

## Cambridge Introductions to Literature

This series is designed to introduce students to key topics and authors. Accessible and lively, these introductions will also appeal to readers who want to broaden their understanding of the books and authors they enjoy.

- Ideal for students, teachers, and lecturers
- Concise, yet packed with essential information
- Key suggestions for further reading

Titles in this series:

Eric Bulson *The Cambridge Introduction to James Joyce*  
John Xiros Cooper *The Cambridge Introduction to T. S. Eliot*  
Kirk Curnutt *The Cambridge Introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald*  
Janette Dillon *The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*  
Janette Dillon *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Tragedies*  
Jane Goldman *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf*  
Kevin J. Hayes *The Cambridge Introduction to Herman Melville*  
David Holdeman *The Cambridge Introduction to W. B. Yeats*  
M. Jimmie Killingsworth *The Cambridge Introduction to Walt Whitman*  
Ronan McDonald *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*  
Wendy Martin *The Cambridge Introduction to Emily Dickinson*  
Peter Messent *The Cambridge Introduction to Mark Twain*  
John Peters *The Cambridge Introduction to Joseph Conrad*  
Sarah Robbins *The Cambridge Introduction to Harriet Beecher Stowe*  
Martin Scofield *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*  
Emma Smith *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare*  
Peter Thomson *The Cambridge Introduction to English Theatre, 1660–1900*  
Janet Todd *The Cambridge Introduction to Jane Austen*  
Jennifer Wallace *The Cambridge Introduction to Tragedy*

# The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare

EMMA SMITH

## Chapter 3

### Texts

|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Shakespeare's hand                                      | 46 |
| So what did Shakespeare write?                          | 47 |
| Stage to page                                           | 48 |
| Quartos and Folio                                       | 49 |
| Editing as interpretation                               | 50 |
| The job of the editor: the example of <i>Richard II</i> | 53 |
| Stage directions                                        | 57 |
| Speech prefixes                                         | 60 |
| The job of the editor: the example of <i>King Lear</i>  | 61 |
| Texts: where next?                                      | 65 |

### Shakespeare's hand

*The Book of Sir Thomas More*, a play about a riot in London and dating from the early 1590s, was probably never performed and exists only in a hectic and partial manuscript including the handwriting of at least five individuals. It has, however, become significant to Shakespeareans because of the widely held belief that one of the writers who contributed to the manuscript may have been Shakespeare. If this is indeed so, the manuscript provides the only example of his literary work that we have in his own writing. No other contemporary hand-written script of a Shakespeare play exists, and the only samples of his handwriting that we do have are signatures to business and legal documents. If the handwriting scholars call 'Hand D' in the manuscript of *Thomas More* is indeed Shakespeare's, then those leaves of paper offer us something like a holy relic: even the common synecdoche 'hand' for 'handwriting' works to suggest that we are getting something of the physical man himself.

The truth is that the evidence that Shakespeare wrote this part of *Thomas More* is actually rather slight, although many collected editions, including those under the Oxford, Norton and Riverside imprints, now include the speeches as part of the canon. But our *desire* for the manuscript to give us access to

Shakespeare's creative processes as he wields his quill is something that underscores all our work on the attributed plays of Shakespeare – it's the same impulse which drives the perennial interest in Shakespeare's biography. 'Hand D' offers us a fantasy of proximity to Shakespeare, rather as Juliet's statue in Verona offers us a fantasy of proximity to one of his characters (see chapter 1), or source study a fantasy of Shakespeare in the act of composition (see chapter 6). What's more, the passages attributed to Shakespeare in *Thomas More* are admirably poetic and liberal: they offer us a Shakespeare we can be proud of. The play's eponymous hero addresses the rioting crowd who are directing their rage against immigrants, and encourages them to think themselves in the place of their adversaries in a feat of imaginative empathy worthy, we might want to think, of Shakespeare's habitual understanding of different points of view in his other plays. The yearning expressed in the discussion of *Thomas More* for physical evidence of what Shakespeare wrote, for the lost manuscripts underlying the printed texts on which we rely, gives textual studies a sort of elegiac quality – a sense that through new and different editions we are trying to reconstruct something tangible which is forever lost.

### So what did Shakespeare write?

Asking what Shakespeare actually wrote may seem an extraordinary question. After all, we have the plays available to us in any number of printed and online forms. But crucially, all of these have been mediated by different agents other than their author. Because we do not have a manuscript version of any play, we cannot see how much of the printed play we do have was added to or altered by actors, theatre managers, printers, publishers, censors, or others, by design or by accident. There is no 'original' to refer back to: all the texts we have are secondary, or, rather, they take on the status of dubious originals. In what follows I will use the phrasing 'early texts' to refer to those printed versions of Shakespeare's plays published up to 1623, as being the nearest thing we have to an 'original'. But in some cases – *King Lear* and *Hamlet* are important examples discussed in more detail below – we have two different versions of a single play – sometimes with major differences, sometimes with minor verbal divergences – and no way of verifying how those differences relate to what Shakespeare wrote when. This chapter is going to discuss the ways in which this uncertainty can be exhilarating rather than demoralising, and to suggest that looking at the earliest texts of Shakespeare's plays can give us insight into his working methods, into the industries of the theatre and of printing, and into the texture of the drama itself.



We will see that recovering what Shakespeare wrote is an impossibility – a kind of holy grail of textual scholarship. But in the process of examining the means by which Shakespeare's plays have been transmitted to us, both by their earliest redactors and by the recent editors of the texts on your bookshelf, other, more stimulating questions emerge to substitute for the question of what Shakespeare wrote. Rather than striving after this impossibility, modern textual scholarship is inclined to embrace the energy of a more dynamic model of authorship than the singular creative genius writing the good bits of *Thomas More*: an intrinsically collaborative model in which the theatre and the printing house have their own creative input into the plays.

### Stage to page

Often academic books and university or college courses considering the plays in performance use the happy phrase 'page to stage': the order of priorities here is decidedly not that of the context in which Shakespeare wrote. In the Elizabethan period performance, using a manuscript text was the first, primary life of a play, and publication secondary, both in terms of chronology and in terms of commercial and aesthetic importance. We need to reverse the terms and think of 'stage to page' as a way of understanding the conception and reception of Shakespeare's drama. Perhaps our nearest contemporary analogy is for the printed play as 'the book of the film'; something parasitic on the film and something to be read after having seen the film, rather than as an autonomous work of art in its own right. Thus the title-pages of Shakespeare's plays in their first publication almost always allude to the circumstances of their performance. *Love's Labour's Lost* (published 1598) tells us the play is 'as it was presented before her Highness this last Christmas'; *The Merchant of Venice* (published 1600) is advertised 'as it hath bene divers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his Servants'; *King Lear* (published 1608) identifies the printed text 'as it was plaid before the Kings maiesty at White-Hall, upon S. Stephens night, in Christmas Hollidaies. By his Maiesties Servants, playing usually at the *Globe* on the *Banck-side*' – and in all these cases the printed text significantly post-dates the earliest performances. And strikingly, Shakespeare's first entry into print is not with drama, but in the genre of poetry. *Venus and Adonis*, his erotic narrative poem in the popular genre of imitations and translations of the Roman poet Ovid, was first published in 1593 and went through fifteen editions before 1638, far outstripping any of Shakespeare's plays in frequency of republication.

