Mediating for Immediacy: Text, Performance, and Dramaturgy in Multimedia Shakespeare Editions

by

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Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies
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Abstract

This dissertation examines digital multimedia Shakespeare editions, a group of seven projects that combine a complete Shakespeare text (plays or poetry) with a complete performance recording (audio or video). I argue that these projects constitute a new form of edition, which uses performance to engage new users and to supplement users’ understanding of Shakespeare’s text. By placing text and performance as congruent and contiguous elements in a digital interface, these projects transpose performance into the experiential framework of reading, enabling users to set their own pace and direction, and to navigate between reading and spectating.

Through its multimedial format, this emerging category also expands the responsibilities of the editor or editorial team, shifting their role from a focus on text to include dramaturgy, pedagogy, and digital design. While these projects do make Shakespeare’s works accessible in new ways, they also reinforce existing narratives, in particular the tendency to regard Shakespeare’s text as dense and alienating while viewing performance as transparent and engaging. The aim of this
dissertation is to explore the intellectual and aesthetic frameworks underlying these projects, as well as to articulate some critiques and possibilities for future development. My goal is to propose a set of guidelines for an editorial apparatus that would govern an edition that comprises not only text, but also performance and digital design.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The rise of Web 2.0 and the resulting ubiquity of web-capable mobile devices – smartphones, tablets, and wearables – coupled with the widespread use and availability of mobile applications, has led to the emergence of a variety of Shakespeare-based apps. This category is comparatively new, having existed in its current form since approximately 2010. Nevertheless, the group already includes a broad range of products and projects, from Readdle/PlayShakespeare’s ShakespearePro, a digital, mobile-based version of Shakespeare’s plays and poems, to SwipeSpeare, a program that offers “modern translation” of Shakespeare’s play-texts; apps linked to institutions such as the Globe, the National Theatre, and the Seattle Shakespeare Company, as well as app-based programmes for the Royal Shakespeare Company’s productions; apps offering audio renditions of Shakespeare’s plays; Shakespeare insult generators; Shakespeare-themed games such as Zach Hintze’s Angry Bards; Shakespeare study guides; and a dazzling array of digital versions of Shakespeare’s play-texts and poems. A search for “Shakespeare” in Apple’s App Store turns up approximately 180 downloadable applications (as of March 2019), while Google’s Play Store lists nearly 200. Following the release of TouchPress’ Sonnets app for iPad in 2012, a new sub-category of Shakespeare apps has emerged, gaining some early prominence, if not necessarily lasting permanence. These products combine a complete text of one or more of Shakespeare’s works with a matching complete performance in either video or audio, as well as a variety of notes, glosses, paratexts, and tools. The tablet, phone, or computer screen thus becomes a locus shared by text and speech, or action, or both, combined in a variety of ways and available to a range of operations and manipulations by the user. Given the current ubiquity of smartphones and tablets, and the availability of relatively widespread wireless internet and data plans, the current situation is one in which a vast number of users – including a majority of North American secondary and post-secondary students – are accustomed to accessing a substantial amount of media and information through a web-capable
multimedia device, most probably through a touchscreen interface\(^1\). The new Shakespeare apps base their appeal in these devices’ capacity to display and combine text, audio, and video, as well as an expanding audience already used to using such devices in order to consume and purchase multiple forms of media: audio, video, text, hypertext.

In what appears to be more a case of parallel evolution than intentional imitation, the release of TouchPress’ *Sonnets* app in 2012 was followed by Cambridge’s *Explore Shakespeare*, the Luminary *Tempest* (antecedent to the Folger Luminary apps/editions), the New Book Press’ *WordPlay Shakespeare*, and the Toronto-based *Shakespeare at Play*, of which I am a founding member and contributor. Two additional projects launched in 2016, linked to the commemorations of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death: the Stratford, Ontario Festival’s web-based *PerformancePlus* resource, and *Heuristic Shakespeare*, produced by Arden and Heuristic Media. These projects take advantage of the functionality and popularity of mobile devices in order to create a new form of Shakespeare product for an emerging – and, possibly, imagined – market. A key feature that links these projects is their presentation of Shakespeare texts in combination with multimedia performance, either audio or video or both. These various elements are presented contiguously and simultaneously, so that a user can engage with multiple streams concurrently, or else alternate between them selectively. The result is an entity that is ‘both/and’ and ‘neither/nor’: an edition that is not precisely an edition, a performance that is not entirely a performance, a book that is not exactly a book. My aim is to explore the emerging category represented by these seven products, analyzing them in terms of the overall nature of their projects, the potential inherent in this new format, the places where it fails to live up to that potential, and the perspectives that it adds to some larger conversations about plays as textual editions, plays as theatrical productions, plays as published books, and the relationships between these iterations. I am broadly interested in the iteration and iterativity of works, the ways in

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\(^1\) These broad generalizations support these projects’ claims for accessibility, though of course this access is neither equal nor evenly distributed. Many areas – especially rural zones – have less access to wi-fi and more expensive data plans, restricting the availability and convenience of streaming media and online content. The majority of the multimedia editions were produced for Apple iOS products (iPhones and iPads), which limits their availability to schools that can afford these devices. I discuss these issues further in Chapter 1.
which a particular document can be said to represent or misrepresent a work, and dramatic works and Shakespeare in particular as loci for these discussions.

1.1 *Shakespeare at Play* and Me

In May of 2012, I co-founded one of these apps, *Shakespeare at Play*\(^2\), in collaboration with Tim Chisholm, Daina Valiulis, and Trevor Jablonowski, a team of Toronto-based directors, actors, designers, and producers. Since then, I have worked on its four productions as de facto textual editor, annotator, dramaturge, and occasional performer\(^3\). The project has undergone several transformations since its inception, from individual iBooks to an independent iOS app to a web-based cross-platform application still in its beta version. Throughout this process, I have been at the core of the app’s textual and performance aspects, crafting the published edition and the production script, providing annotations, glosses, and audio commentaries, and working with the director, actors, designers, and crew in rehearsal and on set. If my proximity to the project compromises my objectivity, it also provides me with an up-close and in-depth perspective, however anecdotal, on these apps and the discourses surrounding them. I am therefore placed in a unique position to analyze and comment upon this emerging trend, to examine the purpose and practice of these new products, and to discuss their possibilities, their limitations, and their contributions to larger fields and broader discourses. My goal here is neither to bury nor to praise, but to articulate what these apps are, what they intend or purport to be, how they might misrepresent or fall short of these promises, and why their existence is significant to Shakespeare studies and studies of drama, theatre, and performance.

Argument from anecdotal evidence is at best partial and fraught. Nevertheless, it seems to me worth pointing out the excitement with which these projects have been received in media coverage, in digital humanities circles, and especially among teachers and students (mostly, but

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\(^2\) As with Luminary and WordPlay, I use the italicized title when referring to the app as an edition, and the Roman font when referring to the company.

\(^3\) I was cast in some of the older male parts when we had trouble filling roles, and performed as the Doctor and English Doctor in *Macbeth*, the Priest in *Hamlet*, and a member of Theseus’ retinue in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. 
not exclusively, at the secondary school level). In the five years since the inception of Shakespeare at Play, I have made hundreds of presentations and participated in dozens of meetings with teachers, administrators, and students, and been struck each time by the enthusiasm demonstrated for the project and the conceptual structure behind it. As these apps are relatively new, reception data is quite limited, and it is difficult to determine how well they meet their pedagogical goals – especially so because those goals are often based in engagement rather than measurable outcomes. The acceptance that they meet in the press and in presentations, however, indicates that there may be some strength to the platform as an appropriate and accessible means to engage the current generation of digital-native students, though all these terms bear scrutiny and healthy skepticism, particularly in consideration of the hype that still surrounds digital editions, and the often-thoughtless excitement that accompanies the inclusion of images in editions (Shillingsburg, *Textuality and Knowledge*; Hockey). I pay particular attention to the marketing and press coverage for these apps⁴, not as a source of objective information or critical analysis, but rather as a discursive framework that positions these projects as new solutions to a variety of problems, real or imagined. These formulations are informative about the ways in which Shakespeare – and Shakespeare teaching and learning – is considered and constructed, particularly in the spheres of academia, pedagogy, and commercial publishing. Not surprisingly, these materials include many triumphalist statements, heralding these new technologies as innovative solutions to ongoing problems, or as the next inevitable step in a continuous march of progress⁵. As commercial and educational products, multimedia Shakespeare editions may turn out to be a flash-in-the-pan intersection of the current app craze (itself supported by widespread use of mobile devices and the availability and accessibility of cloud-based data storage), the push for greater integration of digital and multimedia resources into school curricula and classroom practice (generated, in different ways, by students, parents, and administrators more often than by teachers), the pressure of educational reforms such as the

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⁴ It is a dismaying consequence of the 24-hour news cycle and the need for ‘content’ that the marketing for these projects and their coverage in news media are not easily distinguishable from one another, with many journalistic reports comprising slightly rewritten versions of press releases.

⁵ See, for example, (*Toronto Company’s App Brings Shakespeare to Life*; Mudhar; Bueckert; Colman)
Common Core initiative in the United States, and the distribution of digital self-publishing tools such as *iBooks Author*, which allow scholars, artists, and entrepreneurs to create and sell digital products without requiring them to learn coding skills. In ten years, the multimedia Shakespeare app may seem as quaint and silly an object as the playbook-with-CD-ROM bundle that flowered briefly in the 1990s and swiftly passed from hypermodern wonder-product to artifact of days gone by. My goal is to examine this group of products not as “the coming thing” but as artifacts of a moment that may have already passed, artifacts that link past trends to future developments and concerns. I hope thereby to avoid the messianic hyperbole that infuses so much of their marketing and media treatment, and that creeps into discussions of digital humanities more generally (Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age* 161). That treatment, however problematic, is also worth examining in a larger context, as it draws attention to Shakespeare editions’ status as commercial publications, intended to please a particular market and bring profit to their creators. Claims of textual authority, integrity, and authenticity have been used to market editions from Hemminge and Condell’s “true original coppies” to the current Oxford editions’ back-cover promise of “authoritative texts from leading scholars;” each of these have legitimate and important claims to authority, but these are never fully separable from the desire to sell the product.

### 1.2 Digital Shakespeares

Shakespeare apps are themselves part of a larger phenomenon of digital resources dealing with Shakespeare, early modern drama, and early modern texts. These endeavours include web-based resources such as the Internet Shakespeare Editions and Digital Renaissance Editions, Open Source Shakespeare, MIT’s MOBY Shakespeare and Global Shakespeares, the recent expansion of the Folger Library website, and a host of scholarly efforts, both institutional and independent. In some ways, the app format represents a return to a form analogous to the traditional book, at least in terms of commercial consumption, and thus a turn away from some of the more extravagant claims made by Jerome McGann and other early proponents of digital text and hypertext. McGann’s “hypertextual condition” is more or less the norm in the days of Web 2.0,

\[\text{**In the interest of disclosure, it is worth noting that I do not profit from the sales of Shakespeare at Play.**}\]
and while some e-books and e-text projects utilize the wider possibilities of hypertext, most hew closer to the look and feel of books, a format that is straightforward and traditional. Despite the availability of powerful hypertextual tools, the majority of e-texts are relatively unambitious direct transcriptions of existing textual materials to digital formats. The shape of the text remains unitary and linear, though the platform itself (desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone) enables a variety of reading strategies and modes of presentation that would be difficult or impossible in print: search functions, annotation, sharing or transmission of materials from program to program via social media, e-mail, or copy-and-paste, and the capacity to store immense amounts of information, both textual and non-textual, within a small and portable container.

Probably the best-known and best-publicized aspect of digital humanities is the big data approach, as characterized by Franco Moretti’s ideas of Distant Reading, as well as projects such as Digital Early English Playbooks (Moretti; *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks*). The goal of such methods is to use digital technologies’ capacity for storage and analysis in order to expand sample sets and examine patterns across them, on the basis that computing tools can enable high-level investigation of patterns that emerge across vast data sets. Such endeavours are in turn made possible by digital humanities work in digital preservation of texts, through projects such as EEBO/TCP, ECCO, and other efforts to create searchable databases of early modern texts. The case studies I examine here relate to other aspects of digital humanities, particularly notions of digital access and accessibility, and especially the experimentation with interfaces. The innovation of these projects has less to do with larger data sets and more to do with the arrangement and presentation of content and the new functional and interpretive possibilities offered by digital technologies. At the same time, as Galey and others have remarked, digital humanities often focuses on the analysis and manipulation of content at the expense of a rigorous examination of the content itself, treating all data as essentially viable, or else assuming that, in a sufficiently large sample size, the ‘bad’ data will be overridden by the ‘good’ data (Galey, “Encoding as Editing as Reading”). A pernicious pattern in digital humanities projects (and in digital reading more generally) is the tendency to accept what Katherine Rowe calls the “good enough” version, the “satisficing” answer, rather than insisting on an open and rigorous development of “good” versions (Rowe). In terms of accessibility, the multimedia Shakespeare editions are engaged in increasing access to Shakespeare-in-performance, at several levels. These
include the incorporation of performance materials into the digital edition, providing ready access to recorded performance for users who may be geographically or financially distant from live performance. In addition, the performance materials are constructed and incorporated in such a way as to render them familiar, using conventions that the intended audience readily recognizes from film and television, and thus enabling a smooth understanding of the dramatic fiction or rhetorical meaning. Finally, the interface itself places the performance adjacent to its matching text, and the controls enable users to pause, reposition, and reverse the playback, enabling users to replay, linger over, or skip segments in order to explore meaning and experience.

Digital Humanities also has a tendency to dismiss or elide materiality, especially the materiality of books and textual documents; conversely, champions of books as material artifacts sometimes reinforce this tendency when they argue that print documents are textural and material while digital artifacts are immaterial, a kind of smoothed-out neutral sensory experience. These projects (six out of the seven, anyway) resist that argument, as the editions’ design is heavily contoured by the projects’ existence as apps, to be utilized via touchscreen interfaces, on hand-held mobile devices. As Galey has argued, consideration of reading on such devices has tended to simultaneously emphasize and elide the materiality of reading, on the one hand presenting the digital interface as experientially identical to other forms of reading (specifically to the hand-held mode of the paperback book), while on the other hand advertising the visual and tactile experience of the touchscreen interface (Galey, “The Enkindling Reciter”). The kind of digital reading enacted by apps generally, and by the apps in this category specifically, is already a subset of the expanding field of digital reading, especially as far as interface is concerned (Murray).

Recent controversies over the look and feel of Apple’s iOS have drawn attention to the notion of skeuomorphism, the practice of incorporating into new technologies and tools the dressing, design features, or metaphors of older technologies and practices, in order to evoke in users a sense of familiarity and an intuitive approach (Evans). The e-text, and especially the commercial e-text, thus presents itself to users with signifiers of the material book, with aesthetic features that have nothing to do with operation or functionality, and everything to do with creating an impression of familiarity. Apple’s iBooks platform, for example, includes sophisticated code that creates an interactive page-turning animation cued to the reader’s finger movements. This feature
is wholly unnecessary for the display of the text content, but creates a visual and kinaesthetic
link between the two modes of reading. In his meditation on operating systems and graphical
user interfaces, Neal Stephenson describes skeumorphic practices as “massively promiscuous
metaphor-mixing” in which “[graphical user interfaces] use metaphors to make computing
easier, but they are bad metaphors” (Stephenson). He points to the operating systems’
repurposing of terms such as “document,” “window,” and “desktop,” in a process that has
succeeded to the extent that “all of the other modern operating systems have learned that in order
to be accepted by users they must conceal their underlying gutwork beneath the same sort of
spackle” (Stephenson). The result, as in the case of Apple’s iOS, is a debate between “gutwork”
and “spackle,” in which some participants support programs that use archaisms or promiscuous
metaphors to provide an intuitive and comforting user experience, while others recommend fully
embracing the possibilities of the new format, at the risk of alienating or confusing potential
users. There are parallels here to Shakespeare editing and performance, as well as to the digital
design for Shakespeare projects. The relationship between a purportedly stable source code and
its shifting graphical user interfaces mirrors any number of fidelity-versus-accessibility
dynamics: between an originary text and its material documents, between a dramatic work and
its instantiated productions, between a complex topic and engaging pedagogy.

