

Remaking English Literature:

Editors at Work Between Media

By

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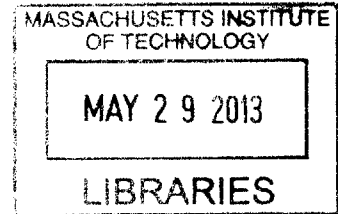
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**Remaking English Literature:
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Master's Thesis

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Introduction

Remaking English Literature is a study of literary mediation. It focuses on a single, specific group of texts, and on the professional editors who shaped their contents and prepared them for consumption. All of these editors lived during fluid, uncertain, and experimental periods in their fields, when the values and practices that ordered the terrain were not well-defined. One was a stationer in England in the late sixteenth century, when the print marketplace was still coming into being. Others are scholarly editors working in the present day, when the late age of print is giving way to the digital age. The study argues that during each of these periods, material and structural changes to the culture of letters—stimulated, at least in part, by shifts in the media landscape—changed the rules of genre and aesthetic value in ways so significant that the game of literature itself had to be defined anew. The rise of a market for books in print, which both encouraged and benefited from the spread of popular literacy, set texts designed for intimate manuscript circles before a new public. The rules of what counted as literary texts at all under this new dispensation were still being formed, as were the terms of the appeal that literature had to make to potential readers.

In the early 21st century, the spread of digital culture is again reconfiguring the makeup of the reading public, shaping readers as “prosumers” who at once consume and manipulate content. Just as importantly, hyper-mediation and media convergence are forcing critics to confront an “unbinding of the book” that began in practice decades before the Internet age. As professional mediators, editors occupy an ideal position to register the opportunities and the pressures of these processes, whether they are literary

entrepreneurs or scholars implicated in literature as an institution. Their efforts to delimit literary texts and sell them as a particular kind of cultural institution is the subject of this study, which, by tracing the ways in which an important set of texts was made use of and made usable, shows how the game of literature and its rules of play change under the pressures of new media configurations and new social worlds.

The central object of analysis in the pages that follow is the poetic miscellany. The poetic miscellany is a literary genre that flourished in England in the years from 1557 to around 1640; it represents the first collections of English poetry ever printed and sold. In a certain sense, the miscellany is to the anthology as incunabula are to print books: an early, experimental form, bearing some but not all of the features of the established later form, and created for a market that does not yet exist.

The term “miscellany” is belated, having come into use to describe these texts only after their period of ascendance, and so it sees wider use in modern criticism than the narrow definition offered here. For instance, scholars of 18th-century literature often use the term “miscellany” to describe fashionable or occasional collections of poetry produced during that era. For the original readers, however, the miscellanies of the 18th century had a role in the marketplace as a lighthearted alternative to anthologies of poetry in the more serious modern sense. The miscellanies this study focuses on circulated before such category boundaries existed.

Miscellanies provide a powerful case through which to examine the contested place of lyric poetry in the young culture of print. To begin with, the weightiest problem stationers faced in the print marketplace was the effort to anticipate the tastes and moods

of a new popular audience. Since the rise in popular literacy was in part a response to the growing availability of texts in the language of the populace, vernacular texts from this period can be said to have truly created their audience. More significantly for this genre specifically, cheap collections were the primary vehicle for the circulation of English poetry below the level of the gentry; no courses in schools then existed to march schoolboys up and down the ranks of English poets, nor institutional prizes to confer prestige and publicize the latest terms of the debate over literary value. This left popular miscellanies in a position to define the field with a kind of meager, solitary majesty.

As well, the astonishing diversity of systems of organization that Elizabethan miscellanies display offers a powerful material reminder of just how blurry and undefined the field of literature then was. Some miscellanies organize their contents in the manner of contemporary encyclopedias—that is, according to the place of the poems’ subject matter in the hierarchical chain of being; others arrange their contents as enlargements on moral themes, others as guides to courtly conduct, and others in the manner of a set of private manuscripts from a gentleman’s social circle, with verses simply tipped in without author, origin, or title. The observation that the years of Shakespeare’s career were also years in which literature was still coming together as a modern cultural institution has been explored with great acuity by other scholars. David Kastan points out that most measures one could look to indicate that English culture in the early 17th century did not count drama as a literary form; the Bodleian Library famously refused to admit new plays in English into its collections, denigrating them as “idle bookes, & riffe raffes.” Selling the English public on the idea of plays as literature required the heroic

efforts of a squadron of contemporary editors, a campaign that Kastan charts in the career of Humphrey Moseley.¹ The adventures of miscellanies can show us how this shifting of gears in the larger cultural system played out in the realm of lyric poetry.

Lyric poetry has, of course, taken on a profound historical importance as a factor in how we construe literature as an enterprise. In part because of the looming presence in later centuries of the Romantic poets and their inward eye, the lyric mode informs our notions of literary eloquence and literary subjectivity. (The philosopher Ian Hacking suggests that when a new category enters the open discourse of human identity, people adjust themselves to it in various ways. This kind of shape-shifting does chime well with the personas of poets, whose lives can seem to go in and out of style as dramatically as their rhyme schemes.) In the twentieth century, as Paul Fry points out, the New Critics gave the lyric poem a special status among literary genres. For them, poetry served almost as a primary state of literature, in part because it enabled them to easily confine a specimen for study. (Fry remarks, “The second generation of New Critics included people who started to read novels as though they were poems.”)² Even for us, living after the demolishers of New Criticism are themselves long demolished, lyric poetry remains a central instrument of teaching in the classroom, where students learn to interpret and become interpreters. The modern origins of the mode therefore have special relevance for the larger study of the project of literature.

1 David Kastan, “Humphrey Moseley and the Invention of Literature,” *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth Eisenstein*, ed. Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 105-124.

2 Paul Fry, pers. comm.

As a textual format, the collection, too, has served as a major vehicle for readers' encounter with literature. Leah Price, Michael Suarez, and Barbara Benedict, among others, have explored the powerful role that anthologies and collections have played in the social history of the book.³ They remain our entry points in the classroom and the main form of poetry's presence in the home; we use them to structure and restructure canons, to delineate national literatures, to promote arguments about literary history, to announce the arrival of new poetic schools, to sanctify particular authors within the ranks of the major poets or consign them to minor or regional literatures. If examining the ways in which we classify and organize poetry has helped us to better understand ourselves, then we should gain valuable perspective and depth of field from spending time in the moment before that organization began in earnest.

It would be impossible to write about these books and their context without coming into contact with the many single-author collections of lyric poetry that appeared in print during the period. Jones himself published several, including *A Sweet Nosegay, or Pleasant Posye* (1573), *A Floorish upon Fancie* (1577), and *A Poore Knight his Pallace of Private Pleasures* (1578). Other single-author collections appeared to great success during these years, and even helped to set a fashion for lyric poetry in the print marketplace during the 1590's; George Gascoigne, Sir Philip Sidney, and William Shakespeare are notable names among the poets whose work appeared in this form. Nor

3 Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Barbara Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Michael F. Suarez, SJ, "Trafficking in the Muse: Dodsley's Collection of Poems and the Question of Canon," in Alvaro Ribeiro, SJ, and James G. Basker (eds.), *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 297-313.

were producers of such collections in England working without precedent; collections by Dante, Petrarch, and other earlier Continental poets set important models for lyric subjectivity as well as for specific poetic forms.⁴ These works and authors have already been the subject of abundant scholarship, and I will not focus on them in this study. Instead, I will focus on multi-author collections and the editors who shaped them, showing how the parallel play of this genre can open new dimensions in the issues of editorship, media transition, and the uses of literariness during this period.

In the modern day, as often with the past, a close look at the ecosystem of letters reveals cross-currents at work that do not match up with the grand narratives we have developed to make sense of the world around us. We tend to describe the advent of the digital age as a dramatic turning point that sent print publishing into a permanent decline. But the publishing industry's own figures show that the proliferation of e-books is not pushing print books out of the market; in fact, the sale of print books has increased since e-books became an active part of the market. The textual ecosystem has simply become richer and more complex. This coheres with an observation, not often made, that opens the second part of this study: the denaturing of the book, the spilling of its discursive activity beyond its pages, began long before the digital age. The twentieth century saw a flowering of para-literary forms: franchise novels, audio books, film adaptations, tie-ins

4 For recent scholarship on the subject that accords with the general themes presented here, see, for example, Steven Mentz, "Selling Sidney: William Ponsonby, Thomas Nashe, and the Boundaries of Elizabethan Print and Manuscript Cultures," *Text: An Interdisciplinary Annual of Textual Studies* 13 (2000), 151-74; Elizabeth Heale, "Misogyny and the Complete Gentleman in Early Elizabethan Printed Miscellanies," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003): 233-47; and Meredith Anne Skura, *Tudor Autobiography: Listening for Inwardness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Arthur Marotti offers a useful discussion of Shakespeare's sonnets in this context, in Arthur F. Marotti, "Shakespeare's Sonnets as Literary Property," in Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus, eds., *Soliciting Interpretation, Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 143-73.

and spin-offs on radio and television. Scholars in the early years of book history simply didn't talk much about these phenomena because they didn't fit into the parameters of the book as an artifact that it was necessary to establish in order to lay the foundations of their discipline. (Then again, many of the scholars who helped to build the field seemed to register a sense of change underway that imperfectly matched the social trajectory of computing technology.) By these lights, the more important contribution of the digital revolution has been to force us to create new formulations for our already new world.

In short, what the moment in book studies seems to call for is a renewed confrontation with the strangeness of the old orders of letters from which we emerged. The long material history of texts abounds with powerful counter-systems and micro-climates that often fail to make it onto the syllabus: in parts of Europe, the performance of oral epic continued into the twentieth century; in Spain and England, for very different reasons, the spread of printing lagged behind that of their neighbors; in India, the history of print followed a trajectory that has prompted some historians to suggest referring to the years 1801-67 as the "incunabula" period.⁵ In a complex ecosystem, diversity and interdependency are essential factors in the functioning of the whole. The presence of these elements in the world of letters is sometimes obscured by the victor's map of history.

Chapter 1

The Print Editor

⁵ Robert Darnton, "Literary Surveillance in the British Raj: The Contradictions of Liberal Imperialism," *Book History* 4 (2001), 233-176; p. 136.

1.

Twenty years from the close of the sixteenth century, in a little shop outside Newgate in London, a stationer named Richard Jones sat working over the poems he was preparing to publish in a new collection of lyric verse. For most of the poems he devised new titles; in some cases, he also modified the texts to incorporate language and imagery that better suited the themes of the collection as a whole. (This was not often necessary, however, since many of the poems in the manuscripts he worked with already conformed to conventional styles and genres so scrupulously as to make their authors seem nearly interchangeable.) He also organized the poems in the collection, using to a scale of value that corresponded roughly with the social status of the authors. When he felt it was relevant, or about thirty-three percent of the time, he credited poems with their authors' names.

