the popularity *originates* with the readings and readers, with accepting Shakespeare as a literary dramatist. There is another clue to this situation in some forms of ephemera on the market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prodigious amounts of Shakespearean paraphernalia have been produced every year since shortly after Shakespeare's death, from the pipes, cups and even chairs carved from the infinitely producing mulberry tree said to have grown in his yard, to birthday books, almanacs, gift books of Shakespeare's flowers, wedding albums, record books and much more that are still manufactured today. The list is inexhaustible.

But there are several small items that appear around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a time of prolific Shakespeare reading both in England and America, that are particularly significant, perhaps because they seem to appeal especially to readers who are closely familiar with the characters and the plays. One item is a set of fifty illustrated Shakespeare characters on trading cards for inclusion in cigarette packs, each one presenting a quotation from that character, packaged by the Cope Brothers & Company. John Player & Sons followed suit with collectible cigarette cards depicting places involved in Shakespeare's life.¹⁰⁷ Using collectible Shakespeare cards as a marketing tool to sell cigarettes indicates a milieu in which a remarkable number of people across a broad spectrum of society are intimately familiar with and care about Shakespeare. Evidently this familiarity is derived from reading the plays rather than stage performances as many of the characters are in plays rarely performed at the time. If one did not live in a major town, then

107. Classic Imports. 'A Brief History of Cigarette Cards' (New Jersey, Oradell), <http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/10517861>. Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco included Shakespeare in its list of items redeemable with coupons, thus helping to spread reading of the text amongst its largest market, the cowboys of the American West: Eugene Manlove Rhodes, *Bransford in Arcadia, or, The Little Eohippus* (1914; rept., University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 65–66; also J. Ben Tarver, *Blaze of Glory: The Legend of Oliver Lee and Pat Garrett* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2004), pages unnumbered.

familiarity via the stage is even less likely. As has been shown in the previous two chapters, readers did thoroughly engage with the characters and story lines and could develop more sustained relationships through the text than through what is offered in occasional performances, even if actors did randomly appear in saloons and churches and county fairs. The market for those who only attended plays would be too small to warrant the corporate investment and marketing of ephemera, while the reading public was not limited to the number of productions available, the number of seats in the theatre, the expense or even the geographical limitations of attending productions.

Another example of this phenomenon is an early promotional scheme for Ty-Phoo Tea in which one could collect a set of twenty-five cards, 'Characters from Shakespeare', each with a descriptive paragraph and beautifully illustrated in full colour.¹⁰⁸ At least two British companies in the early twentieth century, John Waddington Ltd. and Faulkner & Co. Ltd. created Shakespeare playing cards, hiring top illustrators of the day to design the face cards.¹⁰⁹

The cheap and portable—and thus ephemeral—copies of the plays continued to thrive in this heyday of reading Shakespeare amongst the masses. Following the tradition of inexpensive reprints described in the previous chapters, the English publishing firm J. M. Dent & Company in 1906 published the first of the Everyman's Library that includes Shakespeare among the other classics:

Dent promised to publish new and beautiful editions of the world's classics at one shilling a volume, 'to appeal to every kind of reader: the worker, the student, the cultured man, the child, the man and the woman', so that 'for a few shillings the reader may have a whole bookshelf of the immortals; for five pounds (which will procure him with a hundred volumes) a man may be intellectually rich for life.'¹¹⁰

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, an American, is another of the more remarkable cheap-print publishers. Inspired by a dime copy of Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, Haldeman-Julius determined to publish books that were within the reach of everyone, rich or poor. His motivation assumes an intellectual curiosity not limited to academia. He eventually

108. From personal collections and auction sites.

109. The World of Playing Cards, <http://www.wopc.co.uk/waddingtons/shakespearean.html>, illustrations by F. C. Tilney. Also <http://www.wopc.co.uk/uk/faulkner/shakespeare.html>, illustrations by John H. Bacon.

110. 'Everyman's Library: The History', <http://www.randomhouse.com/knopf/classics/about.html>. The Everyman's Library is still published today.

sold more than three hundred million pocket-sized books with blue paper covers priced at five or ten cents, of which 125,000 copies per year were Shakespeare plays.¹¹¹

Small and portable, containing almost no illustrations, [the Little Blue Books] were designed to be read (and passed on) amid the idle moments of a workday routine: during breaks, on bus transits, in stolen moments while infants were napping . . . in hospital wards, factory break-rooms and prison cell blocks.¹¹²

An advertisement for these little books states, ‘Improve your mind by reading at odd moments.’¹¹³ Operating mostly by mail-order, the Little Blue Books took reading out of the exclusivity of privileged leisure time and even expanded it beyond the reading group model. Little Blue Books put Shakespeare not only into the hands of working city folk but spread the works further into the small towns and rural areas.

Another genre of reading and collecting editions developed at the turn into the twentieth century: miniature Shakespeare books, which are technically three-by-three inches or smaller.¹¹⁴ Just as Jacob Tonson in the early eighteenth century had changed a reader’s relationship with Shakespeare by providing smaller, hand-held volumes, so Janice Radway points out how miniature books also create a different relationship with the reader: ‘Disarticulated by its very size from the troublesome intimidation associated with the great books of high culture, this miniature volume displayed its accessibility not to the high and mighty but to the little person, the average American.’¹¹⁵ Miniature books play a part in one of the most astonishing symbols of Shakespeare’s place in the early twentieth-century in the origins of the Little Leather Library series. In 1914 the brothers and publishers Albert and Charles Boni noticed the Shakespeare trading cards in cigarette packages, which sparked a concept for miniature and inexpensive leather-bound Shakespeare plays. They created a prototype using *Romeo and Juliet* and approached the Whitman Candy Company in Philadelphia whose reputation for high-quality product and packaging warranted the inclusion of a premium to motivate buyers. Whitman immediately ordered 15,000 copies of *Romeo and Juliet* to be packaged with their chocolates—Shakespeare as an incentive to

111. Marder, *His Exits and His Entrances*, 324.

112. Rolf Potts, ‘The Henry Ford of Literature’, *The Believer* (Sep. 2008), http://www.believermag.com/issues/200809/?read=article_potts.

113. *Ibid.*

114. Miniature Book Society, <http://www.mbs.org>.

115. Janice A. Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-class Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 152.

buy chocolate. This was so successful that the following year Woolworth's five-and-dime chain ordered one million copies of these miniature leather-bound Shakespeare plays. The Little Leather Library eventually sold more than 25 million classics based on a variety of out-of-copyright works.¹¹⁶

Thus we see a world so infused with Shakespeare that his characters could be used to entice readers to buy tea, cigarettes, playing cards and chocolate, and the plays are routinely sold to Everyman in bookstalls and drug stores across the United States and Britain. These products could only be successful in an atmosphere where Shakespeare is an integral part of the popular culture, in this case a culture developed from the ubiquity of reading the plays aloud in societies and family circles. Along with the demise of reading clubs and social circles by the 1940s was the demise of Shakespeare in the community. Imagine today collectible Shakespeare cards in cigarette packs or small leather playbooks to entice you to buy chocolates. The reverse is more likely, that a Shakespeare theatre would use candy to bribe attendees to buy tickets.

Toward the end of his publishing life, Haldeman-Julius of the Little Blue Books protested:

At the close of the twentieth century some flea-bitten, fly-specked,
rat-gnawed, dandruff-sprinkled professor of literature is going
to write a five-volume history of the books of our century.
In it a chapter will be devoted to publishers and editors of books,
and in that chapter perhaps a footnote will be given to me.¹¹⁷

Sadly, not even a footnote is accorded Haldeman-Julius and his Little Blue Books in Andrew Murphy's *Shakespeare in Print: A History and Chronology of Shakespeare Publishing*. Nor is there mention of the Little Leather Library, the Knickerbocker series, Midget Classics, the elegant two-colour Temple series, the one-inch tall Allied Newspaper collection on its own miniature wooden shelves, nor the Oxford Miniature Shakespeare or David Bryce's special edition of miniature Shakespeare dedicated to the actress Ellen Terry complete with a small four-sided turntable bookcase—all published in the early twentieth century. Murphy states the obvious problem, that his volume 'could not aspire to be exhaustive

116. Radway, *A Feeling for Books*, 158–59. By 1920, the Little Leather Library was a thirty-volume set of classics that sold for \$2.98, by this time bound in fake leather, with titles that include *Salome* by Oscar Wilde, *Poems and Plays* by Robert Browning, *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and various volumes of the Bible. The company went on to become the Book-of-the-Month Club.

117. 'Haldeman-Julius: Pocket Series and the Little Blue Books', <http://www.haldeman-julius.org>. Also see Albert Mordell, ed., *The World of Haldeman-Julius* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960).

and in some respects it does not even aim to be in any real sense thoroughly comprehensive.¹¹⁸ It is a different history and chronology that might undertake the chronicling of the Shakespeare editions specifically for the working man and woman, the community reader, the pocket intellectual, of the Shakespeare books that appear most prolifically during a time of active social fellowship among non-academics.

PAGE VERSUS STAGE

An 1818 poem of John Keats' (1795–1821), 'On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again', signals not only reading of the play but that it has become an object of repeated readings, just as Heminge and Condell insisted in 1623; indeed, the poem is inscribed in Keats' collected works of Shakespeare on the last half-page of *Hamlet* facing the first page of *King Lear*.¹¹⁹ The novelist George Eliot (1819–1880) affirms the predominance of the culture of reading Shakespeare when she has to justify her enjoyment of the stage: 'In opposition to most people who love to read Shakespeare, I like to see his plays acted better than any other; his great tragedies thrill me let them be acted how they may.'¹²⁰ Based on numerous comments in the late nineteenth century there was still, and would continue to be, dissension between those who preferred reading over performance. Griffiths impresses upon reading circles that Shakespeare is worth more than what is either read idly or seen on stage and points out what he finds specifically dissatisfying: '... the gratification of the aesthetic sense in a performance in which a stronger appeal is made to the eye than to the intellect.'¹²¹ Andrew Lipscomb (1816–1890) sums up a recurring theme when he writes in 1882, 'Of late years men have come to understand that Shakespeare off the stage is far superior to Shakespeare on the stage.'¹²² Lipscomb credits Goethe and Coleridge for rescuing Shakespeare from 'mere playwrights' and exalting him to a 'transcendent position', as Lipscomb believes the transcendency is only accessible on the page, through the mind, not through the 'imitative art of histrionics.'¹²³ Stefania Magnoni reports Coleridge's objection that he had never witnessed a Shakespearean performance 'but with a degree

118. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 279.

119. Randall McLeod, 'Un "Editing" Shak-speare', *SubStance: Books: On and About* 10, no. 4, issue 33–34: (1981/1982): 30–31.

120. From a letter dated 1859 excerpted in *Shakespeareiana* 4 (Philadelphia, 1887), 261.

121. Griffiths, *Evenings with Shakspeare*, viii.

122. A. A. Lipscomb, 'Uses of Shakespeare Off the Stage', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 65 (1882): 438, <http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=harp;idno=harp0065-3>.

123. *Ibid.*, 432.

of pain, disgust, and indignation,' and declared that actors had driven Shakespeare away from the stage to his proper place 'in the hearth and in the closet.'¹²⁴ Charles Lamb had complained of the same thing: 'The *Lear* of Shakespeare cannot be acted. . . . On the stage we see nothing but corporeal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear—we are in his mind.'¹²⁵ Today Janet Ruth Heller reports that some scholars argue that this abhorrence of the stage is in reaction to the overwrought productions and stylized actors of the time, while others argue that many truly did believe that the experience of reading drama was far superior than witnessing the necessarily limited interpretations of actors.¹²⁶ Erne remarks on this ongoing contention in 2013:

It is often assumed that Shakespeare's plays make for good reading despite the fact they were designed for performance. I am suggesting that they work well on the page because they are in certain ways designed for readers.¹²⁷

Erne overviews the strong negative reactions he receives to the idea that Shakespeare wrote for both stage and page, which he feels might be 'indicative of territorial anxieties in Shakespeare studies'—does Shakespeare belong to the page or the stage, to the academics or the actors, do we read the work or watch it?¹²⁸ In this light, it is compelling to see what the actor-manager Henry Irving (1838–1905) wrote about Shakespeare in 1890 in an introductory piece titled 'Shakespeare as a Playwright'. Irving also seems to struggle with territorial anxieties:

I daresay that it will appear to some readers a profanation of the name of Shakespeare to couple with it the title of playwright. But I have chosen this title for my introduction because I am anxious to show that with the mighty genius of the poet was united, in a remarkable degree, the capacity for writing plays intended to be acted as well as read. One often finds that the very persons who claim most to reverence Shakespeare, not only as a poet but also as a dramatist, carry that reverence to such an extent that

124. Stefania Magnoni, 'When "Poetry and Stage do Agree Together": Elizabeth Vestris's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', in *Women's Romantic Theatre and Drama: History, Agency, and Performativity*, ed. Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Keir Elam (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 251.

125. Charles Lamb, 'On the Tragedies of Shakspeare Considered with Reference to Their Fitness for Stage Representation', in *English Essays: Sidney to Macaulay*, The Harvard Classics, vol. 27 (1811; repr., New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909–14), online edition at www.bartleby.com/27/21.html.

126. Janet Ruth Heller, 'The Bias Against Spectacle in Tragedy: The History of an Idea', *The Eighteenth Century* 23, no. 3 (1982): 239.

127. Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 249.

128. *Ibid.*, 3. Erne does not mention lay readers in his question.

they would almost forbid the representation of his plays upon the stage.¹²⁹

Irving's comment bespeaks the extraordinary dependence in his time of Shakespeare's popularity on readers of the plays; it indicates the pervasive attitude of seeing Shakespeare as a poet or literary dramatist above a stage dramatist. That Irving has to apologize for considering Shakespeare under the title of 'playwright' in 1890 acutely summarizes the extent to which Shakespeare was embedded amongst readers, as evidenced throughout this thesis in the records of annotated books, the multitudinous editions for readers, the supplemental resources for readers, the evidence of non-specialists attending lectures, the abundance of long-lived reading groups, and the ephemera produced that witnesses Shakespeare as a familiar part of popular culture. Even thirty years later, Arthur Quiller-Couch had to remind his readers to disengage from the 'erudition and scholarship' to 'recollect that the poet was a playwright', implying that Shakespeare's supposed intention of writing for the stage was still too often neglected.¹³⁰ In 2000, Frank Kermode laments the opposite, 'the fact that [Shakespeare] was a poet has somehow dropped out of consideration', although he notes there is a preponderance of scholarship on the Elizabethan theatres and contemporary methods of acting.¹³¹ Kermode acknowledges he is writing against the current of 'the commonplace' when he suggests it is inaccurate to insist that the sense of Shakespeare's plays can be fully apprehended only in performance.¹³² He unintentionally inspires a popular return to reading groups:

Members of an audience cannot stop the actors and puzzle over some difficult expression, as they can when reading the play. The action sweeps you past the crux, which is at once forgotten because you need to keep up with what is being said, not lose the plot by meditating on what has passed. Following the story, understanding the tensions between characters, is not quite the same thing as following all or even most of the meanings.¹³³

Irving and Quiller-Couch, pushing against the popularity of reading the plays, insist they can also be great on the stage; a century later, Erne pushes against the primacy of the stage to insist that the plays are also intended for reading and Kermode elucidates

129. Henry Irving, 'Shakespeare as a Playwright', *The Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. Henry Irving and Frank A. Marshall, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1890), lxxvii. Irving was the first actor to be awarded a knighthood.

130. Arthur Quiller-Couch, *Shakespeare's Workmanship* (1918; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), vii.

131. Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2000), vii.

132. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

133. *Ibid.*, 5.

the advantages of reading against the current of the commonplace. It becomes clear that the profound history of and delight in reading Shakespeare's plays, especially amongst lay readers, aloud and in community, has been forgotten.

The issue, perhaps, goes beyond territorial anxieties to the apparently entrenched belief in the relatively recent theory that Shakespeare should not be read since he *intended* his plays exclusively for the stage. This belief precludes accepting Shakespeare's plays as literature, thus it naturally follows that Shakespeare could not have *intended* them as literature. However, the history of Shakespeare's readers illuminates a historical context in which the plays *have* been spontaneously perceived as literary works, not just occasionally or casually, but with deep-seated predilections. History displays an unapologetic view of Shakespeare as a literary writer throughout the centuries. Reading Shakespeare aloud and in community outside the academy is shown herein to be a long-established and enduring tradition.

The transformation from centuries of a focus on reading Shakespeare as literature and poetry to an insistence on the primacy of performance, as well as the inclusion of Shakespeare in the academy to the exclusion of the lay reader, happened gradually during the twentieth century and is discussed in the following chapter.

PART III
EDITING AND READING SHAKESPEARE TODAY

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE RISE OF SCHOLARS AND DEMISE OF READERS

Yet some fragrance, some balanced rhythm about the older amateur method
fled and has never been recovered
in the history of America's national pursuit of Shakespeare.

Esther Cloudman Dunn, 1939

At the end of the nineteenth century there began a trending shift that eventually nudged Shakespeare out of the realm of the common person and into high society, out of the homes and into the academies, and eventually off the page and onto the stage. By the 1940s Shakespeare reading groups had virtually disappeared in both America and England. The gradual transition can be seen developing from the time in New York City in 1849 when one could attend three *Macbeths* on three different stages in the same week. This was the year of the famous Astor Place riot in Manhattan in which more than 10,000 people filled the streets to argue over who was the greatest actor of Macbeth. The supporters for the British actor William Charles Macready (1793–1873) were generally wealthy and elite while the supporters for the American actor Edwin Forrest (1806–1872) were predominantly working class. At least 25 to 30 people were killed in the melee, many more wounded, and both theatres were destroyed.¹ During the 1857–58 season in New York, one could see ten different *Hamlets*; in 1875, rival *Hamlets* performed on the same night in the same city. But in the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a palpable change in the air as Shakespeare moved further away from the lowbrow popular sphere and was appropriated

1. Cliff, *The Shakespeare Riots*, passim. This American riot for Shakespeare is considered the genesis of the *Macbeth* curse in theatres today.

as highbrow 'Culture'. Lawrence W. Levine documents this process in America principally through performance history in that, 'as a central institution, the theatre not only mirrored the sweep of events in the larger society but presented an arena in which those events could unfold'.² The establishment of separate theatres in separate parts of town that catered to distinctly different audiences is one example of the growing disparity in the ownership of culture, just as the Astor Place riot over *Macbeth* is indicative of the bifurcation of socio-economic groups and an example of a struggle for cultural authority.