1.3 Editions and Editing

Until a better term presents itself, or some kind of industry standard emerges, I will persist in
referring to these multimedia Shakespeare apps as “editions.” I fully acknowledge that the term
implies a depth and breadth of scholarly undertaking, and in particular a level of bibliographic
competence and discipline that is not shared by all these projects (specifically, WordPlay
Shakespeare, Stratford’s PerformancePlus, and my own work at Shakespeare at Play lack the
textual rigour of a scholarly edition). The concept and practice of textual editing, and particularly
of editing Shakespeare, inhere in bibliographic tasks, but have grown to encompass a broader
range of activities and competencies. In preparing his edition of 1766, George Steevens lamented

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7 iBooks also enables the user to navigate by tapping the screen, which calls up the next or previous page. In my
own digital reading, I have always found this option jarring to the point of distraction, whereas the page-turning
animation, while both unnecessary and inefficient, enables me to read seamlessly.
that a “perfect edition” of Shakespeare “requires at once the assistance of the Antiquary, the Historian, the Grammarian, and the Poet” (Steevens, quoted in Murphy 90). Modern editors of Shakespeare must deal with less-visible textual choices such as modernized spelling, altered punctuation, coherent stage directions, and consistent speech headings. They are responsible for glossing terms that they deem to be unfamiliar or confusing to their target audience. They provide annotations on bibliographic cruxes, inter-textual references, historical context, poetry, rhetoric, and performance. They select, organize, and sometimes produce paratextual materials, including introductory essays, appendices, and bibliography. They may select, source, and place printed images, such as woodcuts, illustrations, and production stills. In the wake of Wells, Taylor, and Jowett’s Oxford editions, editors have also been called upon to reconsider the plays as theatrical objects, and to include a treatment of stage practice and performance history, as well as expanded stage directions to clarify the stage action. Editors of digital editions may also have direct involvement with the edition’s aesthetic design, including page layout, font, and the ordering and organization of hyperlinks and navigation structures. Editors – often co-developers or founders on digital projects – may also be involved with the digital edition’s functionality, deciding whether to include searching, built-in dictionaries, copying-and-pasting, or user notes. Each project in this set of case studies has been built around an iteration of Shakespeare’s text that has been prepared for publication. The text for the artist-led projects (Stratford, WordPlay, Shakespeare at Play) betrays the tendency of digital projects to, in Alan Galey’s words, “simply ingest literary texts as normalized data,” but the projects’ larger aim involves a considered construction of an apparatus for presenting Shakespeare’s work to a given public (Galey, “Encoding as Editing as Reading” 209)⁸. As such, I feel it is appropriate and useful to consider these projects as editions, though there is certainly cause to label them as better or worse editions, at least in respect to particular frameworks of evaluation. Given that the set of objects I am describing does not yet have a categorical name, I will refer to them as “digital multimedia Shakespeare editions”. I discuss these editions as innovations, but also as developments in ongoing editorial practice and theory, in particular the integration of performance perspectives,

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⁸ See also Eric Johnson’s lukewarm defense of the Globe Editions and MOBY Shakespeare, included in the Open Source Shakespeare website (E. M. Johnson).
the growing focus on paratextual and non-textual elements, the exploration of functionality and interface, and the effort to engage modern users by adapting Shakespeare into new technologies.

1.4 Performance

Laying claim to the term “edition” prompts a similar declaration of intent for the term “performance,” which I use to describe the audio and video aspects of the multimedia editions. Following Schechner, Auslander, et al, many critics and theatre practitioners would identify performance or theatricality with liveness, the quality of co-presence in real time and real space between performers and spectators. This immediate presence is what separates theatre from film, television, and other recorded or broadcast media. Performance artists and performance studies scholars might also emphasize, with Marina Abromovic and others, the distinction between the “reality” of performance and the “artificiality” of theatre and drama. I certainly do not dispute the importance of this aspect of performance, and the centrality of liveness to the theatrical experience, but I would argue that liveness is not the essential core of performance, and indeed that performance need not have an essential core. Artists working at the intersection of theatre performance and digital technologies have been using recording, broadcasting, projections, and a host of cyber/digital tools to challenge the division between performative liveness and digital mediation, integrating projected, recorded, and variously-mediated presences into live theatre events. Barbara Hodgdon has argued that technology has broadened the cultural understanding of performance and its possibilities, and has likewise opened up pedagogical practice to include technology and mediated performance (Hodgdon 4). Hodgdon’s own description merges the technology used to promote understanding of a textual work (“the film clip played beside the text”) and technology used to present mediated performance as a text/work in its own right (“entire courses were devoted to Shakespeare films”), a distinction that is both evoked and blurred in multimedia Shakespeare projects (Hodgdon 4). Clearly, a recorded performance, whether in video or audio, is qualitatively different from attendance at a live theatrical event, and the most obvious point of differentiation is the element of liveness. For my purposes, however, in consideration of the multimedia edition, the theatre/film or live/recorded binary is less significant than the text/performance binary. In the latter, liveness is no longer the sole or even the primary differentiator, but is instead one aspect among a host of others, including all the aural, visual, and kinesthetic elements that tend to be condensed or elided in dramatic texts, and fully realized in
theatrical performance. Here, performance is less a signifier of theatrical liveness and more an indication of the myriad other qualities that differentiate the production from the script. With this in mind, while acknowledging the essential distinction between a live staging and a recorded production, I nevertheless use “performance” as an umbrella term that contains both sets of practices, for the purposes of this discussion. I should add that my aim here is not to recapitulate or blithely accept the text/performance binary as an uncontroversial distinction, but to engage it as a useful point of entry from which to proceed.

1.5 Shakespeare Intersections: Text and Performance, Teaching and Technology

W. B. Worthen, describing the function of editions in constructing textual and performative authority, asserts that “for better or worse, editions not only document a version of the work, they declare a vision of the work, erecting a kind of monument to ‘something we value’” (William B. Worthen 18). Similarly, Jerome McGann argues that “the edition performs its own meaning. Any other meaning it might have, or be given, could only enter the field as another performative act, another edition (J. J. McGann 114). Peter Shillingsburg and Paul Eggert have similarly argued that every edition is not only a documentation of a given work, but an argument about the work, and M. J. Kidnie has echoed and extended Worthen’s argument to consider editions and productions of Shakespeare as always essentially adaptive, which is to say, always formulating an argument about the work (Shillingsburg, Textuality and Knowledge; Eggert; Kidnie). Similarly, Galey and Ruecker’s “How a Prototype Argues” links Lev Manovich’s assertion that “every prototype is a theory” with Bernard Cerquiglini’s claim that “every edition is a theory” (Galey and Ruecker 407). An edition that incorporates both a text and a performance is, likewise, making an argument about the work, the capacity for multiple versions to represent a single work, and the requirement or advantage of expressing the work via several kinds of adaptation. My contention is that multimedia Shakespeare editions make a forceful argument for considering both text and performance as essential aspects of the Shakespearean work (including non-dramatic texts such as the sonnets); at the same time, these projects make complex and often muddled arguments regarding the relationship between text and performance, and the ways in which each can and should function in the reading and teaching of the work.
Worthen suggests that “precisely because ‘Shakespeare’ stands at the center of two articulate and contentious traditions – of reading and the criticism of texts; of performance and the staging of scripts – Shakespearean theatre affords a powerful way to bring questions of authority and performance into view” (William B. Worthen 2). This effect extends to editions of Shakespeare that attempt to include or even gesture towards the texts’ performative dimension. Antony Hammond argues further that an editor – and an edition – cannot merely stand at that crossroads, but must choose one path to the exclusion of the other: editors must make “a conscious decision as to whether they are editing ‘the poem’ or ‘the play’” (Hammond 96). For Hammond, and for many of his fellow editors, an editor must choose one path or the other, for attuning the reader to ‘the play’ means obscuring ‘the poem,’ and vice versa. Hammond is by no means alone in his opinion, though editors have frequently chosen to ignore his admonition, and the history of Shakespeare editing is full of editors and editions attempting to reconcile these two paths. Wells, Taylor, and Jowett’s project in the Oxford Editions has been to recover and communicate the plays’ theatrical dimension, and this aim has been taken up in succeeding Arden and Cambridge editions as well. The resulting editions have brought attention to those elements of ‘the play’ that emerge through ‘the poem,’ and have sought to aid readers in envisioning the performance via reading the dramatic text. Moreover, this overall project has fundamentally altered and redefined the purpose and function of the Shakespeare edition, as well as the tools and procedures to be used in its execution. The dearth of theatrical descriptions in early editions of Shakespeare is partly a matter of fashion, but partly an indication of the editors’ assumptions of readers’ familiarity with stage practices. When readers can generally be assumed to have direct experience of playgoing, and a working familiarity with conventions of the theatre – and of the kinds of plays presented in the edition – an editor can reasonably suppose that a given reader will be able to competently parse the dramatic text or ‘poem’ in order to reconstruct a hypothetical performance. Shakespeare editions change over time to reflect readers’ competencies and expectations. Thus, readers of Nicholas Rowe’s 1709 editions would, like Rowe himself, bring to bear an experience of indoor Restoration theatre to their reading of early modern playhouse scripts, as well as a set of aesthetic criteria that might bewilder an early modern audience. Rowe’s editions thus preface each scene with a description of its location, more evocative of Restoration backdrops than of the bare stage of the Globe. Nevertheless, Rowe’s readers would likely have an understanding of the mechanics of theatrical action, of plays in five acts and in
verse, of structured rhetorical argument and stage poetry, of stage directions implied through
dialogue, and of now-archaic directions such as “retires” or “drawn.” Whether the edition is
intended to emphasize the play or the poem or both, the editor must take into account the codes
and competencies that might have been assumed for an original audience, consider how well
those assumptions fit the intended modern audience, and devise strategies for addressing and
navigating any gaps between the two. The changing nature of those gaps is one reason why
editions have a limited currency, as is the changing fashion in techniques used to navigate the
gaps. Sarah Neville argues that editing – and particularly editing of digital texts – can benefit
from an understanding of ‘Transactive Memory Systems,’ the processes whereby individuals
“externalize a significant percentage of their knowledge, arranging recall of the location of
stored information rather than the information itself” (Neville 11, emphasis Neville's). Her
argument is particularly concerned with the transformative possibilities of transactive memory
systems (TMS) for revealing editorial labour and challenging the uni-directional dynamic of
authority that flows from editor to reader. I would suggest that such considerations are also
useful for modelling the shifts in editorial theory and content, as stored information that could
once be assumed to inhere in readers of drama is re-evaluated and externalized to the editor and
the edition.

1.6 Shakespearean Authority and Shakespearean Authorities

As Barbara Hodgdon suggests, the “text vs. performance debate” has become a “long-standing
controversy” in Shakespeare studies, in which “the notion of multiplicity of the stage’s
signification has been radically restrained by the sense that it’s the page that permits the reader’s
freedom” (Hodgdon 3–4). Sukanta Chaudhuri reiterates a major tenet of this debate when he
argues that “every performance is attended by spectres of all the possible performances it has
eliminated to become itself; but the verbal text harbours them all” (Chaudhuri 163). Part of this
debate is anchored in an understanding or construction of authority, and the search for an
unmediated encounter with Shakespeare, or an imagined version of Shakespeare. G. T. Tanselle
identifies textual editing as a reconstructive endeavour with a backward trajectory, an effort that
progresses through analysis of existing documentary witnesses and investigation of period
printing practices to a reconstruction of the authorial text. The goal, for Tanselle as for the New Bibliographers, is to arrive at, approach, or approximate the “work,” the originary conception that spawns and authorizes all subsequent texts and copies (Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* 5). The role of the bibliographical editor, then, is to scrutinize existing documents and analyze the processes of their production, in order to arrive at the purest possible reconstruction of the authorial work, carefully separating authorial intention from the forces of influence and corruption (Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* 84). For Tanselle, Shillingsburg, and textual theorists working in this vein, the work is distinct from any social or material processes, and thus “any so-called intention that is actually an expectation of what will be done to the text by others can have no bearing on the reconstruction of an authorially intended text,” an assertion that has profound consequences for the analysis of a play-script (Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* 77). Tanselle goes on to assert that “the fact that plays are produced as collaborative efforts does not mean that plays as written – plays as they left their authors’ desks – are not works of drama, worthy of study as art” (Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* 85). The idea of “worth” here appears to correlate directly to the originary authorship, metonymically figured by the desk, as opposed to the cacophonous and diluting influence of collaboration and production, here extrinsic and somehow threatening to the play’s standing as “a work of drama” and its status as “art,” or at least the direct linking of that art to its author. There are lacunae in Tanselle’s peculiar formulation of this idea. His argument is not precisely that plays are art, but that they are not not-art: the collaborative aspect of the theatre “does not” make written plays “not works of drama,” and that double negation means that they are “worthy of study as art.” This is not a valorization or even a vindication of the theatre. Tanselle’s rhetorical contortions are necessary in order to rescue from the compromised, collaborative theatre something that can be, if not precisely art, then at least not-not-art. The drama only partially survives the destabilizing “collaborative effort” of theatrical production, and it does so only by its connection to the singular author and the stabilizing desk. Wells, Taylor, and Jowett caricature Tanselle’s position – shared with numerous Shakespeare editors and critics – as a formulation that contrasts “the author’s own intentions, preserved in the privacy of his foul papers” with “what happened to this innocent text after it left his protection to be violated and debased in the theatre” (Stanley. Wells, *William Shakespeare, a Textual Companion* 19). Chaudhuri reinforces Tanselle’s proposition by framing playgoing and play-reading in terms of mediation. For Chaudhuri, the
theatrical experience of a play is governed not only by the production “prepared by other people,” but also by the experience of the “mass identity” shared among an audience; by contrast, the reader of a dramatic text “controls his own responses without the mediation of actors,” and thus “enters into a one-to-one relationship with the author” (Chaudhuri 164). In Chaudhuri’s formulation – and implicitly in Tanselle’s as well – the work itself is not the end goal, but rather a vehicle for communion with the author, a desire that figures powerfully in discussions of Shakespeare, and is reflected in Stephen Greenblatt’s desire to speak with the dead, and Wells et al’s description of editing as “an attempt to understand the past, and to make that past more accessible to our own contemporaries” (Stanley. Wells, William Shakespeare, a Textual Companion 7).