The purpose of these changes was to prepare the poems, most of them written for circulation in small manuscript circles, for the print marketplace. But much of his labor in this regard was guesswork, since he had few established models to go by. At the time of his undertaking, no ready market yet existed for lyric poetry in print. The unexpected popularity of a poetry collection that had appeared some twenty years earlier, Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonnettes* (1557), had encouraged a number of stationers to attempt to imitate its success. Still, with few exceptions, the thriving trade in prayer books, songbooks, primers, and almanacs left books of poetry untouched. At stake in Jones's undertaking, therefore, was his chance to build a career in the genre. Working as he did in

the early decades of print, in a publishing culture that lacked many of the institutions that modern literary culture takes for granted, such as authorial copyright, the prerogative of originality, textual stability, and even fixed titles, Jones had to figure out how to present lyric poetry as a saleable, distinctive, and distinctively literary commodity under the new models of literariness that were emerging from the open market for print.

Notably, he had to contend with the slippery issue of authorship. Under Elizabethan copyright law, it was perfectly legal to publish or alter a text without the author's permission. This made it easier for a publisher to assemble poems for a collection, but it also muddled the issues of ownership and credit. But as nebulous a figure as the author could be, theories of authorship were crucial to Jones's task as an editor. The question of poetry and its place in the system of letters is necessarily connected with the question of just what a poet is. To publish a poetry anthology is always in some sense to offer a model for poetic self-fashioning, since it offers to readers a repertoire of ways to structure their own poetic making and an exemplarium of forms of poetic mastery. This essay proposes, by carefully examining Jones's publications in this genre, to delineate the terms on which he found himself obliged to shape that model. How did he assign credit and frame its terms? What for him were the markers that constituted literary value and literary identity? And if we look beyond his editorial framework at the actual body of writers he drew on for his collections, traceable though often anonymous or pseudonymous in his pages, what can we learn about the contributors to the earliest anthologies of English poetry?

2.

Over the past few decades, it has become common to situate the old story of a flowering Renaissance within the resolutely modern context of the printing press as a revolutionary information technology. Recently, the economic historian Jeremiah Dittmar offered a fresh take on this picture. In an analysis of city population growth in early modern Europe, he shows that, taking into account the expected controls, cities that adopted printing presses grew significantly faster than similar cities that did not: “on average, cities that adopted the press in the late 1400s grew 20 percentage points more than nonprinting cities 1500-1600.”⁶ Dittmar points out, however, that this phenomenon had little to do with literary texts. The printing press catalyzed economic growth because it aided bureaucracy and commerce; the books that made cities into centers were handbooks for calculating exchange rates, guides to novel business practices such as double-entry bookkeeping, and mathematics textbooks, or “commercial arithmetics,” that educated the sons of merchant families (Dittmar 2011, 1138-9).

Still, there is an argument to be made that verse and other forms of imaginative writing contributed to the early modern information revolution. As Ann Blair and others have noted, the shift from manuscript to print dramatically changed the economics of the publishing business: publishers moved from working on commission (as professional scribes did) to working on speculation, a shift that made trial, error, and guesswork unavoidable features of book production.⁷ The result was to put more varied kinds of text

6 Jeremiah Dittmar, “Information Technology and Economic Change: The Impact of the Printing Press,” The Quarterly Journal of Economics (2011) 126 (3): 1146. Hereafter cited as Dittmar 2011, with page numbers.

7 Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010): 13.

in circulation than ever before. Dittmar suggests that this may have helped to encourage literacy in the wider population, since the chore of learning to read is more appealing when there are more kinds of text available to read. This is a view of history that endows the arts with a valuable role in turning forward the wheels of science and industry, with a fuller, more diverse literary culture leading to the spread of popular literacy and, in time, greater efforts for improvements in popular schooling (Dittmar 2011, 1137).

On the ground, amid the day-to-day bustle of the book trade, Jones was captive to the realities of what was needed and what sold. Jones's career as a stationer lasted nearly fifty years, from 1564 to 1611, and produced scores of texts, by far the majority of which were stolidly practical. His best-selling title was *The Tresurie of Commodious Conceits* (1573), a "lytell Booke" of recipes and household tips: for instance, how "To bake Woodcoks," "To keep plummes condite in Syrop," "To collour Gloves," "To perfume Gloves," "To perfume Gloves another way," "Another for Gloves," and "A briefe Treatise of Urines aswell of mennes urines, as of Womens, to judge by the colors, which betoken helth, which betoken sicknesse, and which also betoken death." But he also had a passion, and he carved out a special niche in that passion: books of gentility and noble life. Over the course of his career, he published or helped to publish more than a dozen books that fit this theme, such as *Cyville and Uncyville life, a discourse very profitable, pleasant, and fit to bee read of all nobilitie and gentlemen* (1579), *A heptameron of civill discourses* (1582), *The wellspring of witie conceits* (1584), *The English courtier, and the cutrey gentleman* (1586), and *The Booke of Honor and Armes* (1590).

Jones showed a similar attraction to books of lyric poetry. In fact, he was the single most prolific publisher in his era of poetic miscellanies; the full list of his publications in this genre includes at least eleven titles, including both single-authored collections and collections of poems by multiple authors: *A Sweet Nosgay, or Pleasant Posye* (1573), *A Smale Handfull of Fragrant Flowers* (1575), *The Paradise of Daynty Devices* (1576), *A Floorish Upon Fancie* (1577), *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578), *A Speciall Remedie against the Furious Force of Lawlesse Love* (1579), *A Poore Knight his Pallace of Private Pleasures* (1579), *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (1584), *Brittons Bowre of Delights* (1591), *The Arbor of Amorous Devices* (1597), and *Pans Pipe* (1595).

Jones was not frivolous or quixotic in the running of his business. Especially in the early years of his career, he spread his risk across a scattering of genres and a few reliable staples, like ballads—a common practice at a time when much of the market was still untested. But his interest in polite literature and belles-lettres showed early, and it grew more prominent as his financial grounding grew more secure. In the sixties, the Cambridge scholar H.S. Bennett created a distribution table, still widely used, of the kinds of texts published in England between 1558 and 1603. During those years, Bennett calculates, some forty percent of the texts that appeared in print had religious subject matter; ten percent focused on politics, ten percent on history, travel, and current affairs, and ten percent were what we today would call literary.⁸ Jones's own career presents a different map. In a 2005 study of Jones's adventures as a publisher of Marlowe's plays,

8 H.S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1557-1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965): 269-70. Cited in Melnikoff, 157.

Kirk Melnikoff estimates that Jones's total output included thirty-three percent literary texts, seventeen percent religious, thirteen percent "conduct" literature, thirteen percent politics or current events, and six percent drama. (This list excludes ballads and other ephemera.)⁹ Melnikoff further notes that it was only starting in the late 1570's, after he had been publishing long enough to build up a comfortable core business, that Jones began shifting his production towards a greater emphasis on titles aimed at an elite audience: *Cyvile and Uncyvile Life* (1579), *The schoole of honest and 14peciall lyfe* (1579), and two single-authored books of poetry, *A poore knight his palace of private pleasures* (1579) and *A 14pecial Remedie against the furious force of lawlesse Love* (1579) (Melnikoff, 164-5). In short, his career suggests a man who knew that publishing is a business and sought to act as a businessman, but also one who felt a personal affinity for a certain kind of text—enough so to push beyond what the market had proven it was able to accommodate.

The good sales of a few rare titles aside, few parts of the market could have seemed less accommodating than poetry. *The Paradise of Daynty Devices* (1576), a collection of court verse that Jones printed for the publisher Henry Disle, went into ten editions over three decades, making it the most successful poetry collection of its time. But the two poetry titles that Jones himself ventured to publish in the 1570's—*A poore knight* and *A 14pecial Remedie*—both sank, so far as we can tell from the record.¹⁰ Then

9 Melnikoff, Kirk. "Jones's Pen and Marlowe's Socks: Richard Jones" *Tamburlaine the Great* (1590), and the Beginnings of English Dramatic Literature." *Studies in Philology* 102.3 (2005), 156-7. Hereafter cited as Melnikoff, with page numbers.

10 *A handefull of pleasant delites*, published in the 1580's, ran through several editions, but it was a book of ballads, not a book of poetry. Many scholars have assumed that the poet Clement Robinson compiled this collection, in part because surviving editions feature his name prominently on the title page, and in part

in the 1590's, a new fashion for poetry swept the reading public, thanks in part to the success of the first print editions of Sidney's verse.¹¹ Jones leaped eagerly into this blossoming segment: within five years, he compiled and published three new collections of poetry, *Brittons Bowre of Delights* (1591), *The Arbor of Amorous Devises* (1594),¹² and *Pans Pipe* (1595), and hurried back into print a florid collection of ballads, *A handefull of pleasant delites* (1595). When the call came, he was ready, and he jumped at it.

So far, this is a story about the happy conjunction of hope and circumstance. But it leaves some small but significant questions unanswered. This was a publisher who sought to make a name in courtesy literature. Why should he be the one to feel that his career was building toward a special *métier* in poetry? How did the authors and readers of one of his specialty genres relate, if they did, to the authors and readers of the other? The next section of this essay discusses how these two sides of his work cohered, and what that can tell us about the game of poetry and its rules of play in the late sixteenth century. What is significant about Jones's business is that it was a commercial enterprise that ran to an extent on the rails of a non-commercial system. We can best see how these forces

because of the phrasing Jones used when registering the book with the Stationers Company: "a booke intituled *of very pleasaunte Sonnettes and storyes in myter* by Clament Robynson." Melinkoff argues persuasively, however, that Jones was in fact the book's compiler, pointing out that the phrasing is ambiguous and that Jones was a prolific publisher of poetry, while Robinson has no other poetry titles associated with his name (Melinkoff, 177).

11 See Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Cornell University Press, 1995): 228-38.

12 No first editions of this work survive, but Jones is the publisher of the 1597 second edition.

interacted by considering the most general social and economic background to his work, namely that of service and patronage.

3.

A lot has been written about the patronage system in Elizabethan England. Wallace MacCaffrey has written a valuable essay emphasizing its capillary penetration of every level of society.¹³ As his argument runs, one of the shrewdest maneuvers in the shrewd reign of Queen Elizabeth I was to make clear the monarchy's role as a central power that controlled almost every resource that interested the upper classes. The range of positions that depended ultimately on her will extended through the court (from peers to assorted guards and servants), state and regional bureaucracy, military command, the administration of royal lands, church livings, and the judiciary (given only to lawyers, but given by patronage nonetheless) (MacCaffrey, 108). Patronage also was how Elizabeth staffed her civil service, with the posts available "varying in consequence and in reward from the chancellorship of England down to a gunnership in the Tower of London" (MacCaffrey, 104). This was the impersonal side of the patronage system, the respect in which it really was the System: the dull humming machinery of the state, which from the inside must have seemed nearly inescapable.