Equally similar to the result of the influence of the eighteenth-century Shakespeare Ladies' Club, the theatrical posters in the late nineteenth century show that farces were deleted from the ends of shows, jugglers and dancers were eliminated from interval entertainments and admonitions to behave no longer appeared on posters.³

By the turn of the century Shakespeare had been converted from a popular playwright whose dramas were the property of those who flocked to see them, into a sacred author who had to be protected from ignorant audiences and overbearing actors threatening the integrity of his creations.⁴

While Levine's chronicle of the process is insightful, there is a missing link of which he does not speak: reading groups. Scheil argues that Levine's contention of an increasing distance between Shakespeare and everyday people in the late nineteenth century is contradicted by more than five hundred Shakespeare Women's Clubs that provide substantial evidence that 'Shakespeare was far from archaic or inaccessible to a wide variety of Americans across the country, and especially for women'.⁵ To explain the ostensible contradiction, a possibility can be argued that brings these two opposing ideas into focus: the Women's Club movement was part of the process of the cultural confiscation of Shakespeare. The coalescence can be demonstrated in the suggestive connections in the Shakespeare reading groups of the integrated values of culture and civic leadership, as well as their own versions of class exclusion, the combination of which participated in the transition of Shakespeare from lowbrow to highbrow.

2. Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 68.

3. Lawrence W. Levine, 'William Shakespeare and the American People: A Study in Cultural Transformation', *The American Historical Review* 89 (1984): 46–48.

4. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 72.

5. Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, 141 n2.

Records of almost all the Women's Clubs include altruistic and philanthropic causes in addition to study and self-improvement.⁶ The Women's Shakespearean Club of Barnesville, Georgia, established a reference library useful to students, created a night school for factory hands at which club members, being more educated than the workers, served as teachers, and established a Factory Girls' Club with permanent club rooms where a committee from the 'Shakespearean' provided instruction and entertainment. Other clubs built high schools, supported hospitals, arranged for street cleaning and trash collection and organized Travel Libraries for isolated areas. These social outreach and civic activities contributed to the idea that reading Shakespeare was somehow associated with not only personal but public improvements, 'thus linking Shakespeare's cultural value with intellectual development and civic responsibility.'⁷

Although many groups claimed to be comprised of women from all levels of society and education, the general structure and organization of the majority of Women's Clubs can be considered guilty of perpetuating Shakespeare into the realm of the highbrow, even if that highbrow attitude came from the middle class. Most, though not all, organised memberships such as literary or educational clubs always have been, and still are, the province of the more well-to-do or at least upper middle-class women who had husbands with money, plus servants, leisure time and some incentives and encouragement for education. The Women's Clubs required dues; individual meetings cost money to attend; programmes had to be printed; papers demanded leisure time to research and write; fines were levied for papers assigned but not presented; books were expensive.⁸ The membership of the black women's Cleveland Social Circle 'was the *sine qua non* of social standing.'⁹ The Bethel Literary and Historical Association of Washington, D.C., founded in 1881, in which Shakespeare was part of a goal toward upward mobility and 'higher culture', included 'most of Washington's black elite.'¹⁰ In 1893 at a meeting of the Shakespeare Club of Brunswick, Maine, the women heard of a small church in need of \$100 to offset a debt; in ten minutes it was paid. Although it was noted in their minutes that 'this is the way club-women

6. Gere, *Intimate Practices*, 11, suggests this was a protective mechanism to assure males that they were not neglecting their womanly obligations of caring for home and community.

7. Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, 27.

8. Annual dues in 1887 for The Roundtable Club in Deadwood, South Dakota were US\$2. Croly, *History*, 327.

9. Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, 114.

10. *Ibid.*, 108-09.

in Maine, not rich club-women either, do things,' it is also important to note that this same club owned its own clapboard summer house in the mountains.¹¹ As Shakespeare moved into these circles, he moved out of the log cabins and taverns. The force behind more than five hundred women's Shakespeare reading groups across America helped install Shakespeare into the world of elite culture and intellectualism. The plays transitioned from being a staple in popular lowbrow entertainment performed in drinking saloons and barns to being a select element in reading salons and grand theatres. Thus the cultural appropriation crept its way across the country as High Culture in late nineteenth-century America reached a fevered height. The wealthier women's clubs contributed millions of dollars to the construction of massive concert halls, auditoriums, theatres, museums, and in the process—began earlier in the century—eventually dispossessed Shakespeare from the populist masses. Elizabeth Long considers this a transition unconsciously but perfectly designed for women, 'whose appreciation, preservation, and transmission [of culture] already seemed the special province of the fair sex.'¹²

A significant affinity between these women reading Shakespeare in the nineteenth century with women reading in the early seventeenth century is in the description by Teague of the manner in which elite Elizabethan females read books: 'The implication is rather that reading is always a serious and time-consuming activity; . . . the assumed telos of reading is improvement, not entertainment'. For an Elizabethan woman, reading was rarely enjoyed in isolation but was a public and social activity designed to find the underlying structure of the prose, the stylistic practice, the moral benefit.¹³ Thus the trendsetting women in the late nineteenth-century reading circles were unknowingly sympathetic with their Elizabethan forebears, even in the return of reading Shakespeare to elite society. The shared insistence of the modern women on both personal and social improvement as part and parcel of a Shakespeare reading group contributed to conducting Shakespeare into the more esoteric circles.

In this late nineteenth-century trend toward highbrow Shakespeare, one can see the futurity of Andrew Lipscomb's 1882 prediction when he states: 'For he is certainly destined to become the Shakespeare of the college and university, and even more the

11. Croly, *History*, 529.

12. Long, *Book Clubs*, 37.

13. Teague, 'Judith Shakespeare Reading,' 361–73.

Shakespeare of private and selective culture.’¹⁴ This can be seen in Andrew Murphy’s research into the stories of nineteenth-century working-class Shakespeare readers, such as the trade union official in a labour dispute with a truculent employer who found that their common ground in Shakespeare facilitated a union agreement; Murphy argues that the story is indicative of ‘the extent to which Shakespeare had, over the course of the century, become a common cultural property’ but that this cross-class appreciation begins to break down around the turn into the twentieth century.¹⁵ The complexity of circumstances that combine to effect the transition include changes in the political system as shown by James Vernon in the intellectual culture ‘effected by the new educational regime’, as well as in the new masses of reading matter involving sports and gambling as shown by Jonathan Rose.¹⁶ Richard Foulkes argues that the decline of the art of oratory and the increase of the naturalistic school of playwriting helped to remove Shakespeare from the populist theatre.¹⁷ In America, Levine also blames a decline in oratory and melodrama, the pressures of emerging new entertainments such as film, baseball and vaudeville, as well as an enormous influx of non-English-speaking immigrants.¹⁸ These issues are outside the scope of this thesis, and most are concerned with and reflect a decrease in stage performance.¹⁹

It can be argued, however, that one of the most impactful changes as it relates to lay readers was in the transition of Shakespeare into the academy and away from the community.

SHAKESPEARE MOVES INTO ACADEMIA

From the early eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century the editors of Shakespeare were ‘gentleman-amateurs’, as Murphy calls them—publishers, bureaucrats, aristocrats, solicitors and lawyers, antiquarians, journalists, writers, playwrights, poets, a chess champion, a parliamentary reporter, even a bishop—not one employed by a university.²⁰

14. Lipscomb, ‘Uses of Shakespeare’, 438.

15. Andrew Murphy, ‘Shakespeare Among the Workers’, in *Shakespeare Survey 58: Writing about Shakespeare*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 113.

16. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 202–06. See also James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture 1815–1867* (1993; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. 157–60; Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

17. Richard Foulkes, *Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 205–06.

18. Levine, ‘Shakespeare and the American People’, 56–58.

19. Robert D. Putnam traces the disintegration of social groups in general in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

20. Andrew Murphy, ‘Birth of the Editor’, in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 107.

It is not fair to consider these men (and several women) dilettantes, there being no formal study of Shakespeare possible until the early twentieth century. They are more properly autodidacts where Shakespeare was concerned and many of them rigorous scholars.

English language and literature as an academic pursuit as we know it in higher education was constructed over a lengthy period of time, progressing through different meanings and cultural forms. In the early 1800s 'English' or 'English and History' broadly covered a number of topics that later specialized into English literature, English language, modern history, philology, social studies, and sometimes even geography and economics, and in the late nineteenth century could be described as cultural studies.²¹ University College London, founded in 1826 as a secular school and the first university in England open to students regardless of religion or sex, had a chair in English literature by 1828, first held from 1828–30 by an evangelical clergyman, Reverend Thomas Dale.²² Peter Barry points out that the study of English literature at this point was 'merely using literature as a source of linguistic examples.'²³ Until the later decades of the nineteenth century, the study of English in universities was chiefly ancillary to the study of the Greek and Latin languages and to oratory, rhetoric and forensics, and the teaching method was copied from the teaching of the classics. Shakespeare's works, if included along with other literature, was used as illustrations of grammar, elocution, rhetoric, logic, etymology, civic ideas, religious ideals, argument.²⁴ Advanced students went to German postgraduate programs in the 1870s and 1880s to study philology with its groundwork of linguistic, historical and biographical information as a 'preliminary to the study of literature.'²⁵ The *Warwick Shakespeare* published in 1893 reacts against this use of Shakespeare, as shown by C. H. Herford in his preface: 'In the *Warwick Shakespeare* an attempt is made to present the greater plays of the dramatist in their literary aspect, and not merely as material for the study of philology and grammar.'²⁶

21. Brian Doyle, 'The hidden history of English studies', in *Re-Reading English*, ed. Peter Widdowson (New York: Routledge, 1999), 25.

22. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 193.

23. Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 12.

24. Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History, Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 36.

25. Gerald Graff and Michael Warner, eds., 'Introduction', *The Origins of Literary Studies in America: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 5.

26. Charles Harold Herford, 'General Preface', *The Warwick Shakespeare* (London: Blackie and Son, Limited, 1893), viii.

Gerald Graff explains that the formative literary education for students before the turn into the twentieth century were campus debating clubs, literary societies with their own extensive libraries, student literary magazines, and public lectures of the sort that members of community reading clubs, including women, could attend.²⁷ This very democracy of English literature, it being considered a field that could be self indulged, is a characteristic that accidentally built the resistance to including it as a serious field of study. Women were also part of the problem.

As early as the eighteenth century, writings on female education were of the belief that women had a greater ‘natural endowment’ for modern languages than for classics and mathematics, providing the earliest evidence ‘of an educational sense of the special “fittedness” of women for English.’²⁸ In 1889 Higginson, quoted in the previous chapter, wrote of the preponderance of women in the field of literature and confirms its lack of men:

The nation is filled . . . with literary societies of that sex while those in which the sexes mingle in any fair proportion are very few, and those composed of men only are still rarer. It is *not* needful here to dwell on the reason for all this. . . . But whatever be the cause, it may fairly be assumed that the women’s clubs have become to some extent the popular custodians of literature in America.²⁹

Paul Lauter validates Higginson’s statement for the following two decades and the position of literature in universities and colleges:

Even on college campuses prior to 1920, and certainly in communities, a good deal of literary study, particularly of contemporary authors, was carried on within literary societies, mainly female. (The campus men’s societies were concerned primarily with debating and oratory; off-campus men’s clubs, whatever else they were, were *not* literary.)³⁰

Gere describes the difficulty men had with women and literature between 1880 and 1920 and the impact on creating English and literature as a respectable academic field since it first had to be ‘wrested away’ from the control of women: ‘To claim a place in the academy, English had to demonstrate sufficient intellectual rigour, and in the professorial view,

27. Graff, *Professing Literature*, 44.

28. Doyle, ‘The hidden history of English studies’, 22.

29. Higginson, ‘Women and Men’, 222–23. *Italic in original.*

30. Paul Lauter, ‘Race and Gender in the Shaping of the American Literary Canon: A Case Study from the Twenties’, *Feminist Studies* 9 (Autumn 1983): 441. *Italic in original.*

women's clubs offered a cultural other against which a professionalized version of English studies could be established.³¹ The professorial insistence on scholastic diligence and severe mental discipline, the determination to make the study of English comparable to the study of Greek and Latin, stood in sharp contrast to the clubwomen's discovery that an enhanced understanding of humanity through literary studies informed their broadened view of life and prompted philanthropic activities.

Oxford University struggled with the perceived feminization of literature as it established the Honours School of English Language and Literature in 1893 only after pressure from a major public campaign.³² Scarlett Baron's history of the Oxford English faculty reveals that English studies were held in 'contempt' at Oxford as a 'woman's subject' with, therefore, a lack of substance unsuited to masculine intelligence.³³ It was eventually argued at Oxford that an English School would not interfere with the 'Greats' School and, furthermore, that 'it would be really advantageous if it drew off the weaker candidates'.³⁴ Not until 1904, however, was a professor assigned to head the English school, Sir Walter Raleigh. Degrees, even in English, were not awarded to women at Oxford until 1920, and it was not until 'the 1950s and 1960s [that] English studies no longer bore the academic stigma of . . . a "soft option"'.³⁵ It is ironic that the substantial involvement by women in literature and Shakespeare for centuries is what delayed its acceptance as a field in higher education.

As universities began their struggle to professionalize literature in the academy, the first professional edition of Shakespeare's plays was produced, the Cambridge edition, developed in the mid-1860s and based on Capell's Shakespeare collection that he had donated to Trinity College Cambridge eighty years earlier.³⁶ Alexander Macmillan and the Cambridge University Press commissioned William George Clark (1821–1878), an orator, classicist and philologist at Trinity College Cambridge, John Glover, the librarian at Trinity who worked on the first of nine volumes, and William Aldis Wright

31. Gere, *Intimate Practices*, 212.

32. Doyle, 'The hidden history of English studies', 24.

33. Scarlett Baron, 'A Short History of the English Faculty', Oxford University, <http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/History%20of%20Eng%20Fac.pdf>.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 187.

(1831–1914), librarian, bursar and philologist at Trinity, to produce a scholarly edition.³⁷ For the previous century Shakespearean study had been concerned primarily with ‘explanation and commentary [rather] than with the improvement of the text’, which was partly a reflection of the interest of the majority market—community readers.³⁸ Although the methodology of the Cambridge edition, published 1863–66, was not significantly different from that of earlier editors, it did signal an influential shift toward an academic privilege that was to eventually reverberate into the reading groups. The volumes, no longer in the variorum tradition of the eighteenth century, included discursive notes in the backmatter regarding textual questions, variants of early printing, restoration of what had been considered profane expressions, and a focus on establishing a definitive text. One of its most important contributions to scholarship was in the use of collations of the readings of all known editions to establish which editions were substantive and which derivative, as well as recording the accumulated emendations and conjectures since Rowe’s edition in 1709. With the precedent of the Cambridge edition, the editing of Shakespeare transferred to professional academics, and Taylor notes that ‘textual criticism became, as it has largely remained, a private club.’³⁹

And so good-bye to all those amateur enthusiasts who had enjoyed
Tennyson and Dickens, good-bye to all that mass literacy which the
Victorians had so industriously cultivated. Real Literature, important
literature, belonged to, and could only be preserved by, a cultural elite.⁴⁰

Shortly after the publication of the Cambridge scholarly edition, Edward Dowden (1843–1913), graduate of Trinity College Dublin, was appointed chair to the inaugural department of English literature in Trinity College, 1867. Dowden, the first major Shakespearean critic who earned a living by teaching in a university, gave a series of lectures in 1873 entitled ‘The mind and art of Shakespere’, published in 1875 as *Shakespere: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art*.⁴¹ The frequent reprintings and enormous influence of this book can be attributed to its use in reading clubs, a population far outweighing

37. As noted in chapter five, this Cambridge edition was designed specifically for scholars, but Macmillan also developed a popular edition based on the same text for the general consumer, the Globe edition.

38. McKerrow, *The Treatment of Shakespeare’s Text*, 28.

39. Taylor, *Textual Companion*, 56.

40. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 245.

41. Edward Dowden, *Shakespere: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1918).

university students pursuing the study of any sort of literature.⁴² The popularity of Dowden's work in the general public at this time is an indicator of the still permeable boundaries between the nascent academic discipline of English literature and the enthusiastic Shakespeare disciples amongst community readers.

Richard G. Moulton's book a decade later, *Shakespeare as Dramatic Artist*, emphasizes an 'inductive' scientific approach and a stage-centered approach, indicative of the slowly changing priorities of study.⁴³ Werstine confirms that for Shakespeare, 'the twentieth century was to belong to the professional scholars.'⁴⁴ To qualify Shakespeare as worthy to be included in university study, it had to be proven challenging; to legitimate the new profession it was necessary to contrast its rigour with 'the discredited amateurism of mere appreciation.'⁴⁵ Taylor is succinct: 'By making the study of English literature difficult, they made it respectable.'⁴⁶ As the academic studies developed, Shakespeare moved away from the non-professionals and community readers.

In the early twentieth century the amateur enthusiasts are firmly displaced by professionals who will later be dubbed the New Bibliographers. They imposed a major shift in editorial consciousness by placing a firm priority on the science of evaluating documents and textuality. As Michael Hunter describes, the New Bibliographers were searching for a set of principles to develop an enforceable set of standards, the end goal of which was 'the reconstruction of a text as close to the author's intentions as was feasible.'⁴⁷ As noted in previous chapters, discovering Shakespeare's intentions had been editors' targets since the eighteenth century, but now it became accepted that analytical bibliography is the essential preliminary process to textual criticism. As the study of Shakespeare became more 'scientific', it became more removed from the community of lay readers and non-specialists.