There is a practical consideration here, partly distinct from the convoluted claims of authority. Quite simply, play-texts are significantly easier to reconstruct and reproduce than play-performances. The process is hardly perfect, but the combination of reasonably good documentary witnesses (for surviving plays, at least) and considerable research on early modern printing practices through the New Bibliographers and beyond, has led to the production of a large body of objectively sound edited texts. The fact that most editors are working from multiple documents, none of which is fully authoritative or authorial, means that the process is always partial, imperfect, and contingent. As Stephen Orgel warns, “none of our texts is original… every word we possess by Shakespeare has been through some editorial process” (Orgel 35). To make matters worse,

> [e]ven if a Shakespeare manuscript were discovered tomorrow, it would not simply declare its secrets to us. We would have to edit it before we could draw conclusions about it, and the editorial process would involve all the familiar decisions about what was really written, intended, or meant. (Orgel 35)

This instability and indeterminacy of texts works out nicely for the publishing industry, as it helps to provide Shakespeare editions with a kind of planned obsolescence.
On the other side of the equation, there are those who insist on the plays’ theatrical authority, on performance as their dominant mode, and on the stage\(^9\) as their natural habitat. Despite Tanselle’s concerns, this position is not necessarily at odds with the idea of Shakespeare as authorizing figure, and performer-scholars such as Patrick Tucker and other First Folio adherents, or John Barton and his disciples at the Royal Shakespeare Company, insist that Shakespeare’s authorial intentions can be divined from the play-text and applied directly to performance. As Orgel reminds us,

> The dramatic text in its own time was not the play: the text was the script, and it was only where the play started; the play, and its evolution into the texts that have come down to us, was a collaboration between author and actors, with the author by no means the controlling figure in the collaboration. The playwright of the Renaissance theater was an employee of the company, who wrote to order and was paid for piecework. (Orgel 7)

Orgel acknowledges Shakespeare’s exceptional status as a shareholder in an acting company, but argues that even this unique position “probably only means that he was in on more parts of the collaboration than other playwrights were” (Ibid). As David Scott Kastan, Andrew Murphy, and Gabriel Egan have demonstrated, a play’s theatrical provenance, its theatrical success, the reputation of the acting company, and the fame of its noble patrons were all selling points for printed play-scripts in early modern London, often more important on title-pages than the name of the playwright (Egan 93; Kastan; Murphy). At the outset of his *Phenomenal Shakespeare*, Bruce R. Smith posits several aspects of Shakespeare, each with its designated tongue-in-cheek acronym: The Historical William Shakespeare (THWS), William Shakespeare as Cultural Icon (WSCI), and William Shakespeare as Author (WSA) (Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* xi). The turn toward theatrical authority supplies another figure for this list: William Shakespeare as Theatre Artist (WSTA), the playwright-performer concerned less with literary production than with theatrical success (and, arguably, less with artistic high culture status than with commercial popular culture production). The emphasis on the plays as theatrical objects and events notably defined Wells, Taylor, and Jowett’s edition of the Oxford University Press Shakespeare, such that our current editorial ‘moment’ is partly defined by this theatrical turn. Paul Werstine argues

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\(^9\) As Worthen argues, such positions tend to reify “the stage” into a coherent whole, rather than a set of widely disparate historical practices, drawing tenuous links between modern and early modern practices of performance. (William B. Worthen 67)
that this move reconfigured the editions’ conception of textual authority away from the playwright’s authorship and toward a more diffuse theatrical authority; editorial decision-making thus became grounded in an attempt to “represent the plays as they were staged,” rather than to reproduce an authorial intention or document (Werstine 30, italics mine).

1.7 Multiplicity and Multimediation

*Shakespeare at Play*, *WordPlay Shakespeare*, *Heuristic Shakespeare*, and *Stratford Performance Plus*, all of which use video performances, highlight a version of this appeal to theatrical authority in their framing and marketing materials. “Shakespeare was not meant to be read,” proclaims the *Shakespeare at Play* website, “his words were meant to be brought to life in performance” (*Shakespeare at Play*). While the marketing for these projects emphasizes the video content and the authority of performance over text, the products themselves operate in a more complex manner, constructing a rhetoric via mise-en-page (or, more accurately, mise-en-screen) and hypertext. If we agree with Eggert et al. that the edition represents an argument about the work, then these multimedia Shakespeare editions argue that the performance is an essential aspect of the work’s totality. At the same time, they do not abandon the importance of the text, or even truly challenge its primacy. The exact relationship between the two streams is difficult to model. Insofar as these are products designed with a pedagogical purpose in mind, they present the text as a core component of the project. A Shakespeare play or sonnet is, in most classrooms, an object to be read (silently, privately), though that reading might be supported, enriched, deepened, or productively contradicted by performance. Completeness is a defining aspect of these projects, and each contains a full text and a matching performance, so that a user can play the audio or video to get a full rendition of the play or sonnet cycle, or else read the entire text in a full-screen display. The two aspects are thus positioned as complementary rather than supplementary – each enriches the other, and their combination provides opportunity for comparison and consideration, but the combination is not made to seem necessary for enjoyment or appreciation of the work. None of these projects merges the performance and text; in function and design, the elements remain separate yet contiguous. The combination tacitly positions each apparently self-sufficient iteration as part of a larger whole, a broader or more holistic understanding of the overall work. These hybrid projects fall far short of Jerome McGann and Hans Walter Gabler’s optimistic notions of hyperediting (J. J. McGann; Gabler). McGann posits
that scholarly editing is limited by the nature of books themselves, as an editor is labouring to use a book to describe books. He proposes that digital hyperediting, freed from the physical and conceptual bounds of the codex, gains a new perspective, analogous to viewing a two-dimensional image in a three-dimensional space. McGann’s hopes for digital projects elide the fact that computers – or tablets, or smartphones – are media in their own rights, with their own affordances that support, impede, and contour meaning-making just as books do, and that carry their own physical, social, and economic significations just as books do.

The mission of these projects – and some aspects of their design – positions text and performance as equal and equivalent aspects of a work, with the intention of using the performance to supplement users’ understanding of the text. At the same time, the overall design – displaying both text and performance simultaneously on the screen – invites users to engage these streams through a process of comparison, a process that is inherently critical, though not always productively so. In this sense, multimedia Shakespeare editions operate like limited variorum editions, or like dual-language editions, in which users’ ability to compare different versions produces a broader and more dynamic conception of the overall work. Nick Sousanis, in his work on graphic novels, argues that the medium’s juxtaposition of words and images creates a parallax effect, in which each perspective’s supplementation of the other results in a kind of depth perception, a combined view with a more accurate and nuanced sense of the overall work (Sousanis)\textsuperscript{10}. Shillingsburg makes a similar argument for scholarly editions that trace multiple versions of a work, claiming that the comparative mode that such projects establish results in “a bigger bang for one’s buck” (Shillingsburg, \textit{Textuality and Knowledge} 123–24). This comparative mode has the potential to raise multimedia Shakespeare editions above the status of supplementary aides, and to introduce some of the key ontological and epistemological questions about plays’ dual existence as texts and performances. In their current form, however, all of these projects are much more engaged in exploring the textual side of the encounter, in that they provide a range of tools for explaining the text, while largely assuming that the role of the performance is to speak for itself. In Stephenson’s terms, these projects treat the text and

\textsuperscript{10} Sousanis’ own work is analogous to multimedia editions – and different from most comics – in that the text and images are conceptually related and contiguous but not integrated into a united narrative.
performance as analogous to command line and graphical user interfaces: the former is relatively stable and direct, but inaccessible or illegible to a majority of users; the latter is simplified and mediated, and subject to promiscuous metaphors, but enables a wider range of users to engage and manipulate the content. This dissertation seeks to understand the construction of multimedia Shakespeare editions as an essentially editorial activity, and in so doing, to expand the horizon of editorial activity to encompass digital design, pedagogy, and performance.

1.8 Mediation and Immediacy

In editing, in performance, and in teaching, discussions of Shakespeare are filled with notions of immediacy, the idea of a direct and therefore powerful engagement with the work itself, and thus with the author. Fredson Bowers’ new bibliographic mission to “strip the veil of print from text” is rooted in the desire to encounter the authorial text directly, without the interference of printing practices and the meddlesome agents they represent (Bowers, On Editing Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Dramatists 8) 11. Chaudhuri’s championing of play-texts over play-performances is based in the idea that the spectator encounters the author/work only through the interfering mediation of the performers; whereas the reader, interacting with the text, is granted a more direct and intimate access to the author and work (Chaudhuri). Tanselle’s muddled argument for treating dramatic texts as literature is grounded in a similar privileging of immediacy, in which the script gains its value from its direct link to the writer, whereas theatrical production – grudgingly admitted to be the script’s intended end-goal – represents a “collaborative production” and thus a less desirable readerly engagement (Tanselle, A Rationale of Textual Criticism 85). For McGann, and for textual scholars who insist on the primacy of the document, digital technology enables users to gain “a more direct relation to primary document materials,” a perspective that privileges access to the document over the mediations of editors (J. J. McGann)12. Performers likewise describe performance as a direct engagement with Shakespeare,

11 Bowers’ metaphor is surprisingly evocative and oddly erotic, and subject to early modern notions of clothing as well as modern notions of burlesque, in which the ‘veil’ and the stripping construct – rather than reveal – the body beneath.

12 This “relation” is, of course, limited to visual aspects of the document, resulting in distortions and elisions of textural and material aspects.
reversing Tanselle’s priorities such that the script’s intended use as a basis for production marks performance as the more direct encounter with the author.

These arguments for direct access to the work are bolstered by Shakespeare’s standing as a cultural figure, a paragon of literary worth and authorship generally, as well as a mainstay of educational curricula. Shakespeare’s standing lends force to authority- and authenticity-based appeals, as opposed to user- or artist-oriented arguments that would emphasize a particular iteration’s value in its own right, or its resonance to a specific audience. All of these strategies rely on various kinds of experts expending labour that is largely invisible to the end-user, such that the expertise of the editor, teacher, or artist guarantees the direct access. Multimedia Shakespeare editions mobilize these arguments in several ways, in part by reinforcing the notion of performance as a mode of direct access to Shakespeare, and in part by mobilizing users’ presumed familiarity with mobile devices and multimedia modes as a means of bridging gaps between Shakespeare and modern audiences. Paradoxically, the efforts that construct the direct and immediate encounter between the user and Shakespeare also heavily mediate that encounter – modernizing both text and performance into familiar and conventional formats, transmediating the work into a digital form and a recorded medium, and multimediating various forms of the work within a unified digital platform. Strategies of mediating-for-immediacy, of expending and obfuscating editorial, artistic, and pedagogical labour, are standard practice in primary and secondary teaching, but also serve as recruitment techniques that enable new users to engage with difficult and inaccessible material. As projects that combine text, pedagogy, performance, and technology, the multimedia Shakespeare editions provide a new and useful perspective on Shakespearean articulations of mediation and immediacy, authenticity and accessibility.

1.9 Structure

Galey and Ruecker outline a set of guidelines for prospective peer reviews of digital projects and prototypes:

- Is the argument reified by the prototype contestable, defensible, and substantive?
- Does the prototype have a recognizable position in the context of similar work, either in terms of concept or affordances?
- Is the prototype part of a series of prototypes with an identifiable trajectory?
- Does the prototype address possible objections?
- Is the prototype itself an original contribution to knowledge? (Galey and Ruecker 414)
These guidelines form part of the basis for this dissertation, which attempts a review of multimedia Shakespeare editions as a series of prototypes with an identifiable trajectory. The following chapters tease out the implicit and explicit arguments reified by these projects, many of which, I will argue, are contestable, defensible, and substantive, though the projects do not always live up to their potential or follow through on arguments that they propose.

Chapter 2 describes the key features and functions of the seven case study projects, with a focus on their inclusion and treatment of performance. These projects make forceful arguments about the importance of understanding Shakespeare’s work through performance, yet their positioning of performance is confused and confusing, simultaneously insisting on performance as a rich text in its own right and employing it as a transparent aid to comprehending the text. For all their touted innovation, multimedia Shakespeare editions go to great lengths to present themselves as familiar, using strategies of modernization, transmediation, and multi-mediation in order to make both their interface and their content intuitive to their intended users. Some critics have pointed to these strategies, and to the projects’ lack of transparency regarding these strategies, as a weakness in these projects (Werner; W. B. Worthen, “Shax the App”). I argue that the multimedia interface works to counteract this weakness, to an extent, inviting users to engage comparatively and critically with the edition’s multiple streams. These projects do not fully support this engagement, however, as I discuss further in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 deals with codes and coding, and the semiotic processes of ‘reading’ texts and performances. While the ability to include recorded audio and video into an edition is new, and the multimedia editions represent an improvement on older attempts to accomplish this, editions of drama (and some kinds of poetry) have always been multimedial, employing a range of techniques to evoke the works’ visual and oral/aural dimension within a published edition. These include illustrations of various kinds, as well as varying fonts, mise-en-page, and some of the conventions of written drama itself. As the assumed familiarities/competencies/literacies of the intended audience change, the edition needs to include different kinds of information, including more of the ‘coding’ of performance. In this sense, multimedia Shakespeare editions are innovative creations of a particular moment, but are also in dialogue with a longer tradition of printed poetry and drama.
Chapter 4 examines multimedia Shakespeare editions’ position as a hybrid of school edition and scholarly edition, as the projects include a range of scholarly materials but lack the self-reflection and transparency that characterize scholarly editions. I explore several pedagogical theories to make the argument that the simplifications and obfuscations of school editions – and of the multimedia Shakespeare editions – serve an essential role in engaging new learners and – if employed correctly – preparing them for the eventual complexity of scholarly editions. I argue that the editorial strategy of school editions, in which the editor makes herself and her labour invisible in order to shift the focus onto the authorial work, is mirrored in pedagogical strategies (the teacher makes herself and her labour invisible in order to shift focus onto the material being taught) and performance strategies (director/dramaturge/performer/designer use conventionally ‘natural’ techniques in order to shift spectators’ attention away from the qualities of the performance and toward the dramatic content of the work). Likewise, for the multimedia Shakespeare editions to be considered scholarly editions, they would need a similarly nuanced and transparent editorial approach not only to their textual materials, but also to their performance materials, their digital design, and the intentions of the overall project.

The conclusion sketches out some possibilities for multimedia Shakespeare editions and some of their potential development, as well as offering suggestions for the kind of statement called for in Chapter 4.

Essential to my research is a range of theories devoted to describing and questioning the relationship between works and documents, between the immaterial, ideational version of art and the material objects that store and reproduce those works. As M. J. Kidnie and W. B. Worthen demonstrate, this somewhat archaic discussion – archaic because of its structuralist basis and its dependence on notions of authorship and intention – is persistently relevant and consistently re-formulated in relation to Shakespeare, whose status and reception is heavily determined by an understanding of documents as iterations of works, and works as abstractions of documents. Worthen argues for a connection between the questions of textual editing and those of contemporary performance, largely in terms of the relationships that are constructed between texts, authors, works, and audiences or publics (William B. Worthen 16).
The connection that Worthen traces is fundamental for my thinking here, and the linking of editorial theory and practice to performance, performance practice, performance analysis, as well as book history and materiality. The key relationships involved are those between documents and works, between a lexical or signifying object and its material productions, the ways in which iterations are understood to be related to – representative of, divergent from, transgressive of – an original, the ways in which an encounter with an iteration (production, book, app) invites analysis or re-creation or imagination of the original, abstraction from the particular to the general, separation of text or “text” from the document. This process of separation necessitates labelling certain aspects of the document and the reading/interaction experience as “non-essential,” or “transparent,” or “irrelevant,” reproducing textual editing’s contested distinction between “substantives” and “accidentals.”

Part of the innovation of the multimedia Shakespeare editions originates in their status as commercial products. The internet has made the text of Shakespeare’s plays widely available, for free. Any user with an internet-capable machine and internet access can readily read, copy, or download Shakespeare’s works via the MIT Complete Works, Internet Shakespeare Editions, Open Source Shakespeare, or the Folger Digital Texts. A user with a mobile device can download the free Shakespeare app, initially designed by Readdle and now distributed through PlayShakespeare.com, to read Shakespeare’s works on a phone or tablet, with or without an internet connection. These resources vary in quality, both in terms of the text itself and in terms of the web resource’s appearance and interface, but a user with a computer, smartphone, or tablet and access to the internet now has virtually instant access to the entirety of Shakespeare’s works, at no cost (or, more precisely, no additional cost beyond the device and internet or data plan). As Li Lan Yong has argued, the free availability of Shakespeare’s texts has altered the construction and – especially – the commerce of editions, such that the value proposition is no longer an arrangement of paying for a printed version of Shakespeare’s works (understood as a text), but rather the scholarly apparatus, commentary, and other explanatory elements that surround the text (Yong). Multimedia editions attempt to replace or reinforce scholarly commentary with recorded performance, arguing for a new kind of supplementary material in the edition that was not possible in print editions, and that could not be easily or affordably produced in earlier digital editions (web-based or on earlier physical media such as CD-ROM and LaserDisc) (Flannagan).
McGann argues that “digital imaging resources” enable users to gain “a more direct relation to primary documentary materials,” and thus allow a shift in emphasis from linguistic codes to bibliographic codes – an assessment that Shillingsburg echoes as well (J. J. McGann). Neville is more cautious, and reminds us, first, that a digital reproduction is not a material text, and second, that such reproductions can reinforce editorial authority rather than empower users to think critically. Bruce R. Smith argues for a phenomenological understanding of reading, reinforcing some of McGann’s emphasis on bibliographic codes, specifically in terms of the size, shape, and weight of books and the dynamic they enforce by literally shaping a reading experience through their relation to the body (Smith, “Getting Back to the Library, Getting Back to the Body”).