13 Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics," in *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays Presented to Sir John Neale*, ed. S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, and C.H. Williams. University of London: The Athlone Press, 1961. Hereafter cited as MacCaffrey, with page numbers. Other useful works on the origins and workings of the early modern patronage system include Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) and *Patronage in the Renaissance*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

The actual mechanism was its personal side: a shadow economy in gifts. Elizabeth was a parsimonious gift-giver compared with her father, who had tried to keep up with the Italian style of princely largesse, but she distributed gifts with care. Public honors were the highest in value and often the lowest in cost. During her reign, Elizabeth created, promoted, or restored twenty peerages and bestowed more than 870 knighthoods—fewer than some other rulers had done, but still a good number. (William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who, as Treasury Secretary, acted as an influential overseer of royal patronage, became Baron Burghley in 1598.) More generally, and to avoid flooding the towns with knights, she also rewarded service with a “whole range of special favors in the gift of the Queen, exemptions, annuities, monopolies, farms, leases, and gifts.” In some fields, these were not mere extras but an intrinsic part of compensation; public servants often worked for an annual salary that hadn’t been adjusted for about a century, and they relied on gifts to make up the difference (MacCaffrey, 105).

All of which goes to say that when we talk about early modern artists and their dependence on patronage, it is useful to keep in mind that the patrons depended on patronage also. Drawing on proxies for certain levels of wealth and status, MacCaffrey estimates that the Elizabethan aristocracy included a total of around 2,500 people, about a thousand of whom, at any given time, depended on patronage for the offices they held: for peers, positions of visible power such as lord lieutenancies, magistracies, and military leadership; for the greater gentry, deputy lieutenancies, sheriffdoms, and commissions of the peace; for the lesser gentry and younger sons, positions in the civil service, the navy, the military, the church, or trade—which were often a necessity to make a living. (The

well-connected also kept corridors open at court by holding minor offices there or sending younger sons as pages.) (MacCaffrey, 98-100) The social system of early modern England revolved around patronage; incredible amounts of cultural and economic capital flowed through the channels, and used the language, of personal connections. This was a prominent part of the contours of print culture, where it was common for books to begin with pages of dedications to patrons. A particularly striking specimen from this world is a text that Richard Jones printed in 1579, titled *The First Parte of the Eyghth Liberall Science: Entitled, Ars adulandi, The Arte of Flatterie*.¹⁴

The title page displays the same border stamp and formatting as many other titles that Jones printed in the 1570s. A discriminating reader might have used these features to identify the book as belonging to a particular publisher, one already known for such titles as *The courte of civill courtesie* (1577) and *Cyvile and uncyvile life: a discourse very profitable, pleasant, and fit to bee read of all nobilitie and gentlemen* (1579). (It may be worth noting, though, that Jones's version of *The Arte of Flatterie* is the work's second edition. The first edition appeared in 1576 from the press of William Hoskins, who then sold his rights to the title to another stationer, who then sold it to Jones. It seems likely that Jones sought or was offered the title because it fit his interests.) The title page gives far greater significance to the publisher's identity than the author's; Jones's name appears in the largest letters the title page contains, while the name of the author, Ulpian Fulwell,

14 Ulpian Fulwell, *The First Parte of the Eyghth Liberall Science: Entitled, Ars adulandi, The Arte of Flatterie, with the confutation thereof, both very pleasaunt and profitable, devised and compiled, by Ulpian Fulwell*. London: Richard Jones, 1579. Roberta Buchanan provides an excellent critical edition of this work: *Ars Adulandi, or the Art of Flattery, by Ulpian Fulwell*, ed. Roberta Buchanan (Salzburg, Austria: Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1984). Hereafter cited as Buchanan, with page numbers.

appears in the smallest. In later years, Jones would add to his title pages a distinctive printer's emblem that featured a gillyflower—an emblem, says Melnikoff, of “gentleness and graciousness,” and so a further advertisement of his imprint and his field of specialty (Melnikoff, 152).

The Arte of Flatterie is a satire of the vice of flattery. But the discovery that the work is satire takes some time to arrive, for this book, like many books of the period, begins with a series of prefaces that frame the work for a general readership while also commending it to particular readers in a way that suggests that the general reader is not the most important audience for the work. The first preface is a dialogue between the author and his muse; the second is a dedication to a patron, a prevalent feature in works from this period. (It was not necessary for the author to be personally acquainted with the patron he chose, only to desire that person's attention and protection, or, lacking that, the association of their name. As it happens, Fulwell dedicates the book to Lady Mildred Burleigh, the wife of William Cecil.) The third is an epistle “To the Freendly Reader.”¹⁵ Finally we reach a poem that lists the seven classical liberal arts and presents a verse in praise of each: grammar, logic, rhetoric, music, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry. It concludes with the “eighth liberal art,” Flattery, stepping forward to give a speech in her own praise: of all the liberal arts, she says, only she can assure wealth and advancement. Only after all this do we reach the main body of the text, which takes the form of a series of dialogues between the author and other, mostly allegorical, figures. The book closes

¹⁵ Oddly, this page features a large decorative initial that appears to portray Saint John: a figure sits writing with an eagle at his side, while looking up at Hebrew letters that spell the name of God. My best guess is that Jones had a decorative initial handy and decided to show it off.

with the sense that in this world, falseness and flattery will always triumph, and that honesty will rarely even break even, although a few honest men will manage to survive and thrive amid the gross and glittering whole.

Where does this book fit into the culture it aims to critique? On the one hand, its focus on gentility, display, and the ways of the court fits well with Jones's major themes as a publisher. On the other hand, it is a work of satire: a moment when the author and his editorial collaborators bite and scratch at the irritations of the system to which they belong. But of course Jones made a good business of courtesy books because the world ran on the currency of diplomacy, courtesy, and even flattery. In a system built of connections and favors, soft skills mattered. This helps to explain why Richard Jones, a publisher of courtesy books, was also most prolific publisher in his era of collections of poetry. His poetry collections present the mastery of language—and familiarity with the high culture these flowers of language represent—as necessary attributes of courtliness: part of a larger constellation of signs of learning and belonging that recommend the possessor to others. In this sense, there is a certain pointed accuracy in calling flattery “the eighth liberal art.” Nor is there any sign that Jones held these values in real disdain. Quite the opposite: most of the texts he published were aspirational, just like the gillyflower emblem that associated him, an ink-splattered stationer of perpetually unsteady fortunes, with gentility.

Then there is the author, Ulpian Fulwell. The son of a tradesman, he apparently received little applause or attention for his writing, and he published very little. But despite his condemnation of flattery in *The Arte of Flatterie*, the work he had written

before that, *The Flower of Fame* (1575), is a panegyric on Henry VIII—one that also finds space to heap praise on a friend of Fulwell's, the courtier Edward Harman.¹⁶ Clearly, Fulwell wanted to win the game if he could. He felt its frustrations deeply enough to write a vicious satire on the subject, but the opening pages of that satire are filled with flattering dedications to patrons.¹⁷ (I don't think any reader of the text could come away with the impression that the prefaces are meant to be part of the satire. Fulwell isn't that deft a writer.) Taken as a whole, *The Arte of Flatterie* shows how difficult it is to get outside of the roles and values of a powerful cultural system, even in the midst of a critique of that system's and flaws. In the opening dialogue with his muse, the author asks whether he is worthy to dedicate his book to the dedicatee he has chosen. The muse replies, in part,

Blush not at all (thou dastard) in this case,
Unto the best, best welcome is good will,
Refrain thy doubts, and hope for favour's grace,
Give me the charge to rule thy rusty quill:
LEY all thy care upon her courtesy:

¹⁶ Praising Henry VIII as a way of paying tribute to his daughter was a conventional device in poetry and political discourse alike. Often writers would emphasize both moral and physical similarities between the queen and her father, to affirm her legitimacy as well as her fitness to rule. In 1559, for instance, the diplomat Sir Thomas Chaloner gifted the recently crowned Elizabeth with a Latin poem in praise of her father. The poem concludes with a special encomium to "Elizabeth, whose imperial eye and brow shine forth and recall so well the face of her thrice-great father." Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006): 40.

¹⁷ The satire was so vicious that in 1576, a few months after the first edition appeared, the Court of High Commission forced Fulwell to publicly recant the work. Writing about this event, Roberta Buchanan expresses surprise that Fulwell allowed it to be reprinted in 1579. It may be that Fulwell wasn't consulted, since the title legally belonged to the publisher, not the author (Buchanan, xvi-xxii).

Whose noble heart knows all humanity. (7-10)

4.

The books that Jones published clearly cater to this emphasis on social hierarchy. Flattery and snob appeal dominate their pages: they present themselves to “the gentle reader”; the title pages tend to feature prominently the word “gentleman” or “gent.”; and their contents and arrangement imply a strong connection between the canon and court. Does this setup reflect an accurate view of the lives of poets in late sixteenth-century England? It is impossible to tell simply by reading the collections, because so many poems in them are anonymous or pseudonymous. In this section, I will use Ringler and other bibliographical sources to identify the original writers, so far as this is possible, of the poems that appear in the poetic miscellanies Jones supervised; using this information, I will sketch a general map of the population of writers who contributed their contents. This will provide a new frame of reference with which to assess the relationship in these years between the public image of the poet, at least in one highly visible corner of literary culture, and the actual lives of people writing poetry.

The four multi-authored poetry collections that appeared under Jones’s imprint contain a total of 157 poems. Of these, 27 writers, accounting for 133 poems, can be definitely or tentatively identified. The paragraphs that follow break down this population into groups based on social class. (All of the identified writers are men.)

Five writers, accounting for 34 poems, are members of the aristocracy.¹⁸ These writers worked emphatically in an amateur role, but they also took seriously a sense of custodianship over cultural patrimony. Sir Philip Sidney, the signed author of one poem in Jones's titles and the subject of many others, called his poetry—with a moue of self-deprecation—an “ink-wasting toy,” and yet he often turned it to the serious task of moral instruction.

Ten writers, accounting for 78 poems, belong to the minor gentry. These writers generally came from families of wealth and influence. They usually attended university, which they sometimes followed with a stay at the Inns of Court, and they went on to work in household service or in professions such as law, the civil service, or the military. The writing profession represented a large step down the social scale, but some of them went into it nonetheless—some because they failed to find better employment, some because they saw the very newness of the literary marketplace as an opportunity to conquer a world. Over time, crowding at the universities and declining employment opportunities for graduates helped to push larger waves of educated younger sons into the literary marketplace.