A number of discoveries and new theories were developed during this time: Alfred William Pollard (1859–1944), from King's College and Oxford, developed the distinction

42. Russell Jackson, 'Shakespeare their contemporary', in *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 87.

43. Richard G. Moulton, 'Preface to the First Edition', in *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist: A Popular Illustration of the Principles of Scientific Criticism*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), viii.

44. Paul Werstine, 'The Science of Editing', in *The Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 111.

45. Graff, *The Origins of Literary Studies in America*, 9.

46. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 246.

47. Michael Hunter, *Editing Early Modern Texts: An Introduction to Principles and Practice* (2007; repr., New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 59.

between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ quartos; he later edited the team effort that produced the *Short-Title Catalogue (1475–1640)*. Walter Wilson Greg (1875–1959), Trinity College Cambridge, developed the theory of memorial reconstructions. Greg determined that dramatists provided ‘foul papers’ to acting companies and claimed acting companies then gave these to print shops, thus the quartos are the closest to Shakespeare’s original manuscripts and intended texts. Greg transcribed Henslowe’s *Diary* and *Papers* for the first time.⁴⁸ Greg, Pollard and others published papers that argue it was Shakespeare’s hand in the play of *Sir Thomas More*.⁴⁹ Pollard, Greg, and William J. Neidig proved that the so-called Pavier false folio of 1608 that attributes ten plays to Shakespeare was actually printed in 1619.⁵⁰ Ronald Brunlees McKerrow (1872–1940), King’s College and Trinity College, published his analysis of the bibliographic editorial method for the Oxford Shakespeare edition with old spelling and original grammar and punctuation in *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare*, the first editorial manual developed for Shakespeare’s works.⁵¹ Greg followed up in a series of lectures given at Trinity College in 1939 and published in 1942 that further discuss the influential formulation of the new editorial ideal of finding Shakespeare’s original intent using—rather than the moral or romantic overlays of earlier centuries—the scientific method based on the bibliographic foundations of Shakespeare’s texts and the manuscripts that are surely beneath the printed editions.⁵²

The theories and evolution of the New Bibliography had long-reaching influence and impact on many areas of Shakespeare research and editing that are outside the scope of this thesis, but there is one issue in particular that is crucial to the lay reading community:

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48. Walter W. Greg, ed., *Henslowe’s Diary* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1904). Walter W. Greg, ed., *Henslowe Papers, Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe’s Diary* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1907).
49. W. W. Greg, ed., *Shakespeare’s Hand in the Play of Sir Thomas More* (1923; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967). In Pollard’s preface, v, he states that the object of the book is to strengthen the evidence that the three pages written by Hand D are Shakespeare’s and that ‘if Shakespeare wrote these three pages the discrepant theories which unite in regarding the “Stratford man” as a mere mask concealing the activity of some noble lord (a 17th Earl of Oxford, a 6th Earl of Derby, or a Viscount St. Albans) come crashing to the ground’.
50. Neidig, William J., ‘The Shakespeare Quartos of 1619’, in *Modern Philology* 8 (October 1910): 145–63.
51. Ronald B. McKerrow, *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939). Hyder E. Rollins wrote of this ‘stiff reading’ that, ‘From it (and probably from the proposed edition as well), “the general” will fly in horror, but academic readers will find it full of interesting and instructive material’; Review of ‘Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method’, by Ronald B. McKerrow, *Modern Language Notes* 55 (Feb. 1940): 150. This edition of the Oxford Shakespeare was never published, although it struggled forward through the lives and deaths of several editors. Eventually Oxford University Press appointed Stanley Wells to develop the edition that was published in 1986. See Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 223–29.
52. W. W. Greg, *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare: A Survey of the Foundations of the Text* (1942; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951).

Greg's pronouncement that modernising spelling in any edition of Shakespeare was 'sheer perversion'.⁵³ The New Bibliographers believed modern spelling was for trivialized student texts or public consumption only, apparently inconsequential and implicitly inferior markets. The insistence that Shakespeare must be read only in original spelling excludes the opportunity for ordinary comprehension and popular appreciation: 'This change in standards reflected and reinforced the change of readership. Major works of scholarship were aimed at a more circumscribed audience. (Fewer readers; more critics.)'⁵⁴ As the scholarly base increased with a recognition of English studies, a growth in graduate schools and a new proliferation of scholarly journals, those who professionally studied, taught and wrote about Shakespeare also increased.⁵⁵ Shakespeare's inclusion in the academy associated the works with erudition and positioned them as less approachable.

Even though by the end of the twentieth century it had become habitual to dismiss New Bibliography, its impact is yet felt, as when Stephen Orgel argues that the assumption, still, of most editorial practice is 'that behind the obscure and imperfect text is a clear and perfect one and it is the editor's job not to be true to the text's obscurity and imperfection, but instead to produce some notional platonic ideal', a platonic ideal that ordains the academy with special interpretive powers.⁵⁶

Taylor draws attention to another cause for the transition of Shakespeare away from lay readers in the early twentieth-century dichotomy that divided Shakespeare's audience in two: the cultivated and cultured versus the less-educated and unenlightened. This can be seen as a parallel to the dichotomy seen in the plays in which it was argued that Shakespeare, cultivated and cultured, was forced to cater to the lower intellect of his theatre audience.⁵⁷ This returns to a topic mentioned in the introduction to this thesis—irony. Gerald Gould first argued the theory in 1919 that Shakespeare wrote the plays to be interpreted on two different levels of intellectual sophistication.⁵⁸ This conveniently corresponds to the broad division of class, returning to the lingering Victorian question of why there is so much of

53. Greg, *The Editorial Problem*, li.

54. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 255. Frederick J. Furnivall began an old-spelling edition in 1880 and eventually published a number of the plays in old spelling between 1908 and 1912, per Andrew Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 208–09, 368.

55. Some examples of journals specifically from the New Bibliographers are the *Modern Language Review*, co-founded by Greg; *Review of English Studies* by McKerrow; *The Library* by Pollard.

56. Orgel, 'What Is an Editor?', 24.

57. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 247–48.

58. Gerald Gould, 'A New Reading of *Henry V*', *English Review* 29 (1919): 42–55.

the tawdry and bawdry in the plays. Irony subsumes snobbery, thus pushing Shakespeare more firmly into the world of the elite as scholars developed a series of propositions that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written to celebrate the aristocratic marriage of Elizabeth Carey to Thomas Berkeley, *Troilus and Cressida* for the elite at the Inns of Court, *Twelfth Night* for an aristocratic audience at the Feast of Epiphany, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for a Garter ceremony at Whitehall Palace in 1597, and *Love's Labour's Lost* to support the faction of Essex against the faction of Raleigh—none of which has any historical confirmation.⁵⁹ This does reveal a flaw in the New Bibliography: historical documents, even though analysed scientifically, can still provide foundations for conjecture. Regardless, as Shakespeare himself moved into elite circles, by whatever means, so did his appeal and the distancing from the lay community. But there was another movement imminent that also contributed to the demise of community readers.

EARLY MODERN THEATRE PRACTICE

William Poel (1852–1934), actor, director and writer, was an early iconoclast dismayed by the Victorian stage traditions of cavernous theatres that required bellowing oratory to reach the audience, the pretence of realistic sets with their elaborate scenery and tedious scene changes, lengthy intervals and the proscenium arch—he believed these conventions harmed Shakespeare's plays and limited the imaginative powers of the audience. In 1879 Poel founded his own theatrical company, the Elizabethans, which played on a bare stage with a focus on the language rather than what he saw as self-serving practices such as innovative or startling effects.⁶⁰ Poel affiliated himself with the Shakespeare Reading Society, founded by students at University College, London, who staged costumed readings for adult education at halls and institutes—itsself a visible indication of the transition of the text away from lay readers. From this Poel developed the Elizabethan Stage Society which gave thirty productions of early modern plays, many in what we would today call 'original practice'—a platform stage, minimal scenery, Elizabethan costuming, an emphasis

59. Oscar James Campbell and Edward G. Quinn, eds., *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare: The Only Encyclopedia of Shakespeare and His Works* (New York: MJF Books, 1966): *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 543; *Troilus and Cressida*, 894; *Twelfth Night*, 902; *Merry Wives of Windsor*, 532; *Love's Labour's Lost*, 473, 675.

60. J. P. Wearing, 'Poel, William (1852–1934)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Jan. 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35553>.

on the language, and use of the text as interaction with the audience.⁶¹ Poel's work was not uniformly successful, and his adoption of this approach was often seen as eccentric. But his work was furthered by, among others, the actor, director and producer Harley Granville-Barker (1877–1946) in the theatre and later by A. C. Sprague in his influential book of 1944, *Shakespeare and the Actors: The Stage Business in his Plays*, which positions interpretive authority in the performance of the plays rather than in the study of the text.⁶²

Scholarship and Shakespearean theatre were both stimulated by developments such as experimentation with original staging, the discovery of the drawing of the Swan theatre, the transcriptions of Henslowe's diary and papers, new research into the early playhouses and stage conventions, historical studies of Elizabethan theatrical life and the publication of the records of the Master of the Revels.⁶³ These served to galvanize a greater interest in the Elizabethan playing conditions and the dramatic experience that continued to enthuse both scholars and theatre communities in the first half of the twentieth century. A renewed and academic interest in the stage is noted in a 1936 lecture by John Dover Wilson, a peripheral New Bibliographer, in which he makes a remarkable statement:

It is one of the most important literary discoveries of our age that Shakespeare wrote, not to be read, but to be acted, that his plays are not books but, as it were, libretti for stage-performances. It is amazing that so obvious a fact should so late have come to recognition.⁶⁴

The following year Wilson reaffirmed in a BBC broadcast: 'Never believe what the scholars and professors tell you about a Shakespeare play until you have seen it on the stage for yourself.'⁶⁵ Tension between the academy and the stage is clearly seen, while the lay reader is quickly becoming overlooked.

The New Bibliography focus on finding Shakespeare's original intentions through the text at times parallels the theatrical focus on finding Shakespeare's original intentions

61. Farah Karim-Cooper, 'Twelfth Night and Original Practices', <http://blog.shakespearesglobe.com/twelfth-night-and-original-practices-by-dr-farah-karim-cooper>.

62. 'Harley Granville-Barker', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Britannica.com, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/241928/Harley-Granville-Barker>; A. C. Sprague, *Shakespeare and the Actors: The Stage Business in his Plays (1660–1905)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1944).

63. Joseph Quincy Adams, *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, 1623–1673* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917).

64. John Dover Wilson, 'The Study of Shakespeare', *University of Edinburgh Journal* (Summer 1936): 10, quoted in J. L. Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution: Criticism and Performance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 33.

65. Quoted in Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution*, 33.

through historically accurate performance. By the 1970s this became codified in academia as stage-centered criticism or performance criticism, further removing the reading texts from the lay person. Genevieve Love defines Shakespearean performance criticism as an interpretive engagement of the works ‘through the historical, documentary, cultural, and/or imaginative representation of his plays in or as performance.’⁶⁶ Symbiotically, it is academic criticism of the text that acknowledges the realities of theatrical perception, the essence of spoken language, the relationship of actor and audience, the expectations of dramatic compression, the conventions of theatricality, the synthesis of sensory impression. What is achieved in performance criticism is an interpretation of the text that evaluates the contributions of all the resources of the theater on which the play depends. One of the great ironies of performance criticism, a discipline which is insistently textual, is described by Emma Smith as ‘acts of criticism which in the necessary absence of the theatrical event substitute for’ the text.⁶⁷

Formal performance criticism in the mid-1970s assumed the texts were stable and authoritative, that directors and actors interpret rather than make meaning, and that interpretive authority is located in the theatre, not the study. Two decades later, under the influence of theoretical performance criticism, James Bulman argues for a cultural authority which includes ‘the unpredictable, often playful intersection of history, material conditions, social contexts and reception that destabilizes Shakespeare and makes theatrical meaning a participatory act.’⁶⁸ Love argues that:

Theatrical meaning is not ‘immanent’ in the text but arises from the ‘contextual particularity’ [per Bulman] of performance; these specific contexts of production and performance include the participation of not only actors and other theatre practitioners but of spectators, including performance critics themselves.⁶⁹

This perception of the coalescence of everyone involved insists that this form of Shakespeare is the only way to experience Shakespeare. The concept is absorbed into other theories, as when New Historicists contend that ‘reading is irresponsible unless it imitates

66. Genevieve Love, ‘Shakespeare and Performance’, *Literature Compass* 6, no. 3 (2009): 741.

67. Emma Smith, “Freezing the Snowman”: (How) Can We Do Performance Criticism?, *How To Do Things with Shakespeare: New Approaches, New Essays*, ed. Laurie Maguire (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 284.

68. James Bulman, ed., ‘Introduction’, *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1.

69. Love, ‘Shakespeare and Performance’, 751.

playgoing.⁷⁰ It is difficult to find any academic writing about a space for lay readers within performance criticism, even though it can be argued that socialised reading is an even greater participatory act than performance with its limited interaction between performers and audience. If all components including audience are essential to understanding, the social participation through reading aloud should not be neglected.

Performance criticism and textual scholarship have occasionally complemented each other in their strivings toward the ideal of representing the authority of Shakespeare in a non-illusory and versatile manner through a focus on the theatre for which the plays were originally written and by Shakespeare as he originally intended the plays for that theatre. As the New Bibliographers in the early twentieth century were document-centered in an attempt to recover the original text, the 'new' New Bibliographers in the late twentieth century were stage-centered in an attempt to recover the play as originally performed. Ironically, performance criticism has also 'destabilized any vestigial belief that [the plays] have singular or authorial meanings' as it contends they need to be understood in a performative context.⁷¹

Dutton confirms that the primacy of performance as the most authentic manifestation of Shakespeare's text 'has important implications for our editing and reading practice', and indeed it has had a consequential impact.⁷² Gabriel Egan recognizes that crucial advances in Shakespearean editorial theory were revealed by the expanding awareness of the practices of the early modern theatre.⁷³ Indeed performance criticism has influenced all editions in the late twentieth century, the epitome being the 1986 Oxford edition with Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor as general editors.⁷⁴ The vision of the Oxford edition was to reproduce the plays as they were surely performed in Shakespeare's time and as Shakespeare intended, using what they believe to be the [lost] manuscripts 'which stand immediately behind each control-text'.⁷⁵

Performance is the end to which they were created, and in this edition
we have devoted our efforts to recovering and presenting texts of

70. Berger, *Imaginary Auditions*, xii.

71. Smith, '(How) Can We Do Performance Criticism?', 280.

72. Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship*, 111.

73. Gabriel Egan, *The Struggle for Shakespeare's Text: Twentieth-Century Editorial Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9.

74. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, with John Jowett and William Montgomery, eds., *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

75. William Montgomery, 'Summary of Control-Texts', in *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, 145.

Shakespeare's plays as they were acted in the London playhouses which stood at the centre of his professional life.⁷⁶

Performance criticism has also led to the creation of the new Globe Theatre in London in 1995, a reconstructed Blackfriar's Playhouse in Staunton, Virginia, in 2001, and the demolition and reconstruction of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2010, all built on theatrical and historical research and providing both stage practitioners and academics new opportunities for exciting discoveries.

However, in the forward momentum of Shakespeare away from popular culture and into a rarefied milieu, it can be considered that performance criticism itself is elitist in that non-professional provincial theatre is unlikely to be considered for attention, thus the professional metropolitan theatres perpetuate their own highbrow cultural importance. Smith notes that of developments in Shakespeare studies, performance criticism is one of the most undemocratic 'since few critics or students of Shakespeare in performance have direct access to the productions they want to consider'.⁷⁷ Escalating ticket prices contribute to a self-fulfilling elitism.

This thesis does not insist on privileging either a theatrical stage-centric or an academic text-centric approach to Shakespeare, but merely suggests that both approaches exclude the lay reader. The emphases on both performance and academia have silently discouraged lay readers from entering into the texts themselves, disrupting centuries of social enjoyment and intellectual fulfilment.

ESTRANGING READERS

An indication of the early transition away from reading aloud in clubs and circles can be seen in the type of books that were previously written specifically for reading groups soon began to be written for students, such as Odell Shepard's *Shakespeare Questions* and Albert Tolman's two volumes of *Questions on Shakespeare*, both in 1916.⁷⁸ Shepard makes a nod to the Shakespeare clubs but the course of study in his book is chiefly directed to the student in a college course, a new market created by the inclusion of Shakespeare in

76. Wells, 'General Introduction', in *The Complete Works*, xxxix.

77. Smith, '(How) Can We Do Performance Criticism?', 283.

78. Odell Shepard, *Shakespeare Questions: An Outline for the Study of the Leading Plays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916); Albert H. Tolman, *Questions on Shakespeare*, two vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916).

higher education. Logan Pearsall Smith recognizes the transition away from community readers in 1933, *On Reading Shakespeare*: ‘Even more formidable are the barriers which another set of critics have erected between Shakespeare and his readers. Shakespeare’s plays, they tell us, were not written to be read, but acted, and to read them is to miss their true significance and meaning.’⁷⁹ By 1963 in *A Reader’s Guide to William Shakespeare*, Alfred Harbage writes to readers but fully assumes they are reading alone, as indicated when he urges a reader to read aloud to herself.⁸⁰ A rare exception is David Bevington’s 2006 *How to Read a Shakespeare Play* in which he refers to reading groups several times, although he does protest that even though ‘reading a play out loud in a reading group can bring the characters and the dialogue to life, actually being in a production is even better.’⁸¹

In the 1992 book, *Which Shakespeare?*, the authors provide guidance to students, instructors, actors, directors or general readers on which Shakespeare edition to use. Recalling the nineteenth century when a complete new edition was published on an average of every six weeks for a century, it is significant that *Which Shakespeare* reviews only five collected works editions.⁸² In less than a hundred years, the lay reader market has been significantly diminished, perhaps virtually destroyed.