While a digital facsimile can provide access to documents that were previously available only to those who could physically enter select library archives, and can provide improved access to some bibliographic features through magnification tools, it also elides the bibliographic elements outlined by Smith: on a digital display, a folio, quarto, and duodecimo are all rendered into equivalent visual objects, pages displayed on the same screen. App-based projects are multiple in this sense, since as phenomenological or experiential objects they build on an existing relationship between the user and the device, and are also accessed through multiple devices with very different phenomenological properties: reading on screens has some essential qualities, but reading on a smartphone or tablet is physically very different from reading at a desktop computer, or even on a laptop.

As Worthen, Kidnie, and others argue, Shakespeare studies is a field that is deeply concerned with questions of iteration and interface. Consideration of performances, editions, digital projects, and teaching techniques related to Shakespeare involves an examination of the relationships between content and mediation, the ways in which performing, producing, or transmitting Shakespeare are determined by and transformative of understandings of what ‘Shakespeare’ is, or can be. This examination has been concerned with a relationship between authenticity and accessibility, understood as a spectrum in which attention to the material medium reduces the focus on the information being transmitted, and, vice versa, a focus on content implies or requires that the material medium be ignored or rendered transparent. Shakespeare’s position as a contested figure belonging to both literature and theatre arts complicates this discussion, since there is some productive disagreement about precisely what
the content is, and thus how its relationship to material media should be understood. In this sense, one of the most productive aspects of multimedia Shakespeare editions is their foregrounding of slippage, as they emphasize ways in which a user’s experience of a performance, edition, or lesson shifts both intentionally and unintentionally between different forms of engagement, understanding Shakespeare now as literary, now as theatrical, sometimes as an ideational work of fiction, sometimes as deeply embedded in material particularity. Worthen argues that “for better or worse, editions not only document a version of the work, they declare a vision of the work, erecting a kind of monument to ‘something we value’” (William B. Worthen 18). The set of case studies I propose represents multiple senses of documenting a version of the work, enacted through the selection of text, the selection or creation of performance, and the combination of these elements and others within a digital framework. Each of these is a documentation of the work, and the vision being declared fluctuates depending on how one considers these documentations individually and collectively. These projects also witness to a contradiction in Shakespeare editing, performance, and teaching, each of which holds Shakespeare to be both universally accessible and difficult, relevant and meaningful to all, yet requiring multiple interventions in mediation in order to be appealing or even comprehensible to audiences. Multimedia Shakespeare editions are a new expression of an old tradition, which holds that, while Shakespeare’s works are universally “for all time,” their manifestations – in performances, in editions, in pedagogy – are particular and local, “for an age.”
2 Chapter 2: Multimedia Shakespeare Editions

2.1 Overview

The goal of this chapter is to draft a working description of the multimedia editions as a category of products, and as a genre of Shakespeare editions. I take the seven current projects as case studies: TouchPress’ Sonnets, Cambridge’s Explore Shakespeare, Folger’s Luminary Shakespeare, The New Book Press’ WordPlay Shakespeare, Shakespeare at Play, Arden’s Heuristic Shakespeare, and the Stratford Festival’s PerformancePlus. As such, I examine differences in purpose and execution between the various projects, but my focus is on their commonalities. While I do attend to specific details of the various projects, the aim is to enumerate shared elements that are characteristic of the multimedia edition. The key identifier, for my purposes, is the inclusion of both play-text and performance recordings in a format that allows users to alternate from one to the other. In this chapter, I explore the ways in which multimedia Shakespeare editions position those two elements, the ideas of ‘Shakespeare’ and Shakespearean authority evoked by these projects, the arguments produced by their design, and some of the cultural factors that these projects draw upon. I pay particular attention to the marketing and press coverage for these apps, not as a source of objective information or critical analysis, but rather as a discursive framework that positions the apps as new solutions to a variety of problems, real or imagined. These formulations are informative about the ways in which Shakespeare – and Shakespeare teaching and learning – is considered and constructed, particularly in the spheres of academia, pedagogy, and commercial publishing. Not surprisingly, these materials include many triumphalist statements, heralding these new technologies as innovative solutions to ongoing problems, or as the next inevitable step in a continuous march of progress. Such formulations tend to conform to a standard marketing formula, which begins by identifying a problem (e.g. the difficulty of teaching Shakespeare), and proceeds to present the new product as a solution to said problem. The discourse of problem and solution is informative not only about the conceptualization of these products, but also the construction of Shakespeare, the analysis of the current market (high school and undergraduate students, primarily), and the factors impeding learners’ access to Shakespeare.
2.2 Outliers

While these projects share a range of commonalities, there are two that are noteworthy exceptions, though in different ways, and thus worth addressing at the outset. TouchPress’ Sonnets is the only project of the seven that takes poetry rather than drama as its subject matter. Sonnets’ performance aspect thus does not involve the portrayal of a fictional narrative, as is the case with the plays, nor are its videos concerned with translating implied stage action into visuals. As the first app to combine Shakespeare text with video, Sonnets modeled a design template echoed by many of the other projects, intentionally or otherwise. Even though the sonnets are not dramatic text, the core concept of the app – which it has in common with the rest of the projects in this chapter – is that the language and rhetoric of the poetry will be clarified, amplified, and enriched by the accompaniment of performance recordings. Even without the added layer of dramatic fiction, Sonnets reflects claims about the interplay of textuality and orality that are central to the operations of the multimedia edition. The app is also a joint artistic/scholarly endeavour, and its incorporation of scholars, performers, and scholar-artists is instructive and directly related to the ways in which multimedia editions perform claims of authority through their function and design.

The performance of The Sonnets is unique among the editions in that it is a video presentation of poetic rather than dramatic material. The visual dimension gives users a sense of recitation as an embodied activity, whose pronuntiatio includes not only rhythm, pitch, and timbre but also gesture, facial expression, and posture. The mise-en-scene of the videos varies slightly between performances, but, significantly, none of the presenters is depicted holding or reading from a text. The performance thus construes each sonnet as memorized and spoken – rather than written – text, even as the bottom half of the screen depicts the written sonnet. Users are invited – perhaps even manipulated – into viewing the sonnets through the lens of realistic performance, imbued with a sense of spontaneity, a Stanislavskian “illusion of the first time.”

The other outlier is the Stratford (Ontario) Festival’s PerformancePlus, which is functionally identical to most of the other projects I address in that it presents the text of King Lear in a shared screen with Antoni Cimolino’s 2015 production of the play, along with a variety of
paratextual materials. The key difference is that PerformancePlus is not an app, but rather a section of the festival’s website. Unlike the other projects I describe, PerformancePlus exists entirely on the web, accessible via any web-capable device. The project is thus conceptually similar to the others in this category, but does not share their book-like attributes of individual ownership and access. Where the app-based projects are commercial products, PerformancePlus is a freely-available resource, accessible through the Stratford Festival website. Though free to use, PerformancePlus is heavily branded, and drives traffic to the festival’s website, where users are only ever a click away from purchasing tickets or buying merchandise. Where the app-based projects function through the haptic interface of hand-held devices, PerformancePlus is ‘platform-agnostic,’ though most easily used through a desktop or laptop computer and mouse interface. Where the app-based projects enable personalization, reflecting some aspects of book culture and book ownership, PerformancePlus is the same site for everyone, with no option to customize or add one’s own material. At the same time, the site’s core design is virtually identical to that of the app-based projects, using recorded performance in parallel with Shakespeare text as a means of making the material more approachable. Stratford’s brand as a Shakespeare festival provides the site with its own authority, distinct from and analogous to the institutional authority that reinforces Cambridge’s ExploreShakespeare, Arden’s Heuristic Shakespeare, and Folger’s Luminary Shakespeare.

2.3 Apps and App Culture

It is worth exploring the workings of apps in some detail, as their functional, cultural, and commercial status contributes to the material and virtual underpinnings of the multimedia editions. With the exception of Stratford’s PerformancePlus, outlined above, the other six projects are app-based, designed to run on Apple’s iOS operating system, and thus only usable on a limited set of devices: iPad, iPhone, and iPod Touch (WordPlay Shakespeare and the iBooks version of Shakespeare at Play can also run on more recent Mac computers, through the iBooks app). These are all commercial products, sold via the App Store, and ranging in price

13 More recently, PerformancePlus has added Hamlet (with Cimolino’s 2015 production) and Macbeth (with Cimolino’s 2016 production), and lists Romeo and Juliet (with Scott Wentworth’s 2017 production) as “coming soon”.
between $4.99 (Shakespeare at Play iBooks) and $19.99 (Sonnets). The term “app” is derived from “application,” itself a neologism for “computer program.” The diminutive “app” has become a standard term to describe such programs, thanks in part to Apple’s “there’s an app for that” advertising campaign, used to promote the iPhone 3g in 2009. The phrase became so ubiquitous that Apple has since registered it (Chen). In the culture of mobile devices, the device itself, be it smartphone, tablet, or wearable, arrives with an operating system and a very small complement of already-installed essential applications. Users then navigate to an online ‘store’ such as Apple’s App Store or Android’s Google Play, from which they select, purchase, download, and install such programs as they desire for their own use.

Prior to Web 2.0 and reliable, widespread internet access, programs had to be supplied on a physical medium such as a floppy disc, CD-ROM, or DVD-ROM, and were thus relatively difficult and expensive to produce and distribute. Computers would arrive packaged with most of the programs necessary to function usefully, and users would purchase additional programs as necessary, most probably from a brick-and-mortar store. Web 2.0 has made the physical medium for programs largely redundant; even programs purchased in a store now typically consist of a box containing an access code for a downloadable application. In addition, programs supporting the production and design of applications have become widespread, enabling many non-specialists to dabble in app design. The creation of apps has thus, like the publication of books, become a far more democratized phenomenon than it had been, blurring – though not erasing – the line between professional and amateur producers of content. The virtual ‘stores’ through which apps are distributed have a nearly-unlimited capacity for storage and display, and thus users looking for a particular kind of application – a video player, for example – will find hundreds of entries, including those produced by major software companies, those created by minor companies, and some by individual programmers, professional or amateur. Any programmer with a functioning application can submit it to Apple or Google for inclusion in their stores. The distributors take a substantial 30% commission on any sales, but they provide access to a massive audience of users. Once an app has been uploaded to the store, its popularity among users – measured via algorithm, using reviews, clicks, and downloads – will determine its status in search results. A popular app will appear higher on the list of search results, giving it easier access to new users, and thus increasing its popularity. In the wake of more recent
revelations of data-mining and privacy issues, it is worth noting that these processes are rarely transparent, and very susceptible to manipulation.

While apps may run on a variety of operating systems and devices, the multimedia editions are mostly tied to mobile devices, and specifically to iOS devices, chiefly the iPad. Though there is some truth to W. B. Worthen’s observation that computers’ roots in work culture mean that “reading hypertext is always reading at the office,” mobile devices engender a different relationship, for a different reading experience (W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* 188). Indeed, the rise of social media, the growing acceptability of computer gaming, and the increased frequency and necessity of internet access have fundamentally altered many users’ relationship to computers since Worthen’s analysis. The current cultural discussion is rife with observations about Web 2.0 and mobile devices blurring the boundaries between work and leisure, and though the commentary tends to lament the incursion of work into leisure time, the crossover works both ways. The iPad is in many ways a symbol of this indeterminacy, a device designed for productivity and for pleasure, and marketed under the principle that the two can be profitably combined. The iPad is presented as a platform for reading, for note-taking, for e-mail and messaging, for presentations, as well as for listening to music, watching videos, connecting to the internet, and playing games. It is no coincidence that the *Sonnets* app is produced by TouchPress, a company that has carved out a niche for itself making iPad-native multimedia books that combine education and entertainment, aimed at digitally-savvy general readers (Maguire). In addition to *Sonnets*, the company has produced app-editions on T. S. Eliot’s *The Wasteland*\(^{14}\), Beethoven’s 9th Symphony, the planets, and Disney animation, all of which use interactive and multimedia elements to engage users with educational content (*Touchpress — Our People*).

There are pragmatic reasons for these apps to premiere on iOS devices, and it is currently standard practice for most apps to do so. Apple creates and releases both its hardware and its software, allowing for consistent integration between the two. Google, conversely, produces the

\(^{14}\) Itself the template for *Sonnets*, featuring a nearly-identical text-and-video format, with a performance/recitation of the poem by Fiona Shaw, as well as video commentary by a variety of experts.
Android operating system, but the hardware – the phones and tablets – is produced by a variety of manufacturers: Samsung, Toshiba, Asus, LG, and others. An app creator can thus design an app, upload it to Apple’s App Store, and be confident that it will function on any Apple iOS device, at least until the operating system is updated. An app created for the Android system would have to be programmed multiple times, to ensure that it integrates not only with Google’s operating system, but with the hardware of each manufacturer’s phones, tablets, or other devices. Common practice, therefore, is to release an app for iOS as an initial step and proof-of-concept, funding the expansion to Android platforms only once the app’s iOS version is deemed sufficiently successful, demonstrating that a larger market exists for it. This practice is relevant here in that it partly explains why the app-based Shakespeare editions are currently only available for iOS systems, but also because it indicates that these apps are currently within the testing phase of their potential life cycle. Alexander Parker, WordPlay’s designer, informs me that The New Book Press is considering moving WordPlay beyond iOS, and Shakespeare at Play has launched a web-based beta version (Parker). The Apple products that run these apps are typically more expensive items than their Android equivalents, marketed for aesthetic appeal as much as for functionality, and for a cultural and social caché and status. The practice of releasing multimedia editions exclusively through Apple’s iOS complicates the projects’ arguments for accessibility. On the one hand, their digital format and use of multimedia arguably makes them simultaneously familiar and novel, approachable and engaging to current generations who are as comfortable with digital products as with print books, if not more so. On the other hand, access to these apps is limited to those users who can afford higher-end technology, or to those schools that have been furnished with Apple products for their students. In the context of the education industry and classroom use, the iOS-only nature of these apps is restrictive, and potentially prohibitive.

2.4 Access and Ownership

Unlike websites, which users must reach via an internet connection but can access from any device, apps are tied to the user’s account and – with some flexibility – to the user’s device or devices. They thus foster a sense of ownership that is considerably stronger than is the case with
online material, which is available to anyone, in an anonymized and identical fashion. This sense of ownership, however, is not as strong as one might have for a print book, whose material form bears the traces of ownership and use. The user owns – or, more accurately, licenses – a copy of the app, which is stored in the user’s device; the user’s notes and other customizations are linked to both the device and the account. Notes saved to the account can be accessed from multiple devices, or else ‘migrated’ from one device to another. If a user buys a newer-model iPad, for example, she can dissociate her account from the older machine and attach it to the new machine, transferring not only the app itself, but the notes and other saved content. While the initial purchase and download of the app is dependent on the content existing elsewhere, much or all of it is then physically stored on the device. If a website such as the Internet Shakespeare Editions or the Stratford Festival’s site is taken down, users can no longer access any of the material stored there, which become temporarily unavailable or even permanently lost. If the Shakespeare at Play website stopped functioning, or even if Apple’s App Store crashed, existing copies of the Shakespeare at Play app would continue to function, though they could no longer be updated. The apps’ self-contained nature places them partway between books and websites: the app is dependent on the mobile device as a platform, and so can only be accessed through the iPad or smartphone, but it can operate offline, independently of an internet connection, and with far more portability and mobility than a computer. Because of the high storage demands of audio and video content, multimedia apps require a considerable amount of storage space, typically between 500 megabytes and 1.5 gigabytes. Since each play is its own stand-alone purchase in the play-based apps (WordPlay, Shakespeare at Play, Luminary, ExploreShakespeare, Heuristic), the space required quickly multiplies if users wish to store several plays simultaneously. A standard storage capacity for most devices is 16 gigabytes, making each multimedia edition take up a substantial percentage of the total capacity. The large storage demand is a trade-off for offline capability: in order to enable the user to access all the materials without an internet connection, multimedia content must be stored in the device’s memory. The multimedia app thus represents a prestige product and an investment, which also carries with it a certain

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15 While websites themselves are not customizable, users’ individual experiences will vary depending on the device they are using, in terms of its processing power and graphics/sound quality, as well as the strength and reliability of their internet connection.
inconvenience. TouchPress’ products have aptly been compared to coffee table editions for the iPad: the aesthetic quality can only be achieved through a certain bulkiness, which itself becomes part of the item’s claim to status (Greenwald).