### Quartos and Folio

Introducing some technical terms at the outset can help us to understand the implications of Shakespeare's publication. *Bibliography* – the study of the printed book – has often looked to outsiders to be dry, dusty, and overspecialised, particularly because its vocabulary is so arcane. Not much of this is directly necessary for our discussion. The term *quarto*, sometimes abbreviated in critical discussions to 'Q' (Q1, Q2 etc indicate first, second and any subsequent quarto editions), refers to a small book, measuring about 22 × 16 cm and made by folding a standard sheet of paper twice. This cheap, pamphlet-style format typically sold for sixpence – rather more than the cheapest entrance to the Globe at one penny. It has been pointed out that print-runs of published drama were typically considerably smaller than spectator capacity at the playhouses. The first play of Shakespeare's to be printed in this format is *Titus Andronicus* in 1594. For the record, the most reprinted Shakespeare plays are *I Henry IV* (8 quarto editions between 1598 and 1640), *Richard II* (7 editions), *Richard III* (6 editions); given our own reverence for Shakespeare it's salutary to see that now largely-forgotten plays such as Samuel Daniel's *Mucedorus*, Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, and Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* are all more widely reprinted in the same period than any of Shakespeare's.

The other major format in which Shakespeare's plays were published is in *folio* (F) form. Folio, too, refers to the size of the book; this time the standard paper is folded once to produce a large, expensive book approximately 45 × 32 cm. The First Folio, published posthumously in 1623, is the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays. It includes 36 plays, eighteen of which had not been previously published. The most notable absence from the modern canon of Shakespeare's plays is *Pericles* which is not included. Those which have been previously published often appear in the Folio in substantially different versions, something the book's editors, Shakespeare's fellow actors John Heminges and Henry Condell, attribute to the inferiority of the earliest quarto versions: 'where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious imposters, that expos'd them: even 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 conceived them'. A second edition of the Folio, including some additional plays now not considered to be Shakespeare's, was published in 1632.

Information about the Folio and Quarto texts and any subsequent editions from which any modern edited version is derived is stored, rather cryptically, in a section of the edition called the *collation*. The Norton and Riverside each



have their collation as a series of 'Textual Notes' at the end of each play. In the New Cambridge, Arden 3 and other series, the collation comes on each page, between the play-text and the footnotes, in a thin strip of hieroglyphics such as this example from the beginning of G. Blakemore Evans' edition of *Romeo and Juliet*: '*Actus Primus. Scaena Prima. r*; not in Q2-4, Q1', which tells us that the Latin act and scene division is present in the Folio text but not the quartos. A good rule of thumb is that the more collation there is, the more work the editor has done to adjudicate between alternative readings or the work of his or her editorial predecessors. If there is a lot of collation, there may be something worth looking at in the early texts. And whereas previously, those early texts of Shakespeare were so precious and so rare that only a few scholars had access to them, online versions (see the 'Where next?' section at the end of this chapter for details) have democratised editing: we can all look at the play texts from which our tidied-up modern editions have been derived, and reopen editorial questions that previously were shared only by an inner circle.

## Editing as interpretation

All editors will work with those early texts of their play – the Folio, in all cases, and also quarto texts where these exist – and with what other editors have done with those texts, to produce a coherent and reliable version for modern readers. Typically they will work on standardising spelling, punctuation, and lineation – all of which are discussed below. Editors may provide more or fewer explanatory notes, depending on the market for their particular edition. They may offer an introduction or suggestions for reading. Some editions – the Shakespeare in Production series, for example – annotate the play with reference to the ways in which it has been performed; some, like the Shakespeare Made Easy series, provide a version of the lines in modernised English to help Shakespeare novices; some, like the New Penguin series, have the explanatory notes at the back of the text, making it easier to read the play without constant interruption from footnotes; some, like the New Cambridge, Oxford and Arden 3 series favour extensive on-page annotation.

These aspects may seem incidental, but they can have significant consequences for our reading of the plays. What all this activity amounts to is a series of interpretive acts. Editors interpret the play for us, by the decisions they make and the ways in which they present those to us. By the time we read Shakespeare in an edited text, it has already been interpreted for us, and our own interpretations are inevitably shaped by that prior act of editorial interpretation. Because of this, the concept and practice of 'unediting' have been influential – the idea

involves returning to the early texts, because their inconsistencies and silences can be meaningful, revelatory and stimulating in ways that editing smooths out.

Let's look at a couple of examples. The first is a single and problematic word from *The Tempest*. In this play, Prospero, a magician and deposed duke, lives on an island with his daughter Miranda and his servants Caliban and Ariel. The play has long been associated with contemporary voyages to the so-called New World (it wasn't new to the native Americans who lived there), and, indeed, has as one of its major sources a travellers' account of a shipwreck. (There's more on Shakespeare's use of his sources in chapter 6.) Prospero's former enemies, including the brother who usurped his dukedom, are shipwrecked on his island thanks to a tempest he has conjured. Caliban, dissatisfied with his servitude, joins with two of the servants of the shipwrecked nobles in a plot to overthrow Prospero. In return he promises that he will be useful to his new allies. In the earliest text of *The Tempest*, printed in the Folio in 1623, we have this speech: 'I prethee let me bring thee where Crabs grow; and I with my long nayles will digge thee pig-nuts; show thee a layes nest, and instruct thee how to snare the nimble Marmazet: I'll bring thee to clustering Philbirts, and sometimes I'll get thee young Scamels from the Rocks: Wilt thou goe with me?'

This speech as it appears in the Folio differs from the form in which a modern edition will present it in lots of different ways – you might want to compare it with the version in a text you have to hand. An editor will work to modernise spelling here, standardising 'digge' as 'dig', for example. He or she will relineate this prose speech as blank verse, and given the assumptions of nobility or importance that are often attached to verse-speaking, will thereby implicitly elevate Caliban's status at this point, particularly when compared with his drunken companions (there's more on the significance of verse and prose, and a discussion of blank verse, in chapter 4). This is important for readings of the play which have begun to stress Caliban's dignity as a colonised subject, rather than the sub-humanity to which earlier critics shackled him. The editor will probably offer a glossary for the unfamiliar words 'Marmazet' or 'marmoset' (a sort of monkey) and 'Philbirts'/'filberts' (hazelnuts). But then she or he will come to the word 'Scamels'.