The minor gentry occupied an indefinite position in the social scale, including a cultural elite that shaded into an aspiring cultural elite. This indefinite position goes far to explain why this stratum of writers outnumbers the others in the miscellanies from Jones's press. For one part, their world still included a bustling literary culture based on the exchange of manuscripts among friends. Most of the manuscripts Jones used probably

18 Thomas, Baron Vaux; Walter Devereux, first earl of Essex; Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford; Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange; Henry Howard, earl of Surrey.

came from their hands, if not always with consent. One important source for his collections was Nicholas Breton, the stepson of George Gascoigne and a major contributor to Jones's pages; he first made Jones's acquaintance in the 1570's when, as a law student living in Holborne, he arranged for the publication of two books of his own poetry, *A Smale Handfull of Fragrant Flowers* and *A Floorish Upon Fancy*. Breton seems to have broken off his relationship with the publisher as soon as he acquired an aristocratic patron, the Countess of Pembroke. (Frank McCloskey notes that Breton "published nothing" for the next ten years, even though he was clearly doing work as a writer during that time.)¹⁹ Years later, Jones got hold of some new manuscripts of Breton's poetry and published them without permission in a collection Jones titled *Brittons Bowre of Delights*. Breton announced his unhappiness publicly, but Jones's actions were legally sanctioned, so there was nothing to be done.

For the other part, the minor gentry constitute the "gentle readers" that the prefatory epistles address. They are how these books identify their readership as a social type. This does not mean they necessarily *were* the main readership for these books; the appeal to "gentle" readers might have been meant to flatter the sort of reader who did not have access to the hubs of manuscript culture. Then again, in practical terms, the line between these two classes of reader was blurred. It was possible for outsiders to enter the gentry through marriage, wealth, or military service. (Barnaby Rich, whose poems appear in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* over the pseudonym "My Luck is Losse," was a soldier who acquired gentleman status after reaching the rank of captain.) As with all

¹⁹ Frank H. McCloskey, Studies in the Works of Nicholas Breton. Phd. Diss. Harvard University, 1929, p.324.

aspirational literature, the dreams on sale were an inviting mix of plausible and glamorously out of reach.

Finally, eight writers in Jones's miscellanies, accounting for 25 poems, belong to the middling classes: the sons of trade and the lesser professions. Generally speaking, these are the contributors we know the least about today. Some of the middle-class writers whose work appears in Jones's collections—Shakespeare, Spenser, Drayton, Marlowe—are now institutions in their own right; but Jones allots them only a few poems apiece and calls no special attention to their presence. The growing literary professions employed many writers from the middle class, who worked as pamphleteers, dramatists, stationers, and so on, but their roles as professionals conferred little cachet. The unpaid activity of amateurs like Sidney was still required to sanction writing as a vocation.

To be sure, the catalogue of a single press represents only a thin slice of the scores of poetic miscellanies that appeared on the market in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. But we can find in them some clues about the cultural tastes and values that shaped Jones's editorial choices. The largest group of contributors is the minor gentry, followed closely by the educated middle class. The proportion of poems by actual members of the titled nobility is by far the smallest; but the reader may be hard-pressed to notice this at first, since Jones makes so much of this social group. His collections tend to organize their contents according to a loose social hierarchy, placing titled contributors up front. (They do not group together all of the poems by a given author, however.) The form that the names of authors take also evokes a particular social picture. In most of the collections, initials, pseudonyms, and blank signature lines

outnumber given names, a design that seems to imitate a manuscript culture that cherished guessing games and the flaunting of inside knowledge. (Even the initials can be false or inaccurate. In *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, two poems by William Hunnis use the signatures “E.S.” and “D.S.”)²⁰ In a related turn, the titles of the poems—which it was the editor’s job to write—often emphasize that the occasion of the poems belongs to court life: “A worthy dittie, long before the Queenes Majestie at Bristowe”;²¹ “A Lady writeth vnto her Louer wherin shee most earnestly chargeth him with Ingratitude”; “A louing Epistle, written by *Ruphilus* a yonge Gentilman, to his best beloued Lady Elriza, as followeth.”²²

5.

The final side to this question is how authors presented themselves as authors. The differences between the lives of Sir Philip Sidney, Nicholas Breton, and the printer Angell Day—to choose three writers who share space in a single volume—were immense. But the similarities in their poetry, in terms of style, subject matter, and authorial self-presentation—not only among these three, but among the writers in Richard Jones’s books at large—tend to obscure their biographical differences. There are a number of explanations for this, most notably, the ubiquity in poetic culture of borrowing, reworking, and unacknowledged translation. But one particularly widespread and distinctive overlap between writers is a habit of representing the poetic speaker as a

20 “No Pleasure Without Some Pain” and “Our pleasures are vanities” (1576). In the two editions following this, the same poem appeared with the signature “W.R.”

21 *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576).

22 *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578), G3-4, B1-3.

specific sort of person, one that that none of the identified speakers in these collections is in actuality: a shepherd from a pastoral world.

Today, we tend to recognize the pastoral voice as a voice from another world. It would probably be impossible to write in that voice today without seeming false or disingenuous. But for early modern writers and readers, it evidently seemed very natural. Breton often identifies his poetic speaker as a shepherd; a typical verse from *Brittons Bowre* begins, “Sweet Phillis, if a sillie swaine may sue to thee for grace.”²³ The last book of poetry Jones ever published, a single-authored collection titled *Pans Pipe* (1603), contains nothing but pastoral eclogues.²⁴ Nor was this an unusual theme for an editor of poetry to take up. *England’s Helicon* (1600), a poetic miscellany edited by Nicholas Ling, consists entirely of pastoral poetry. Ling achieved this by altering some of the poems to *make* them pastoral—often this was as simple as adding the word “shepherd”—but many of his contributors had already taken the trouble. Anthony Munday, a colleague of Ling’s who likely supplied copies of his poems personally, appears in *Helicon* by the pseudonym “Shepherd Tonie.”

Why should pastoral personae and imagery appeal to writers across such a broad spectrum of life experiences? Why should this particular kind of speaker resonate, as it seems to have done, with Elizabethan writers’ sense of what it means to write poetry and live out the life of a poet? One way to think about this question is to consider it through

23 Nicholas Breton, “Corridons supplication to Phillis.” *Brittons Bowre of Delights* (1591).

24 In a prose narrative of 1594, Thomas Nashe introduced an especially florid pastoral turn in his prose with an allusion to one of Jones’s miscellanies: “To tell you of the rare pleasures of their gardens, theyr baths, their vineyards, their galleries, were to write a second part of the gorgeous Gallerie of gallant Devices.” Thomas Nashe, *The unfortunate traveler. Or, the life of Jacke Wilton*. London: T. Scarlet for C. Burby, 1594.

the lens of style. The concept of style in literary practice has attracted growing critical attention in recent years. The best recent discussion of its role in early modern literary culture is a 2007 essay by Jeff Dolven.²⁵ Dolven argues that the two most prominent critical traditions concerning style—the anthropological view of style as the symptom of a whole culture, and the Romantic view of style as the individual’s rebellious deviation from the norm—offer only partial application to the world of early modern poetry. In the court and its satellites, poetry was importantly a social activity; poems could be used “for wooing, scorning, or flattering; proffered for securing entry to a new circle or banishing a competitor; or conveyed to let it be known that you are capable but also perhaps that you are restless” (Dolven, 77). In this context, style was conspicuously a matter of social identity and belonging, a way of signaling group membership and positioning oneself among communities of taste. (Dolven uses the example of a coat: a man who wears a coat with a particular silhouette may not have designed it himself, but if chosen right and worn well, it can express his personality and belong to his personal style.) Nor did this tradition of poetry as public identity deaden its ability to reckon with private experience; in the stressful and competitive world of court, even the most impenetrably polished verse could represent a way of composing discomposure.

Literary criticism of the period reinforces this description. Early modern ideas of literary accomplishment set a high value on imitation; Elizabethan poets borrowed extensively from classical, French, and Italian works, and their criticism drew on sources,

25 Jeff Dolven, “Reading Wyatt for the Style.” *Modern Philology*, 105, 1 (August 2007), 65-86. Hereafter cited as Dolven, with page numbers.

both classical and modern, that counseled the imitation of the classics.²⁶ Some critics, like Roger Ascham, complained about an over-reliance on imitation in modern literary culture, but this dissent served mainly to underscore the centrality of the practice. (No critics today complain about poets “hunting the letter,” not because it’s done well now, but because it isn’t done at all.)

That poetic theory and practice so heavily emphasized poetry’s role as social currency can help us to better understand why poetic miscellanies abound with conventional expressions and devices. Authorship registered in part, then as now, by way of a name on the page and an individual style, but even more substantially as part of a social formation that treated style as group identity and the shaping of language as a discipline for shaping the self. As late as the eighteenth century, Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope were able to write self-portraits that associated moral character with the shaping influence of style:

His vein, ironically grave,
Exposed the fool and lashed the knave...
Though trusted long in great affairs,
He gave himself no haughty airs;
Without regarding private ends,
Spent all his credit for his friends;
And only chose the wise and good;
No flatterers; no allies in blood...²⁷

²⁶ Harold Ogden White, *Plagiarism and Imitation During the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935): 60-73.

Not fortune's worshiper, nor fashion's fool,
 Not lucre's madman, nor ambition's tool,
 Not proud, nor servile, be one poet's praise,
 That if he pleased, he pleased by manly ways...²⁸

Of course, the conventions of pastoral represented just one popular style a writer might follow. Not every poetic miscellany featured or even included pastoral tropes. But a striking number of them did, including every volume from the press of Richard Jones. It seems clear that part of the function of pastoral in these works was simply to act as a signifier of aesthetic experience and aesthetic value. The question is why poets should choose this particular speaker as a mouthpiece—why, in order to speak as a poet, they should favor an identity that none of them possessed in their personal lives.

Pastoral is a term that describes a family of related formulas and conventions, though its uses have proven too scattered and slippery for it strictly to constitute a genre. (For this reason, Paul Alpers refers to pastoral as a “mode” rather than a genre.) Notionally, pastoral poetry is supposed to imitate the songs of shepherds as they pass the time while watching their flocks, but in practice, it simply has to include elements from a setting where such songs might be sung. In the words of one 20th-century critic, pastoral “represents all that is artistic, simple and natural in the life of tending flocks in a blooming summer, amid rural delights and beauty. When the shepherd's crook is

27 Jonathan Swift, “Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift” (1731; pub. 1739), ll. 315-334.

28 Alexander Pope, “Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot” (1734; pub. 1735), ll. 334-7.

subtracted from this conception it does not cease to be pastoral.... The pastoral exists when there is a scene that would fitly enclose the natural and rustic affairs of the Arcadian shepherd.”²⁹

There were practical reasons for writers of lyric verse to find an appeal in pastoral formulas. Pastoral had come to be associated with light, short verse; the term *eclogue* even carries an etymological association with the concept of the selection or extract, as the scholar Joseph Scaliger explained in 1561: “When certain superior poets became disgusted with some of their hurried productions... they impulsively destroyed them and kept only an anthology of their better work. From this practice of ‘picking out’ or ‘selecting’ came the word eclogue, which bears this meaning in Greek” (qtd. Congleton, 7). The prospect of a poetic form that embodied or referenced common forms of poetic transmission—excerpting, selecting, gathering, anthologizing—must have been appealing.³⁰

But the appeal of pastoral clearly went beyond short lyric. In the late sixteenth century, pastoral motifs pervaded English culture, finding expression everywhere from masques at court to playhouses and the print marketplace. (Sidney observed that some people disliked pastoral precisely because its popularity was so broad: “where the hedge

²⁹ Robert Bolwell, “The Pastoral Element in Spenser’s Poetry,” Western Reserve University Bulletin, 19, 8 (1916): 18.