These apps thus take a middle position in a current cultural tension between ownership and access. This binary, outlined by librarians such as Laura Townsend Kane and Barbara von Wahlde in the 1990s, initially concerned the workings of public and academic libraries (Wahlde) (Kane). Von Wahlde describes this tension in terms of materials physically stored within a library, as opposed to materials available through inter-library loans; Kane expands the argument to include then-new models of online access, attempting to prescribe a balance between the two modes. While libraries are still struggling with this balance, the debate has shifted to larger areas of culture, from public libraries to private collections. The proliferation of e-books, as well as content-access services such as Netflix, Spotify, and Comixology Unlimited, place users of various media in the position of choosing what content they wish to own – as print books, print comics, DVDs and Blu-Rays, music CDs, or even as ‘permanently’ downloaded and owned digital content such as music .mp3s, books in .epub or .pdf format, and downloaded movies – and what content they wish to access – as streaming music or movies, online comics, or temporary e-books. In recent years, the access phenomenon has grown to include other services, including cars (ZipCar, AutoShare), housing (Airbnb), and tools (in ‘Maker’ spaces, and the resurgence of tool-sharing collectives such as the Toronto Tool Library). The ownership model limits the amount of material available, partly due to storage space, partly due to cost, but gives users a great deal of control over the materials they own, including the ability to re-sell, lend, and bequeath, as well as a physical relationship with the objects. The access model offers a wider range of materials, though constrained by distribution systems (especially internet access and bandwidth), and limited by the provider: access may be changed or revoked suddenly, users cannot lend materials or pass them on to descendants, and cannot personalize the materials. In the case of books, a crucial factor is the ability to annotate a text. Web-based materials are available for reading, but do not support note-taking and note-sharing, attributes that Katherine Rowe finds essential for in-class editions (Rowe 150). Not surprisingly, Folger Luminary, co-designed by Rowe, includes these options, as do several of the multimedia Shakespeare editions.
2.5 Digital Reading and Online Reading

The reading of multimedia editions fits into some of Worthen’s analysis of “Cyber Shakespeare,” though there is an important distinction to be made between online reading and e-reading or digital reading. This is partly a phenomenological distinction, as online reading tends to take place on computer screens, and thus in the office-like mode that Worthen articulates. E-reading, however, is often accomplished using hand-held devices, and is as likely to take place in an armchair or in bed as at a desk. The distinction is also a functional one, as the hybrid nature of e-reading places the reading process in-between text and hypertext. As McGann, Worthen, and others argue, hypertextual reading is characterized by openness, in that readers can follow the hyperlinks in a document at will, rapidly expanding the reading beyond the original document and across an unpredictable array of websites and other documents (J. McGann). Multimedia Shakespeare editions do contain hyperlinks, but these are rarely integral or even emphasized in the workings of the edition, as they can only be utilized when the user is connected to the internet. Folger’s Luminary app, for example, includes links to the Folger Library website; when the user touches this menu option, a browser window opens within the app, navigating to the mobile version of the Folger Library website. If the user is not connected to the internet, the window remains blank, and the user must navigate back to the app’s main menu. Heuristic Shakespeare represents a shift in the format towards greater hybridity, in that the app’s core functions are all accessible while offline, but other features are designed to take advantage of online use. Many of the app’s notes and glosses include links to OED entries and Wikipedia pages, enabling users to access ancillary information and explore further into given subjects.

Multimedia Shakespeare editions are hypertextual, in that they rely on embedded links both as coding and as interface. Words or icons are visually highlighted, indicating that a user may select them in order to open a pop-up or navigate to another part of the app. A user may touch a bolded word in the play-text, for example, in order to open that word’s definition in the glossary, or to navigate from an instance of a word in one scene to an instance of the same word in another
scene. Compared to the relatively unrestricted navigation of online reading\textsuperscript{16}, however, these hyperlinked navigations are much more contained. Each of these apps is a self-contained unit made up of a particular text – either a single play or else the corpus of the sonnets. Thus, while annotations or glosses may draw parallels between one play and another, between a play and a sonnet, between a sonnet and a poem, no hyperlinks are provided to navigate a user from one work to the other. The editions structure the reading experience much as a book does: the text is a contained unit that may refer to other texts, but will not include those texts, or transport a reader to them directly. A reader wishing to follow up on these connections would need to close one book/app and seek out the other. The structure of multimedia editions is thus more hypertextual than a print edition, though more constrained than an online document. Internal links create a network of connections that the user may follow, in addition to the ability to scroll or browse through the document as one would with a print book. At the same time, this containment limits the ability of the edition to emphasize or create meaningful links across works. Readdle’s ShakespearePro app, for example, a non-multimedia edition, treats the entire Shakespeare corpus as its text, enabling a user to search a word or phrase and receive a navigable concordance, hyperlinked from, say, the use of “fantasy” in \textit{As You Like It} 5.2 to its occurrence in \textit{Julius Caesar} 2.1 to \textit{Venus and Adonis} 897. The search only includes the app’s specific version of that corpus, and an editorially suspect one at that, but the utility is substantial. Conversely, my own note for \textit{A Midsummer Night’s Dream} 1.1 in \textit{Shakespeare at Play} references a similarity between Egeus’ accusing Lysander of sorcerous seduction and an analogous accusation by Brabantio in \textit{Othello} 1.3. The app’s format, however, will not allow a hyperlink that connects the two scenes, so a reader wishing to explore the comparison would need to close one text, open the other, and seek out the relevant passage. Treating the single text or work as a contained unit thus reinforces a focused reading experience, but also limits the functional capabilities of the digital text.

\textsuperscript{16} Itself, of course, highly structured and determined by which words or icons are hyperlinked, and where the links navigate to, as Worthen argues.
2.6 Offline Reading, Online Functions: Social Media as Paratext

Some multimedia Shakespeare editions use online connectivity in their wider functions, beyond hypertext reading. Social media integration is quickly becoming a common feature of digital content, as users are both enabled and encouraged to “share” aspects of their media consumption, engagement, or reactions by posting videos or comments to social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram\(^\text{17}\). These features shift away from affordances of hypertextual reading to cultural considerations of social media as both promotion and communication. *Sonnets* includes a “share” function that is primarily a marketing tool, enabling users to post a selected sonnet (text and video) to their Facebook profile, or else to send a link via e-mail or Twitter, connecting to the sonnet’s text-and-video entry on TouchPress’ website. While there is very little utility to this feature beyond marketing the app, it does encourage users to utilize both the text of Shakespeare’s sonnets and the Illuminations-produced video performances as part of their own collage of identity-making on social media. The feature makes individual sonnets and performances – and the celebrity performers featured in the videos – available for users to appropriate as expressions of their own mood or personality.

Folger’s *Luminary Shakespeare* likewise uses social media, in this case Facebook’s “Groups” function. A teacher or other organizer would need to create the group using Facebook, and either invite users to join or else make the group publicly available. A group can be as small as an assignment team, or as large as an entire tutorial, class, school, or even a national or international collection of users. Members of a Facebook group are able to post comments and responses visible to other members of the group, including text, photos, videos, and hyperlinks. *Luminary*’s integration of this function allows users to copy and paste material from the play-texts (though not the expert commentaries, notes, or glosses), as well as from their own notes, and post these comments to Facebook to be shared with the group. These posts then form a parallel commentary to the play, which may meander from topic to topic, as different users respond to one another’s comments. These posts are relatively permanent, as they remain accessible through Facebook

\(^\text{17}\) Again, more recent concerns with privacy and the sharing or selling of users’ data prompt an increased skepticism toward these features.
indefinitely, unless they are removed by the user who originally posted them or by a group administrator. This feature is open to vast expansion, capable of generating a cloud of online content that grows from the app, but exists independently of it. As with much user-generated content, quality quickly becomes an issue, and educators and/or group administrators may be required to step in when posts are of poor quality, off-topic, or abusive. Posts will also be subject to Facebook’s “community standards,” inconsistently employed by both algorithms and human agents with characteristic heavy-handedness and lack of transparency. Academic integrity can easily become a concern as well, as the copy-and-paste logic of the internet, and of social media in particular, clashes with the scholarly values of academic honesty and rigorous citation. *Luminary*’s Terms of Use clearly indicate that users are responsible for content that they post, and that the creators of the app “cannot and do not warrant or guarantee the truthfulness, integrity, suitability, or quality of that User-Generated Content” (Rowe and Visconti). Users who post comments retain ownership of the material they create, though they implicitly grant the Luminary team

> a nonexclusive, fully paid, worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free, transferable license (with the right to sublicense through unlimited levels of sublicensees) to use, copy, modify, distribute, publicly display and perform, publish, transmit, remove, retain repurpose (sic), and commercialize User-Generated Content. (Rowe and Visconti)

It remains to be seen to what extent and for what purposes users will employ this feature, and to what extent the Luminary team will gather and re-purpose user-generated content. Luminary’s legal terms are wide-ranging, but Facebook is a separate entity, and recent events indicate that Facebook’s treatment of user data and privacy is itself cause for concern, or at least for careful scrutiny.

### 2.7 Material Interfaces: Haptics and Somatics

While some book historians argue that the material tactile and textural aspects of the book disappear when it is remediated into a digital format (Karim-Cooper), this claim is not entirely accurate. The smooth surface of the touchscreen is not, as Karim-Cooper suggests, a lack of texture, but rather a texture and material interface in its own right. The touchscreen is, undoubtedly, a very different tactile experience from the codex, and may arguably be a worse or deficient one. Nevertheless, the haptic interface is both an increasingly familiar mode for the current generation of digital natives, and a tactile/visual experience of its own, separate from the
codex. Karim-Cooper makes a compelling argument for the paucity of the tablet as a textural sensation, in comparison to the tactile richness and variety of books, not to mention their familiarity. Though the touchscreen is perhaps a less rewarding tactile sensation than the book, there is nevertheless a particular pleasure to be derived from the range of effects that the screen interface evokes. Through the haptic interface of the touchscreen, somatic motions – taps, flicks, presses – create visual results in the on-screen display. The most common of these is the scrolling effect, which the screen’s touch sensors correlate to the force of the user’s movement, so that text or images scroll speedily at first, their illusory momentum gradually slowing as though obeying the laws of inertia.

Perhaps the best illustration of the haptics as a design phenomenon is the page-turning animation of Apple’s iBooks app, which approximates the appearance of a turned page, complete with bleed-through of text, keyed to the user’s touch. This animation serves no practical purpose – a simple touch control could easily signal that the reader is ready for the next page, whereupon that page would quickly load into the display screen, as in most .pdf reader software. Instead, the skeuomorphic reproduction of book-reading somatics on the tablet screen simultaneously evoke the familiar sensations and experiences of book-reading and draw the user’s attention to the capability and aesthetics of the tablet. Contrary to Karim-Cooper, I would argue that the absence of tactile sensation is precisely what makes the haptic interface fascinating. The finger feels that there is no page there being turned, but they eye registers a page turning, and the dissonance between those two inputs creates the sense of play that drives design for touchscreen programs, and forms a cornerstone of the iPad’s advertising campaigns, which baldly proclaim the device to be “magical.”

The touchscreen interface can be awkward or frustrating – reactions to it will often be split along generational lines, as Alexander Parker hints in his description of reactions to *WordPlay Shakespeare (Why WordPlay Shakespeare?)* – and it often lacks the precision of the mouse-pointer interface familiar to users of desktop and laptop computers. The size of the screen will determine the relative size and position of hot-button and hyperlinked words or phrases, and so successfully pressing a desired button/word can range from seamless to infuriatingly difficult. The interface can become frustrating by working too well, as it forces users to be controlled and precise in their gestures. The touchscreen interface is often touted as “intuitive,” and its haptic
mode can be responsive and engaging in ways that standard computer interfaces like the mouse and keyboard lack, though it also suffers from the necessity of relegating a wide range of operations to the limited range of gestures that the touchscreen can interpret: pressing, swiping, tapping. The multimedia edition utilizes these controls for navigating both text and performance, so that the manipulations that scroll through a text also control the scrubber bar that plays, pauses, and tracks through the performance playback. From the perspective of user control, then, the very different fields of information represented by text and performance are both subsumed into a unified set of controls, responding to the user’s fingertips.

2.8 Multimediating

The incorporation of performance elements alongside the text is the feature most emphasized in reviews of these projects. Christy Desmet, analyzing WordPlay Shakespeare’s Macbeth among other apps, describes at some length the “rhetorical arrangement” by which text and performance share the screen. Desmet makes much of this feature, arguing that the innovation in content and interface makes up for the app’s lack of scholarly materials:

If you or your students use the WordPlay Shakespeare Macbeth, don’t worry about the textual translations, definitions, or note cards. Just read and watch, moving from page to page as expeditiously as possible. You will enjoy a new, pleasurable, and profitable kind of Shakespearean engagement. (Desmet)

While users may not know how to approach Shakespeare text, this design suggests, they will instinctively understand how to play and control audio and video, and how to ‘read’ performance. As Alexander Parker notes in WordPlay’s introductory video, the design of the editions is accessible and familiar to modern digital natives:

When I show these WordPlay books to people for the first time, I generally get two reactions, and it’s based on ages: younger people…from 15 to 16 downwards, inevitably say “cool,” and they want to use it. Older people – and I’m generally talking about my age group and older – almost all say the same thing: “I wish I’d had this when I was reading Shakespeare.” (Why WordPlay Shakespeare?)

My own experience when describing or demonstrating Shakespeare at Play has been virtually identical. The text-and-video format, presented through the familiar touchscreen interface of the tablet or smartphone, is instantly comprehensible and operable for a considerable portion of today’s high school and undergraduate students.
While the layout of the multimedia edition reinforces drama, poetry, and theatre as distinct streams, the navigation and controls reflect the slippage between those streams. The design renders performance into another form of reading. More accurately, both viewing and reading are subordinated to the interface of the device, a touch-based interaction that often alternates between text, hypertext, image, video, and audio. This interaction bears similarities to both reading and spectatorship, but is far closer to reading in the sense that the user is in control of navigation and pacing, using tactile manipulation to move back and forth through the content, shift from one stream to another (in print, from narrative to annotation to glossary; in multimedia Shakespeare editions, from text to video to audio). The recorded performance materials, of course, are encoded with rhythm, tempo, and duration, and will unfold at their own pace if played uninterrupted. The user can, however, manipulate the performance playback, using the scrubber bar, navigation menus, and hyperlinks to skip back and forth, pause and resume, or shift from one unit (scene, act, sonnet) to another, in ways analogous to a reader’s control over and trajectory through a book. The design and functionality of the editions thus reverses Elam’s division of reader and spectator, such that the apps’ user must still, like the play-goer, “process simultaneous and successive acoustic and visual signals,” as well as visual/textual signals, but can now do so, like the play-reader “in a leisurely and pseudo-narrative fashion” (Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama 99).
2.9 Audio Editions: Performance as Paratext

The visual arrangement of the multimedia editions varies from one app to another, though two broad categories quickly emerge: the apps with performance audio, and those with performance video. The audio apps – Cambridge *Explore Shakespeare* and Folger *Luminary* – are characterized by a wider range of textual materials than their video counterparts. These apps retain the practice – criticized by Gabler – of presenting the edited text as the central aspect of the edition, surrounding it with annotations, glosses, audio performance, and (in the case of *Explore Shakespeare*) classroom exercises. Rhetorically, this arrangement positions the audio performance as another strand of annotation, explicating and enriching the core text. Both in its arrangement and in its editorial treatment, the performance is not a text in itself, in need of explications, discussions, statements of intent. In speaking the text to the user, the performance is speaking about the text, clarifying its action and meaning for the user, though the process by which this clarification happens is treated by these apps as instinctual, thus needing no explanation. The positioning of the menu icons in both these apps places the control for the audio performance in a line alongside the buttons for notes, glossary, and other paratexts.
The Folger Luminary app’s “About” section introduces the app’s intention “to make great plays accessible to all readers in a lively digital format,” with a list of features: the app “enriches the Folger Library Editions with exciting audio recordings by professional actors, expert commentaries by scholars and master teachers, illuminating video and images, and robust authoring and sharing tools” (Luminary, “About”). But while the “expert commentaries” engage with the practice of criticism and with performance history in general, the actual performance included in the app receives no comment or context at all.