No one knows what 'Scamels' are. From the context we can grasp that it is something to eat from the rocks, perhaps a shellfish or mollusc. Much ingenuity has been expended on it, many obscure books of ornithology, marine biology, travel and dialect scoured, and lots of possibilities have been suggested, but no one has answered the question. So what should the editor do? In the Oxford edition, the word is changed, or in editorial-speak, *emended*, to 'scamews' –



on the basis that in certain sorts of seventeenth-century handwriting the word 'seamews' could be misread by the printing-house compositor as 'scamels'. It's an editorial decision which has the advantage that, even if, like me, you don't know what 'seamew' means either, it is a word that can be looked up in the Oxford English Dictionary (it's a seagull). So 'seamews' makes sense – although we might think that if an editor wanted to change 'Scamels' for readers' benefit into something intelligible he or she might as well go the whole way and emend to 'seagulls'. David Lindley, in the Cambridge edition, chooses not to emend the word and leaves it as 'scamels' (2.2.149), thus preserving something of the intrinsic strangeness of Caliban's vocabulary, mixing the exotic 'Scamels' with the then familiar 'filberts'. Perhaps Shakespeare did write 'seamews' and his handwriting was misread by the compositor; perhaps he intended a nonce-word 'Scamels'; perhaps 'Scamels' has a meaning we haven't yet recovered. It's a miniature version of a larger attitude to the text and the role of the editor. By emending, the Oxford editors assert control over the text, replacing an intrinsically opaque word with one with an attested meaning. They interpret a word without a known meaning as an aberration which needs to be normalised, by changing it into a word which does have a meaning. By not emending, Lindley leaves the text just beyond understanding, containing things we cannot fully comprehend. And, of course, it's wonderfully appropriate that this word which resists the editorial discourse of mastery should be uttered by Caliban, a character who himself resists the authoritarian control of the bookish (editorial?) Prospero.

The extent to which editors manage the meanings of their texts can also be seen if we look critically at their annotation and footnoting. Footnoting tends to look authoritative, neutral – as if it gives us scholarly information or explanation on which we can build more speculative or creative interpretations. In fact editorial glossing is itself already an act of interpretation. Why, for example, does the Arden editor of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* feel so sure that the clown Lance's bawdy is 'unintentional' when he pretends that 'this shoe with the hole in it is my mother' (2.3.15)? Or we could take as a more developed example the song which precedes Bassanio's choice of casket in the comedy of *The Merchant of Venice*. Portia's dead father has set as a condition of her marriage that any prospective husband make the correct choice between gold, silver and lead caskets. We have already seen two woefully unpromising suitors fail by choosing gold and silver respectively, and since the choice is the stuff of fairytale it is quite clear to us that the preferred Bassanio must choose the apparently discouraging lead casket. But does Bassanio, too, have inside knowledge? As he is about to make his choice, Portia interrupts him, and the stage direction indicates 'A song the whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to himself'. M. M. Mahood

in her New Cambridge edition notes that the endwords in the first verse of the song 'Tell me where is fancy bred' (3.2) rhyme with 'lead' and that this may therefore be intended as a clue to Bassanio about which casket he should choose. Interestingly, however, she goes on to discount this as a real possibility, since it contravenes their moral characters as, presumably, already and unsailably established: it 'belittles Portia's integrity and Bassanio's insight'. From the discussion in chapter 1, we can see that giving Portia integrity and Bassanio insight in advance of, and separate from, their words and actions in the play is a particular kind of character criticism: here it uses an idea of character to restrict and dictate the text's meanings. If Portia is 'cheating' – circumventing her father's will to exercise some choice in her marriage – this needn't be either a moral lapse or a failure of character consistency. Indeed, in plot terms it makes sense in linking her with Jessica, the daughter of Shylock who also challenges her father's authority by eloping with a Christian. So an editor at once offers us an interpretative possibility – that Portia, the self-styled figure of virtue and wit in the play, has bent the patriarchal rules to get the husband she wants – and at the same time uses her editorial authority in the footnote to close it down.

Editors, therefore, are interpreters. Their own – often scholarly and well-supported, but partial, nevertheless – assumptions, interpretations and attitudes pervade their texts. What an editor does is to interpret, in useful and necessary ways, to be sure, but to interpret nonetheless.

### The job of the editor: the example of *Richard II*

One of the major questions for all subsequent editors of Shakespeare is how to take the statement of those first editors Heminges and Condell in their preface to the First Folio. Are the Folio texts always superior, complete, authoritative? What should an editor do in preparing Shakespeare's plays for modern readers and students? Why do we need more editions, and are there any real differences between them? All Shakespeare's plays have already been edited, in that they have been mediated to us by other agents. The elusive and unedited manuscript is, as we have seen, an illusory source of ultimate textual authority. So all the Shakespeare editions we read and study are, effectively, editions of editions. We can start to look at the ways in which the edition has been prepared for us, and how that might affect our interpretation of the play at hand, by working with a single initial example: different editions of *Richard II*, a play about the downfall of King Richard and the ascendancy of his rival, Henry Bullingbrook. Bullingbrook outmanoeuvres Richard who is forced to abdicate; Bullingbrook



takes the crown; he orders the murder of Richard, and then expresses his sorrow for his actions.

Having been composed and performed in 1595, *Richard II* was first published in quarto form in 1597. The title-page reads 'The / Tragedie of King Ri-/chard the se-/cond. / As it hath been publickely acted / by the right Honourable the / Lorde Chamberlaine his Ser-/vants.' (The slashes indicate line-breaks: it looks odd to our eyes to break two important words 'Richard' and 'second' across the line.) Then there is a small picture of the blind boy-god Cupid – this is a publisher's mark, rather than anything specific to do with this play – and underneath the place, London, and details of the play's publication: 'Printed by Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wise, and / are to be sold at his shop in Paules church yard at / the signe of the Angel, / 1597.' We can immediately see that something we'd now expect – the name of the author – is missing from the title-page, and the information about performance substitutes for it in the space we might expect to meet Shakespeare's name. The proper names we get are those of the men involved in presenting, either in print or on stage, the play, not in authoring it.

We also get an attribution of genre: it's very clear from the title that this is a tragedy. There's more on genre and structure in chapter 5: but here, titling this a tragedy may shape our reading of its central protagonist. Tragedies are typically structured around the lifespan of the central character: once King Lear, or Cleopatra, or Coriolanus, is dead, the play too is in its dying moments. We scarcely care about Edgar, or Octavius, or Aufidius, the characters on whom the battered and uncertain future of those tragedies seems to rest: they function merely as the mouthpieces for a kind of tragic closure. Thinking of *Richard II* alongside this structure gives us a play resoundingly about the downfall of Richard, rather than a play about the decline of one sovereign and the ascent of his successor. If Richard is the hero of a tragedy, where does that leave Bullingbrook? Is his accession to the throne merely a closing gesture, rather like that in *Hamlet* when the Norwegian prince Fortinbras enters the corpse-strewn Danish throne room, only to have his political victory utterly undermined by the fact that all eyes are still on the dead Hamlet?