³⁰ The noncommittal meaning of “eclogue” also proved useful for the handful of writers who dabbled in the minor genres of “town eclogues” and “sea eclogues”—poems written with a pastoral air that are set far from any pasture. For writers like Fletcher and Drayton, and later Pope and Swift, the modest definition of an eclogue as simply a selection offered a pretext to step out of the grove and explore the town and the seashore (Congleton, 8-9).

is lowest they will soonest leape over.”)³¹ Edmund Spenser, who became one of the period’s most famous writers of pastoral poetry, was typical of the second category of writers discussed above: those who circulated poetry in genteel contexts but were not gentle themselves. An ambitious son of the middle class, he attended Cambridge and then secured a good position as private secretary to the Lord Deputy of Ireland; even so, passages in his poetry make clear that he felt it important, as a sign of his success, to show that his living came from service and patronage rather than trade.³² In his poetry, pastoral could help to establish this connection, since playing the poet’s role as a pastoral role enabled him to wear a costume that courtiers often affected. Group identity helped to give the style its subtext: the shepherd’s lowly costume allowed the poet to avoid seeming presumptuous while also sending a readable signal of ambition.

Pastoral also helped Spenser to assert ambition as an artist, invoking a canon of serious authors and setting Spenser in their company.³³ If an artist matured in part through imitation, here was a brilliant line of models to imitate, from Theocritus to Petrarch and Marot. In short, here was a poetic mode that could at once display virtuosity and learning and sustain the currency of courtly interaction: praise, complaint, supplication. Nor did Spenser forget to affiliate his work with the most celebrated aristocrat to work in the pastoral mode; he dedicated the *Shepheardes Calender* (1579) “To the Noble and

31 Sir Philip Sidney, “The Defence of Poesy” (1579-1580; pub. 1595).

32 As Christopher Warley notes, in Spenser’s longer poems “Epithalamion” and “Amoretti” (1595), the speaker is careful to distance himself from “the wealth of merchants.” Christopher Warley, *Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 106.

33 In the 1540’s, Thomas Sebillet had pressed an influential argument pastoral characters should discuss weighty matters, should be grand in their air (Congleton, 15-25).

Vertuous Gentleman most worthy of all titles both of learning and chevalrie M. Philip Sidney.”

Modern critics tend to describe pastoral in the Renaissance as a class literature akin to the middle-class novel in later centuries. (Raymond Williams comments that Renaissance pastoral had “more connection... with the real interests of the court than with country life in any of its possible forms.”)³⁴ Early modern writers seem also to have accepted the same premise, though they chose to explain the connection differently. For George Puttenham, it was the moral purpose of eclogue “under the vaile of homely persons, and in rude speeches, to insinuate and glance at great matters.” (This sentiment was evidently commonplace; there are few signs that anyone lifted an eyebrow at pastoral shepherds talking like university graduates.)³⁵ But the wide popularity of these motifs shows that people from all sorts of backgrounds saw in them the value of masks. The idle *delights, fancies, beauties, princely pleasures*, and *pretty conceits* that poetic miscellanies offer as the keywords of lyric poetry, the abundant settings and imagery from the natural world (a proxy, in part, for the artful artlessness of *sprezzatura*), the appealing postures of the speakers, hold out a performable repertoire of aristocratic fashions and manners. In Richard Jones’s books, to be a poet was to be a person of quality—not in defiance of the class system, but because of it. The author’s words mattered less than his world.

Perhaps the most potent expression of this idea appears in a poem written in the 1590’s. It first entered print, not incidentally, in a poetic miscellany:

³⁴ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973): 21.

³⁵ The anonymous 1589 treatise *The Arte of English Poesie* contends: “The Poet devised the Eclogue... not of purpose to counterfeit or represent the rustical matter of loves and communications, but under the veil of homely persons and in rude speeches to insinuate and glance at greater matters...”

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountains yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;

And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

The editor of *England's Helicon* (1600), where this piece first appeared in print, chose for it a title that underscores its pastoral, illocutionary character: “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love.” The original author was Christopher Marlowe, but—the name of the author being unimportant, in the terms these collections set and in the case of a tradesman’s son like Christopher Marlowe—the editor attributed it carelessly to Shakespeare. The poem is distinctive for the level of self-consciousness it brings to the social and aesthetic issues that inform pastoral conventions. On the surface, the speaker is a shepherd; he offers his beloved a series of gifts that he means to resemble the gifts that a gentleman would give to his mistress. The embroidered kirtle, the gown, the cap, the slippers with buckles, and the belt, together suggest a fashionable wardrobe, and he also promises to take her to musical and theatrical performances. But because he is after all a shepherd, the speaker must promise rustic, inexpensive versions of these items: the gown will be made of lamb’s wool, the cap of flowers, the belt of straw; the choristers who will serenade the lovers are birds, and the theater they watch will be shepherds at work and

play. In short, the lines suggest a rustic speaker courting his beloved with tender hyperbole that affects the grand manner of a courtier with his lady.

But the language admits other possibilities, too. The gently stylized maneuvering of the lines, the use of a framework that was, after all, a favorite mode of courtly verse, leave open the possibility that the speaker might be a courtier after all. In that case, the speaker would be a courtier pretending to be a shepherd pretending to be a courtier. Or again he could simply be the biographical poet, pretending to be all the rest. If lyric poetry carried meaning, in part, as a mode of play-acting, then this is a poem that loses its beginnings in the act of play. It is a lovely Möbius strip of a lyric.

So how does Jones fit into the project of investigating the material history of literature? What issues connect the early print marketplace with the social system of letters in its maturity, or the editors who worked in early modern England with editors who worked in later centuries?

The first observation to make is that both of these populations of editors lived during periods when the rules and boundaries that constituted the game of literature seemed to be changing shape, in part because of large-scale media transformations. Exactly what forms those changes would settle in were unclear; consequently, both populations of editors struggled to navigate markets that seemed to be pulling simultaneously in wildly different directions. Jones, who sought to make books of poetry a salable product in the new marketplace of print, felt that he could best do this by framing them as part of the gift economy of the enlightened amateur. Today, scholars who work on digital editions often seek to reach out to readers who (as they think) grew

up in a culture of mashups and remixing, and so frame the literary past in ways that emphasize those concepts.

But another point that this study seeks to press is the alterity of the historical past. Book history in its shallow or trivial moments often adopts one of three forms: artifact fetishism, steampunk (which is just a term I'll use for the tendency to attribute to our ancestors our own features and values), and the notion that if something is arbitrary and historically contingent it therefore lacks value. (The laziest argument that I have heard from a media scholar is that it's all right to steal music and television online because intellectual copyright is a cultural construction. Everything we do, everything we make sense of, is a cultural construction. Saying that a practice isn't worth following simply because it's a cultural construction is like saying marine law shouldn't apply to anything wet.) Lingering on difference and alterity offers a counter to the easy saleability of steampunk, which seeks to make the study of the past marketable by showing it to mirror our own historical moment. One of the many problems with this tactic is that we may be mistaken in the terms we use to characterize our own historical moment—which, the next chapter argues, is presently the case. Another problem is that it encourages us to extrapolate too quickly about where media practices will settle simply on the basis of what those media are able to do. In fact, the notion that the uses people actually make of media often runs counter to what the affordances of those media, considered alone, suggest, is a major theme of the next chapter.

Finally, this study makes a modest case for an approach to the study of textual systems that stresses conflict and heterogeneity. The editors in these chapters lived and

worked during periods when the practices and discourses surrounding the media they worked in were up in the air, and nobody knew quite what would achieve dominance in the long term. Diversity and experimentation are prominent features of their professional contexts, demonstrating the sheer range of functions and attributes that literary texts are capable of and suggesting, in roads not traveled, possibilities for roads not traveled *yet*. In fact, there is reason to suspect that even during periods when matters were supposedly more settled, heterogeneity ruled the textual ecosystem more than we tend to think. If the literary distribution system of the coming years will be multifarious, as it increasingly looks to be, recovering those histories might offer yet another way to consider the relationships between media systems as well as those between literature's past and its future.

Chapter 2

The Electronic Editor

1.

That the print marketplace is currently undergoing a period of dramatic change is evident to everyone. Large bookstores are becoming rare, small ones are downright endangered; even in airport terminals, our global reading rooms, tablets are driving out the native glossies and paperbacks. The national news magazines have thinned to perhaps a few dozen pages per issue; *Newsweek*, after nearly eighty years in print, published its final print issue last year. In the most quotidian aspects of our physical environment—the

coffee shop, the breakfast table, the train car, the supermarket checkout—the signs of a changing information society are all around us.

Numbers offer, as usual, a more dramatic picture. Most economic forecasts predict the end of the newspaper industry in its current form. A 2010 paper from the OECD's Working Party on the Information Economy (Sacha Wunsch-Vincent et al., 2010) noted that "The growth of the global newspaper market slowed progressively from 2004 to almost zero in 2007 and negative growth since 2008."³⁶ (The global newspaper market has continued to decline since then, dropping by 0.7 percent in 2011.)³⁷ In the world of books, a big story of recent years has been the emergence of books in digital format. Universities and libraries across Europe and North America have been engaged in well-funded efforts to create digital libraries of printed books and make them available online; the most impressive of these is the Google Books project, which has digitized more than 20 million books with the help of some 20 partner institutions. In the marketplace, e-books are taking a commanding position. Recently, the online book retailer Amazon reported that, as of April 2011, e-books were outselling print books in its store, with 105 e-books sold per 100 print books.³⁸ Throughout the world of letters, the

36 Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, Graham Vickery, Cristina Serra Vallejo, and Soo Youn Oh, for the OECD Working Party on the Information Economy, "The Evolution of News and the Internet" (11 June 2010), p. 7, 17. Accessed online: <http://www.oecd.org/sti/ieconomy/oecdexaminessthefutureofnewsandtheinternet.htm>. Hereafter cited as OECD 2010, with page numbers.

37 "Global Entertainment and Media Outlook: 2012-2016; Newspaper Publishing." PricewaterhouseCoopers. Accessed online: <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/global-entertainment-media-outlook/segment-insights/newspaper-publishing.jhtml>

38 OECD, "E-books: Developments and Policy Considerations," OECD Digital Economy Papers No. 208 (29 Oct., 2012), pp. 36, 34. Accessed online:

prevailing rhetoric has emphasized the rise of digital media and the concomitant decline of print.