The design and marketing for Cambridge’s Explore Shakespeare make a useful (and usefully flawed) distinction between “experiencing” the play, “exploring” the play, and “examining” the play. According to the press release on the Cambridge website, users of the app can experience the play via reading the edited play-text, listening to the audio performance, and looking at photos from various productions, as well as reading glossaries and summaries. In this figuration (admittedly inflected with the vocabulary of marketing), “experience” is a first-order engagement with the play, directly encountering it in a variety of forms, all presumably equal. “Exploration,” in this model, then refers to a variety of second-order operations that abstract elements of the play and present them visually. These include word-clouds, character trajectories (“explored” entirely as thematic constructs rather than as indications of theatrical practices), thematic arcs presented as infographics, and suggested classroom activities. Finally, “examination” describes several practices of commentary, ranging from the reading of contextual notes and explanatory articles to functions that allow the user to search and annotate the play themselves. Of paramount importance here is the category of “experience,” in which users encounter the play as dramatic fiction, engaging and (with assistance) understanding its action and meaning. Significantly, within this process, reading the text, hearing the performance, seeing the images, and glossing the words are all understood as avenues to the same destination, which is a direct experience of ‘the play.’ Also significantly, these avenues are presented as equally valid and equally useful, though the mise-en-page, and most classroom practices, would privilege reading the text as the primary means of ‘experience.’ However much the website materials suggest an equivalency, though, the design of the app relegates the performance to a marginal position.
2.10 Video Editions – Performance as Parallel Text/Counter-Text

The editions that use video performance – Sonnets, WordPlay, Shakespeare at Play, Heuristic, and PerformancePlus – organize their display in a split screen that suggests an equivalence between text and performance. The design for Sonnets, Shakespeare at Play, and Heuristic is a vertical split screen, in which the video window takes up the top section of the screen (between one-third and one-half), with the bottom section occupied by the edited text and annotations.

PerformancePlus and WordPlay use similar proportions but rotate the arrangement horizontally, so that the text occupies the left-hand side of the screen, with performance on the right.

Sonnets offers multiple navigation paths, enabling users to reach a given sonnet either through a text-based list or via a “Performance” menu displaying the various performers’ faces. Sonnet 125, for example, can be selected either from a list of all the sonnets written by Shakespeare, or from a list of all the sonnets performed by Ruth Negga, reinforcing a parity of text and performance, and an authority of the artists. While most of the video-based editions separate the text and video into distinct-but-contiguous units, WordPlay Shakespeare frames the two streams within a unified visual space. Unlike the collage-like display of the other editions, Wordplay’s screen display encompasses ‘page’ and ‘stage,’ placing text and performance against a white background in which both are suspended. The design of the digital screen display visually reinforces the app’s commitment to parity and equivalence between the two elements, but also creates a visual metaphor for the larger holistic work, a sense of ‘the play’ that encompasses page and stage simultaneously. The video is segmented to match the text on the ‘page,’ so that the user must ‘turn the page’ in order to reach the next video segment. As Christy Desmet notes in her review, this necessity causes interruptions in the flow of reading and viewing, but also trains the user in a new practice of reading, appropriate to the idiom of this app (Desmet). The visual aesthetic makes an argument for integration, positing the digital platform as a space wherein, according to Parker, the user can encounter “a text in multiple forms on the same plane” (Parker). Crucial to his design is the notion of “playing fair” with the two streams, so that neither is favoured or ill-served (Parker). The goal is “a productive tension of text sharing a space with movement,” such that the two streams are “not detracting but actually supplementing one another” (Parker). The “modern translation” text becomes a third stream, that can be accessed simultaneously with the video, but that overlays the source text. This arrangement suggests a
three-way equivalence between the play-text, the performance, and the ‘translation,’ though it also suggests that both performance and translation are articulations of the play-text, ways of rendering Shakespeare more accessible to modern users. The rhetoric of this design also posits the performance as a kind of translation, similarly mediating between the daunting original text and the modern user.

Figure 3 - Screenshot: Sonnets

Figure 4 – Screenshot: Heuristic Shakespeare
An open place. Thunder and lightning.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Watchmen

First Witch

When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch

Where the是以兵bloody's shrew,

When the beast's last and won.

Third Witch

That will be now the set of war.

First Witch

Where the place?

Second Witch

Upon the heath.

Third Witch

That will be now the set of war.

Bottom

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the form. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quince

Answer as I call you, Nick Bottom the weaver.

Bottom

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the form. Masters, spread yourselves.

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2.11 Conflated Text

A factor that distinguishes all of the multimedia editions from standard scholarly editions is the use of a conflated text and the absence of a textual collation. Notes in the Folger *Luminary* app indicate that collation and a set of textual notes are “soon to come to this app,” though they have yet to materialize. Nevertheless, *Luminary* remains the most transparent of the editions when it comes to its treatment of the text, in part because it imports its text from the Folger editions, edited by Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine. Each edition in the *Luminary* series includes a note from Mowat and Werstine on “This Text,” which summarizes the play’s textual sources, and indicates the editors’ base text of choice, or else their decision to conflate multiple sources (Mowat and Werstine, “*This Text*” in William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*).

Mowat and Werstine’s in-text indications are also imported from the Folger editions, including the square brackets to signal editorially-added stage directions, and pointed parentheses, square brackets, and half-brackets used to indicate Folio text, Second Quarto text, and emendations in the text of *Hamlet* (Mowat and Werstine, “Marking the Changes” in William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Based on the New Folger Shakespeare Editions. Created by Elliott Visconsi and Katherine Rowe, Eds. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine, Dir. Lauren Shohet*). Similarly, the *Sonnets* app uses Katherine Duncan-Jones’ Arden Third Series edition of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets, Revised* (2010), itself based on the 1609 Quarto. The ‘Arden Introduction’ section, which can be reached from the home page, contains an entry entitled “This Edition,” in which Duncan-Jones describes aspects of the bibliographic theory behind the edition. She begins with the assertion that, in this edition, the “wording, format and punctuation” of the Quarto “has been followed more closely than in any previous modernized edition” (Duncan-Jones). No explicit consideration is given, however, to what precisely a “modernized edition” entails, and why the choice was made to modernize at all, let alone what criteria were used when choosing spelling variants and altering punctuation. The textual notes record alterations in italics (i.e. the changes from italics in Q to a Roman font in this edition), and significant alterations in capitalization, as well as those changes in spelling and punctuation deemed especially significant. *Heuristic Shakespeare* likewise includes a note on “Editorial Practices,” located toward the end of the “Essays” section of paratexts. The note is adapted from Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan’s introduction to the Arden 3 edition of 1999, and details the editors’ use of the First Folio as the edition’s basis, as well as the choice to modernize spelling and punctuation, and
insert “brief supplementary stage directions where the Folio seems ambiguous.” The piece also briefly details the ambiguities surrounding the Folio’s authority, concluding that “there is, in short, no unimpeachable authority, no truly reliable basic version of the play – no ‘pure’ Shakespeare” (Vaughan and Vaughan). The full entry on “The Text” from Vaughan and Mason Vaughan’s Arden introduction is also available further down in the app’s menu.

Cambridge’s Explore Shakespeare uses the Cambridge text, though curiously the app provides no information about the editor or the edition. The Credits section for the Hamlet app includes a list of “Authors and editors,” which is headed by William Shakespeare, and goes on to list “Rex Gibson, Richard Andrews, Brian Gibbons, A. R. Braunmuller, Philip Edwards, Philip Brockbank,” and “Robert Hapgood”. Given that Gibbons is the General Editor for the New Cambridge Shakespeare, Braunmuller the Associate General Editor, and Brockbank the Founding General Editor, and that even this information cannot be found within the app but must be searched online, this list represents a bewildering muddle of editorial credit. It certainly provides no insight on the editorial process for the app or the print edition on which it is based, and may even obfuscate that process. The text for Hamlet is Philip Edwards’ edition for the New Cambridge Shakespeare, first published in 1985. The edition is a modernized text that conflates the Folio and Second Quarto. Each scene includes a location – given just below the scene-title – in the style of the Globe editions, though with more detail. Thus, Hamlet 1.1 takes place on “A gun platform on the battlements of Elsinore Castle,” and 3.3 in “the king’s private chapel” (Agant Ltd.). Line numbers are given every five lines, with the value of a prose line determined by a justification spacing. The app retains Edwards’ meticulous use of square brackets to indicate material from Q2 not present in F, but omits his textual notes that explain and contextualize this practice. Similarly, the app includes Edwards’ square brackets indicating non-authorial stage directions, though again the notes explaining this practice are removed. The app likewise omits the print edition’s textual collation, although particular instances of textual variance are sometimes mentioned in the pop-up notes. The result is an edition that elides the process and practice of its own crafting. The Cambridge imprimatur stands in for the text’s bibliographic authority, but the standard indications of that authority are not readily apparent.

WordPlay Shakespeare uses a text based on the MOBY Shakespeare available freely online through MIT, which is itself based on the 1866 Globe editions. According to Alexander Parker,
the text then undergoes some modernization of spelling and punctuation, as well as some editing (Parker). This process owes very little to bibliographic study or concerns, but is based in the rehearsal process, as alternative readings are selected while working through a scene with the actors and director. Parker’s own editing is primarily concerned with making the text functionally accessible to a (hypothesized) first-time Shakespeare reader, rather than fidelity to either an authorial or a published original. The text does not include a collation, nor does it indicate where alterations have been made in dialogue or stage directions. A note in the Foreword indicates that the text is the “compiled version presented under GNU license, whose sources include the first folio of 1623, and the Globe edition of 1866.” This statement is factually accurate, but gestures towards editorial and textual authority, while also eliding the process of editing whereby that authority is established and contested through the labour of an editor.

*Shakespeare at Play* is similar to *WordPlay* in its approach and its sources. The text itself has evolved over the course of the project: *Romeo & Juliet*, the first produced, is mostly drawn from the MOBY Shakespeare, with changes having been made during rehearsal. In working on subsequent plays, I relied less on MOBY and more on existing editions and digital facsimiles of Folios and Quartos. As part of the edition’s mandate is to match the written text to the actors’ speech, the text evolves in rehearsal, as textual variants are discussed by the actors, director Tim Chisholm and me (in a dual role as editor/dramaturge) in order to determine the version that best fits both production and edition. As in the case of *WordPlay*, that process is ad hoc and idiosyncratic, aimed at clarifying the text for users rather than adhering to bibliographic fidelity or integrity. The app’s FAQ page provides a brief and general synopsis of the differing states of Shakespeare texts, though it makes no mention at all of which editions were used in compiling the app’s text, nor does it elaborate on the workings of the editorial process. The note on stage directions does explain that “stage directions that have been added by later editors, or that are of questionable or controversial origin, are presented between square brackets”. The app provides no textual collation, though the notes occasionally make reference to textual variance.

*PerformancePlus* uses a conflated version of *King Lear*, that includes lines found only in the Folio and passages found only in the Quarto. The site contains no textual notes, and gives no indication as to what edition is being used, and no credit for the sources of its text or glosses. The
spelling and punctuation are modernized, and editorially-added stage directions are placed in square brackets, though no note anywhere explains that this is the case.

2.12 Facsimile Text

In the Sonnets app, a function button marked with a long ‘s’ allows the reader to alternate between the modernized, edited text and a facsimile of the 1609 Quarto, enabling rapid comparisons of spelling, punctuation, and layout. The Quarto text is a genuine facsimile (i.e. not an approximation as in the ShakespearePro app), complete with running titles, catchwords, stains on the pages, occasional inkblots, and bleed-through. The source for the facsimile is not mentioned in the main body of the app, but the credits page includes a note of thanks to the University of Manchester’s John Rylands Library, for permission to reproduce its Quarto. Heuristic Shakespeare likewise includes a Folio facsimile of The Tempest, enabling readers to compare the modernized, edited text with the Folio. The two cannot be displayed simultaneously, however, so a user would have to perform the comparison by either using two devices side-by-side, or else shifting from one display screen to the other and back.

2.13 Uncut Performance

The majority of these projects use an uncut, full-text performance – the key exception is Stratford’s PerformancePlus, which is built on the Stratford Festival’s 2014 production of King Lear, directed by Antoni Cimolino, and, later, on Cimolino’s productions of Hamlet and Macbeth. PerformancePlus is an instructive exception, to which I shall return. The logic behind the choice to provide an uncut performance is simple: as the performance is being used to explicate and illuminate the text, providing an uncut performance enables users to match the words they read on the screen to the words they hear in the performance. This practice reinforces the parity and similarity between text and performance, maximizing the effectiveness of the performance as an explanatory tool. A performance based on an edited script would risk confusing users as to why some parts of the text are performed and others are not, and would thus reduce the clarity being gained from the performance as an explication of the play-text. A benefit of the uncut performance, as Desmet points out, is that it offers users – especially students and teachers – a performed version of scenes that are routinely cut from modern productions (Desmet). Scenes such as Peter and the Musicians haggling after Juliet’s apparent
death in *Romeo and Juliet* 4.5, the English Doctor in *Macbeth* 4.3, or the exchange between Horatio and the Sailor in *Hamlet* 4.6 become available for consideration in performance precisely because of the decision not to cut. Here the uncut performance can serve as a useful explanatory tool in ways that a professional production might not. Given that students and casual readers tend to read the play as a complete text, these frequently-cut scenes are more likely to present stumbling blocks for comprehension, as they are often archaic, confusing, or otherwise difficult. As is evident in ongoing discussions about the praxis and logic of cutting Shakespeare for performance (and, specifically, for ‘modern audiences’), sections are routinely cut because they present a problem for modern audiences, either in terms of obscure language, or else because they are grounded in historical references or historical staging practices that are deemed unappealing or inappropriate under modern performance conditions (Furness). The removal of many dances, songs, and masques is one example of such practice, as is the cutting of lines referring pejoratively to “Ethiopes” or “Jews.” The rationale for cutting such scenes in performance is precisely the reason that they are useful in the classroom: these are the scenes that puzzle and alienate modern audiences and readers, and thus seeing them performed is even more of a boon. The performance recording created for the app, lacking the pressures of commercial success that underlie a majority of theatrical cuts – the need for a shortened running time, the fear that anything that is not immediately clear will cause an audience to disengage – has a greater leeway to explore and retain these frequently-cut scenes.

The uncut text, however, represents both a kind of duplicity and a missed opportunity. Performing the text in its entirety reinforces a historically inaccurate notion that cutting the text is a modern practice, and that Shakespeare’s audiences would have seen his plays performed ‘as written,’ in their entirety. As title pages of extant plays witness, the printed play often contains material that was omitted from the stage performance, either for reasons of politics and topicality, or because of what “the length of the play would…bear in the presentment.” Moreover, much research suggests that plays were routinely altered to fit the conditions of playing spaces, adapted for touring performances, or changed in the transition from public playhouse to court theatre and back (see, for example Stern; Dessen, *Recovering Shakespeare’s Theatrical Vocabulary*). Plays also passed in and out of the popular repertory, being retired when unprofitable, then remounted at later dates, often with cuts, changes, or additions made by the
original playwrights or by others (see McMillin and MacLean; Styan, Shakespeare’s Stagecraft,; Gurr). This is to say nothing of the textual variations between quartos and folios, already effaced in the un-collated conflated text. The result is a production that provides textual clarity at the expense of historical accuracy, John Astington’s “baggy monster never seen in that form in the playhouse of Shakespeare’s time” (Astington 232). Historical inaccuracy is not, in itself, a problem in a modern production, nor even in a modern edition (Stanley Wells). The digital medium is obviously anachronistic to Shakespeare, and the edition’s audience is presumably more interested in textual clarity than in historical authenticity. More precisely, based on the consistent treatment of performance materials in the editions’ design, the projects’ creators seem to assume that these are the interests of their intended audience. This was certainly the case for Shakespeare at Play.