The Folio text of 1623 prints the history plays in chronological order, and here *Richard II* bears a slightly different title: 'The Life and Death of Richard the Second'. Much criticism and some performance sequences have followed the implications of this in seeing the play within a sequence, or a series of plays. There's more on the way the Folio develops an idea of serial history in chapter 5: one of its immediate effects is to make *Richard II* less a self-contained tragic play in which an idea of the future dies along with the central character, and more an initiatory movement within a cycle or series of political actions in

which one king follows another, one fortune waxes as another wanes, or, to use one of Richard's own metaphors, 'Now is this golden crown like a deep well / That owes two buckets, filling one another, / The emptier ever dancing in the air, / The other down, unseen and full of water' (4.1.184–7). Far from being the equivalent of Fortinbras at the end of *Hamlet*, then, Bullingbrook becomes a worthy, and necessary, opponent of Richard in an historical sequence which sees Richard's reign succeeded by that of Bullingbrook as Henry IV in two plays, *I* and *2 Henry IV*, and, in turn, by his son in *Henry V*.

*Richard II* appears in another significant early edition, Q4 of 1608. This is important because it includes material not part of the earlier editions: a scene called the 'Parliament scene' in which Richard hands over the crown to his rival in an act so constitutionally extraordinary as to require a new word, 'unkinging.' There has been much scholarly debate about the provenance of this new material, and whether it was left out of the earlier texts or added into the later ones. Most critics suggest that in Elizabethan printings of the play, some form of censorship – perhaps prudence on the part of the publisher, perhaps more active state intervention at a time when all plays had to be licensed for performance by a government agent called the Master of the Revels – was enacted to leave out a potentially seditious depiction of the usurpation of a monarch. We know that towards the end of Elizabeth's long reign, history plays were used covertly to discuss contemporary politics, particularly the question of who would succeed the 'Virgin Queen'. This historical contextualisation is explored in more detail in chapter 7: here it is enough to notice that contemporary events press in on the text of the play.

Even before we get into the first lines of *Richard II*, then, editors have been at work. Andrew Gurr's New Cambridge edition of the play – which takes as its copy-text or preferred early version Q1 – calls it *King Richard II*, thus suspending the early texts' initial generic attribution of tragedy and the readerly expectations this may prompt. Gurr's edition follows the standard livery of all Cambridge's Shakespeare editions: it is part of a prestigious series, identified by author. It proceeds with a full scholarly apparatus of General editorial preface, Contents, List of illustrations, Acknowledgements, Abbreviations and conventions, Introduction. The play begins on page 57; it takes up less than half the length of the book; each page includes explanatory footnotes; there are appendices listing source material, and a reading list. It has a list of characters to introduce the *dramatis personae* before we begin reading. The sense is – and as students of the play we are grateful for this thoroughness – that the play needs a good deal of supporting material to be fully intelligible.

By contrast, Simmes' 1597 quarto, Gurr's copy-text, consists of 38 leaves. There is no character list, no commentary, no advice or instruction on how to



read the play. There are no descriptive stage directions. Looking at the detail of the first lines of the play in the two editions shows us some of the other work done by modern editors.

We can see a number of changes, many of them small ones. Gurr gives us an act and scene number, 1.1, which is not in the quarto text: like most of the quartos the 1597 edition is not divided into acts and scenes, giving a more fluid sense of the run-on between episodes. Gurr regularises the unpunctuated opening line, he modernises spellings such as 'bande' or 'boistrous', he sets the speech out with more space so that the name of the speaker – Gurr opts to call him 'Richard' rather than his title 'King Richard', later 'King', of the quarto – remains adjacent to his indented speech. All this might be thought exactly what a conscientious editor ought to do to smooth out accidentals in the text. We might feel that Gurr's intervention here has merely made it easier for us as twenty-first century readers to begin to approach the play, although we also begin to see that much of the standardised apparatus of the printed play, discussed in more detail below, is actually imposed by editors on the early texts.

### Stage directions

Many critics of Shakespeare think it unlikely that such stage directions as exist in the plays are authorial. Perhaps matters of how the play was staged were the business of the stagekeeper or the theatre company as they rehearsed. Because of this, where stage directions are detailed, it may be that they give us particular insight into early performances of the plays, as well as some unexpected interpretative information. *Hamlet* Q1's description of the Ghost dressed in his 'nightgown' sees him enter Gertrude's chamber not in the armour of his public person as in 1.1, but in domestic mode; similarly, Macbeth's first soliloquy in 1.7 when he proposes murdering his sovereign and his house-guest in a speech in which moral and lexical strangeness come together in that neologism (a word unrecorded before this example) 'assassination', is preceded in the Folio text by the mundane domestic detail of 'Enter a Sewer [butler, waiter] and divers Servants with Dishes and Service over the Stage'; something of the magic of theatrical illusion is conveyed in the Folio's detail of Ariel doing Prospero's bidding in *The Tempest*: 'Solemn and strange Musicke: and Prosper on the top (invisible:) [how do you think they did this bit?]. Enter severall strange shapes, bringing in a Banquet [banquet]; and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations, and inviting the King, &c. to eate, they depart.' Compellingly, we are getting here a peephole into the Shakespearean performance.

1.1. Entering RICHARD, JOHN OF GAUNT, with  
other Nobles and Attendants.  
RICHARD Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster,  
Hast thou according to thy oath and band  
Brought hither Henry Hereford, thy bold son,  
Here to make good the boisterous late appeal,  
Which then our leisure would not let us hear,  
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

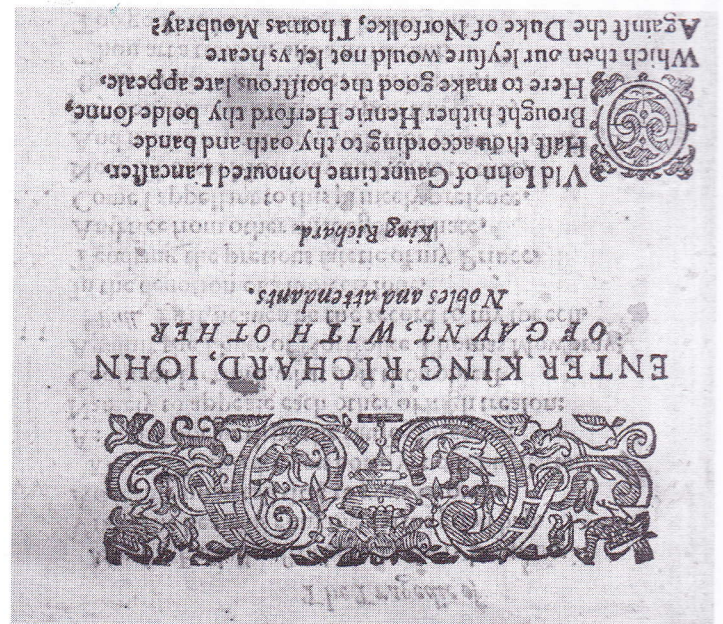


Table 3.1. Comparing Richard II in its first edition (1597) and the Cambridge text edited by Andrew Gurr