The often esoteric studies of the academy do not reach to the general reader: New Bibliography, Marxism, Cultural Materialism, New Criticism, Structuralism, Post-structuralism, Deconstruction, New Historicism, New Textualism, ‘new’ New Bibliography, et alia, come and go unnoticed by non-specialists. Shakespearean criticism in the twenty-first century is confined to academia, having removed it from the general public, while the popularity of actors who denounce reading Shakespeare also exerts a negative influence on readers. Academia and actors simultaneously distance the lay person from the text while interpreting the same text from their respective positions. The influence of Shakespearean actors has had a particularly consequential impact on lay readers because it reaches out to the community through the popular culture of celebrity

79. Logan Pearsall Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare* (Chautauqua: The Chautauqua Press, 1933), 22.

80. Alfred Harbage, *A Reader’s Guide to William Shakespeare* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), 8.

81. Bevington, *How to Read a Shakespeare Play*, 1.

82. Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, 167. Ann Thompson, et al., eds., *Which Shakespeare? A User’s Guide to Editions* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1992). The five collected works reviewed are *The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Alexander (London: Collins, 1951); *The Pelican Shakespeare*, ed. Alfred Harbage (New York: Penguin Press, 1969); *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*, ed., Sylvan Barnet (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972); *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974); and *The Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, with John Jowett and William Montgomery (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

film and theatre. A person might consider reading Shakespeare in a group but views an online video from the Royal Shakespeare Company in which Ian McKellen states: ‘Forget Shakespeare as something you learn in the classroom. Shakespeare belongs not on the page (his words are on the page for the actors to learn) but Shakespeare belongs on the stage.’⁸³ McKellen assumes a person’s only introduction to Shakespeare is in school, indicating how far from memory the remarkable history of reading Shakespeare in family and community has been displaced. McKellen makes a somewhat sardonic statement in his insistence that the words on the page are for the actors—the actors are allowed to read the play. The implication is that the rest of us must go through these interpreters, the actors, to access Shakespeare’s words because we cannot, for some reason, understand them fully on our own. This exemplifies an attitude that inhibits adults from establishing or joining new Shakespeare reading groups today.

There is irony in the situation that when literature—and with it Shakespeare—was part of the social structure and thus trivialized and neglected in the universities, it seemed to enjoy a more secure social status than it did when it finally became part of the curriculum. Graff’s summation of the condition that occurred when literature was finally engulfed by the universities is coincident with the transition of Shakespeare away from the community readers:

The subsequent rise of literature as a college subject with its own departments and programs coincided with the collapse of the communal literary culture and the corresponding estrangement of literature from its earlier function in polite society, where it had been an essential instrument of socialization.⁸⁴

This thesis prompts a renewed acceptance and encouragement of today’s general readers, especially adult community readers, a group that has had little to no outreach from academia or theatre for years. Regarding twenty-first-century scholarship on Shakespeare as a literary dramatist, Erne leans toward a renewed acceptance:

We need to take seriously the editorial and critical repercussions of a Shakespeare who is becoming an increasingly plausible alternative to the one we have long believed in, a Shakespeare whose plays led a double existence

83. Ian McKellen, ‘Stand Up for Shakespeare’ video, <http://www.rsc.org.uk/sufs>, <http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/how-our-work-makes-a-difference/stand-up-for-shakespeare/video.aspx>.

84. Graff, *Professing Literature*, 20.

and were intended by their author to lead a double existence, not only on stage but also on the page. . . . Instead of chasing a play's unattainable early modern performance, we may therefore want to focus our attention on the readerly specificity of Shakespeare's early modern play texts.⁸⁵

Building on Erne's contention that Shakespeare also wrote to be read, as well as the long and prevailing history of community reading groups, it would not be misdirected to champion a return of Shakespeare to a populist cultural field and to stimulate a renewed interest in a readerly attentiveness to the plays. There is a perceptible movement to this effect, and support is growing for a reanimated popular approach to the Shakespearean works outside the performance space of festivals.⁸⁶ This is not to disparage or displace academic criticism or theatrical performance, but to restore the impact of a literary work that has been shown throughout its history to provide intellectual satisfaction, cultural inclusion and social bonding for a great variety of people. The development of Readers' Editions of the plays is a contribution to this incipient renewal of people reading Shakespeare aloud in community and a tacit statement of belief that Shakespeare may have intended the plays to be read. The editorial guidelines for this very specific public segment are outlined in the following chapter.

85. Erne, 'Shakespeare for Readers,' in *Alternative Shakespeares* 3, 93.

86. One small indicator of a resurgence in Shakespeare reading groups can be found on Meetup.com, an international site for creating community in one's neighbourhood. As of this writing, dozens of Shakespeare reading groups have been organized across the United States, as well as in London, Dublin, Zurich, Abu Dhabi, and Canberra, with more groups being created weekly.

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE DEVELOPMENT OF READERS' EDITIONS¹

Since we do not *know* what Shakespeare wrote,
someone has to *decide* what Shakespeare wrote,
on the basis of the evidence available at a particular time.

Editors are the people who decide.

GARY TAYLOR, 1986

Michael Hunter speaks directly to the purpose of this chapter in asking, ‘What is an edition for? The answer surely is that it has to provide something that would not otherwise be available.’² An edition specifically edited and designed for adults reading Shakespeare aloud in community is not otherwise available and consequently is the practical aspect of this thesis—modern Readers’ Editions. This chapter clarifies the editing guidelines for this unique series, the needs of which are founded on empirical research of several different reading groups over the course of almost fifteen years. Members of these groups range from 9 to 85 years old (although the majority are between 30 and 75), male and female, a broad range of occupations and interests, and group size ranges from 6 to 40 members. The time structures and reading formats vary, although reading is always in a circle. One monthly group reads an entire play aloud in one evening with some time for discussion, and the evening includes a pot-luck supper with two rules: dessert is not allowed until the end of Act 3, and everyone must take home their own leftovers. A different monthly group meets in a bookstore after hours and reads the play very briskly without stopping for stage directions, discussion or breaks, then retires to a pub to exchange views. Another group

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1. A prototype print edition of a Readers’ Edition, *The Comedy of Errors*, is provided with this thesis.
 2. Hunter, *Editing Early Modern Texts*, 36.

meets weekly for two hours with some discussion, generally reading an act per week, while another weekly group runs a two-hour guided close read with a great deal of discussion. Some groups hold additional meetings in preparation for an upcoming film or stage performance where a play is read either straight through over the course of a weekend or in selected segments with discussion. Another group reads an entire play each New Years' Eve with pertinent food, drink and costuming. Some groups are private, meeting in someone's home, while some are public and meet in a library or theatre bar or other appropriate venue.

Direct observation and participation in these groups, as well as questioning other groups across the country, has led to the development of these Readers' Editions. Over the years certain design and editorial attributes have been requested by readers or group leaders. These include such elements as larger type for easier reading; every line numbered to facilitate referencing for discussion; charts of lines per character for apportioning parts; brief character descriptions for assigning roles; pronunciation guides for names; glosses easy to find at a glance; deletion of unnecessary glosses; a map of places mentioned in the play; motifs to be aware of; pertinent notes that alert readers to threads that reappear, motifs that tie a play together, or passages that particularly reward close attention; and various other details to assist non-expert readers. The intent is to provide a heuristic experience for the community reader, as opposed to a didactic experience for students.

Kastan argues that not only such 'vulgar' material considerations as design, format, layout, typeface, even paper, become 'part of the text's structures of signification', but that literature exists 'only and always in its materializations, and that these are the conditions of its meaning rather than merely the containers of it'.³ Empirical evidence reveals that not only *what* is offered on the page but *how* it is visually offered actively shapes its intelligibility. The Readers' Editions are meticulously shaped for community readers in the knowledge that the presentation of the play on the page as well as its accompanying apparatus can be essential to a new reader's level of comfort and apprehension.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF EDITING AND EDITIONS

As John Jowett plainly states, the question is 'not whether to edit, but how to edit'.⁴ Every text of Shakespeare, including the original quartos and folios, has been mediated by agents

3. Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*, 5, 4.

4. John Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 113.

other than the playwright. The editorial treatment of Shakespeare depends on the kind of edition to be produced, which presumes an acknowledgement of different editions for different users—the variety of users requires a variety of editions. It may seem obvious at this point in history that it is neither desirable nor attainable to create a definitive edition that accommodates all users, but Stanley Wells recently complained: ‘There is, as I constantly but with little success try to persuade publishers to acknowledge, no such thing as a definitive edition.’⁵

Leah S. Marcus is concerned that most editions of Shakespeare are ‘too uniform, too much alike, too often geared to the same audience’ and that instead of expecting ‘an infinite array of textual and dramatic possibilities’ to unfold within one version, a greater range of focused editions should be encouraged.⁶ Wells agrees that plays can be properly edited ‘in different ways to suit different readers.’⁷ Jowett also concurs that ‘no single format can meet all needs.’⁸ Because it is not possible to have an unmediated Shakespearean text, all we can do is choose which mediator or type of mediation we would like to use for a particular purpose. Various editions executed with different orientations would each be the best edition possible to a specific group of users.

John Pitcher describes the process by which he arrived at his editorial stance that what may seem obvious to an editor may be obscure to a reader. He argues that it is necessary today to provide fuller and more elaborate illumination of the text than that to which scholars have been accustomed. For example, when Posthumous in *Cymbeline* refers to Dian and a boar in his volatile speech, Pitcher at first felt it would be impertinent to note that the references indicate the inverted order, virgin and beast, yet student papers and even discussions with peers at Oxford convinced him that ‘this trust in the obviousness of things was misplaced.’⁹ This trust is even more misplaced when editing for lay readers for whom it is essential to make what is unfamiliar seem familiar, to be explicit for those readers who feel they lack the skills or resources to interpret for themselves or even to recognize significant

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5. Stanley Wells, ‘On Being a General Editor’, in *Shakespeare Survey 59: Editing Shakespeare*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 48.
 6. Leah S. Marcus, ‘Editing Shakespeare in a Postmodern Age’, in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 142–43.
 7. Stanley Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare for the Modern Reader* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 78.
 8. Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text*, 163.
 9. John Pitcher, ‘Why Editors Should Write More Notes’, in *Shakespeare Studies 24*, ed. Leeds Barroll (New Jersey, London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 58.

moments, threads of implication, or symbolism. Many lay readers have had little exposure to historical or social contexts that aid understanding of what an academic might consider to be 'obvious' text. At the same time there are academic issues that a lay reader is generally not interested in, such as arcane textual variants or parallels in the texts of contemporaries of Shakespeare, such as Spenser or Sidney.

There are various types of specialist editions. A *type facsimile*, popular before the photographic process was developed, emulates the unamended original on a printing press in a new type setting, warts and all. The most faithful to an original is a *photographic reprint facsimile*, although it can truly represent only the one original that is actually photographed or photocopied.¹⁰ A *diplomatic* transcript does not attempt to visually mimic the original but does reproduce the exact spelling, punctuation and capitalization in a new type setting, a type of edition that Wells claims is truly suitable only for a few.¹¹ A *bibliographic* edition is concerned with the details, problems and comparisons of the printed texts including the typography, layout, paper and binding. A *variorum critical commentary* is not a work of textual scholarship, but a collection of various critical responses to the text; occasionally a variorum appears separate from the text itself since the text of a variorum is inherited from some other authority. A *parallel-text* edition provides two or sometimes all three texts of a Shakespearean play to be read and analysed side by side.¹² A *critical* edition is generally defined as one which does not reproduce a text already in existence but is developed by a textual critic or team of critics who establishes an authoritative scholarly edition based on research in palaeography, typography, bibliography, criticism and editing, as well as some issues of the material object such as format and imposition.¹³ A *non-critical* edition might present a version of the text with only minimal textual involvement by the editor or a cheap-print edition for non-specialists which can include extensive apparatus for students or avid armchair readers. Outside of these main versions are *niche* editions such as art volumes, miniatures for collectors, actors' editions, fetishistic editions, and numerous

10. Randall McLeod, in a late twentieth century movement, believed the reader who surrenders 'the beholder's share' of the original text to editors 'forgoes something essential to aesthetic and historical experience' in 'Un "Editing" Shakespeare', 38.

11. Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare*, 63.

12. See Bernice W. Kliman and Paul Benjamin Bertram, eds., *The Three-text Hamlet: Parallel Texts of the First and Second Quartos and First Folio*, 2nd ed. (Brooklyn: AMS Press, 2004).

13. David C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 347.

digital versions with various features such as hypertext or live action.¹⁴ There are no modern editions specifically designed for adults reading aloud together.

READERS' EDITIONS¹⁵

Today's growing congregation of non-academic adult Shakespeare readers is reminiscent of the Victorians who attended readings of Shakespeare both private and public in a desire to participate in 'a larger intellectual movement.'¹⁶ Just as the Victorians' readerly involvement with Shakespeare, their admiration of his complexity and acuity, their delight in his wisdom and their unfaltering recognition of the works are credited with the active contribution to his status in the nineteenth century, so can today's readers be instrumental in a resurgence of popular esteem for Shakespearean works. Most people recognize that Shakespeare is part of our shared history, and thus becoming familiar with reading the works increases one's self-confidence and inspires a pride in a cultural resonance that lasts a lifetime. The pleasure of the reading in community is no small factor in a group of this sort, which is enlarged by the stimulus of others' minds in the discussions of the plays. It is the desire to facilitate and broaden this experience that guides the development of the Readers' Editions.

Kastan's remark represents a prevailing attitude toward lay readers: 'Reading an edited text is a remarkably convenient way to engage the play, especially for students who, however naively, merely want to read it.'¹⁷ Even more 'naive' are non-academic community readers who, in truth, do 'merely' want to read the play and find great contentment therein. With more than a decade of experience in working with adult non-specialist readers, the need for an edition specifically for this market has become evident. The Readers' Editions proposed here present Shakespeare in a new way for a new readership. Margaret Jane Kidnie recognizes

14. Neil Freeman's *The Applause First Folio Editions of Shakespeare in Modern Type* (Vancouver: Folio Scripts, 2001) are diplomatic editions with original punctuation and capitalization in the belief that Shakespeare provides clue for actors in the accidentals; every verso is blank for actor and director notes. *A Frankly Annotated First Folio Edition* by Demitra Papadinis (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010) focuses on sexual innuendos to the point where every play is effectively turned into pornography.

15. The Readers' Editions use CreateSpace.com, owned by Amazon.com, Inc. A PDF file of the interior and a separate PDF of the cover are uploaded to one's account. Upon approval, which can take up to twenty-four hours, a physical and digital proof is produced. Upon acceptance of the proof, the book is available worldwide on Amazon.com and also available for bookstores to purchase at bookstore cost. Retail cost is set by the account holder. When ordered, CreateSpace prints the book on demand, ships it, and deposits money into one's bank account. Account holders can order unlimited copies of their own books at cost, which is about \$2.50, plus shipping.

16. Ziegler, 'Women and Shakespeare', 215.

17. David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare After Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 69.

that, 'Scripts exist as texts—as words on a page—and so rely entirely on printed or written conventions to convey meaning to a reader.'¹⁸ The Readers' Editions propose to facilitate the process of conveying meaning to a reader and to make the unfamiliar familiar. The guiding principle is in accord with Barbara Mowat's argument that within the necessity of responsibly edited texts, the editor should defer to the needs of the reader, not of the author.¹⁹

The Comedy of Errors, a printed copy of which is included separately with this thesis, was chosen as a prototype for a Readers' Edition for these reasons:

- It is short and thus efficient for constant experimentation with ideas of layout and design. As H. H. Furness wrote regarding his experimentation with various typefaces, sizes and formats of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1869, his first variorum edition: 'Eight times did I remodel the first twenty pages of that volume. As it now stands, it seems a task of no special difficulty, but no one who has not tried it, can imagine what entanglements impeded me at every step.'²⁰
- Original speech headings and stage directions are manifestly corrupt in this play and confront the editor with difficult decisions and solutions that can be applied to other plays.
- The variety of verse and rhyme forms allows for experimentation of formatting to visually clarify the text.
- There is no quarto, thus a certain layer of complex decisions are removed, allowing a foundation of guidelines to be developed before adding the folio versus quarto decisions.
- The play is unfairly dismissed as a silly farce, challenging the editor to devise methods to subtly encourage a reader's explorations of the rich layers and intricate thoughts, as well as to encourage community discussion.

ISSUES OF EDITING

When making the text transparent and clean for community readers reading aloud, it is not useful to go as far as Steven Urkowitz delightfully envisions: a loose format, magazine-style sidebars with discussions of textual variants or antecedent texts, 'treats in the margins'

18. Margaret Jane Kidnie, 'The staging of Shakespeare's drama in print editions', in *Textual Performances: The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama*, eds. Lukas Erne and Margaret Jane Kidnie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 158.

19. Barbara Mowat, 'The Problem of Shakespeare's Text(s)', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 132 (1996): 26–43.

20. H. H. Furness in a letter to C. M. Ingleby, 1871, quoted in James M. Gibson, *The Philadelphia Shakespeare Story: Horace Howard Furness and the New Variorum Shakespeare* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1990), 61.

such as costume design or diagrams of movement, portfolios of images to help readers visualise stage action, political and theatrical history, and other features that might showcase ineffable beauties, 'the wildly imaginative irreverancies' and 'intractably irreconcilable multiplicities' of Shakespearean content.²¹ The totality of that vision remains for another edition.

The general editorial guidelines for the Readers' Editions are outlined below, based on what personal experience shows to be most useful for the expected demographic.

APPARATUS

The typical apparatus of a scholarly text includes general information about the author and the text, a rationale of the edition, the foundation of the text, facsimiles of the original when possible, the source material in detail, explicit history of the composition of the work, the editorial methods used, arguments for the presentation, collation variants, a publication history, its critical reception, a staging exploration, theatre history, a glossary and annotations. The 2011 Norton Critical Edition of *Antony and Cleopatra* is 378 pages, only 108 of which is the play text. Hunter declares that 'the apparatus is one of the most crucial parts of an edition, codifying and encapsulating for the reader's benefit all the research that the editor has done to make sense of the text at both a general and a specific level.'²² Hunter, however, is considering academic readers, not lay readers, as lay readers are rarely concerned with the editor's research. Taylor recognizes this issue in his comments that a critical edition with apparatus, 'the proper object of a scholar's labour, will be used by "critics"; it should not be confused with a mere "popular or reading edition".'²³

The only apparatus provided in the Readers' Editions is what pertains to the interests of community readers in a reading circle. Because most of the new Shakespeare reading groups are comprised of people unfamiliar with reading the text aloud, the Readers' Editions provide some tips on reading, on understanding the important difference between thee/thou and you, verse versus prose and rhyme, and pertinent details specific to the play, such as motifs and themes. Each play book includes a map and a dramatis personae similar to that created by Alfred Graves in *The Shakespeare Reading Circle*, as described in chapter

21. Steven Urkowitz, 'Brother, can you spare a paradigm?', *Critical Survey* 7, no. 3 (1995): 297–98. Personally, this would be a splendid vision to actualise.