What kind of future can we expect for letters? As it happens, we have more power over the shape of things to come than we might think. Though there is an appealing simplicity and prospect of clairvoyance in the fables of technological determinism, history has shown that the uses people make of media do not correlate especially closely with what the technologies of their time make possible. Consider the VCR, which failed to shut the doors of movie theaters, or the radio, which early adopters predicted would make the telephone obsolete. Nor do changes in the shape of cultural forms always result from changes in technology. Consider the curious “rise” of the short story in the twentieth century. Until the final decades of the nineteenth century—excepting precocious innovators like Poe—a short story was in general just what the name indicates: a self-contained narrative that happened to have a short length. The short stories of O. Henry and Arthur Conan Doyle are dense with plot and thin on atmospherics (with the exception of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which is really a novella). Over the course of the twentieth century, however, the short story came to mean something quite particular: a lambent, atmospheric slice of life that ends in a mood of gentle melancholy. How the short story came to narrow so dramatically is a mystery for which many critics have offered shrewd explanations. But the change happened without the technologies of writing and publishing changing in any meaningful way themselves.

<http://www.oecd.org/internet/e-books/developmentsandpolicyconsiderations.htm>. Hereafter cited as OECD 2012, with page numbers. See also Amazon.com’s press release, “Amazon.com Now Selling More Kindle Books Than Print Books” (19 May 2011). Accessed online: <http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=176060&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1565581&highlight>

In fact, there is already evidence that digital editions of texts, e-books or otherwise, are not pushing print books out of circulation. According to another study by the OECD, “the publishing industry grew in both 2009 and 2010, aided by USD 1.6 billion in sales from e-books. Total estimated revenue for all publishers rose 3.1% in 2010, to USD 27.9 billion, following a 2.5% increase in 2009. E-book sales across all publishing categories rose 29.4% in 2009 and 38.9% in 2010, and accounted for 5.8% of total industry revenue in 2010.” The report says of e-books, “They may well also expand and grow the book market by opening up new, additional, opportunities for purchasing, selecting and reading, providing a greater range of books, at hand, anywhere, anytime. The on-going attraction to the physical solid analogue form and feel of the book, and the turning of its pages, looks more likely to be clarified, focused, and distinguished, than simply displaced” (OECD 2012, 7, 37).

If the rise of digital texts does alter the culture of the book, that change will likely occur most powerfully in the narratives and categories we use to make sense of the literary system. In particular, critics today are showing a greater readiness to part with the idea of literature as a category defining something essential and stable. Confronted with an unstable media landscape ourselves, we’re explaining where we are by re-explaining where we’ve been. There is strong evidence that such a shift in literary studies has been underway in recent years. In a recent review of a new edition of the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (2012), a standard reference work in literary studies, Stephen Burt observed (Burt, 2012) that many of the entries differ considerably from the 1993 version of the same work. Entries in the later version, he reported, include “more

history, more attention to a larger stack of ethnic and national traditions, more discussion of how big terms (such as ‘Romanticism’) themselves have histories.” On the whole, he said, the PEPP is moving “away from prescriptive theory... towards a sense that almost everything about poetry (to quote Elizabeth Bishop) ‘is historical, flowing, and flown.’”³⁹

2.

Of course, from a vantage point within certain kinds of cultural systems, the values they sustain can seem absolute and eternal. In the news business, the rise in the twentieth century of journalism as an independent profession, with specialized codes of ethics, a convention of autonomy from political and commercial interests, and a sense of vocation grounded on deeply researched original reporting, even if such reporting made up only a portion of news content, came about not because of a dawning mood of enlightenment but because of specific economic conditions. In particular, the strong profit position of newspapers, which could count on subscriptions from nearly captive local readerships while also selling advertising space aimed at the same readers, gave newspaper companies the funds to build huge staffs and cover the costs of long-form projects.⁴⁰ The result was a period of baroque fullness for professional journalism that came to seem like a social right with deeper roots than it really had, as the OECD report notes: “despite the length of the newspaper history, it is relatively recent that a non-partisan, independent press coupled with investigative journalism, are the order of the

39 Stephen Burt, “No More Rules,” *London Review of Books* blog, 19 November 2012. Accessed online: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2012/11/19/stephen-burt/no-more-rules/>

40 John Lanchester offers especially an concise and perceptive account of this history. John Lanchester, “Let Us Pay,” *London Review of Books* 32, 24 (16 December 2010). Accessed online: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v32/n24/john-lanchester/let-us-pay>

day” (OECD 2010, 15). The trade publishing industry likewise relied for its sense of timeless aesthetic value on market forces that were all too timely: large publishers were able to subsidize ambitious, prize-winning books because they were also producers of unambitious bestsellers like genre fiction, cookbooks, and reference works.

But the kind of change that books seem poised to undergo has already taken place. Mega-selling genre authors, like James Patterson and Lee Child, already act like managers of multi-media franchises. They write books with an eye to how the scenes will translate to the movies, choose agents with expertise in pitching blockbuster characters to television and movie studios, and frame their creative work in terms of branding across platforms. For the part of the publishing industry they represent, which accounts for a sizeable proportion of the trade publishing market in the United States, convergence culture and the unbinding of the book are already here.⁴¹ From this perspective, ushering in a new era is more a matter of changing the rhetoric than the practice. We have seen these kinds of shift before, over both major and minor time scales. Consider how remarkably the public face of the editorial process in early modern England differed from what we expect of the editorial process today. Both legally and in practice, the editors and publishers in Richard Jones's England were openly creative figures to a degree we rarely acknowledge in our own editors today. A great deal in the world of publishing has changed in the transition from that world to this. But it is difficult not to suspect that in some ways practices have changed less than the rhetoric. Examples abound of modern editors, like Ezra Pound, Maxwell Perkins, and Gordon Lish, who quietly played a

41 Jonathan Mahler, “Making Books: The Author as Brand Name.” The New York Times Sunday Magazine (20 Jan. 2010). Accessed online: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/24/magazine/24patterson-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

decisive hand in the shaping of an authorial sensibility. The earlier claim that no author produced a work, and the later claim that no editor did, are fictions alike whatever the era. The difference lies mainly in which fiction we choose to live by. In the nearer past, the blurring of the boundaries of the book represents a more minor but still important change in practice; we simply did not begin to discuss it in depth until recently, because we had other stories about the shape and function of books that served better in its place.

Perhaps no better showcase exists for the current state of commerce between the past and future of letters than efforts to produce digital editions of classic print texts. Instead of attempting to create entirely new genres of imaginative writing based on new media, projects of this kind attempt to make use of new media to better showcase key dimensions of older literary systems: writing technologies, concepts of authorship, patterns of circulation, and so forth. The new literary apps, multimedia annotated editions, and online archives seem to make the case for literature's survival in a strange future by making readers more sensitive to the rich strangeness of the literary past.

3.

The effort to produce worthy digital editions of literary classics has been a serious commercial pursuit for around the past ten years. At the turn of the 21st century, news stories described the ambition of major publishers in developing digital branches, but were able to report few substantial developments. More recently, literary “apps” have been appearing more often and to increasing critical attention. In 2011, T.S. Eliot's old publisher, Faber, collaborated with Touch Press to produce a digital edition of *The Waste Land* (1922) for the Apple iPad. Faber reported that the application immediately became

its best-selling digital publication.⁴² Among its features are expandable marginal annotations and audio recordings of a variety of performers reading the poem. In 2011, Penguin Classics put out a digital edition of Jack Kerouac's 1957 novel *On the Road*. Its features include expandable marginal annotations, print records from Viking's archives, photographs, audio recordings of the author, and an interactive map that charts Kerouac's own road trips. The platform also allows the full text of the novel to be read as one long scroll—an appropriate feature for *On the Road*, which Kerouac famously typed in a Benzedrine-fueled three-week burst on a single long roll of telegraph paper.

Both of these editions aim at general literary audiences, though academic experts helped to build their editorial apparatuses. University presses are also beginning to develop digital editions for pedagogical use. Cambridge University Press advertises a selection of iPad editions of plays by Shakespeare, including *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and now *Twelfth Night*, which it produced in collaboration with the mobile app development company Agant.⁴³ *Their features include audio readings from famous actors, performance photos from past productions, and learning materials such as character charts. Advertising for the series makes clear that its primary aim is pedagogical, boasting “hundreds of classroom-proven activities for each play.”*⁴⁴

42 Stuart Dredge, “The Waste Land iPad App Earns Back Its Costs in Six Weeks on the App Store,” *The Guardian* (8 Aug. 2011). Accessed online:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/appsblog/2011/aug/08/ipad-the-waste-land-app>

43 “Cambridge Launches Two New Explore Shakespeare iPad Apps,” press release, Cambridge University Press website, 15 Feb. 2013. Accessed online: <http://www.cambridge.org/about-us/news-archive/cambridge-launches-two-new-explore-shakespeare-ipad-apps/>

44 “Explore Shakespeare.” Web page, Cambridge University Press. Created November 2012. Accessed online: <http://education.cambridge.org/us/subject/english/shakespeare/explore-shakespeare>

Critics have responded to these projects largely with praise, but they have also offered useful criticism. One pervasive theme is how often these projects recycle editorial content from elsewhere. In a review of the *Waste Land* app, Jeremy Noel-Tod complains that the work's critical annotations have been "filleted wholesale" from an older critical edition, B. C. Southam's *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot* (first published 1968, most recent edition 1994). Similarly, many of the video clips of critics offering commentary on the poem are "imported from a BBC documentary two years ago." In all, he concludes, "If Faber's latest repackaging of the poem's 433 lines had appeared in print, its second-hand critical apparatus would have been an embarrassment."⁴⁵ The Shakespeare iPad editions, too, draw on earlier print editions; their content is based on the Cambridge School Shakespeare, a critical edition for use in high schools, and the New Cambridge Shakespeare, an edition for use in colleges.

Economics and professional constraints can help to explain why new editorial content appears less often in digital than in print editions. As yet, digital platforms have little professional cachet among scholars, as the fate of electronic monograph projects like Gutenberg-e shows.⁴⁶ It is better professionally to write for print. The scholars who compile digital editions of literary classics are therefore often not able to sacrifice the time needed to produce new content, so they make use of from older print editions that can be had easily and cheaply: editions that are associated with the same publishing

45 Jeremy Noel-Tod, "A Wasted Opportunity," The Times Literary Supplement, 20 February 2012. Accessed online: <http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article875711.ece>

46 An excellent general introduction to these issues is Diane Harley et al., "Assessing the Future Landscape of Scholarly Communication: An Exploration of Faculty Values and Needs in Seven Disciplines," especially chapter 6. Center for Studies in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley (Jan. 2010). Accessed online: http://escholarship.org/uc/cshe_fsc

imprint, for instance, or ones that have gone out of copyright, or ones that are about to lose their cachet in the market. (A new edition of Eliot by Christopher Ricks is about to supplant Southam's version, as Noel-Tod notes.)