Often, though, stage directions are brief or lack descriptive colour, or they are simply not there. So they are supplied by editors. The Oxford edition notes editorial stage directions with broken brackets; the Riverside and New Cambridge with square brackets. The extent of these interpolations varies. When John Dover Wilson edited the plays in the middle of the twentieth century he supplied a set of novelistic, highly interpretative stage directions to help readers imagine a particular scene. Thus he includes at the head of the first scene of *Richard II* (compare this to the quarto text and to Gurr's edition above): 'A great scaffold within the castle at Windsor, with seats thereon, and a space of ground before it. Enter King Richard, John of Gaunt, with the Duke of Surrey, other nobles and attendants. They ascend the scaffold and sit in their places, the king in a chair of justice in the midst.' It's very detailed, but entirely made up by the editor.

We may feel that the stage directions are literally marginal aspects of the text which do not substantially affect the meaning of the play, and in many cases we may be right. Even small details, however, can make subtle adjustments to our understanding. There's no exit stage direction for Edmund at the beginning of *King Lear*, for example: is he present during the love-test when Lear challenges his daughters to flatter him into their inheritance, and might that be what gives him the idea to plot to divide his own family, or should an editor assume he leaves the stage with his father before the main business begins? Or, to return to the example of *Richard II*, there are no stage directions in quarto or folio texts for the scene in which Richard hands over the crown. We do not know, therefore, whether his declaration that he is giving up the symbols of his office need be accompanied by the gestures which apparently endorse his words. Andrew Gurr's edition does not add in stage directions; the Oxford edition does, and thus gives us:

Now mark me how I will undo myself.  
I give this heavy weight from off my head,  
[*Bolingbroke accepts the crown*]  
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,  
[*Bolingbroke accepts the sceptre*]  
(4.1.192–4)

These additional stage directions commit Richard to enacting his own words – interestingly, they phrase this as a positive action by Bullingbrook (whose name is here edited following the traditions set by the eighteenth-century editor Alexander Pope, who meant it as a compliment to his friend, the then Viscount Bolingbroke) – and thus stage the speech on the page as the moment of the transfer of the symbols of power between former and future king. This

is certainly one interpretation of the scene. But Richard's ambivalence to his enforced abdication is another – the speech is immediately preceded by his reply to Bullingbrook's 'Are you contented to resign the crown?' in the tortured, recursive syntax 'Aye – no. No – aye, for I must nothing be / Therefore no 'no', for I resign to thee' (4.1.199–201). (Interestingly, the 1608 quarto – the earliest printed version of this scene – reads 'I, no no I; for, I must nothing be, / Therefore no no, for I resigne to thee': how would *you* have edited that line for a modern reader?) So it is entirely in keeping with the scene – and with aspects of Richard's habitual grandiloquence and his preference, from the opening scene onwards, for words rather than actions, that he might be *saying* he was giving up the accoutrements of power without actually doing so. Here, the added stage directions press one interpretation and effectively exclude others.

Other examples are more substantive. At the end of the comedy *As You Like It*, Rosalind, who since Act 2 has adopted the male disguise of Ganymede, has been reunited with her lover Orlando. She enters to undergo her wedding ceremony. After much gender confusion and homoerotic play during her cross-dressed period, including a wooing scene in which she pretends to be Ganymede *pretending* to be Rosalind, and another in which a hapless shepherdess Phoebe falls for her striking, acerbic Ganymede persona, therefore, the play asserts that heterosexual imperative to which Shakespeare's comedies are traditionally headed: marriage. And almost all editors of the play help this along by adding to the stage direction for Rosalind's entrance. In the Folio we have the stage direction for the entrance in 5.4 'Enter Hymen [the goddess of marriage], Rosalind and Celia.' This unadorned formula 'Rosalind' has been the Folio's stage direction throughout the period Rosalind has been in the role of Ganymede. In the Oxford edition the stage direction adds 'as themselves' – a striking ontological position for anyone, least of all a character in a play – the phrasing also preferred by Michael Hattaway for his New Cambridge edition.

It certainly does make a sort of narrative and thematic sense to have Rosalind return in her women's clothes at this point. Her temporary role as Ganymede can now be set aside; she returns to the (female) person she was at the play's outset, bracketing the freedoms of the Forest of Arden with the 'reality' of heterosexual normativity. But by stating in a stage direction, apparently authoritatively, that she *does* put on her female clothing, the modern editions lose some important element of sexual playfulness. The Folio text leaves open the possibility that she doesn't return fixed into femaleness, that the gender confusion and gender play intrinsic to that pert, knowing title *As You Like It* continues, rather than being finally contained in marriage. This seems even more likely when we remember that Rosalind would have been played by a male actor. After all, the newly married Rosalind reappears to give a cheeky epilogue, flirting wildly



with both men and women in the audience: 'My way is to conjure you, and I'll begin with the women . . . If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not' – hardly the demure, gender-fixed behaviour of a blushing bride. And in choosing the name Ganymede, the young male lover of the god Jupiter, the play, or Rosalind herself, toys explicitly with male homosexuality. There's another Folio textual clue which challenges a firmly heterosexual reading to the play's conclusion: in an apparent confusion of male pronouns Hymen discusses the wedding ceremony: 'thou mightst joyne his hand with his, / Whose heart within his bosome is'. Joining two male hands together doesn't seem quite the image of heterosexual union that editors want to see. All 'straighten' one of the 'his' into 'her'. Thus the edited text is at once more normative, more heterosexual, and more prescribed than the first printed version in the Folio.

### Speech prefixes

In chapter 1, on 'Character', we saw that the speech prefixes and stage directions in the early texts sometimes name characters in ways alien to modern editions. Thus, no modern editor is so discourteous as to call Edmund in *King Lear* 'Bastard', despite the fact that is his name throughout the apparatus of the early texts, whereas all editors prefer to call the King of Denmark 'Claudius' rather than endorse his ill-gotten gains by each time calling him 'King', as he is in the quartos. One of the ways in which the early texts of Shakespeare may seem to inscribe a different version of character from that of our own psychological presumptions is in the way that character names or designations shift during the play. So Q1 of *Romeo and Juliet* shifts the speech prefix for the character we call Lady Capulet between 'Wife' and 'Mother', which might tell us something about her structural, rather than psychological, role in the play. (Characters as individuals or types are also discussed in chapter 1.)