The missed opportunity inherent in these choices is a greater concern. While editions frequently alter original texts in order to make them more palatable to modern readers (such alterations, indeed, are the basis of the edition as a concept and as an enterprise), the current standard practice in scholarly editions is to indicate those alterations clearly, and to provide a rationale both for the decision to alter and for the particular changes or choices made. As Peter Shillingsburg, Hans Walter Gabler, and others argue, such practices of transparency represent both an ethical imperative – clearly identifying the author’s text and the editor’s, providing reasoning behind the editor’s choices – and a pedagogical one – opening up spaces to discuss the editor’s task, the variant versions of a text, and the history of editorial analyses and interventions. Theatrical productions of a play might have similar rationales in a director’s note or an artistic director’s statement, but these are ad hoc statements that vary wildly and are entirely absent from many productions. Beyond the ethical consideration of misrepresenting theatrical practice – both modern and historical – the lack of commentary around the performance materials robs the multimedia editions of the opportunity to engage with the practice of script cuts, an engagement that the multimedia platform would be uniquely qualified to provide. The juxtaposition of a complete and uncut (if edited and conflated) text alongside a cut-for-performance production could serve as a basis for a discussion of cutting practices and rationales, of the history of adaptation and emendation, of the ways in which a published play-text differs from a
performance script, and of the processes involved in transforming the former into the latter – and, in the case of early modern plays, vice versa.

*WordPlay* and *PerformancePlus* gesture toward this possibility, as both apps use performances that are partly cut: *WordPlay* omits small sections of text, whereas *PerformancePlus* uses the festival’s 2014 production of *King Lear*. The use of Cimolino’s Stratford productions is the only instance among these projects of a performance recording from a commercially-produced, staged production. The performance of *Lear* already represents an intersection of several media, as the recording is from a live performance of the play that was also recorded and live-streamed as one of the festival’s Stratford HD productions, which artistic director Antoni Cimolino intends as a “Canadian collection of the entire Shakespeare canon” (Ouzounian). The production is a live performance, which has been adapted for the presence of cameras, and also intercut with additional footage and audio tracks recorded by producer Barry Avrich and his crew (Ouzounian). Stratford’s *PerformancePlus* site places video of that production adjacent to an uncut conflated text of *King Lear*, with an option to either display or hide the “Director’s Cut,” a function that highlights in gray the sections of the text that were cut for the performance. Here a user can compare the uncut text, the cut text, and the performance, and make some inferences as to why a line or section might have been excised. The script also marks moments that were added for performance but are not present in the text. In *Lear* 1.2, for example, Evan Buliung’s Edgar is introduced pursuing a “Servant Girl” (Laura Schutt), and they kiss on a table before Brad Hodder’s Edmund interrupts them. This action, and Edmund’s interpolated cries of “Brother!” and “Come, away!” are indicated in the script as “*ad hoc.*” Curiously, the “Director’s Cut” function can only highlight the cut text, not remove it, so that activating it paradoxically serves to place greater emphasis on the text that is cut from the performance. The app offers no commentary to contextualize this function, however. No discussion is presented regarding cutting practices in the abstract, nor addressing the particular choices that shaped this production. In the case of *PerformancePlus*, the site achieves a certain level of transparency and honesty by signalling the textual difference between the play-text and the performance script, but fails on a larger pedagogical level (and, arguably, an ethical one as well), by omitting the contextual information necessary for a user to understand the distinction between these two texts, let alone to comprehend the rationale behind it and imagine alternative versions.
2.14 Single-Version Performance

In Folger’s *Luminary* series, each play/app also includes an “Audio Plus” feature that offers alternate takes of several short segments of the performance. These are typically limited to a single speech or a brief exchange of dialogue, and are intended to give users a sense of what other kinds of performance choices might be available. These alternatives are still in the conventional-realistic playing mode of the overall performance; the minute exception is an alternate take in *Hamlet*, in which Emily Trask, who plays Ophelia in the production, performs Hamlet’s soliloquy from 4.4, “illustrating the tradition of female casting for this role.” These segments provide a very limited model of multiplicity. The Audio Plus content is not accessible within the performance playback, nor is it linked to the text of the play. It must instead be sought out via several menu branches, so that the alternate performance sits in an isolated section of the app, with no direct connection to either the play-text or the performance audio. The app’s “About” section indicates that Audio Plus “[g]ives you an alternative audio recording of the same speech. You get two different interpretations of the same passage. Nice” (Rowe and Visconti). No discussion is provided as to why one might want two different interpretations, or why the designers and editors chose these particular passages and versions. Nevertheless, this “Audio Plus” feature is the single exception to the trend among the multimedia editions of including only a single version of each performance. Despite much discussion among scholars and educators of the pedagogical and academic value of viewing and comparing multiple performances, and Michael Best’s theoretical discussion of the possibilities for encoding multiple versions of performance into a digital multimedia edition, the current projects all include only one version of the performance material (Best, “The Text of Performance and the Performance of Text in the Electronic Edition” 275). Audio Plus is a useful gesture towards alterity, and establishes the fact – if not the range or rationale – of choices made for performance. The feature could be more useful and more instructive if it were linked directly to the performance, and if it framed the choices being made in a way that enabled users to understand the decision-making process and apply it not only to the alternatives, but also to the primary performance.

In the case of *Shakespeare at Play*, the artistic team frequently discussed producing multiple versions of the performance, or at least of key scenes or speeches. Part of the reason for doing so
is to combat the tendency in education to treat the play as monolithic, inscribed with correct answers or performance choices that must be simply sought out and identified. Even within a limited set of conventions, a multiplicity of performance options exists, each of which evokes a different sense of the play, character, or moment. If Claudius is sincere in his search for redemption, if Gertrude recognizes Claudius’ machinations, if Horatio begins to doubt Hamlet’s sanity, the overall narrative changes. Less frequently discussed are aesthetic choices: choosing to set the play in an identifiable period rather than using a mixture of visual elements (as in Julie Taymor’s Titus) alters the play’s impact significantly, while still maintaining a conventional-realist performance style. As Cimolino points out in discussing the PerformancePlus production of King Lear, the choice of period setting will emphasize certain aspects of the play and mute others (Cimolino). In a discussion of technological aides for teaching Shakespeare, James P. Saeger argues in favour of exploring multiple performances, which can “minimize (though perhaps not completely erase)” students’ paralysis in the face of the overwhelming body of Shakespeare commentary (Saeger et al. 277). Engaging with performance, and especially with multiple performances, enables students to see that small details can alter a play’s resonances without requiring a deeply original reading. Furthermore, Saeger suggests that “exposure to multiple and varied performances” can powerfully demonstrate for students the ways in which a given work can sustain radically different interpretations and approaches, a task that “many hours of textual explication in class can still fail to achieve” (Saeger et al. 273).

Including multiple versions of performance can be a demonstration, rather than a discussion, of how a script is fleshed out in performance, of how performance choices become signifiers, to be decoded by audience members according to shared cultural conventions. Multiple performances can point to performance cruxes, as discussed by John Russell Brown, indicating the lacunae in the script in which “something must be said visually” (Brown 28, emphasis Brown’s). In the case of Shakespeare at Play and, I suspect, other multimedia editions as well, the reasons for not including multiple versions are largely pragmatic, but also pedagogical. Additional versions would require additional rehearsal time, filming time, and editing time, all of which must be paid for; the most prohibitive of these is filming time, as crew, equipment, and space are all expensive and difficult to organize. The app’s video content would then take up even more storage space. Moreover, the edition would then need to be configured to provide a framework for multiplicity,
with appropriate introductions and notes, or else to simply provide some alternatives, and leave users to their own devices in engaging with them.

For Best, as for Saeger, the optimum option would be to use existing materials rather than newly-created ones, drawing from famous and significant productions in order to give a sense not only of the possibilities of performance, but of the play’s existing production history (Best, “The Text of Performance and the Performance of Text in the Electronic Edition” 269). Such an approach would of course restrict that history to filmed and televised productions, de-emphasizing the play’s history in the theatre, and doubly de-emphasizing theatrical productions that predate photography (See Elam, “Editing Shakespeare by Pictures: Illustrated Editions”, for a discussion of pre-photographic illustrations in editions). The primary barrier to including such extant materials is simply that the companies that produce such work, and own the copyright to it, are loath to permit others to use their material. With the exception of Stratford’s PerformancePlus, the multimedia editions are all commercial products, so the use of existing materials (from the BBC, or RSC, or Stratford, for example) would require financial negotiation and compensation. As the materials were originally created for a particular model of distribution (theatre, film, television), re-purposing them for a new medium under commercial use would likely require renewed contracts for the actors and production team, in which a single refused permission may sink the entire project. These logistical and financial considerations explain why Peter Donaldson’s MIT Global Shakespeares website, an impressive aggregation of Shakespeare productions and adaptations, primarily includes reference images and short clips, as very few of the companies involved have agreed to provide access to full video of their productions (“Home”).

The pedagogical impediment to presenting multiple performances is that it becomes confusing for users who are encountering the text for the first time. Such users – generally, students at the elementary or secondary school level – benefit from a streamlined and simplified approach in order to focus on the primary task of distilling details of plot, character, and theme from the complex language of the dramatic text. In this regard, the single performance becomes an equivalent of Michael Best’s notion of the “entry text,” a deliberately simplified introductory version that serves to prepare users to grapple with the deeper complexities of the work. I take up this notion, and its theoretical basis, in Chapter 4.
2.15 Artists and Artistry

Inherent in the enterprise of multimedia editions, and most readily apparent in those containing video performance, is an assertion regarding the authority to speak of and for Shakespeare. A powerful – though implicit – aspect of the rhetoric of such projects is the notion that Shakespearean authority and meaning are appropriately transmitted via theatre artists, in ways that are equivalent – if not superior – to academic editors and annotators. The marketing of these apps is instructive on this point. WordPlay Shakespeare’s website provides an exemplary instance, in which director Jessica Bauman argues that a major value of performance lies in the ability of “classical theatre professionals” to deploy their “storytelling tools” in order to “crack open difficult texts” (Why WordPlay Shakespeare?). On a more pragmatic level, artists and educators have long argued that performance recordings are a convenient and cost-effective way to make performance available to students. In a charged polemical article from 1938, Orson Welles and Roger Hill propose that phonograph recordings might be utilized in order to bring the great actors of the day into the classroom (Welles and Hill 468). Such a plan, they argue, would marshal the potential of then-current technology in order to wrest control of the classroom away from “the literary high priest in his classroom sanctuary,” and return it to “those folks whose blood courses hot through their veins, i.e. the artists, and through them, the students (Welles and Hill 467–68). The article is overwrought and inflammatory, insisting on a rigid division between artist and scholar-teacher, lionizing the artist and lambasting the scholar in no uncertain terms.

The rhetorical move in Welles and Hill’s argument is worth examining, as it exemplifies through hyperbole discussions of Shakespeare both in the arts and in scholarship. The article identifies a problem, namely that modern students feel they cannot understand Shakespeare (Welles and Hill 467). Welles and Hill then argue that Shakespeare is perfectly accessible, that the fear students face is mistaken: in fact, Shakespeare “was written for you, for the groundlings, for the unscholarly Globe patrons who walked in from the cockfight on the street” (Welles and Hill 467). The mistake is more complex: not only is Shakespeare naturally accessible, but the “gray-bearded professor,” far from being a mediating agent leading to increased understanding, is in fact a barrier, who has “asked you to read Shakespeare with a pair of glasses smoked to a dull and dingy gray” (Welles and Hill 467). The impediment was not the material after all, but the interlocutor. Welles and Hill expand their point beyond Shakespeare to encompass Chaucer,
Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Byron, all of whom, Welles and Hill assure students, “spoke for you – not for the pedagogues” (Welles and Hill 467). Having made that assurance, though, Welles and Hill begin to back-pedal. “Of course, the flavor of the whole thing is new to you,” they warn, asserting that “the exotic, zestful flavor of Elizabethan phraseology falls at first strangely on our dulled and jaded senses, but, cultivated, it can bring moments of ecstasy” (Welles and Hill 467). Such cultivation, naturally, can be aided by a new, better, set of intermediaries: because “it is axiomatic that all poetry, and particularly all Shakespeare, was meant to be read aloud,” and because “so many teachers are incapable of reading Shakespeare aloud or instructing their charges in adequately reading Shakespeare aloud,” Welles and Hill recommend that the “growing library of phonograph recordings,” which includes “Gielgud, Barrymore, Ainley, and Forbes-Robertson readings of many Shakespearean parts,” and, Welles mentions with characteristic humility, will shortly also contain his own “Mercury’s current production of Julius Caesar” (Welles and Hill 468). Welles and Hill propose that these resources could ameliorate the situation of “thousands of English classrooms struggling with murderized pentameter” (Welles and Hill 468). This proposal is not merely, as Galey and Siemens suggest, an “early speculation on technology in the classroom,” though it is certainly that (Galey and Siemens 201). A critical point about Welles and Hill’s proposed use of new media in the classroom is that the technology is part of an intervention that carries artists into the classroom, and argues for their authority in the transmitting of Shakespeare. Also worth noting is the division of educational labour between artist and teacher: while the teacher offers the “scientific and analytical,” the artist enables the student to enjoy the material; after all, “if the pupil doesn’t enjoy it, it will certainly be no good to him” (Welles and Hill 467). The notion that artists can make difficult material – and Shakespeare in particular – enjoyable and engaging is one that recurs in the discussion surrounding multimedia editions, as well as the use of performance recording in the classroom more generally.

The press release for Cambridge Explore Shakespeare frames a more reserved version of Welles and Hill’s argument. The release endorses the app’s performance component through the biographies of its performers, specifying for each a credit in a high-culture work and a credit in a popular culture work. The combination emphasizes the cast’s qualifications both for the elevated task of performing Shakespeare and for the populist task of appealing to a broad and
predominantly youthful audience. Thus, the site presents such credits as “Kate Beckinsale (Emma, Total Recall),” Michael Sheen (Tron Legacy, Frost/Nixon),” and, bewilderingly, “Fiona Shaw (Harry Potter, True Blood)” (“Cambridge University Press Launches Explore Shakespeare Interactive Apps”). Folger Luminary contains a list of Experts, accessed via the app’s central “Honeycomb” menu. This list gives the names, images, and biographies of all Experts included in each app, as each play is its own standalone edition. The list includes all the scholars who directly contribute commentary on the play, as well as Peter Donaldson, who provides paratextual notes elsewhere in the app (not adjacent to the play-text), the audio performance’s cast, director, and design team. The list of Experts who supply commentary, identified as “Lecturers” in the pop-up menu next to the play-text, is a small subset of this complete listing, as Lecturers make up only twelve (as Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstein share a single entry) of the twenty-three individuals mentioned in the larger list (Rowe and Visconti). The implication is that all of the app’s contributors are to be taken as Experts, whether their expertise is deployed via scholarly commentary or via artistic production. All the Experts mediate between Shakespeare and the app’s users, some by interpreting through performance, others by interpreting through commentary.