Still, despite these obstacles, it seems we are entering a period of heady expansion and investment for the digital book. The idea of the digital codex has exerted a powerful pull in the book business and those who see themselves as its heirs. Amazon currently has about half a million titles available on the Kindle, and publishers have begun to experiment with “enhanced e-books” for use on the iPad. If new titles on the digital bookshelf become another staple in the literary marketplace—and this seems very likely—then there is no reason for the classics not to appear by their side. But these two sorts of text carry different meanings and uses, and it is hard to know how those differences will translate onto the screen. How does an app for a book everyone *ought* to have read (if that's how we define a classic) differ in its responsibilities and its user experience from an app for a book nobody would have seen at all without digital publication? Will automatic, bundled-in, tablet-sized multimedia change our understanding of the accomplishments of an author like Shakespeare—make him into more of a Patterson, a creator of a franchise rather than a language? Or is this, for all practical purposes, our conception of Shakespeare already, so that the accoutrements of digital publishing will simply force our rhetoric to catch up with our practice?

4.

“Verse Miscellanies Online: Printed Poetry Collections in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” is a digital archive of early modern poetic miscellanies that a

group of scholars at the University of Reading produced in late 2012 and early 2013. It is the first digital archive of works in this genre, focusing on selected single editions of seven important titles: *Tottel's Miscellany*, *Handful of Pleasant Delights*, *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, *Phoenix Nest*, *England's Helicon* (1600), *England's Helicon* (1614), and *A Poetical Rhapsody* (1602).

The migration of these texts online is in itself a welcome development. These texts in their original editions are difficult to access, kept under careful preservation in select rare-books collections; and reprints are difficult to find, since they have not been republished since the early decades of the twentieth century. Thus an online edition would be a valuable contribution simply as a resource of primary materials for literary historians. Yet this project aims to be more than a simple repository of text. It also aims to exploit the features of digital publishing to engage readers, facilitate scholarly use, and help students to better understand the social and literary world of these peculiar books and the poems they contain. The project investigator is Michelle O'Callaghan, a professor of literature at the University of Reading; the project also makes use of a research assistant, Alice Eardley, a postdoctoral fellow who specializes in early modern women's writing and in editorial theory.

Editing in a digital format is a relatively new kind of scholarly undertaking, so the stages of labor that went into the archive's construction are worth discussing. In an interview, Eardley offered a window on the process.⁴⁷ From start to finish, the process of editing the source texts for digital publication took eighteen months. (The amount of labor involved in creating the archive was a surprise to both of the scholars working on

47 Interview, 20 October 2012.

the project, Eardley said, despite the fact that both already had experience in scholarly editing for print.) The initial copy-text consisted of HTML text files. They obtained the copy texts from Early English Books Online (EEBO), a digital archive, based at the University of Michigan, of some 100,000 books published in England between 1500 and 1700. EEBO makes its contents available in a variety of formats, including HTML files as well as scanned pages stored in GIF, TIFF, and PDF formats. EEBO gave the Verse Miscellanies Online project permission to use its HTML files. (“Their first batch of files was about to go out of copyright,” Eardley explained.)

Eardley started her work by transcribing and marking up the texts using the TEI-P3 version of the XML markup language. (XML is a language used for creating digital texts; its value is that it communicates information about text and presentation both. For instance, in preparing a text for digital use, the XML editor can add an “element” to a particular passage that marks it for display in italic font. The computer responds to the element by rendering that passage in italics—or as a title, a footnote, a new paragraph—on the screen.) XML is a popular choice among literary scholars, since it creates documents that reproduce the look of a printed page. But it can also complicate the job of editors, for it effectively forces them to work on two layers of text at once. When the reader confronts the screen, she sees only the image of a page. This topmost layer shows plainly the fruits of an editor’s usual tasks, such as ensuring the text’s clarity and solving problems of textual ambiguity. The other layer, which controls the text’s presentation through markup, is hidden in the code beneath; but because it dictates properties like layout, which shape meaning, it plays from behind the curtain a surprising role in guiding

interpretation. Presentation is interpretation. (In the words of Michael Sperberg-McQueen, who helped to develop the first version of XML, markup “expresses a claim about the text.”)

First, Eardley cleaned up the html texts that EEBO had provided by filling in any passages that appeared garbled. (The automated method the archive used to translate scanned images to html sometimes failed to recognize characters.) Where necessary, she also restored the stanza divisions that had appeared in the original printed texts. When EEBO created html versions of the texts it archives, it sometimes added stanza divisions where none had been in the originals. The new divisions make the poems easier to read, and they may even be truer to the form the poems would have taken as first written. But changing a book’s formatting can conceal historical evidence about its conditions of production: for instance, a book that squashes the lines together, saving valuable page space at the expense of the text, might suggest an editor forced to work on the cheap. (Layouts match the original texts on EEBO’s scanned page images, of course.)

One important decision for modern editors of older texts is whether to preserve printer’s errors or orthographic conventions now obsolete: for instance, the interchangeable “u” and “v” in early modern texts. At stake in this kind of choice are questions about what the text really is: great men speaking to each other across the ages, the effusions of a particular psyche, historical evidence about a strange past. In this case, the digital platform expanded the solutions available to the problem of what aspects of older texts to preserve. In general, the editors of the Digital Miscellanies Archive favor a historically situated presentation of texts, choosing to preserve the original orthography.

(They had to alter the early modern typesetter's "vv" to the modern "w," however, since the original form would cause problems with computer searching.) But the use of XML tagging enabled the edition's creators to preserve and correct printer's errors at the same time. They left the errors in the main body of text, but tagged them using <choice> tags. If the user moves his cursor over a printer's error, the choice tag produces mouse-over text showing the correction.

How else do digital features change the capabilities of the editorial apparatus? The Miscellanies Archive breaks glosses into three different kinds of user action: hyperlinks, pop-up notes, and mouse-over notes. Sometimes their functions are specialized: editorial notes pop up when the user clicks them, and source references hover in mouse-over text when the user scrolls over them. Sometimes these features coexist with hyperlinks. For instance, a cross-reference from one poem to another takes the form of a little star beside the relevant line. If the user scrolls over the star, a mouse-over note appears giving the title of a related poem; if he clicks on the star, a hyperlink takes him to the other poem. A similar set of hyperlinks connects obscure words to the archive's glossary page.

These features belong to new media, but aside from the use of bits instead of atoms, their technical sophistication is still in an embryonic stage. A particularly well-glossed book from the Middle Ages might include five or more different kinds of annotation, including notes between the lines of the main text, commentaries or *scholia* around the margins, and marginal symbols such as crosses, manicules, and flowers. (The notes might also use color coding and font shifts to facilitate clarity.) Some scholars have

even identified manuscript illustrations as annotations of a sort, since they are later additions that a hand other than the author's has added as summaries and exegeses of the main text, albeit pictorial ones.⁴⁸ By comparison, annotation for digital documents is still at an embryonic stage of development. Markup allows us to manipulate texts in ways that print and manuscript could only dream about—most notably, to create links in the main text that lead directly to cross-referenced material—but discussions of its use in presenting texts and annotations widely convey the sense that we have only begun to investigate its potential. Still, there are signs that scholars are beginning to look to the history of print with an eye specifically to amplifying the repertoire of the digital medium. The minor boom in recent years in academic articles and lectures brandishing nouveau-retro terms such as “medieval hypertext” reveals not only members of older disciplines, feeling perhaps a little frumpy among their sleek, space-age cousins, trying to capture some of the sparkle of futurity, but also members of the new crowd looking for ways to legitimate their own research in those disciplines in search of ideas bring into new applications. For instance, when Sperberg-McQueen emphasizes that *hypertext*, as a description of the linking of non-contiguous passages within a text, is a new term but a concept with “a respectable antiquity,” he means to clear a path in the long discourse of textual semiotics for digital editors to walk back and gather the ideas hanging on either side.⁴⁹ A deeper identification with the oldest and most traditional subjects of textual

48 See, for instance, Stephen G. Nichols, “On the Sociology of Medieval Manuscript Annotation,” *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), and Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992).

49 See, for instance, Michael Sperberg-McQueen, “Text in the Electronic Age: Textual Study and Text Encoding, with Examples from Medieval Texts,” *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 6.1 (1991): 34-46, p. 42. There is a large and growing critical literature on markup; I have chosen McQueen's essay for

scholarship should help digital textual studies better understand the terms of its potential to be revolutionary.

In purely technological terms, perhaps the most promising new tool digital text creation makes available is tagging. Tagging is an editorial intervention specific to the XML layer, and therefore hidden; but in some ways, its invisibility makes it all the more influential. A tag is a keyword assigned to a piece of information for the purposes of classification. Libraries and other print institutions tend to use hierarchical classification systems; for instance, the Dewey Decimal System organizes items in a series of fixed and finite classes, using increasing subordination to pin a given item to a specific location. By contrast, tagging allows for a given item to roam through an open, unfixed, and potentially unlimited range of categories. Eardley started out by putting together a basic “ontology” of keywords, and was able to add new tags as she went along. (One set of tags that she added later, for instance, makes it possible for the user to search for different rhyme schemes.) This made the search function more supple and the contents easier to analyze, and it facilitated academic research by transferring to the machine some of the tedious spadework that must take place before analysis.

The opportunity to use markup language to open a text’s classification system to multiple ontologies at once is potentially revolutionary. It resonates with the ascending critical principle, already mentioned, that literature has a protean past and therefore admits readings that cross multiple orders of discourse. In recent years, digital scholars have been devoting increasing attention to the concept of the ontology in digital

citation because he offers a clear and well-expressed overview of many of the major critical themes.

information systems.⁵⁰ Because the successive waves of users who return to a text over time will differ in the kinds of features they term significant, Sperberg-McQueen argues, a digital text that aims to be useful over the long term must ensure that the markup language that provides its foundation is extensible: “Extensibility implies that someone working on a new kind of text, or with a new theory of general features, may add new tags to the language” (Sperberg-McQueen, 35). Thus a later user may add tags to the markup that keep track of Latinate words and enable searches for that category, or that register phonological information about the text’s language. Of course, a literary text is already multiform in principle—is received as literary in large part because the factors that weigh on its meaning are so overdetermined. The most basic linguistic elements that the markup of a literary text must denote—“lexical information (e.g. dictionary-form of words), morphological analysis including part of speech, and surface phrase structure of the sentence’—are only an aperitif for the constituents of literary meaning, such as symbol, rhythm, sound, and formal structure (Sperberg-McQueen, 37). In this sense, the special value of markup for contemporary literary study may be its resonance with the themes of provisionality and change. No disembodied canon stands as an ideal literary order; instead, critics emphasize that texts and their procedures change over time, taking fugitive material form in competing drafts, revisions, editions, and adaptations (Sperberg-McQueen, 43-44). Markup language may make possible a presentation of the body of the

50 There is a considerable literature on this subject. A good general introduction for literary scholars is B. Smith and C. Welty, “Ontology: Towards a New Synthesis.” In C. Welty & B. Smith (Eds.), *Formal Ontology in Information Systems: Collected Papers from the Second International Conference*. New York: ACM, 2001.

text that changes in keeping with this narrative, showing how specific social and material contexts shape the ways in which writers write and readers read.