Something similar, and more culturally chilling, happens to Shylock if we look at *The Merchant of Venice* in the Folio text. Shylock, the Jewish money-lender whose wealth is instrumental in enabling Bassanio to make his wooing visit to Portia discussed above, occupies a complex role in the play and one which we'll come back to in chapter 5 on structure. In Act 4, Shylock ends up in court to get his money back from Antonio, Bassanio's friend and patron, who has borrowed it on his behalf. The term of their bargain was that if the debt was not repaid, Shylock has the right to a pound of Antonio's flesh. But, unrecognised, Portia enters the courtroom dressed as a male lawyer, and manages to

outwit Shylock both by legalistic quibbles that there was no mention in the agreement of any blood and by reference to the disadvantaged status of Jews under Venetian law. Shylock's property is confiscated and he is forced to convert to Christianity.

The interpretation of this outcome, and the representation of Shylock throughout the play, has been the occasion for much important criticism. For some commentators he is the comic villain, the spoiling or blocking figure who must be overcome in order for comic values of community and marriage to triumph; for others, the uncomfortable spectacle of Shakespeare's only Jewish character being crushed by the Christians of Venice gives him an almost tragic, or at least sympathetic, status. The early texts can contribute to this debate in some interesting ways. Throughout the play, Shylock is given his proper name in all speech prefixes and stage directions. Until, that is, the trial scene. The Duke's 'We all expect a gentle answer, Jew' (4.1.34) is echoed in the very next word on the next line in the Folio. For the first time Shylock's speech prefix is 'Jew'. Even as he asserts in the scene 'Shylock is my name' (4.1.172), the text has him speak this from the position of 'Jew'. We could argue that here the unspoken words of the text, the speech prefixes which name the protagonists in the courtroom, reveal that this is a cultural struggle not between individuals but between the named Christians and the archetypal Jew; that it is his Jewishness which seems to dominate both Shylock's behaviour and his treatment in the court; that he has become the vengeful, money-grubbing stereotype of anti-semitic slurs. The question of Shylock's cultural identity, and its significance to the play, has become the most pressing issue in readings and productions of *The Merchant of Venice*: there have even been calls for it to be banned because of its problematic relation to the terrible history of anti-semitism which pre- and post-dates it. Here the early texts are engaging with this theme in some interesting ways, ways that are obliterated if editors standardise Shylock's presence in the text.

### The job of the editor: the example of *King Lear*

We have seen some of the implications of the sort of editing-as-tidying function, when even apparently unimportant presentational details have an impact on our interpretation of the plays. Finally, let's look at a different and more sustained example, the case of *King Lear*. *King Lear* is the play on which much recent textual theory has focused, because it exists in two substantially variant versions: a quarto text from 1608 entitled a 'true chronicle history of the life



*Lear*. Break heart, I prethe breake. *Edgar*. Look vp my Lord.

*Kent*. Vex not his ghost, O let him passe,  
He hates him that would vpon the wracke,  
Of this tough world stretch him out longer.

*Edg*. O he is gone indeed.

*Kent*. The wonder is, he hath endured so long,  
He but vsurpt his life.

*Duke*. Beare them from hence, our present busines  
Is to generall woe, friends of my soule, you twaine  
Rule in this kingdome, and the goard state sustaine.

*Kent*. I haue a iourney sir, shortly to go,  
My maister calls, and I must not say no.

*Duke*. The waight of this sad time we must obey,  
Speake what we feele, not what we ought to say,  
The oldest hath borne most, we that are yong,  
Shall neuer see so much, nor liue so long.

*FINIS.*

### 3.1 Ending of *King Lear* Q (1608)

and death of King Lear and his three Daughters', and the text included as *The Tragedy of King Lear* in the 1623 Folio. There are around 300 lines in Q that are not in F, and about 100 lines in F not in Q, as well as hundreds of variants of words, punctuation, or stage directions. Does Lear, for example, express a 'darker purpose' (Q) or 'darker purposes' (F) (1.1.31) as he introduces the disastrous love-test? Given how mysterious his motives are at this point in the play – this is discussed in more detail in chapter 6 on sources – the apparently marginal difference between a singular and a plural may take on considerable significance.

If you read an edition of *King Lear* dating before the mid 1980s, it is likely that the editor has made a selection from quarto and Folio texts according to his or her view of their provenance, authenticity, or literary value. This is known as a *conflated* text: it has the advantage of including all four hundred disputed lines, and the disadvantage that it produces a composite text that never existed until the edition itself. It is based on a presumption that the differences between the texts are the result of accidental or extrinsic factors, and that therefore the specific separate forms of the two early texts are unimportant. However, if you are working from the Oxford or Norton collected editions you will see that

*Lear*. And my poore Foole is hang'd: no, no, no life?  
Why should a Dog, a Horse, a Rat haue life,

And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,  
Neuer, neuer, neuer, neuer, neuer.

Pray you vndo this Button. Thanke you Sir,  
Do you see this? Looke on her? Look e her lips,  
Looke there, looke there, *He dies.*

*Edg*. He faints, my Lord, my Lord.

*Kent*. Breake heart, I prythee breake.

*Edg*. Looke vp my Lord.

*Kent*. Vex not his ghost, O let him passe, he hates him,  
That would vpon the wracke of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer.

*Edg*. He is gon indeed.

*Kent*. The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long,  
He but vsurpt his life.

*Alb*. Beare them from hence, our present businesse  
Is generall woe: Friends of my soule, you twaine,  
Rule in this Realme, and the go'd state sustaine.

*Kent*. I haue a iourney Sir, shortly to go,  
My Master calls me, I must not say no.

*Edg*. The waight of this sad time we must obey,  
Speake what we feele, not what we ought to say:  
The oldest hath borne most, we that are yong,  
Shall neuer see so much, nor liue so long.

*Exeunt with a dead March.*

f f 3

### 3.2 Ending of *King Lear* F (1623)



they print each text separately, so that there is not one but two plays called *King Lear*.

The 'Where next?' section gives an indication of how to follow up some of the critical arguments around the textual history of *King Lear*, and also points out some specific, local points of suggestive comparison between the two versions. Here I want to focus on one important section as an example of the differences between the two plays, and the ways in which those differences are important not just to bibliographers but to anyone who is interested in the notion of tragedy, in dramatic form, in character, in *King Lear*.

As chapter 5 discusses in more detail, tragedy is a particularly end-stopped genre: like comedy, it is defined by its ending, but unlike comedy its ending is peculiarly final. So the ending of a tragedy is a natural focus for our interpretative energy. The ending of *King Lear* in its two versions is doubly significant.