22. Hunter, *Editing Early Modern Texts*, 92.

23. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 254.

six, that provides not only character names but also their acts and scenes and very brief descriptions of the main characters, where germane, for casting purposes. The back matter of each book includes a list of questions to instigate group discussions, as has been shown historically in chapter six to be a popular attraction, plus a chart similar to those of T. J. King showing how many lines per character per scene so reading parts can be divided as equally as possible.²⁴ Readers' Editions also include minimal commentary relevant to readers' interests such as connections, symbolism, motifs and foreshadowing. It is expected that the Readers' Editions will vary in the elements within this limited apparatus, but they do not aspire to replicate what already exists in scholarly editions.

Contrary to contemporary editing theory, the Readers' Editions of *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello* are unabashedly conflated as community readers typically operate on the principle that if it is Shakespeare, they want to read it; they are not aware of today's trend to print the multiple versions as multiple texts.²⁵ Community readers are generally not aware that—amongst the academy—whilst A. C. Bradley's perceptions on Shakespearean tragedy 'are still respected, his critical premises are not.'²⁶ They are not aware that the New Bibliography has been largely discredited and is out of fashion or that it even existed, that close reading is often disparaged, nor that a modern facsimile of a text in a library today 'misrepresents the unstable reality of the book.'²⁷ Certain aspects of these and other important critical issues may eventually filter down to lay readers, but in general they simply enjoy reading the plays aloud together and exploring the text and issues on their own critical terms. Scheil's research into the numerous records of the Women's Clubs indicates that those readers, as

24. Thomas J. King, *Casting Shakespeare's Plays: London actors and their roles, 1590–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 96–257.

25. A conflated or constructed text comprised of lines from both quarto and folio when available is one that many scholars consider to be a text that Shakespeare himself never wrote or imagined and that quarto and folio texts represent distinct and coherent versions of the play—and of our ideas of Shakespeare—that should not be combined. The academic trend today is to present *King Lear* as not one play but two, as also *Othello* and a three-text *Hamlet*. As early as 1725 Pope included alterations between texts, as did Granville-Barker in 1927, *Prefaces to Shakespeare: Hamlet* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd., 1927) and Madeleine Doran in 1931, *The Text of King Lear*, vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1931). Editors Gary Taylor and Michael Warren edited *The Division of the Kingdoms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) in which some claim a new orthodoxy of non-conflated editions was established. See also Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993), 255, in which they argue that, 'As a result of this multiplication, Shakespeare studies will never be the same'.

26. John Bayley, *The Character of Love: A Study in the Literature of Personality* (New York: Collier Books, 1960), 43.

27. Stephen Orgel, 'What Is an Editor', in *Shakespeare Studies 24*, ed. Leeds Barroll (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 26.

today's, expect Shakespeare to provoke 'debate and discussion rather than passive reading'.²⁸ It is this debate and discussion that not only excites the mind but engenders community and should not be deemed the exclusive province of scholars or actors.

MODERNISATION OF SPELLING

The aim of modernisation for the community reading group is to remove some of the strangeness of an early modern text, making it more accessible to readers who might feel alienated by unfamiliar writing or spelling conventions. Although it would dismay the New Bibliographers to see the spelling modernised, the focus of the Readers' Editions is clear communication with regularised spelling while maintaining the richness of the original language when possible. As David Bevington observes, the decision of whether to edit in modern or old spelling or to adopt a compromise 'is still an unresolved issue in the academy', and it should not be expected that all editions be entirely consistent.²⁹ Brian Parker recognizes an important factor for readers in that 'the subjective relevance and the objective pastness of Shakespeare are both involved in his significance for us'.³⁰ In the Readers' Editions, there is an eclectic combination of modernising elements that straddle a community reader's desire to understand the text while at the same time remaining conscious of the pastness of the text, thereby maintaining the connection between author and reader across four hundred years. This guideline informs the spelling: When the original words are similar and familiar to today's and the choice does not interrupt the metre, there is no question of regularising the spelling, as in changing *countrie* or *courtrey* to *country*. At the same time, the Readers' Editions walk a fine line between updating some words such as *vilde*, *murther*, *corse*, and *parfit* so as to remove stumbling blocks for lay readers, while leaving those that provide flavour without confusion, as *infortunate*, *mushrump*, *porpentine*, *my self*, aided by a simple gloss when necessary. A trickier decision relates to homonyms such as *travel/travail*, *metal/mettle*, *antic/anticke/antique*, or *moth/mote*, each of which must be determined individually in context. Wells reminds us, 'There is no moral superiority in belonging to the class of readers best served by an old-spelling edition'.³¹ As the Readers'

28. Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, 38.

29. David Bevington, 'Modern spelling: the hard choices', in *Textual Performances: The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama*, ed. Lukas Erne and Margaret Jane Kidnie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 144.

30. Brian Parker, 'Richard III and the Modernizing of Shakespeare', *Modern Drama* 15, no. 3 (1972): 322.

31. Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare*, 14.

Editions are American texts, modernised words follow American spelling rules.

ACCIDENTALS

'Accidentals' (as opposed to 'substantives') were defined by the New Bibliographer W. W. Greg as the semantically insignificant textual elements that supposedly can be altered without altering the meaning, such as capital letters, punctuation, diacritical marks, italics and even general typography; substantives are readings that directly communicate the author's meaning. Accidentals have been in dispute since the eighteenth-century, as discussed in chapter three. Many scholars argue that these elements cannot be considered accidental, and some believe them critical.³² The Readers' Editions methodology in various accidentals is outlined below.

PUNCTUATION

One small example of a historical change in attitude towards certain punctuation is evident in exclamation marks in *The Taming of the Shrew*: the 1623 First Folio uses not one, but the 1864 Globe edition adds 221 exclamation marks. Most editions today have somewhat fewer of these marks than the Globe edition but invariably more than the folios or quartos. The Readers' Editions are quite conservative, following the folio punctuation as much as possible and allowing the text itself and the situation to indicate to a reader how emphatic the vocalising should be, agreeing with Wells' argument that the aim of punctuation should be to give the reader 'such pointing as is essential to intelligibility without attempting to impose on the text interpretative nuances and directions.'³³ The other extreme is Taylor's insistence that Shakespeare never punctuated his manuscripts nor used capital letters at the beginnings of sentences or verse lines; consequently, Taylor sets the entire play of *Macbeth* with absolutely no punctuation and few capitals, allowing readers to 'decide for themselves how to interpret the words.'³⁴

32. See chapter three regarding the attitude toward punctuation. In 1911 in *Shakespearean Punctuation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), Percy Simpson promoted the hypothesis that 'play-house punctuation' directs the actors how to speak. John Dover Wilson in his New Bibliographers work turned Simpson's hypothesis into a discovery that is still followed by some today, as in Peter Hall's *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players* (London: Oberon Books, 2003) and Freeman's *Applause First Folio*. Bruce R. Smith maintains that semicolons and colons say nothing about logical relationships between parts of speech but signal breathing spaces, 'Prickly Characters' in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David M. Bergeron (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 34.

33. Stanley Wells, *Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 33.

34. Gary Taylor, 'The Tragedy of *Macbeth*' in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 1170.

The guideline for the Readers' Editions is that punctuation is not only the representation of grammatical structure, but to a certain and limited extent can also represent speech pauses and rhythms of speech. There is no concern in these editions to punctuate for actors' interpretations, but only to help readers both understand the text and speak it in such a way that the other readers in the circle understand the speech. The punctuation is not strictly modernised according to today's grammatical rules, just as the spelling is not fully modernised.

CAPITALIZATION

In the comparison below between a few lines in Act 1.1 of Q1 and F1 *King Lear*, it quickly becomes apparent that the capitals and other accidentals, as well as spelling, were at the time perceived as flexible:

Bast. Neuer my Lord, but I haue often heard him maintaine
it to be fit, that sons at perfit age, & fathers declining, his father
should be as ward to the sonne, and the sonne mannage the re-
uenew. QUARTO 1608

Bast. Neuer my Lord. But I haue heard him oft main-
taine it to be fit, that Sonnes at perfect age, and Fathers
declin'd, the Father should bee as Ward to the Son, and
the Sonne manage his Reuennew. FOLIO 1623

The use of capitalised words beyond the first words of sentences and verse lines has occasionally been proposed as indicators of extra emphasis. The 'bountiful use of capitalized words' in the Everyman series edited by John F. Andrews does not actually follow the folio text but adds more capitals in an attempt to suggest the flavour and perhaps the rationale of Renaissance capitalization.³⁵ The first exploratory versions of the Readers' Edition of *The Comedy of Errors* retained the F1 capitals, but in practical use with readers it was noted that the capitalisation calls too much attention to itself and provides an emphasis that often appears to be arbitrary, thus confusing readers.

In the Readers' Editions, extra capitalisations are limited to entities such as Fate, Death, Time, etc., principally in apostrophes so that a reader can more easily recognize to whom or to which entity a character is speaking.

35. John F. Andrews, ed., *Measure for Measure, the Everyman Shakespeare* (London: J. M. Dent, 1994), xxxvii. In a private email, Andrews mentioned that he would probably not use the capitals if he were to edit the series again.

PARENTHESES

Parentheses are banished by Wells and Taylor from the 1986 Oxford *Complete Works* as 'inappropriate to a dramatic text'.³⁶ But in many cases the folio or quarto parentheses can be integral to a reader's comprehension, especially in Shakespeare's lengthy, complex thoughts. In the example below from the Readers' Edition of *Macbeth*, 1.2.8–21, a lay reader is better able to follow the thread of the conversation when the original Folio parentheses surround the interruptions of the parenthetical thoughts:

Doubtful it stood,
 As two spent swimmers that do cling together
 And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald
 (Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
 The multiplying villanies of Nature
 Do swarm upon him) from the Western Isles
 Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied,
 And Fortune on his damnèd quarry smiling,
 Show'd like a rebel's whore. But all 's too weak:
 For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name)
 Disdaining Fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
 Which smok'd with bloody execution
 (Like Valor's minion) carv'd out his passage,
 Till he fac'd the slave: (MAC 1.2.7–20)

The Readers' Editions retain parentheses for parenthetical thoughts when deemed necessary for clarification, but remove them around vocatives, shown below, as unnecessary and confusing to today's community readers:

You do look (my son) in a mov'd sort. (TEM 4.1.146)
Tell her (Emilia) I'll use that tongue I have. (WT 2.2.51–52)

GLOSSES AND ANNOTATION

When reading Shakespeare aloud in community, it is distracting to hunt for the gloss of an unfamiliar word. Most editions set the material at the bottoms of pages and include longer notes in the back matter. The Bevington collected works sets a line number only when a line includes a glossed word, which is convenient for glosses but not for finding lines for discussion or reviving a reading mid-play. The Barnes & Noble editions, excellent for single readers, include short glosses at the beginnings of lines and longer annotations

36. Noted by Howard-Hill, 'Shakespeare's Earliest Editor', 119.

on the facing versos, necessitating leaving the text regularly. The Folger trade editions set all glosses and annotations on the facing versos. In the Readers' Editions, a format has been specifically developed for reading aloud, a *substitution gloss*: the gloss is a one- or two-word substitutable definition to the right of the line, just an inch or so away from the word itself and able to be scanned while reading the line, as shown below and in Appendix A. Glossed words are noted with a small black dot; occasionally text is paraphrased in parentheses.

IAGO

O Sir, content you.	<i>(don't worry about that)</i>
I follow him, to serve my turn upon him.	
We cannot all be Masters, nor all Masters	
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark	<i>notice</i>
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave	
That (doting on his own obsequious' bondage)	<i>servile</i>
Wears out his time, much like his Master's ass,	
For naught but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd.	<i>dismissed</i>
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are	
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages' of duty,	<i>outward appearances</i>
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,	
And throwing but shows of service on their Lords . . .	

(OTH I.I.43–54)

The short gloss on the right allows new readers to quickly substitute the word while reading aloud and thus carry on with the play, and new listeners can easily substitute the words in their minds if the reader does not.³⁷ This does limit the exploration of the layers of complexity in some words, but research shows that reading circles generally prefer to initially understand the text easily and proceed with smooth readings; enthusiastic and close readers will explore more fully using other resources.

Annotations in a left sidebar are as minimal as possible and phrased more as exploratory notes or questions than explanatory answers.³⁸ Occasional original illustrations are used only when the use of such can quickly enhance comprehension.

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Michael Olmert articulates the importance of the physical appearance on the page in a pivotal example from 1560: 'The Geneva Bible's popularity had everything to do with its

37. Readers remark that the gloss dot, which may feel slightly obtrusive at first, quickly fades in the process of reading.

38. Examples of annotations are shown in Appendix A.

the typography, formatting and design. Linda McJannet recognizes the importance of the visual presentation in the early quartos and folios: 'Making the material text more readable was an important step in creating a drama that has survived both in the theatre and on the page.'⁴¹ McJannet argues that the mimetic features of the page—headers, footers, body—as well as entrances that appear visually on the left and exits on the right can simulate entering and exiting a stage and thus 'assimilate utterance to the human body.'⁴² However, the Readers' Editions limit the visual interruptions on the page as much as possible—all stage directions are on the same left alignment to maintain a visually clean reading space.

VERSE AND PROSE AND SHARED LINES

In some quarto and folio texts the verse is apparently set inappropriately as prose, and modern editors make sure to reset it properly into verse. The Readers' Editions will only reset the text as verse if it is abundantly clear that the prose is simply a mistake, as it appears to be, for instance, in much of *Antony and Cleopatra*. However, prose will not be forced into unmetrical blank verse. Nor will two short lines be arbitrarily set as one shared verse line, as often happens, as shown below. Only unambiguously iambic pentameter lines will be set as shared:

Fig. 3: A clipping from a First Folio facsimile.⁴³

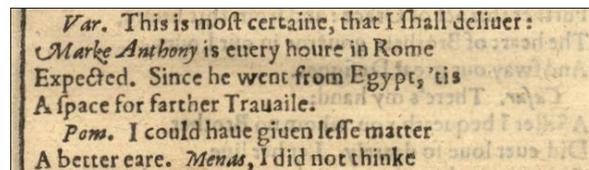
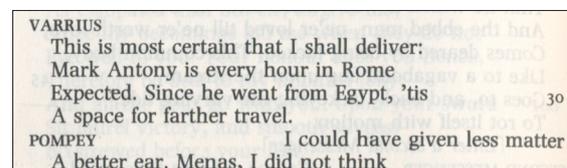


Fig. 4: The same text from The Oxford Shakespeare.⁴⁴



(ANT 1.5.28)

Prose is traditionally set in justified text blocks and provides an instant visual recognition

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41. Linda McJannet, 'Elizabethan Speech Prefixes: Page Design, Typography, and Mimesis' in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David Bergeron (London: Associated University Presses, 1996): 45.
42. *Ibid.*, 48.
43. Internet Shakespeare Editions, University of Victoria, http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/facsimile/bookplay/Bran_F1/Ant/614/.
44. Wells, *The Complete Works*, 1008.

of the form as opposed to verse or songs. In the Readers' Editions, prose is set in phrasings to make it easier for lay readers to understand it and to read it aloud understandably.⁴⁵ The visual distinction of the prose is not as instantly recognizable as when it is set as justified text, but lay readers rarely realize the significance; an understanding of the words is more important. The eye of someone familiar with the critical difference between verse and prose can still recognize the form by the lack of initial capitals.

Below are examples from *Antony and Cleopatra* of a traditional prose setting versus a Readers' Edition phrased prose setting:

ENOBARBUS

Alack Sir, no, her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure Love. We cannot call her winds and waters, sighs and tears: they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report. This cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

ENOBARBUS

Alack Sir, no, her passions are made of nothing
but the finest part of pure Love.
We cannot call her winds and waters, sighs and tears:
they are greater storms and tempests
than almanacs can report.
This cannot be cunning in her;
if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

(ANT 1.2.153–158)

RHYMED VERSE

Shakespeare uses rhyme very specifically. Lay readers enjoy noticing the rhyme and discussing what it might signify in the context of the play. The Readers' Editions lay out certain rhyme patterns to make them noticeable and more comfortable for readers. When the rhyme is clearly signified, readers enter into it with more gusto. Below are examples of rhyme settings from *The Riverside Shakespeare* and from the Readers' Edition of *Comedy of Errors*; both are at actual size (also note the line numbers in both editions).

45. A community reader was heard to say of someone else in the circle, 'I *know* Nigel doesn't understand what he's reading because when he reads, I don't understand what he's reading'.

Fig. 5: A clipping from *The Riverside Shakespeare*.⁴⁶

E. Dro. Say what you will, sir, but I know what
I know:
That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand
to show;
If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave
were ink,
Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.
E. Ant. I think thou art an ass.
E. Dro. Marry, so it doth appear
By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear.
I should kick, being kick'd, and being at that pass,
You would keep from my heels, and beware of an ass.

(COM 3.1.11–18)

Fig. 6: A clipping from the *Readers Edition*, *The Comedy of Errors*.⁴⁷

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS
11 Say what you will, sir,
12 but I know what I know:
13 That you beat me at the Mart
14 I have your hand' to show; *slap marks*
15 If your skin were parchment,
16 and the blows you gave were ink,
17 Your own hand-writing
18 would tell you what I think.
ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS
19 I think thou art an ass.
DROMIO OF EPHEBUS
20 Marry, so it doth appear
21 By the wrongs I suffer,
22 and the blows that I bear.
23 I should kick, being kicked,
24 and being at that pass,
25 You would' keep from my heels, *had better*
26 and beware of an ass.