The problem, of course, is that much of this editorial process happens out of sight. When the user navigates the archive, performs searches, or follows links from section to section, the text and images onscreen seem to reflect a simple, natural record of the way things are. The manual creation of markup language and metadata requires the labor and ingenuity of human agents, but their presence is invisible in the final product. In fact, it is peculiarly characteristic of the information age that the forces delivering and shaping our information are invisible to most laymen. It is perhaps in this respect above all that the editors who work on digital archives and editions inhabit a transitional phase in the emergence of a new social literary system; most lay readers, and even most academic critics, navigate the new order of texts, intuitively even when not intellectually, as though it were the old one. “When we talk at conferences about digital archives, all the labor underneath is occluded,” Eardley said. “*We’ve* created the spreadsheets that will allow people to search. Whereas people usually think searching is objective, because it involves machines.”

5.

So what is the picture of literary endeavor that emerges from engagement with this archive? A full answer cannot yet be given. As of March 2013, the website was not yet fully operational; most importantly, the main texts are absent.⁵¹ Still, enough of a skeleton of the site is up to enable the user to do some light navigation and get a sense of

⁵¹ Work on the project began in March 2011. It was originally projected for completion by the end of September 2012.

the kinds of activities the edition offers. On the home page, a horizontal menu bar presents links to a set of inner pages: “Home,” “About the Project,” “The Miscellanies,” “Contexts,” “The Commonplacer,” “Critical Apparatus,” “Contacts.” Two of the inner pages are blank (“About the Project” and “The Commonplacer”). “Contexts” contains a set of topics for as yet unwritten essays on historical and bibliographic contexts: “Stationers,” “authors,” “readers,” “books of poetry,” “ballads and songs,” “working papers.” (The latter link suggests the site means in part to serve as a general forum for discussion among scholars.) “Critical Apparatus” presents some traditional forms of critical annotation and a few new ones: a glossary of terms, a first-line index of poems, critical notes by the sixteenth-century writer George Puttenham, and musical settings for some of the poems that advertise themselves as following familiar tunes. (It would have been nice to have sound files that played a few bars from each tune, as well.) Finally, the section “The Miscellanies” will contain the texts proper of the seven editions in the archive: *Tottel’s Miscellany*, *Handful of Pleasant Delights*, *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, *Phoenix Nest*, *England’s Helicon* (1600), *England’s Helicon* (1614), *Poetical Rhapsody*. The texts themselves are not yet posted, but the page presents a paragraph of introduction to each text. (This section also offers the option for users to leave comments.)

The Commonplacer represents one of the new edition’s most promising ideas. The Commonplacer is a web application that allows the user to select, edit, and recombine passages of text into new miscellanies of their own. This feature underscores the basically educational purpose of the edition. Most broadly, it demonstrates a form of

reading native to the era of miscellanies, wherein readers collected favorite passages from their reading in personal commonplace books. (The absence of this practice in reading culture today is striking given how omnipresent it once was, and how recently it was still alive. Erasmus and Montaigne used the techniques of commonplacing to develop the early form of the modern essay; even Sherlock Holmes kept a “pile of commonplace books” in his study.) By making it possible to experience these texts, not as wholes, but as systems of fragments and excerpts, a tool of this kind might help 21st-century readers to see how cultures of reading change over time—and perhaps also to recognize an unexpected venerability in the idea of the remix.

Overall, the site looks to be an engaging presentation of Tudor literature for a hyper-mediated modern audience. The layout and orthography, preserving the features of the original as closely as possible, will offer the advantages of a facsimile edition; the unobtrusive XML foundation will enable readers to interact with the texts in ways the original readers never dreamed of. In a 2007 article, Diana Kuchik offers some general reflections on the digital facsimile as a form of remediation.⁵² *Remediation* is a term Richard Grusin and Jay David Bolter coined in 2001 to describe the way new media forms, when they first appear, tend to incorporate the most recognizable features of their old media predecessors. For instance, the database Early English Books Online (EEBO), which presents a digital update of the microfilm series Early English Books (EEB), imitates the general look and behavior of microfilm, down to portraying page images in

52 Diana Kichuk, “Metamorphosis: Remediation in Early English Books Online (EEBO).” Literary and Linguistic Computing, Vol. 22, No. 3 (2007), pp. 291-303. Hereafter cited as Kuchik 2007, with page numbers.

“bi-tonal black and white.” (It is even possible for a user to search EEBO by reel position, Kichuk points out.) In Kichuk’s view, we are still in a stage of digital evolution in which so-called “new media” largely imitate old media. Most of the digital learning platforms we interact with in the library, from EEBO to podcasts to electronic journals to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography’s online database, are “copies or sequels of analog counterparts” (Kichuk 2007, 291).

Kichuk suggests that digital resources for research will become more useful and effective as they focus less on reproducing the functions of analog devices and more on exploring the opportunities that digital technology presents. In the case of EEBO, the ones who best identify these opportunities may be the users rather than the developers; in addition to the expected page images and plain-text transcriptions, EEBO makes available TCP files of the texts in its collection, and scholars have begun to use these files as groundwork to develop their own digital humanities projects. (Verse Miscellanies Online is one such project.) After all, history suggests that the spread of innovations in media follows demand more than supply,⁵³ and the ones who best know the kinds of questions researchers at a given moment want to ask are the researchers themselves. Already, scholars who use EEBO regularly have mentioned historically significant aspects of texts that the archive does not account for in its metadata, such as format (e.g. quarto), watermarks, and information about the bindings (Kichuk 2007, 301). Even in potential, these kinds of features demonstrate the capability of digital platforms to hyper-

53 See, for instance, Marshall Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

charge the study of literary history even as they denature our conception of just what a literary text is.

Consider, as a final illustration, another digital humanities project currently in progress that seeks to use computing tools to shed light on a similar group of texts. The Digital Miscellanies Index is planned as an online database containing information on the 1200-odd texts falling under the general description of “miscellany” that were published in the 18th century. The information in the database will be limited, including just the table of contents for each text and the title and author of each poem. (Michael Suarez created the “comprehensive bibliography of 18th-century poetic miscellanies” that serves as the primary source for the archive.)⁵⁴ Even so, the scholars involved in the project are ready to make large claims for the kinds of knowledge this tool can generate. The project’s director, Abigail Williams, says that (Williams, 2012) a true quantitative study of earlier literary periods “hasn’t been possible until now, because it’s just impractical to open up every one of 1200 books.” A digital repository enables scholars to analyze vast corpuses of texts: to find “all the different ways in which people talked about the Jacobite Rising of 1745, or all the particular poems that were sung to a particular tune or had a particular refrain.”⁵⁵ Here, once again, the aim of an editing project carried out under the

54 “Digital Miscellanies Index.” Externally Funded Projects, Faculty of English website, University of Oxford. Accessed online: <http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/about-faculty/our-research/externally-funded-projects/digital-miscellanies-index>

55 Abigail Williams, “Only Collect: An Introduction to the World of the Poetic Miscellany.” Lecture at Oxford University, 9 March 2012. Accessed as an MP4 video podcast. Great Writers Inspire lecture series website: http://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/generatersstwo2.php?channel_name=engfac/great_writers-video&destination=itunesu

auspices of the digital humanities is to reverse the tapestry of literary tradition: to unpick the canon of “major” poets so that the weaving of intermediaries shows, to open up the closed body of the text so that variations and borrowings are more apparent, and, in brief, to advance the dictum that literature’s grand myths disguise a snarl of contingencies and constraints. The purpose of the modern authoritative edition is to undo authority.

Inevitably, the Digital Miscellanies Index can only give a vague account of just what a miscellany is. Williams offers a broad definition of miscellanies as “a halfway house between the completely randomized collection of the commonplace book that you see in manuscript culture and not quite the formal history of English literature that you see in late 18th century anthologies.” Yet the very indistinctness of this category of texts during the years in which they first circulated furthers the lines of argument the project is designed to support, since it enables scholars to clarify the retroactive and imperfect character of our critical distinctions. (Even digital forms of scholarly labor, impersonal and exhaustive though they may seem, are not exempted from the rule that a literary edition revolves around a thesis about literature.) Not incidentally, this map of literary history construes editors and critics as powerful agents: trailblazers who lay the groundwork for creativity and reception. If the scholars creating these platforms have lost an authority based on timeless values, they have compensated with an authority based on pragmatic historical fact.

Of course, these concerns are not new. They emerged in tandem with the rise in the twentieth century of the study of book history and the material history of texts. D.F. McKenzie, Robert Darnton, and Alvin Kernan helped to establish the field’s defining

lines of inquiry for the late age of print; Johanna Drucker, Jerome McGann, and Jeffrey Schnapp are carrying its driving questions into the digital age. Lingered farther in the background are the historians of the Annales School, who in the early decades of the twentieth century sought to use multiple angles of inquiry, including the history of communication and the material world of texts, to construct complex pictures of past cultures. The scholars who built book history as a discipline often disagreed, but they shared a common conviction that they were living in a time of growing change and volatility to text's material forms. (Kernan, who wrote many books lamenting the end, in his own time, of what he called "the old literary system of romanticism and modernism,"⁵⁶ was typical in the force of his intuition that the social order of letters was undergoing radical and permanent change. He focused his account of the reasons for these changes on high theory in the academy and a rather analog, McLuhanesque conception of electronic media, e.g. television. Though he could not have predicted the full scope and character of the digital revolution, he sensed that literary works in his own time were already ceasing to fit the mold that the arbiters of value in the field enshrined, and he directed his work toward making sense of this change.)

What is new in the activity surrounding digital editions of poetic miscellanies is the deliberate foregrounding of the text's vulnerabilities as part of the performance of its meaning. If collaboration, remixing, and mixed media will help to define the social practice of letters for the next generation, then recovering traces of those practices in older literary systems is a way of naturalizing the specific upheaval of the present time

56 Alvin Kernan, *The Death of Literature* (Yale University Press, 1990): 82. See also *Samuel Johnson and the Impact of Print* (1989) and *The Imaginary Library* (1982).

and dampening its tragic or elegiac tenor. Like other forms of critical mediation, and in spite of their ostensibly objective, machine-driven format, digital scholarly editions and archives interpret, themselves, the objects they offer for interpretation; two notable trends in the first generation of these works have been to emphasize that literature is a “flowing and flown” category, and to surround texts with attributes from other media—both gestures that aim to loosen the traditional bindings of the book and to expand the space of the literary. This unbinding of the book is a process that has long been underway in the marketplace in diverse though under-acknowledged forms, from franchise novels, books on tape, and magisterially literary editions of non-literary texts, like diaries, to the more recent advent of e-books and literature iPad apps. In our own time, we are witness to a belated critical engagement with this theme. Perhaps the most interesting sites, for now, in which that engagement plays out are emphatically forward-looking editions of emphatically historical texts, where a new generation of editors seeks to write a future for historical study and educate readers in new ideas about what it means to read and to have written.

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