There are a number of points to consider. Here are some for starters:

- In the quarto when does Lear die? There is no stage direction. How might this allow for different possibilities from that in the Folio?
- How do you interpret the shift of the line 'Break heart, I prithee break', from Lear in Q to Kent in F?
- Some critics have argued that Lear dies in the Folio still with the hope that Cordelia is alive: does the text support this? Is it different in the quarto? How does this affect the tragic ending of the play?
- What difference does it make whether 'Duke' (Albany) – senior, noble, tainted by his association with Gonerill – or Edgar, speaks the last lines?
- Does your assessment of these differences materially alter your interpretation of the two texts? Does this have implications for what you would want an editor to do with them in preparing an edition for you to read?

For many critics, the differences between Q and F of *King Lear* are related to the contingencies of performance at different times and in different places. Like the fluid interpretations of the plays on the stage and on film discussed in the previous chapter, that is to say, the early texts of the plays materialise different possibilities and register their thorough-going resistance to singular analysis. Editors have historically taken on the burden of choosing – of second-guessing, of streamlining: that newly democratised process of selection offers one of the most bracing encounters with the plays as they were written, performed and published.

### Texts: where next?

- The text of *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, which was never printed and exists only in manuscript, is transcribed online at the University of Virginia – <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/AnoTMor.html>. Here the chaotic order of the much-revised original is exactly reproduced, so it is difficult to read: Grigori Melchiori's edited version in the Revels series (Manchester University Press, 1989) works to reconstruct the play and make it more readable, as well as discussing the question of authorship in his introduction; the second edition of the *Oxford Shakespeare* (2005) also prints the complete play; the previous edition only included the 'Shakespearean' speeches, and this change itself is indicative of changed editorial priorities. The most prominent of the speeches attributed to Shakespeare is More's invitation to the rioters to put themselves in the place of those they are attacking:

Say now the King,  
As he is clement if th'offender mourn,  
Should so much come too short of your great trespass  
As but to banish you: whither would you go?  
What country, by the nature of your error  
Should give you harbour? Go you to France or Flanders,  
To any German province, Spain or Portugal,  
Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England –  
Why, you must needs be strangers. Would you be pleased  
To find a nation of such barbarous temper  
That breaking out in hideous violence  
Would not afford you an abode on earth,  
Whet their detested knives against your throats,  
Spurn you like dogs, and like as if that God  
Owed not nor made not you, nor that the elements  
Were not all appropriate to your comforts  
But chartered unto them, what would you think  
To be thus used? This is the strangers' case,  
And this your mountainish inhumanity.

- Bibliography, or the study of Shakespeare's texts, can seem arcane and difficult – it's also been transformed in the last twenty or so years, so more recent work tends to be more engaged with matters of literary interpretation, rather than just the quasi-scientific stuff about textual transmission. The essays on 'Printing' in David Scott Kastan's *A Companion to Shakespeare*



(Blackwell, 1999) cover the facts in an engaging way. Leah Marcus' *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Milton, Marlowe* (Routledge, 1996), is recommended, particularly on the assumptions behind editorial decisions in *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Marcus shows how textual history and the interpretation of the plays are inseparable. Tiffany Stern's *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page* (Routledge, 2004) is also recommended as a model of the integration of textual matters with theatre history and dramatic appreciation. In this chapter and elsewhere I've been much influenced by Margreta de Grazia and Peter Sallibrass's elegant and thought-provoking essay in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993), 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text'. Two indicative and stimulating articles on the revaluation of what textual scholars used, provisionally, to call the 'bad' quartos – texts considered to be those 'maimed and deformed' ones denounced in the prefatory epistle to the First Folio – are Steven Urkowitz's 'Good News about "Bad" Quartos' in Maurice Charney (ed.), "*Bad*" *Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988) and Random Cloud's 'The Marriage of Good and Bad Quartos' in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1982).

- Online texts are available from a number of sources:

The Furness collection at the University of Pennsylvania has a beautifully digitised copy of the First Folio at <http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti/>, and some other early quartos for browsing. (They also have some worthwhile online tutorials about aspects of printing and editing at <http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/eric/teach/index.cfm>)

The British Library has digitised its 93 quarto texts and has an excellent website where you can compare multiple versions at <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html>

Michael Best's Internet Shakespeare Editions site has Folio facsimiles and quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and the *Sonnets* at <http://ise.uvic.ca/index.html>

Bernice Kliman's hypertext Enfolded *Hamlet*, which enables comparison of a transcribed (i.e. not scanned) Q2 and F *Hamlet*, is at <http://www.global-language.com/enfolded.html>.

The University of Virginia Library has mounted transcribed versions of Q1 *Hamlet* at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/ShahQ1.html>; Q2 is at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/ShahQ2.html>; the complete Folio is transcribed at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/shakespeare/folio/> – this makes it possible to search the texts, but remember that non-standardised spelling may produce unexpected search results.

- 'Scamels' in *The Tempest* is an example of a textual *crux* – a point of interpretative difficulty. Other famous textual cruces include the Hostess' account of Falstaff's death in *Henry V* for which the Folio text has the incomprehensible line 'for his Nose was as sharpe as a Pen, and a Table of Greene fields', which most editors emend, following the eighteenth-century editor Lewis Theobald, to 'and a babbled of green fields' (2.3.14); Q2 *Hamlet*'s 'the dram of eale / Doth all the noble substance of a doubt / To his owne scandie' (1.4.36) – where editors have often emended 'eale' to 'evil' or to 'esill' [vinegar]; the mysterious word 'prenzie' (3.1.93 and 96), often emended to 'precise' in *Measure for Measure*; and Sonnet 129, where the 1609 quarto's 'A blisse in prooffe and proud and very wo' was emended by Edmond Malone's edition in the eighteenth century to 'A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe'. Most editions discuss textual cruces; perhaps the most important question to ask is what the variant readings offer to the passage or line's poetic, thematic or associative properties, rather than to strive finally to resolve the matter.
- Looking critically at footnotes may seem difficult, since it's about going head to head with the editor's authority. There's an interesting article by Michael Cordner on the ways in which editors annotate Petruchio and Katherine's first encounter in *The Taming of the Shrew* ('Actors, Editors, and the Annotation of Shakespearean Playscripts' in *Shakespeare Survey* 55 (2002), and in her 'Feminist Editing and the Body of the Text', Laurie E. Maguire draws out some of the assumptions behind, for example, the coy or coarse annotating of sexual puns (in *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare* ed. Dymnna Callaghan, Blackwell, 2000). Comparing annotations in two or more editions is a good way to see how a particular editor may be steering our interpretations: how do editors gloss, for example, Malvolio's description of – as he thinks – Olivia's handwriting: 'These be her very c's, her u's, her t's; and thus makes she her great P's' (2.5.72–3). Do they gloss 'cut' as 'cunt', or as 'pudenda', or as 'sexual pun'? What about 'P'? Do they evaluate this pun? Do they tell us whether Malvolio himself is talking dirty, or being made to do so by the play? What would we want them to tell us?
- On Elizabethan censorship, *Shakespeare in Love* (dir. John Madden, 1998), gives us an engaging – and obviously fictional, but nonetheless energetic and involved – portrait of the Master of the Revels, Edmund Tilney (Simon Callow). The standard works on the role of censorship in the drama of the period are Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (Macmillan, 1991) and Janet Clare, 'Art Made Tongue-Tied by Authority': *Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship* (2nd edn, Manchester University Press, 1999). It is often claimed