(COM 3.1.11–26)

Setting rhyme so clearly encourages new readers to become conscious of textual details and to feel empowered by that consciousness. It provides readers with a guide to the rhythmical organization of the text and helps them identify the form and thus the conventions of that form. Malcolm B. Parkes also emphasizes that this type of graphic treatment assists a

46. G. Blakemore Evans, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 122.

47. Robin Williams, *Readers' Edition, The Comedy of Errors* (Santa Fe: The Shakespeare Papers, 2014), 48.

reader 'to recognize the contribution of the stanza form to the "message" of a poem.'⁴⁸ His research reveals how intuitive and ancient this type of layout is in that medieval scribes relied 'exclusively on layout and rhyme when presenting verse for readers, to evoke in them the responses required by a poetic text.'⁴⁹

ACT AND SCENE DIVISIONS

Only one Shakespearean quarto includes any act or scene divisions: the 1622 *Othello* labels Acts 2, 4, and 5 and one scene, Act 2.1. In the 1623 F1, six plays have no division of any kind; *Hamlet* marks Acts 1 and 2; eleven plays are divided into acts but no scenes. The eighteen remaining plays include varying degrees of act and scene divisions: *Antony and Cleopatra* has one act and one scene defined, Act 1.1; *All's Well That Ends Well* has five acts but labels only the first scene in Act 1.

In Wilson's Cambridge edition, as well as in the Pelican, the Arden, and the New Penguin, the divisions have a lack of prominence, whilst the divisions in the Oxford edition are particularly minimal. Community readers, however, have shown that they appreciate the partitioning of the text. Prearranged subsections allow readers discrete points at which to take breaks, ask questions, discuss and clarify or leave. The act and scene divisions also provide spaces for very short synopses that prepare readers to understand the following action. The Readers' Editions not only demarcate acts and scenes clearly, but there is also a progress bar at the bottom of each page so participants always know where they are within the play, as shown below. This is particularly useful in groups that read an entire play straight through as the spirits of flagging readers can be sustained by the promise of dessert at the end of act three, especially if they can visually discern when that might be.⁵⁰

48. Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: Punctuation in the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 100.

49. *Ibid.*, 101.

50. In certain plays such as *Antony and Cleopatra* in which there are many extraordinarily short scenes, adjustments are made in the Readers' Editions to allow the reading to flow smoothly.

ACT 4.3 • 1-22

Act 4 • Scene 3: A street in Ephesus (97 lines)
 [Antipholus and Dromio of *Syracuse* are convinced the town is full of witches and plan to escape on the next boat. They are even more convinced of witchcraft when they meet the Courtesan with whom Antipholus of *Ephesus* dined earlier.]

[*Enter Antipholus of Syracuse, wearing the gold chain.*]

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE [to the audience]

1 There's not a man I meet but doth salute me
 2 As if I were their well-acquainted friend,
 3 And every one doth call me by my name.
 4 Some tender' money to me, some invite me; offer
 5 Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;
 6 Some offer me commodities to buy.
 7 Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,
 8 And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,
 9 And therewithal' took measure of my body. that being done
 10 Sure these are but imaginary wiles,' insidious tricks
 11 And Lapland Sorcerers inhabit here.

[*Enter Dromio of Syracuse with the purse of ducats demanded by Antipholus of Ephesus.*]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

12 Master, here's the gold you sent me for—
 13 what, have you lost the picture' image
 14 of old Adam new apparelled?

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

15 What gold is this? What Adam dost thou mean?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

16 Not that Adam that' kept the Paradise, who
 17 but that Adam that keeps the prison—
 18 he that goes in the calf's-skin' that was kill'd leather jacket
 19 for the Prodigal': he that came behind you, biblical prodigal son
 20 sir, like an evil angel, and bid' you forsake insisted
 21 your liberty.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

22 I understand thee not.

Again we see how Antipholus of *Ephesus* is esteemed in his own town.

Lapland, the most northerly portion of the Scandinavian peninsula, is the legendary home of witches and magicians.

Dromio continues the puns on the leather uniform of the officer who arrested Antipholus of *Ephesus*.

72

Each small dot is a page, and each large dot is the beginning of an act.

ACCENT MARKS AND APOSTROPHES

Lay readers tend to assume that any -ed ending in Shakespeare indicates an accented syllable and so they randomly pronounce it as such in the mistaken belief they are then speaking iambic pentameter, even though they rarely know how to define iambic pentameter. To avoid this confusion, the Readers' Editions maintain the apostrophes for missing letters as used in the folios, and use the grave accent to assure a reader of an accented syllable. This is explained in the front matter with the recommendation that readers should feel free to ignore the marks, but at least they become familiar with what the apostrophes and grave accents indicate, making them feel more comfortable with the text.

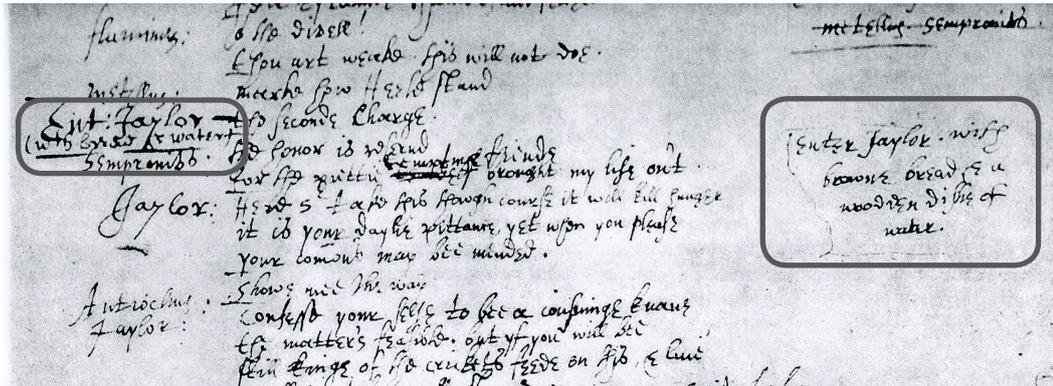
LOCALITY AND STAGE DIRECTIONS

There are no localities specified in the quarto stage directions and only two general ones in the First Folio: the list of dramatis personae at the end of *Measure for Measure* includes 'The Scene Vienna', and at the end of *The Tempest* it states, 'The Scene, an vn-inhabited Island'. Shakespeare provides what we need to know about setting in the dialogue and there is generally no need for precise localisation. McKerrow argues, however, that 'many readers find it far easier to appreciate dialogue if they can place the characters somewhere. Without a locality they cannot *see* them, and if they are not *seen* their conversation carries no conviction.'⁵¹ Fluidity and flexibility in the locations are often preferable to specificity when conceptualizing the dramatic action of a Shakespearean play, thus the Readers' Editions lean toward non-traditional treatments that encourage readers to generate their own possibilities 'in favour of greater openness and multiplicity.'⁵² This must be balanced with the understanding that most lay readers have no experience in translating a play script into staged action and appreciate plausible suggestions for both localities and stage directions. It should be remembered that the virtual performance of a play as read is succinctly described by John D. Cox: It is 'what happens in the minds of readers.'⁵³ The Readers' Editions facilitate that virtual performance.

In extant play manuscripts, the original stage directions are difficult to place precisely. Below is a piece from Philip Massinger's 1630 play *Believe as you List* showing the Jaylor's entrance on the right, circled, as written by the playwright or scribe; another hand on the left, perhaps a prompter, has clarified exactly where he enters:⁵⁴

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51. McKerrow, *The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text*, 12. Italic in original.
 52. Marcus, 'Editing Shakespeare', 137, 142.
 53. John D. Cox, 'Open stage, open page? Editing stage directions in early dramatic texts', in *Textual Performances: The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama*, ed. Lukas Erne and Margaret Jane Kidnie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 178.
 54. Philip Massinger, *Believe as you List*, BM MS Egerton 2828, fol. 20^a, portion of Act V, scene ii, in W. W. Greg, *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Stage Plots, Actors' Parts, Prompt Books, Reproductions & Transcripts* (1931; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), plate 8.

Fig. 7: Circled on the right, 'Enter Jaylor with browne bread & a wooden dishe of water.'
Circled on the left, 'Ent: Jaylor—(wth bread & water)'



It is not simply exits and entrances that need clarification. There are no stage directions for Romeo and Juliet's first kiss, for when kneelers arise from their knees, for many messengers to exit, nor for Lady Macbeth's action when, upon the discovery of the murdered king, Macduff and Banquo both say, 'Looke to the Lady' within ten lines of each other. In the first scene of *1 Henry VI*, Richard's first line, 'Speake thou for me, and tell them what I did', is followed by his father York's line, 'Richard hath best deserv'd of all my sonnes: / But is your Grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?' There are no stage directions to explain what happens here, although the context indicates that Richard has brought in the head of Somerset—does he throw it down, toss it to his father, make the mouth act as if speaking, shake it about, drop-kick it?

The Readers' Edition stage directions clarify the action while encouraging readers to consider the possibilities. The entrances of characters are enhanced when necessary to provide readers with a more comprehensive understanding of who has arrived on the scene and sometimes how they are related to each other, as shown on the following page. This is particularly important in the English history plays.

Although original stage directions have great significance for academics and questions of authority in any given text, they are not so fraught for community readers. Experience does show, however, that community readers do appreciate knowing what is original and what is editorial.⁵⁵ The traditional typographic treatment to distinguish the original text from the enhanced editorial text is to enclose editorial additions in square brackets. This presentation can become visually complex. Below are examples of a seventeenth-century

55. Lukas Erne, in reviewing the prototype Readers' Edition of *The Comedy of Errors*, confirms the need to differentiate Shakespeare's text from editorial, which encouraged a search for a typographic solution.

and a twenty-first-century typographic treatment of stage directions in *Julius Caesar*, Act 1.2, followed by the solution proposed for the Readers' Editions.

Stage directions in the 1623 First Folio:

Enter Cæsar, Antony for the Course, Calphurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, a Soothsayer: after them Murellus and Flavius.

Stage directions in the 2007 *Barnes & Noble Shakespeare* edition, edited by Andrew David Hadfield, with traditional use of square brackets set in roman type, plus bold roman for character names and light italic for both the original and editorial text:

[*Flourish.*] Enter **Caesar, Antony** [*dressed*] for the course,¹
Calphurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius,
Casca, [*and*] a **Soothsayer** [*in a throng of Commoners*];
after them, **Murellus and Flavius.**

The Readers' Edition sets the original text in semibold italic and editorial text in light italic. Square brackets throughout the play enclose all text that is not dialogue:

[*Enter Julius Caesar, Mark Antony dressed in a goatskin for the Lupercalia running course, Caesar's wife Calpurnia, Brutus's wife Portia, the senators Decius Brutus, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, and a Soothsayer; after them, the tribunes Murellus and Flavius, with a crowd of plebeians following.*]

The distinction in the Readers' Edition between original text and editorial text is clear yet unobtrusive. A brief explanation of these visual clues appears in the front matter of each play book, as shown in Appendix A.

EXEUNT AND MANENT

Although Wells has no scholarly compunction about changing *exeunt* and *manent* to English, the Readers' Editions maintain the Latin form.⁵⁶ It can be assumed that new lay readers will eventually read other editions, so by learning simple things such as *exeunt* and *manent*, readers will feel confident when confronted with other versions. Learning a few Latin terms not only strengthens the connections to the original experience without being overwhelming, but it also instils an additional touch of self-esteem in a reader.

56. Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare*, 78.

SPEECH PREFIXES

Speech prefixes are notoriously unstable, and that very instability can reward textual scholars with rich layers of complexity.⁵⁷ But community readers prefer the prefixes to be consistent throughout the play, and they appreciate the names spelled out in full not only so they can easily recognize the parts they are to read, but also to engage with the text more fully. Close observation has shown that readers have a difficult time finding their parts, for example, in the Riverside edition where Salerio and Solanio are identified as *Sal.* and *Sol.* directly within the first lines of their speeches. The Readers' Editions provide names set on their own lines and spelled out in full, as shown below.

CLOWN

312 Look you, the worm is not to be trusted,
 313 but in the keeping of wise people:
 314 for indeed, there is no goodness
 315 in the worm.

CLEOPATRA

316 Take thou no care, it shall be heeded.

CLOWN

317 Very good: give it nothing, I pray you,
 318 for it is not worth the feeding.

CLEOPATRA

319 Will it eat me? (ANT 5.2.312–319)

SHINING PASSAGES

As described in chapter three, as early as 1728 Alexander Pope marked in one way or another 'the most shining passages' for Shakespeare's readers. This may seem a tad prescriptive to academics, but readers have shown they enjoy it, especially new readers to whom Shakespeare can be rather overwhelming; they enjoy a guide that provides a focus and appreciation of the essence of selected text. As lay readers become more experienced, they learn to look for shining passages that are meaningful to themselves individually. In Smith's 1933 monograph written for the Chautauqua Home Reading Series, he notes how he

57. Much has been written about speech prefixes. See for instance Marcus, 'Editing Shakespeare in a Postmodern Age', 128–144; Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare's Modern Collaborators* (London: Continuum, 2008), 39–42; David Bevington, 'Working with the Text: Editing in Practice', in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 167–70; David Bevington, 'Determining the Indeterminate: The Oxford Shakespeare, a review', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (Winter 1987): 501–19.

appreciates when others call his attention to specific bits, to small scenes or lines that may have 'an exquisite touch which might easily escape the attention of the common reader' as he states: 'I quote this passage as but one example among many of scenes in Shakespeare's most familiar masterpieces which a reader—at least a reader like myself—may easily overlook until his attention is called to their interest and significance.'⁵⁸ To this end the Readers' Editions return to the use of a signifier to note particular passages, in this case darker line numbers, as shown below. The signification might indicate lines that are important to the story's undertones, or lines that have a richness of imagery that need an extra moment to absorb, that might prompt a group discussion, that bring together recurring motifs, or that a reader might simply enjoy more fully when focused attention is called to them, as Smith states, above. These editorial choices are based upon almost fifteen years of involvement with reading groups and identifying areas of interest from readers of all levels.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *[to the audience]*

33 He that commends me to mine own content,
 34 Commends me to the thing I cannot get:
 35 I, to' the world, am like a drop of water,
 36 That in the Ocean seeks another drop,
 37 Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
 38 (Unseen, inquisitive) confounds himself.
 39 So I, to find a Mother and a Brother,
 40 In quest of them (unhappy) lose my self.

in relation to

[Enter Dromio of Ephesus; this Dromio, an exact twin of the previous Dromio, lives in this city. He mistakes Antipholus of Syracuse for his own master (the Antipholus who lives in Ephesus), and this new Dromio is mistaken for the one who just left with the money.]

41 Here comes the almanac of my true date:
 42 What now? How chance thou art return'd so soon? (COM I.2.33–42)

EXPLORATORY NOTES AND COMMENTS

'Those who argue for a page unsullied by notes are often self-deceivers, willing to float through their reading on a wave of delusion,' states Alfred Harbage.⁵⁹ Although the Readers' Editions limit notes as much as possible, empirical evidence reveals that most reading circles appreciate a minimum of explicatory or exploratory notes to provide essential clarification and also as points for discussion. The Readers' Editions set these notes directly on the page

58. Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare*, 52, 50–51.

59. Harbage, *A Reader's Guide*, 6.

in which they are relevant because experience also shows that community readers rarely or never look to the front or back of the book for longer notes.⁶⁰

	ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE	
<i>This losing of one's</i>	30	Farewell till then: I will go lose my self,
<i>self, finding one's self</i>	31	And wander up and down to view the City.
<i>transformed, absorbing it</i>		
<i>into another, etc., is a</i>		
<i>major theme in this play.</i>		
<i>Keep an eye on it.</i>	32	FIRST MERCHANT OF EPHEBUS Sir, I commend you to your own content.

[Exit the Merchant of Ephesus.]

(COM 1.2.30–32)

The Readers' Editions employ word origins and meanings from the OED. Additionally, mythological, religious, historical and botanical references from a large variety of resources are examined to connect the lay reader more directly to the original experience. One example of a rediscovered association is in *The Winter's Tale* where King Leontes tells Antigonus, husband of Paulina who staunchly defends her pregnant Queen:

You Sir, come you hither:
You that have beene so tenderly officious
With Lady Margerie, your Mid-wife there,
To save this Bastards life. (WT 2.3.160–63)

In eight contemporary editions of the play, 'Lady Margerie, your Mid-wife' is glossed:

- 1) Used as a term of contempt: but a 'margery-prater' was the cant term for a hen; *Lady Margery* is thus a variant of *Dame Partlet* (75).
- 2) Perhaps equivalent to *Dame Partlet* (line 76), since *margery-prater* is recorded as a slang term for 'hen'.
- 3) A margery-prater was a slang term for a hen.
- 4) *Margery* (a contemptuous term for an uppity woman; "margery-prater" was a slang term for a hen).
- 5) *Lady Margery*: that old hen—a term of abuse like 'Dame Partlet' (line 75).
- 6) A derisive term, evidently equivalent to *Partlet* in line 76.
- 7) A derisive term, evidently equivalent to *Partlet* in line 76.
- 8) In underworld slang a 'margery-prater' was a hen, hence Margery was a

60. If a group has a dedicated leader, that leader might explore other sources, of which there are many excellent ones already available.

contemptuous term for women, especially unruly ones; also a common name among midwives.⁶¹

It is traditional that editors rely on each other. In the Readers' Editions, a personal enthusiasm for the underlying significance of words led to a discovery of a different gloss for *Lady Margerie*: Saint Margaret of Antioch, the patron saint of mothers, pregnancy and childbirth, and to whom the Anglican parish church at the Palace of Westminster is dedicated, founded in the twelfth century and rebuilt by 1583.⁶² Her cult was widespread and more than 250 churches in England are dedicated to her.⁶³ Saint Margaret is usually depicted standing above a dragon or bursting forth from it, which adds the potential for more complexity in Paulina's relationship with both her husband and Leontes and is typical of this type of poetic technique that Shakespeare habitually employs.