that *Richard II*'s revolutionary credentials are attested by its performance on the eve of the Earl of Essex's rebellion in 1601: this has a significance for many Shakespearean critics beyond the merely factual, since it represents the literalisation of their interest in politically radical theatre. Two articles on this topic include the sceptical 'Which play was performed at the Globe Theatre on 7 February 1601?' by Blair Worden in the *London Review of Books* (10 July 2003), and Chris Fitter's 'Historicising Shakespeare's *Richard II*: Current Events, Dating, and the Sabotage of Essex' in the online journal *Early Modern Literary Studies* 11.2 (September, 2005) at <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/11-2/fitric2.htm>.

- Comparing the heterosexualising of *As You Like It* with the history of editing Shakespeare's Sonnets is informative: Margreta de Grazia's important essay 'The Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets' is in *Shakespeare Studies* 46 (1993), and reprinted in *Shakespeare and Sexuality*, ed. Catherine Alexander (Cambridge University Press, 2001). On readings of the sonnets which emphasise, rather than suppress, homoeroticism, see Joseph Pequigney, *Such is My Love: A Study of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (University of Chicago Press, 1985) and Jonathan Goldberg's *Sodomities: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford University Press, 1992). There's been some great work on queer sexualities and homoeroticism in Shakespeare's plays – on the relationship between *Twelfth Night*'s Antonio and Sebastian, for instance, or unrequited love as a trigger for Antonio's unexplained melancholy at the opening of *The Merchant of Venice*, or the intensity of the amity between Titania and the mother of the contested changeling boy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. For more on these issues, see Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2002) and Mario diGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge University Press, 1997). You might like to compare the unedited Hymen scene in *As You Like It* with the ending of *Twelfth Night*, in which Viola pointedly does not reassume women's clothes and continues to be called 'Cesario', her male alias, by her new lover Orsino, or with *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which also concludes with pointed jokes about the still male-clad Julia.

- The textual history of *King Lear* can be traced through the landmark collection of essays in *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of 'King Lear'*, edited by Michael Warren and Gary Taylor (Oxford University Press, 1983). Rene Weis edited a useful parallel text edition of *q* and *f* for Longman (1993); the British Library collection of online quartos includes the 1608 *King Lear* (<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/>)

homepage.html); Folio texts can be found on the Furness Collection (digital facsimile) and University of Virginia (transcription) sites listed above.

- Other interesting points of comparison between *q* and *f* texts might include Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' soliloquy, which, in *q1* (1603), is rather different from our (over)familiar version:

To be, or not to be, I there's the point,  
To Die, to sleepe, is that all? I all:  
No, to sleepe, to dreame, I mary there it goes,  
For in that dreame of death, when wee awake,  
And borne before an euerlasting Iudge,  
From whence no passenger euer retur'nd,  
The vndiscover'd country, at whose sight  
The happy smile, and the accurs'd damn'd.  
But for this, the ioyfull hope of this,  
Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world,  
Scorn'd by the right rich, the rich curs'd of the poore?  
The widow being oppress'd, the orphan wrong'd,  
The taste of hunger, or a tirants raigne,  
And thousand more calamities besides,  
To grunt and sweate vnder this weary life,  
When that he may his full Quietus make,  
With a bare bodkin, who would this indure,  
But for a hope of something after death?  
Which pusles the braine, and doth confound the sence,  
Which makes vs rather beare those euilles we haue,  
Than flie to others that we know not of.  
I that, O this conscience makes cowardes of vs all,  
Lady in thy orizons, be all my sinnes remembred.

You might also look at the depiction of the killing of the rebel leader Jack Cade in 2 *Henry VI*: in the Quarto (printed as *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* in 1594) the scene is introduced with the stage direction 'Enter lack Cade at one doore, and at the other, maister Alexander Eyden, and his men, and lack Cade lies downe picking of hearbes and eating them', establishing that Cade is at a disadvantage both physically and numerically; the Folio has simply 'Enter Cade' and then 'Enter Iden'. It's interesting to compare the presentation of the rebellion, and the possible sympathies of the audience, via these small differences between the texts. Or, alternatively, what difference does it make that the quarto of *Henry V* (1600) has no choruses? Or how does the 12-line Prologue in *q1*



*Romeo and Juliet* differ in the way it frames the narrative from the version we're used to? Or could it be important that Q2 of *Titus Andronicus* (1600) ends with a further four lines to Lucius's speech not found in Q1 or in F: 'See justice be done on Aron that damn'd Moore, / By whom our heauie haps had their beginning: / Than afterwards to order well the state, / That like euent may nere it ruinate.'?

## Chapter 4

### Language

|                                                        |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 'In a double sense' ( <i>Macbeth</i> 5.7.50)           | 71 |
| Did anyone really talk like that?                      | 72 |
| Playing with language                                  | 77 |
| Language of the play / language of the person          | 79 |
| Prose and verse                                        | 81 |
| Linguistic shifts: 1 <i>Henry IV</i>                   | 82 |
| Shakespeare's verse                                    | 84 |
| Linguistic variation: A <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> | 85 |
| Language: where next?                                  | 87 |

#### 'In a double sense' (*Macbeth* 5.7.50)

After encountering Banquo's ghost sitting at his table, the tortured Macbeth vows to return to the witches, 'for now I am bent to know / By the worst means, the worst' (3.4.133–4). The weird sisters summon up their 'masters' (4.1.62) in the form of three apparitions. The warning of the first, 'beware Macduff' (70), is, however, swiftly overtaken by the apparent comfort offered by the second two apparitions. The bloody child tells Macbeth that 'none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth' (79–80), and the crowned child announces that 'Macbeth shall never vanquished be until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him' (91–3). Macbeth, unsurprisingly, takes these statements as expressions of his literal invulnerability: to him, that none of woman born shall harm Macbeth is simply a more elaborate way of saying that Macbeth shall never be harmed; the impossibility of trees moving up the mound of his castle means that the apparition is promising that he will never be vanquished. That is to say, Macbeth paraphrases the precise terms of the prophecies. And, as the play goes on to reveal, those paraphrases are strikingly inaccurate. The specificity – we might even say the poetry – of the terms of the apparitions' promises was what mattered, and their ostensibly impossible conditions become literally true when Malcolm's forces disguise their approach to Dunsinane by cutting