CONJECTURAL EMENDATIONS

Taylor argues that the textual situation in Shakespearean works, being at least at some points 'diseased', requires that editors occasionally resort to conjectural emendations that depend on assessments of probability and inferences about intention.⁶⁴ The Readers' Editions take seriously the argument of Marcus Walsh that to avoid a conjectural emendation is 'to practise the art of explaining corrupt passages instead of correcting them.'⁶⁵ At genuine textual cruces, where none of the surviving textual witnesses provides a reading that makes sense, it becomes the editor's responsibility to make sense for the reader. Walsh states that it is also the editor's responsibility for a conjecture to have 'validatable criteria for assessing

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61. 1) J. H. P. Pafford, ed., *The Arden Edition of The Winter's Tale* (1963; repr., London: Routledge, 1996), 51 n159; 2) G. Blakemore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 1628 n160; 3) Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstein, eds., *Folger Shakespeare Library: The Winter's Tale* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1998), 78 n198; 4) Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller, eds., *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare: William Shakespeare, The Complete Works* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2002), 706 n159; 5) Roma Gill, ed., *Oxford School Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale* (1996; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 36 n159; 6) Mario DiGangi, ed., *The Winter's Tale: Texts and Contexts* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 62 n160; 7) David Bevington, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 6th ed. (London: Pearson Education, 2009), 1543 n160; 8) John Pitcher, ed., *The Arden Edition of The Winter's Tale*, 3rd series (London: Methuen Drama, 2010), 216 n158.
62. Arnold Wright and Philip Smith, *Parliament, past and present: a popular and picturesque account of a thousand years in the palace of Westminster, the home of the mother of parliaments*, vol. 1 of 2, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1902), 263. POD reprint.
63. David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 289–90.
64. Taylor, *A Textual Companion*, 60.
65. A. E. Housman, *Manilius's Astronomicon, Book I* (London, 1903), xli, quoted in Walsh, 'Eighteenth-Century Editing, 130.

authorial meanings and authorial readings' to avoid it being viewed as merely individual and subjective.⁶⁶

Shown below is small example from the Readers' Edition of *The Comedy of Errors* of a word that can be conjecturally emended to prevent having to explain a corruption. In the First Folio, the line now numbered 58, below, reads: 'And you said no'. This line appears, however, within a series of thirty-five rhymed couplets and should rhyme with 'hope'. The OED defines 'nope' as 'a knock or blow, esp. one on the head,' first used in print in 1684 but based on 'nolp' used in 1540. This word (in place of 'no') and its definition also make sense of the line following 'nope', as shown below.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

55 Do you hear, you minion,
56 you'll let us in I hope?

LUCE

57 I thought to have asked you.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

58 And you said, "Nope."

DROMIO OF EPHESUS

59 So come help, well strook,
60 there was blow for blow. (COM 1.2.55–60 in this Readers' Edition)

Lewis Theobald in 1733 emended 'hope' to 'trow' to create a rhymed triplet (trow, no, blow), but 'blow for blow' responds well to 'nope'. There probably remains a missing rhymed line following 'blow for blow' but editors have been reluctant to add an entire line to this admittedly puzzling sequence. The Readers' Editions opt for small conjectural emendations in non-critical places to attend to the needs of community readers; these complement and do not replace the essential explications in scholarly editions, such as: 'As the text stands, the pattern of rhyming lines is broken, and lines [55–60] make little sense.'⁶⁷

MISCELLANEOUS

There are infinite other decisions to be made, always opalescent, rarely with discrete answers. Should asides, which are rarely printed in early plays, be diligently marked as the

66. Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton*, 121.

67. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, eds., *Folger Shakespeare Library: A Comedy of Errors* (1996; new edition, New York: Washington Square Press, 2005), 62.

editor perceives them or, as Jowett wonders, be left to 'the reader's interpretative discretion'?⁶⁸ Should 'crypto-directions', as Honigmann calls them, such as Othello's 'Oh, oh, oh' be replaced with an equivalent such as [*Othello cries out in pain*] so as not to 'mislead a modern reader'?⁶⁹ There is the question of conflation of quarto and folio texts, how to interpret foreign words, whether to use oaths and swear words, and more. Comprehensive guidelines will evolve, as they do in every series—based on primary research working with groups of lay readers—and there will be exceptions to the guidelines when it serves the reader.

NEW TECHNOLOGY OF BOOK PRODUCTION

Within this decade Stanley Wells was still able to complain that editors 'followed the all-too-common practice of marking up an already existing text and then having that typed'.⁷⁰ It is now possible to copy and paste the original text of a folio or quarto from which to work, which is the method used for the Readers' Editions.⁷¹

Historically, a determination of nineteenth- and twentieth-century editors—indeed since Edmund Malone in 1780—was to recreate a 'pure' text, the text that Shakespeare intended, no matter how unknowable. This has been interrupted by the acknowledgement of pressures outside the author's control that also shaped the texts, such as printers and compositors, politics, authorities, actors, playhouse practice. Marcus maintains that post-modernism 'famously embraces contamination, hybridity, heterogeneity and self-negation, and its celebration of these things is filtering into editorial practice'.⁷² Intriguingly, this is reminiscent of the Renaissance production process for Shakespeare's plays in which a page correction was made on the press, yet the uncorrected pages were nevertheless bound into the books for sale. It was during the actual stage of printing that censorship and revision took place; Renaissance practice produced editions in which it is unlikely that any copy of a book was identical to any other copy. The concept that a book embodies a perfected state of work was not a Renaissance concept. 'Every copy was unique'.⁷³ Sonia Massai further

68. Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text*, 154.

69. E. J. Honigmann, 'Re-Enter the Stage Direction', *Shakespeare Survey 29: Shakespeare's Last Plays*, ed. Kenneth Muir (1976; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 123.

70. Wells, 'On Being a General Editor', 45.

71. The Internet Shakespeare Editions, supported by the University of Victoria, provides free access to quarto and folio texts of all the plays, <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca>.

72. Marcus, 'Editing Shakespeare in a Postmodern Age', 131.

73. Orgel, 'What Is an Editor?', 23.

explores the understanding that the instability of the text stems primarily from a Renaissance appreciation of the printed text 'as endlessly *perfectible*.'⁷⁴ Thus Renaissance readers almost certainly were reading different texts of the same work.⁷⁵ The Readers' Editions use a print-on-demand service, Amazon's CreateSpace.com, in which the play books can once again return to the Renaissance ideal wherein the text is continuously corrigible:

The early modern printed text was understood and treated as perfectible, and therefore never definitive. Readers were accordingly invited to contribute to its perfection by acting as graceful and patient correctors. . . . its perfection was regarded as an open-ended process.⁷⁶

As reader feedback shows that changes are desirable to improve the experience, those changes can be effected immediately in the Readers' Editions, making the text more usable for a growing market of community readers. This type of production and printing process marks another major technological shift in book production that will impact Shakespeare editions and readers. A recognition of the constructed nature of editorial practice throughout the history of Shakespeare editions can relax the fear of textual chaos that is often discussed in light of today's digital texts with their myriad possibilities for generating reader-edited forms, unstandardised collations, alternate endings, as well as the print-on-demand publishing systems that allow corrected or revised editions into the marketplace with the upload of a PDF file. As Michael Best argues, the general agreement is now that the Shakespearean texts are 'ineluctably multiple' and that 'in many cruces there can be no final "accurate" version.'⁷⁷

Regardless of the new ideas and possibilities, however, Shakespeare's text is essentially Shakespeare's text and will remain so throughout all the permutations now possible and in the future—the basic reality of *Hamlet* remains *Hamlet*. But there is joy in taking advantage of the technological possibilities for various readerships. Embracing change will not fundamentally alter Shakespeare, as has been shown throughout this thesis.

74. Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*, 199. Italic in original. Gabriel Egan contradicts this theory of stop-press corrections in *The Struggle for Shakespeare's Text*, 193.

75. Orgel, 'What Is an Editor', 27.

76. Massai, *Shakespeare and Rise of the Editor*, 199.

77. Michael Best, 'Shakespeare and the Electronic Text', in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text* (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2010), 155.

SHAKESPEARE FOR EVERYONE—AGAIN

Matt Kozusko observes that Shakespearean scholarship 'is increasingly competitive and increasingly sophisticated, addressing minutiae and abstractions and contextual ephemera of little interest to the non-matriculating world'.⁷⁸ It is to this non-matriculating world that the Readers' Editions are directed, providing a familiar and focused textual surface which allows readers to proceed unencumbered and thus empowered in their inclusion into the cultural milieu of Shakespeare. Everyone is capable of reading and understanding Shakespeare's works if they so choose. The Readers' Editions can facilitate that process with an accessible text that also encourages the reader to probe beneath the surface. As Griffiths stated in 1889:

Ordinary intelligence and simple application are the only requirements for a fair grasp of the spirit and details of all Shakspeare's plays. Technical criticism will, in addition, bring out a multitude of side questions of intense interest.⁷⁹

DeNel Rehberg Sedo asserts that 'shared reading is both a social process and a social formation' and is an important foundation for community.⁸⁰ For community readers, a Shakespearean play becomes an activity of discovery and imagination between the text and the reading circle. Shared experience, continuing education, cultural capital, fellowship, language amplification, mental stimulation, social intercourse, laughter, quiet pleasure—there are many reasons to encourage community readers of Shakespeare. One older member of a reading group in Santa Fe, New Mexico, expresses it this way: 'We came because we love Shakespeare. We stay because we love each other'.⁸¹

78. Kozusko, 'The Shakspeare Society of Philadelphia', *Borrowers and Lenders*.

79. Griffiths, *Evenings with Shakespeare*, 3.

80. Sedo, 'An Introduction to Reading Communities', 2.

81. Personal statement from Jan Lurie, reader.

PART IV
CONCLUSION AND BACKMATTER

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

No one ever got smaller by reading a little Shakespeare.

iReadShakespeare.com 2014

In print, Shakespeare is not merely remembered but revived.

David Scott Kastan, 2001

This thesis has placed Shakespeare in a literary foundation so profound that it would be unwarranted to surmise that Shakespeare himself would have had no inkling of his work's potential on the page; we would have to imagine a virtuoso artist completely ignorant of his own gift. This thesis has shown the tremendous history of reading Shakespeare, including a focus on how editors have edited, how technology has affected editions, how editions have affected the common reader, and how readers in turn have impacted Shakespeare's legacy. An advocacy and encouragement for a return to the legitimacy of reading Shakespeare aloud in community is warranted and beneficial. An edited series of Shakespeare plays, the Readers' Editions, specific to community readers can help to facilitate reading Shakespeare aloud amongst non-specialists. With a renewed belief in the great variety of readers, we can expand Shakespeare's place in the world to once again include the idea of a literary dramatist.

One of the most important outcomes of this thesis is the exhibition of general readers who have been integral to the establishment of Shakespeare's place in culture and who did

this by accepting Shakespeare as a literary dramatist. The consequences of this approach to Shakespeare have been far-reaching. A piece of art is propelled to the status of masterpiece by setting it in the public gaze; it can be argued that before the invention of film, theatre did not provide the requisite exposure to elevate the work to masterpiece status so broadly, and that appreciable credit is due to the readers' editions and the readers who participated in creating and perpetuating Shakespeare's place in literature and culture. It is intriguing that, historically, Shakespearean readership has been shown at times to support theatrical performance, but rarely the reverse. Thus it seems legitimate to question the contemporary view of the supremacy of performance.

As early as the eighteenth century, the Shakespeare Ladies Club restored original Shakespeare to the stage and were instrumental in placing his monument in Westminster Abbey; by the nineteenth century reading circles in England were ubiquitous; and as late as the turn into the twentieth century, thousands of Women's Clubs took Shakespeare across the vast nation of the United States. An increasing market of readers in the nineteenth century influenced the rapid growth of supplemental books on a wide array of topics related to Shakespeare's life and works. Books written specifically for reading circles and study clubs were prevalent, indicating that these readers were a well known and lucrative market for publishers. The notable genre of books written by women especially for women speaks to the importance of women readers, some of whom developed into critics and editors in a male-dominated field. A bounty of ephemera in the early twentieth century shows the strength of Shakespeare's popularity during the peak of lay reading groups, when records show a diminishing popular audience for Shakespeare's work on stage. The collectable miniature editions and Shakespearean trading cards and little leather books used as incentives to sell tea, cigarettes and chocolate are material witnesses to the popularity and natural inclusion of Shakespeare's printed works in home and social life, arguably due to the reading environment.

It has been shown that the Women's Clubs inadvertently contributed to the gentrified appeal of Shakespeare's works, at the same time as the works moved into academia and became invested with an aura of complexity and obscurity. Eventually this transition implicitly designated academics as the arbiters of Shakespearean knowledge. A concurrent emphasis in theatre on a return to original performance practice developed in the twentieth century into academic performance criticism, insisting the plays only exist

on the stage; this attitude radiated out to actors and directors who assumed their own control over interpretation. It is not unreasonable to suggest that by the last quarter of the twentieth century these combined authorities innocently succeeded in separating the general community from a direct relationship with Shakespeare through reading.

Shakespeare's removal from the lay community has resulted today in a decreased interest in Shakespeare in general, as evidenced by the numerous programs determined to rekindle an attention to the plays. Unfortunately for potential adult readers, prevailing outreach is youth- and performance-based. The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) has developed several programs, including 'Stand up for Shakespeare' which advocates doing it on your feet, seeing it live, and starting it early, preferably well before eleven years of age.¹ The RSC also develops the 'Learning and Performance Network', the 'Young People's Shakespeare' production series, an 'RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Teachers' to ensure that children explore the plays in action, and the 'Shakespeare Challenge Arts Award' to encourage students ages eleven to fourteen to use 'Stand up for Shakespeare' in their schools. These are wonderful ways for children to be introduced to the works, but it leaves their parents as mystified as ever, as one eight-year-old states in the RSC manifesto: 'My dad says Shakespeare is boring, but he's got it wrong!'² In a related development, in 2008 the American National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) published statistics on the state of 'literary' reading, which comprises novels, short stories, poems or plays: 'Literary reading is on the rise for the first time in the 26 years of the NEA's periodic survey of U.S. adult participation in the arts,' although during the same time, reading in poetry and drama declined.³ This is illuminating given that the NEA initiated a program in 2003 entitled 'Shakespeare in American Communities' in which more than a hundred theatre companies have since brought live Shakespeare to hundreds of thousands of middle and high school students across the nation in an attempt to encourage 'the next generation of audiences in the U.S. to attend and appreciate live theater.'⁴

Both the English and the American programs speak directly to the current focus on youth and performance omitting any encouragement to adults, many of whom are ready

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1. Royal Shakespeare Company, <http://www.rsc.org.uk/sufs>.
 2. Ben at Stokeinteignhead Primary School, *A Manifesto for Shakespeare in Schools* (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2008), 1, <http://www.rsc.org.uk/downloads/stand-up-for-shakespeare-manifesto.pdf>.
 3. National Endowment for the Arts, *Reading on the Rise: A New Chapter in American Literacy* (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 2008), 3, 7. <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/ReadingonRise.pdf>.
 4. National Endowment for the Arts, *Shakespeare in American Communities*, <http://www.ShakespeareInAmericanCommunities.org/about>.

and willing to become personally involved in Shakespeare, or to reading aloud, an activity that many adults rediscover they enjoy immensely. One must wonder what the results might look like if this much attention from the RSC and the NEA is given to cultivating adult reading groups. This thesis champions a future emphasis on a Shakespearean outreach to adults in the form of reading aloud together. It can be argued that adult Shakespeare readers are more likely to pay for expensive theatre tickets and also to instil an interest in Shakespeare to the youth in their own families and communities, as has been seen to happen historically.

While the future of adult Shakespeare reading groups is of course unclear, there are promising signs of increased social activity in general, of which Shakespeare reading groups are a part. As one example, Meetup.com was started in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks to connect strangers in their local communities; the cofounders discovered people physically wanted to be with other people. Meetup has expanded to 171 countries, has more than 18 million members at the time of this writing, and posts almost 170,000 meetup groups where people meet in person, not online.⁵ Anyone can start a group on any topic and find people in their area interested in joining. Dozens of public Shakespeare reading groups around the world can be found already on Meetup.com, and this does not include the private groups that are springing up in neighbourhoods.

For several hundred years, readers were earnestly affected by their inclusion into Shakespeare circles that inspired and challenged them, offered close human discourse among bright minds, conferred upon the members a mantle of intellectualism and culture, and were simply enjoyable. Jenny Hartley draws attention to studies that emphasize and demonstrate 'the importance of reading as a collective phenomenon.'⁶ As shown in chapter six, the National Home-Reading Union, the Working Men's College and the Working Women's College in England each had reading rooms which 'all testify to the educational benefits to accrue from reading together.'⁷ The Women's Clubs built libraries and established public reading rooms across the United States. This benefit of making a space for reading together is not merely educational, but also inspires and engenders friendship and community among neighbours. Robert D. Putnam studies community and social capital, which he

5. Meetup.com, <http://www.meetup.com/about/>.

6. Hartley, 'Nineteenth-Century Reading Groups in Britain', 44.

7. *Ibid.*, 45.

defines as ‘the ways in which our lives are made more productive by social ties.’⁸ He made a surprising finding regarding social circles:

The bottom line from this multitude of studies: As a rough rule of thumb, if you belong to no groups but decide to join one, you cut your risk of dying over the next year *in half*.⁹

Presumably one could argue that reading Shakespeare in community makes you live longer.¹⁰ Kidnie identifies a key reason, within an analogy of reading poetry and musical composition, why lay readers enjoy reading the plays aloud in community with others: ‘Whereas the script offers copious, but not infinite possibility, a theatrical performance offers a singular reading, or instantiation, of the script.’¹¹ The singular instantiation of the script—which is necessarily the director’s or actor’s interpretation and reifies the ambiguous—limits the discussion and the interaction between performers and audience. The text itself offers abundant possibilities for familiar discourse not only between text and reader, but between reader and reader.

Apparently, however, there is academic resistance to community readers, as expressed by Ann Thompson’s comment in a review of *How to Read Shakespeare*:

While I find the idea that non-specialists can and do get a great deal out of the plays, especially in performance, both cheering and worthy of investigation, I would say that this happens *despite* a fairly high degree of difficulty and inaccessibility in the texts. . . . As an editor and critic I continue to find Shakespeare immensely, perhaps increasingly, difficult. I am not at all sure that the way to tackle this paradox is to sweep the difficulties away or to pretend that they are somehow extraneous. But then, as an academic and a person with special training in the area, I am not the intended audience for this book.¹²

Brilliant software is considered ‘elegant’ when it combines ease of use with depth of possibility; this analogy can be applied to reading Shakespeare, also an elegant process. Lay readers do not need to be aware of all the recondite and deep mysteries of the text, nor do they even need to understand every word to enjoy the process, as the empirical evidence of

8. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 19.

9. *Ibid.*, 331. *Italic in original.*

10. It is not insignificant that in personal communication three octogenarians recently and separately declared that their Shakespeare reading group has given them a renewed interest in life.

11. Kidnie, ‘The staging of Shakespeare’s drama in print editions’, 159.

12. Thompson, review of *How to Read Shakespeare*, 484. *Italic in original.*

history has shown. The very recognition that there is more to be discovered is what brings community readers back again and again. Thompson's realization that she finds Shakespeare *increasingly* difficult is evidence of her admirably extensive involvement with the text and her ever-growing appreciation of its limitless capacity. The complexity becomes more obvious the more knowledgeable the reader. However, this view of its supposed inaccessibility to anyone without 'special training in the area' is the quintessence of what caused the transition of Shakespeare out of the community and into academia.

Of course Shakespeare is not easy, but that does not make it beyond the capacity of a basically intelligent person. Learning to read is not easy, riding a bicycle for the first time is not easy, nor is appreciating opera, snowboarding, having a relationship, staying fit, being a good person, learning a musical instrument, graduating. But the process is worth the trouble and the riches so extensive that reading Shakespeare in community should never be discouraged. The implicit insistence that reading Shakespeare is beyond most of us is an attitude shown to be a deterrent to lay readers and a deterrent to accepting Shakespeare as a literary dramatist.

Shakespeare's place in the world was generated by interactions to his work as literature; to deny this for performance or for any other reason is to deny the long history of passionate involvement by readers. The ephemeral quality of a great performance of course has an undeniable beauty in its very evanescence and its interpretations are always provocative, and thus it is a remarkable addition to the experience of the page, but not a substitute. Performance does not vivify the text any more than the text catalogues the performance—the two halves of this single actuality are disparate and disconnected, yet reciprocal. Neither is more authentic than the other. In fact, room should be made for a third completely separate yet complementary arena, an arena for the lay readers who have instinctively viewed and responded to the Shakespearean plays as literary works to be read as opposed to academic texts to be studied. Andrew Murphy recounts the story of a man named Frank Hodges (1887–1947) who reflected on his time as a boy working in a coal mine. Hodges read Shakespeare to an illiterate old man and expressed his own reaction to the process: 'I found it wholly pleasurable work to read aloud. It has the double effect of being pleasant to hear and of impressing itself more clearly upon the mind.'¹³

13. Murphy, *Shakespeare for the People*, 107, quoting Frank Hodges (1887–1947).

A new consideration of the printed texts as literature reopens a practise that embraces a more ecumenical approach to Shakespeare—a return to ‘The Great Variety of Readers’ as proposed by Heminge and Condell in 1623. New areas of study will be opened. The 2015 schedule at the annual conference of the Shakespeare Association of America shows a session on ‘Shakespeare and Book Design’ as it relates to the evolving practices of reading, which could well have implications relevant to this thesis. A workshop on ‘Reading the First Folio Then and Now’ investigates reading practices of seventeenth-century readers and relates them to our own practices; it proceeds from the marginalia of the Meisei University First Folio and could potentially have some pertinent direction. The session ‘Analyse Reader Interactions with Digital Texts’ applies specifically to students and scholars, but that area of research could branch out to include community readers. Textual analysis with a return to the literary characteristics can provide new possibilities for study. A fruitful study might be in a regeneration of reader response criticism with a focus on readers who are not alone and silent but communal and aloud, where the reader’s part in the production of her experience is shared.¹⁴

According to an NEA executive summary, reading literature strongly correlates to active civic participation and greater involvement in volunteer and charity work.¹⁵ As has been shown in this thesis, the Women’s Clubs were active examples of precisely this phenomenon, long before an NEA study. In a time when educators and politicians bemoan the lack of education on and participation in civics, the return of reading groups can have repercussions in sociology as well.¹⁶ Further inquiry would be justified in examining modern Shakespeare readings groups, how they adapt Shakespeare, affect theatre attendance, create community and manifest new directions in Shakespeare studies. What is the effect of Readers’ Editions—and similar series that may develop—on community readers familiarizing themselves with Shakespeare?

Irrespective of what one believes may have been Shakespeare’s original intention in the

14. A sampling of the extensive studies on reader response: Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Wolfgang Iser, *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Jane P. Tompkins, ed., *Reader-Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

15. National Endowment for the Arts, *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America* (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 2008), 7. <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/ReadingAtRisk.pdf>.

16. Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, <http://www.CivicMissionOfSchools.org/the-campaign/civic-learning-fact-sheet>.

writing and publication of his plays, it is nevertheless difficult to imagine that a dramatist of Shakespeare's skill would have been completely ignorant of the readability factor and the potential for immortality of his work. To open scholarship to a new study of Shakespeare as a literary author and all of its attendant implications, however, the value of actually reading the plays by non-specialists must first be accepted. One cannot accept Shakespeare as a literary dramatist if one cannot embrace the plays' potential to be read. It is to be hoped that an awareness of the chronicled evidence of millions of enthusiastic readers who for centuries instinctively embraced the readability of the plays might function as a small part in encouraging further scholarship in that area, as well as a general return to the great variety of readers.

It should be surprising to find anyone objecting to a resurgence in communities of non-experts reading Shakespeare aloud. Critical and scholarly editions of Shakespeare will always be necessary and the prevailing textual theories will always closely shape them, but this should not be to the exclusion of community readers and the sheer pleasure people find in reading Shakespeare aloud with others. David Nichol Smith provides a reminder:

Each age has its own point of view, its own special interests,
its characteristic method of treatment; and no age can ever say
the last word on anything that is a living and life-giving force.
Say the last word on Shakespeare, and Shakespeare is dead.¹⁷

17. Smith, *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, 1.

APPENDIX A READERS' EDITIONS LAYOUT AND FEATURES

The examples below and on the following page display the details of the typographic formatting and design of a Readers' Edition to facilitate a community reading circle. The intricate relationship between form and content is intrinsically connected to use and readership. A printed prototype of this book is also included with this thesis.

*Number of lines in this scene
so readers know how much time to expect.*

ACT 4.3 • 1-22

Act 4 • Scene 3: A street in Ephesus (97 lines)
[Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse are convinced the town is full of witches and plan to escape on the next boat. They are even more convinced of witchcraft when they meet the Courtesan with whom Antipholus of Ephesus dined earlier.]

[Enter Antipholus of Syracuse, wearing the gold chain.]

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE *[to the audience]*

<i>Again we see how Antipholus of Ephesus is esteemed in his own town.</i>	1	There's not a man I meet but doth salute me	
	2	As if I were their well-acquainted friend,	
	3	And every one doth call me by my name.	
	4	Some tender' money to me, some invite me;	<i>offer</i>
	5	Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;	
	6	Some offer me commodities to buy.	
	7	Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,	
	8	And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,	
<i>Lapland, the most northerly portion of the Scandinavian peninsula, is the legendary home of witches and magicians.</i>	9	And therewithal' took measure of my body.	<i>that being done</i>
	10	Sure these are but imaginary wiles;	<i>insidious tricks</i>
	11	And Lapland Sorcerers inhabit here.	

[Enter Dromio of Syracuse with the purse of ducats demanded by Antipholus of Ephesus.]

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

	12	Master, here's the gold you sent me for—	
	13	what, have you lost the picture'	<i>image</i>
	14	of old Adam new apparelled?	

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

	15	What gold is this? What Adam dost thou mean?	
--	----	--	--

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

	16	Not that Adam that' kept the Paradise,	<i>who</i>
	17	but that Adam that keeps the prison—	
<i>Dromio continues the puns on the leather uniform of the officer who arrested Antipholus of Ephesus.</i>	18	he that goes in the calf's-skin' that was kill'd	<i>leather jacket</i>
	19	for the Prodigal': he that came behind you,	<i>biblical prodigal son</i>
	20	sir, like an evil angel, and bid' you forsake	<i>insisted</i>
	21	your liberty.	

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

	22	I understand thee not.	
--	----	------------------------	--

72

A progress bar on each page tells a reader where she is in the play. Each small dot is a page, and each large dot is the beginning of an act.

Headers to find acts, scenes, and lines.

ACT 2.2 • 96–121

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE
 96 The one, to save the money that he spends
 97 in tiring; the other, that at dinner they
 98 should not drop in his porridge.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
 99 You would' all this time have' prov'd,
 100 there is no time for all things.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE
 100 Marry, and did, sir: namely,
 101 in no time to recover hair lost by Nature.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
 102 But your reason was not substantial,
 103 why there is no time to recover.

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE
 104 Thus I mend it: Time himself is bald, and therefore
 105 to the world's end, 'will have' bald followers.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE
 106 I knew 'twould be a bald' conclusion;
 107 but soft, who wafts us yonder?

[Enter Adriana and her sister, Luciana, beckoning. They both mistake Antipholus of Syracuse for Adriana's husband. Adriana berates him for his earlier responses to Dromio of Ephesus. She takes his arm.]

ADRIANA
 108 Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange' and frown,
 109 Some other Mistress hath thy sweet aspècts;
 110 I am not Adriana, nor thy wife?
 111 The time was once when thou, un-urg'd, wouldst vow
 112 That never words were music to thine ear,
 113 That never object pleasing in thine eye,
 114 That never touch well welcome to thy hand,
 115 That never meat sweet-savor'd in thy taste,
 116 Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carv'd to thee.
 117 How comes it now, my Husband, oh how comes it,
 118 That thou art then estrangèd from thy self?
 119 Thy "self" I call it, being strange' to me:
 120 That, undividable, incorporate,
 121 Am better' than thy dear self's 'better part.'

[Antipholus of Syracuse tries to leave.]

Room for readers to write their own notes.

These are ideas to think about. Sometimes they are questions to discuss in a reading group.

Darker line numbers indicate passages that particularly reward close reading and discussion.

Gloss dot.

Gloss (minimal definition): Substitute the gloss for the word with the gloss dot or the phrase enclosed by gloss dots.

Multiple glosses in one line are separated by semicolons.

Phrases in parentheses are explanations rather than definitions.

Phrases in brackets are editorial comments.

There is a lot of the play text on the double-page spread so a reader can see a good deal of the progress at one time.

APPENDIX B

READERS' EDITIONS APPARATUS SAMPLES

The example below and on the following pages displays the type of minimal apparatus in a Readers' Edition that is specific to the needs of community readers.



Motifs and themes to watch for

Shakespeare always uses motifs (repetitive patterns) or themes (universal ideas) to weave a play together. Below are some that you will notice in *The Comedy of Errors*. Perhaps assign a reader to keep an eye out for references of a particular sort and to be responsible for leading a short discussion about that motif at some point. It is worth the trouble to notice and talk about these ideas—it always leads to deeper understanding and appreciation.

Appearance: Every Shakespeare play involves a discrepancy between *appearance and reality*. Besides the obvious discrepancy of the twins being confused for each other, watch for other ways in which appearance (in many forms) is not what it seems.

Family: This play begins and ends with family issues—loss of, searching for, misidentified as, trouble within, reunion of, creating anew. These issues act as stimulation for some of the other themes.

Time: Time is very specific in this play. It is one of only two plays in which Shakespeare sets the play in (sort of) actual time.

Self/new self/metamorphosis: There is a lovely thread of *self*—losing one's self, finding one's self in someone else, being re-formed as another self, etc.

Bondage: Almost every character suffers from some sort of bondage, be it emotional or physical. This bondage unites the characters or offers parallels to each others' situations.

The chain: The chain, which is actually a *carcanet* (*KAR ka net*), threads throughout the play. A carcanet is a choker with a hanging jewel, set with gems and pearls; the word comes from Old French, *carcan*, which is an iron collar used on prisoners.

Gold: Notice how you can specifically track the gold—as money and as the chain—throughout the play. Gold acts to unify and connect everyone.

Money/trade/merchants: Business, money, transactions, trade, merchants, etc., weave throughout the play. Money or the lack of it impacts the lives of most of the characters in some way.

Sea and water: The play begins in water; tears drop into the sea; there are attempts to escape by sea; in the final scene their goods are pointedly taken *off* the boat and they remain on dry land. Water becomes an emblem of separation, of loneliness, of isolation, of regeneration.

Duty: We see various sorts of duty and obligations in this play—between husbands and wives; masters and servants; duties owed to friends and associates, to the state and the church, duty owed to one's self, etc. This is tied in with law and order.

Law and order: From the first scene through the last, law and order is appealed to and complied with.

19

As can be seen on the examples on this page and the next, the explanatory material for each play is similar yet particular to that play.

Verse, prose, and rhyme

You can completely skip this information if you like! But for those of you who might have an interest in knowing the difference between verse, blank verse, prose, and the various sorts of rhyme—and what Shakespeare is telling you by the uses of these techniques—then here is a very brief primer.

VERSE

Most lines of any Shakespeare play have ten (sometimes eleven) syllables; these lines are called *verse*. You can tell when the lines are in verse because every line starts with a capital letter (and has ten syllables). Each line also has a definite pattern of sound, like a heartbeat, with an emphasis on the *bum*:

ba **BUM** · ba **BUM** · ba **BUM** · ba **BUM** · ba **BUM**

Technically, each **ba BUM** is called an *iamb*, which is one *foot* in a line of poetry. Because there are five iambs in each line, Shakespeare's verse is called *iambic pentameter*.

▶ Thou **art** a **Villain** to **impeach** me **thus**.
I'll **prove** mine **honor** and mine **honesty** . . .

This is what forces Shakespeare to put words in an odd order and to add or delete syllables by using accent marks and apostrophes—so they will fit into the rhythm of the line. There can be several peculiarities in an iambic pentameter line (including an eleventh syllable or disrupted meter), but that's basically it for this play.

BLANK VERSE

Blank verse is simply lines of verse that don't rhyme. Most of the text in all the plays is in blank verse.

PROSE

Lines that are not verse are *prose*. That is, prose lines are not limited to ten syllables and they do not have to conform to the iambic pattern of sound. You can recognize prose because the text is *not* capitalized at the beginning of each line. In most books, you can see the prose easily because the lines of text are justified, making prose look like blocks on the page (shown below, left). In this book, I chose to divide the lines by phrases to help make them easier to understand (shown below, right). This creates uneven line lengths but still, the first lines are not capitalized and the lines are not limited to ten syllables.

Prose tends to be less formal than verse; it can change the tone of a scene from madness to sanity, from passion to reason, from heightened thought back to earthiness.

▶ Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude,
this drudge or Diviner laid claim to me,
call'd me Dromio, swore I was assur'd to
her, told me what privy marks I had about
me, as the mark of my shoulder, the Mole
in my neck, the great Wart on my left arm,
that I, amaz'd, ran from her as a witch.

Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude,
this drudge or Diviner laid claim to me,
call'd me Dromio, swore I was assur'd to her,
told me what privy marks I had about me,
as the mark of my shoulder, the Mole in my neck,
the great Wart on my left arm, that I, amaz'd,
ran from her as a witch.

Lines from
The Comedy of Errors.

Lines from
The Comedy of Errors.

Empirical evidence shows that community readers initially appreciate simple explanations and look forward to expanding their knowledge and engagement gradually.

Verse, prose, and rhyme

You can completely skip this information if you like! But for those of you who might have an interest in knowing the difference between verse, blank verse, prose, and the various sorts of rhyme—and what Shakespeare is telling you by the uses of these techniques—then here is a very brief primer.

VERSE

Most lines of any Shakespeare play have ten (sometimes eleven) syllables; these lines are called *verse*. You can tell when the lines are in verse because every line starts with a capital letter (and has ten syllables). Each line also has a definite pattern of sound, like a heartbeat, with an emphasis on the *bum*:

ba **BUM** • ba **BUM** • ba **BUM** • ba **BUM** • ba **BUM**

Technically, each **ba BUM** is called an *iamb*, which is one *foot* in a line of poetry. Because there are five iambs in each line, Shakespeare's verse is called *iambic pentameter*.

Lines from Antony and Cleopatra.

▶ Now **for the love of Love** and **her soft hours**,
Let's **not confound the time** with **conf'rence harsh**.

This is what forces Shakespeare to put words in an odd order and to add or delete syllables by using accent marks and apostrophes—so they will fit into the rhythm of the line. There can be several peculiarities in an iambic pentameter line, including an eleventh syllable or disrupted meter. *Antony and Cleopatra* is full of complex and disrupted meter, so don't worry if the lines don't fall precisely into the iambic pentameter framework.

BLANK VERSE

Blank verse is simply lines of verse that don't rhyme. Most of the text in all the plays is in blank verse.

PROSE

Lines that are not verse are *prose*. That is, prose lines are not limited to ten syllables and they do not have to conform to the iambic pattern of sound. You can recognize prose because the text is *not* capitalized at the beginning of each line. In most books, you can see the prose easily because the lines of text are justified, making prose look like blocks on the page (shown below, left). In this book, I chose to divide the lines by phrases to help make them easier to understand (shown below, right). This creates uneven line lengths but still, the first lines are not capitalized and the lines are not limited to ten syllables.

Prose tends to be less formal than verse; it can change the tone of a scene from madness to sanity, from passion to reason, from heightened thought back to earthiness.

Lines from Antony and Cleopatra.

▶ Truly I have him: but I would not be the party
that should desire you to touch him, for his
biting is immortal: those that do die of it, do
seldom or never recover.

Truly I have him:
but I would not be the party
that should desire you to touch him,
for his biting is immortal:
those that do die of it,
do seldom or never recover.

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