A similar strategy can be seen at play in the casting for TouchPress’ Sonnets app, which combines modern actors best known for popular culture roles, such as Kim Cattrall and Nathan Stewart-Jarrett, alongside scholars such as Katherine Duncan-Jones and James Shapiro, and performers who combine pop-culture recognition with ‘classical’ acting authority, such as Patrick Stewart, David Tennant, and Fiona Shaw. The range of performers in Sonnets enacts a democratization of authority, and authorities, presenting actors, scholars, and actor-scholars (David Crystal, Cicely Berry) as equivalent authorities, though with differing areas of expertise. In Worthen’s terms, “all participants in a production are trying to make it speak, which means they must speak for it, and that it will speak in their present voices” (William B Worthen 59). In Sonnets, a variety of authorities speak Shakespeare, and thus claim the right to speak of and for Shakespeare. Moreover, the app’s format privileges performance to a greater extent than has been possible in print editions. Not only do actors and performance scholars present their observations in writing as paratexts, but scholars are shown performing sonnets, inviting comparison between their technique and that of the actors. The scholars’ authority is placed in
the sphere of the actors’ expertise, and the scholars suffer by comparison. James Shapiro’s energetic gesticulation and Henry Woudhuysen’s tense stillness undermine the presentation by calling attention to the performance, though their understanding of the text still comes across.

The trend of presenting scholars as performers continues in Sonnets’ “Perspectives” section, which offers a set of short essays and observations of the sort commonly found in scholarly editions and especially in digital editions. In the case of Sonnets, however, each piece is a video accompanied by a text transcript. The pieces are relatively informal and conversational, and the video and audio aspects emphasize the scholars’ role as performers. The filmed presentations demonstrate the importance of voice, gesture, and expression in conveying ideas, just as the app’s larger design makes the argument that Shakespeare’s poetic language is deepened, enriched, and clarified by the integration of (recorded) living performance.

8 Screenshot: Sonnets - Perspectives

WordPlay and Shakespeare at Play go further, presenting each group’s artistic competence as a basis from which to foray into textual commentary and analysis. Each app has an academic on hand: David Scott Kastan is a “special consultant” for WordPlay, while I am the “Head of Content” for Shakespeare at Play. These projects, however, base their Shakespearean authority on the capability of their artists and the innovation of their design, rather than on a connection to an academic institution or publisher. Both apps make the argument that the training and
experience that theatre artists develop in performing Shakespeare qualifies them to speak of and for Shakespeare in ways that are analogous, though not identical, to the expertise of scholars. These apps, in their presentation and their marketing, argue that actors’ rhetorical techniques – expression, inflection, musicality – as well as the visual components of the performance – proxemics, movement, composition – serve to clarify the play’s action and to engage an audience. *Heuristic Shakespeare* attempts to have it both ways, especially in its marketing. While the app is produced through Arden, and grounds its edition in the Arden 3 *Tempest* edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, the publicity surrounding the app’s release invariably emphasized the involvement of Sir Ian McKellen. Typical headlines read “Sir Ian McKellen Releases New Apps to Make Shakespeare’s Plays More Enjoyable & Accessible” (Colman), “Ian McKellen seeks to demystify Shakespeare with new app” (Burton), “Heuristic Shakespeare: Ian McKellen’s new app offers a fresh take on the Bard’s plays” (Phelan), and the succinct-but-misleading “Listen to Ian McKellen Read Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*” (McCluskey). The involvement of series co-editor Jonathan Bate, let alone the Arden Shakespeare, is a buried lede at best, and often a distant afterthought in this coverage. The app itself is more equitable in its distribution of authority. McKellen’s presence is pervasive, from his performance as Prospero in the app’s videos, to his voice reassuringly guiding users through the app’s design and features, to his recorded appearance in several of the video essays describing the play’s characters and themes. Bate, listed in the app’s credits as “Professor Sir Jonathan Bate,” is a subtler presence within the app, appearing in the majority of the character/theme videos, but otherwise operating as more of an éminence grise, possibly responsible for aspects of the app’s format and design, as well as some of its uncredited content, such as the “Play at a glance” summary, the “Character map,” and the selection and editing of the paratextual materials. As is common among these projects, his precise contributions are not specified.

Stratford’s *PerformancePlus* is the most extreme example of this shift in authority, as the project (embedded in the Stratford Festival website’s Teaching Resources section) trades on the Festival’s brand analogously to a scholarly edition’s reliance on a recognized academic publisher. The site itself supplies no information, description, or context on the project, instead trusting that the interface is sufficiently intuitive and self-explanatory. *PerformancePlus* uses a bare minimum of academic materials: the site contains no notes or scholarly essays, though brief
and uncredited glossary definitions are provided for selected terms within the text, indicated by blue hypertext. No scholars are mentioned, and none seems to have been involved in the site’s design. According to Kate Bueckert’s CBC News article, the Festival’s education team was responsible for much of the edition’s conception and execution, alongside educational software development company Desire2Learn, though the site itself makes no mention of this (Bueckert). The site’s design and marketing emphasizes its core premise, of positioning Shakespeare’s text alongside Stratford’s production, within a digital format. While the text and performance are both Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, they are also, significantly, Stratford’s *King Lear*. The Stratford Festival logo appears on every page of the site, and precedes every video, while Shakespeare’s name does not appear in any titles or banners. The text is described as “Shakespeare’s” in the site’s publicity materials and media coverage, but the text is an edited, uncredited, conflated script, including both Quarto and Folio elements, but no collation. The site includes a few paratextual materials in the form of teaching aids, though these are cursory at best. A few lesson plans are supplied, as well as lists of “Discussion Points” such as “Discuss parent-child relationships in Act 4” or “Is Lear a sympathetic character?” with no discussion whatsoever beyond the “point” itself. By contrast, the most robust section of paratext (or “Bonus Features,” as they are described on the site) is the “Artistic Insights.” This section is comprised short videos, in which the actors and director Antoni Cimolino discuss the play’s characters, themes, action, and relevance. I will discuss PerformancePlus’ artists’ commentary in more detail in Chapter 3, but it is important to note here that it is the only one of these projects that explicitly gives its artists a voice with which to discuss Shakespeare. Where Sonnets offers commentary by artist-scholars, and Shakespeare at Play makes an analogous move by incorporating my audio commentary on each scene, PerformancePlus surrounds its performance with reflections on the play by the cast and crew themselves.

The fusion of Shakespeare’s text with recorded performance is met with skepticism or even distaste by some reviewers. Anna Baddeley, reviewing TouchPress’ Sonnets in The Observer, buries the mention of the videos in the review’s second-last paragraph: “as for the much-trumpeted celebrity performances, my first thought was ‘yuck,’ but it’s tastefully done and you don’t have to watch Stephen Fry and Kim Cattrall if you don’t want to” (Baddeley). The oblique reference hints at anxiety about the tastefulness of the video feature, though the comment is
ambiguous as to whether the issue is video performances per se, or the use of celebrities as a marketing gimmick, or both. Tim Carmody, writing for The Verge, begins his analysis by asserting that “the trained Shakespearean actors…handle the bulk of the readings with predictable skill, but Stephen Fry positively nails Sonnet 130” (Carmody). The opposition of the Shakespearean actors’ “predictable skill” to Fry’s (apparently unexpected) success with Sonnet 130 suggests that there is pleasure to be derived from the performances through an expectation of – or desire for – the performer’s failure, which can then turn into delight at the performer’s unanticipated skill or even adequacy. These responses suggest a layer of pleasure to be found in the performances that is at least partially separate from any kind of heightened understanding of the text, but rather views Shakespeare performance as a kind of cultural-athletic event, in which the audience is invited to watch performers pit themselves against the challenge of Shakespeare’s text, judging their success or failure.

2.16 Conventional Performance: “Truth for Now”

The performance materials in each of these projects make up a range of aesthetic approaches, from the composed-but-casual visuals of Sonnets to the stripped-down, workshop style of WordPlay, to PerformancePlus’ live-audience-and-cameras production. I will argue, however, that all of these performances represent a broad aesthetic that I will call ‘conventional performance.’ This label is not intended to be pejorative, and is meant neither as an accusation of artistic failing in the productions nor as a dismissal of this particular aesthetic. All art relies on conventions, after all. What I am attempting to describe is an aesthetic approach to Shakespeare that closely resembles performances that an audience would encounter in film and television. The style is broadly realistic (though this is also a contested and imprecise term in theatre theory and theatre history), and represents fidelity to the text – and thus to the playwright-as-author – rather than an emphasis on theatricality – represented by the director-as-author. Guillermo Verdecchia posits a spectrum of directorial approach, ranging from the “Worshipful” at one extreme to the “Heretical” at the other. The former is characterized by a desire to “tell the story” or “serve the text,” while the latter is engaged with the intent to “make theatre,” treating the script as “a platform to present [the] director’s ideas” (Verdecchia). This binary is reductive, to be sure, and Verdecchia is fully cognizant that these approaches blend into one another. From this perspective, all of the multimedia editions’ performance materials fall on the “worshipful”
end of the spectrum. All are, understandably, concerned with “telling the story” and with communicating textual content via performance rather than with creating virtuosic productions. The acting style is realistic, drawing from the Stanislavsky-Meisner-Strasberg tradition, emphasizing character and psychology. Even in the comparatively non-illusionistic aesthetic of WordPlay Shakespeare or the recitation-performance of Sonnets, the performance is representational rather than presentational. Actors perform, inhabit, and embody their characters or their spoken text, rather than commenting upon them or keeping them at a distance, as in more overtly theatrical modes of performance. Despite the fidelity to Shakespeare’s text – however edited – the performance style across the multimedia editions is decidedly modern, rooted in a performed naturalness of speech and gesture, movements and rhythms rehearsed, then performed to appear unrehearsed. Indeed, it is the failure to appear unrehearsed that marks the scholars of Sonnets as “bad” performers. With very few exceptions, male characters are played by men and female characters by women. Actors occasionally play multiple roles (WordPlay and Shakespeare at Play both use film editing to enable feats of doubling that would be impossible on stage), but they perform these roles with no meta-theatrical acknowledgement of the doubling. Design in the performances tends to favour a unified aesthetic or “concept,” including the use of modern sound and light technologies to evoke setting, mood, and tone.

In a segment on “Performing Shakespeare Today,” one of the Sonnets’ “Perspectives” pieces, Cicely Berry articulates the challenge actors face in performing Shakespeare for modern audiences. “We want to hear Shakespeare as if it is being spoken for now,” argues Berry, so that actors must balance the need to “make the listener hear the extraordinary range of imagery that [Shakespeare] uses because it is that imagery that takes us into the world of the play and the world of the character and takes us into a very deep part of ourselves,” while at the same time “we don’t want it to sound over-loaded or over-poetic to take away its truth for now” (Berry, “Performing Shakespeare Today,” in Sonnets). The effort to transmit the highly artificial and rhetorical language of Shakespeare (both verbal and theatrical) through the medium of a performance style focused on “truth for now,” and characterized by what Berry calls “a very sort of cool way of speaking” (in the sense of ‘natural’ or ‘casual’) defines the aesthetic of conventional performance. As Worthen pointedly observes, “another nod to propriety: performance = realistic mimesis of the narrative” (W. B. Worthen, “Shax the App” 219). The
elements making up this style all represent significant departures from the performance text, major changes from the play as it was originally performed. My point here is not to harp on the differences between modern and early modern theatrical practices, but rather to point out the degree to which these differences are elided and ignored in projects that lay claim to a Shakespearean authenticity and authority. What interests me here is less the fact of mediation and more the necessity of keeping the mediation invisible and unremarked in order for it to do its work of presenting an accessible and universal Shakespeare. The ability of a modern audience to engage with ‘Shakespeare’ is facilitated, even enabled, by the efforts made by the acting company to place Shakespeare into a modern performance idiom. Gendered casting, modern lighting, unified aesthetics, realistic acting, even the very act of embedding the performance into a digital platform, all do for the student-audience what modernized spelling, simplified or updated punctuation, regularized speech-headings, and interpolated stage directions do for the student-reader. These strategies smooth out graininess and friction, remove obstacles to comprehension, and transform a distant historical object into a proximate contemporary one. As editors, we make reading Shakespeare similar to reading Shaw or Arthur Miller or Judith Thompson, and as artists, we make watching Shakespeare similar to watching television and movies. We make our students and our audiences like Shakespeare by making Shakespeare like them.

2.17 Mediation, Remediation

Discussing material conditions in an edition may be a step beyond the usual purview of an editor, even in a digital project. After all, editors of print editions are not expected to address the design of the book, despite the arguments of many book historians regarding the importance of size, shape, cover, paper quality, font, and cost, what McGann calls the work’s bibliographic, as opposed to literary, elements. McGann suggests that “every part of the productive process is meaning-constitutive – so that we are compelled, if we want to understand a literary work to examine it in all its multiple aspects” (J. J. McGann 33). Shakespeare in a folio is a different experience than Shakespeare in a pocket-sized softcover, even if they (arguably) contain the same text (Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare*).
None of the multimedia Shakespeare editions currently supplies any discussion of how they function as digital projects: what effect, beyond a general idea of ‘accessibility’, is achieved by placing Shakespeare’s text into a digital platform, and why a given set of choices was made about format, design, and functionality. Discussions of mediation and remediation often begin from the idea that a given object has an original medium, from which it is being translated (in the literal sense of ‘carried across’) into a new medium, as per Linda Hutcheon’s model of adaptation (Hutcheon). Discussions of Shakespeare in new media, or on film and television, tend to work in a similar manner, analyzing the gains and losses of translating theatrical work into recorded media, or from historical production practices to modern ones, as in Alan Dessen’s analysis (Dessen, Rescripting Shakespeare). Shakespeare, like any dramatist, adds a difficulty to these considerations, in that it is difficult if not impossible to establish the works’ original form. Any choice here prompts follow-up questions, as scholars, artists, and educators debate whether Shakespeare’s ‘originals’ are texts, scripts, or performances, and, in any case, which versions ought to stand as the work itself.

2.18 Annotating (for) Performance

If the performance is not to be taken as merely ancillary to text, but as a text in its own right, then it demands its own annotations as well. Annotating with a view to performance is hardly a new practice in Shakespeare editions, and has had a recent resurgence in the wake of the new Oxford editions’ emphasis on theatricality, as well as in performance editions and performance history-based guides to Shakespeare’s plays. The format of text and performance sharing a screen presents new options for annotation, as does the digital format more generally. Folger Luminary, for example, includes a wide variety of “Expert” commentary, all of which can be hidden or displayed, including an option to select which Experts display and which do not. Luminary’s format highlights the multiplicity of experts, identifying the author of each mini-essay, so that users get a sense of each contributor’s voice and areas of interest and expertise. In each note, the author’s name appears as hypertext, enabling users to navigate from the present text and its accompanying note to the entire body of a given Expert’s commentary. Because the notes display as pop-ups, multiple notes can be attached to any piece of text, enabling (and also requiring) users to choose which comment they wish to read, with the option to read through all of them individually. Each comment is titled, easing the process of selection and of citation.
wealth of expert contributors results in a variety of topics addressed by the comments, as well as in a range of tones and styles, from the very formal and academic to the conversational and playful. While a number of the contributors discuss performance, however, none of the comments deals directly with the Folger Theatre’s audio production of the play included in the app. The artists are listed as Experts, but their expertise is channeled into the performance, rather than articulating any perspective or context on their work. The artists speak through the performance, but neither artists nor scholars speak about the performance.

*Shakespeare at Play* takes a similar approach. My annotations often draw from my work as a dramaturge to point out performance cruxes and discuss historical staging, production practices, or possible performance choices. A typical note asks users to imagine what Juliet might be doing during Capulet’s speech as he greets guests in *Romeo and Juliet* 1.5:

> Since only Capulet is speaking, Lady Capulet and Juliet may be greeting guests silently; this moment gives Juliet an opportunity to show how she behaves in public: is she comfortable, awkward, charming, polite, distant? (Lior and Chisholm)

This approach incorporates a consideration of performance, rooted in the kind of performance cruxes that Brown describes: the goal is to help users with little or no background in theatre or performance analysis to think beyond the dialogue and consider the visual stage-picture, and the possibilities for interaction between the staged action, simultaneous with the dialogue, and the words on the script page. At the same time, the analysis is entirely framed within a psychological-realistic convention of acting, in which physical action is meant to realistically portray social behaviour, enabling audience members to infer details about a character’s thoughts and nature. Stylized or non-representational acting is absent from the consideration, as are the possibilities of staging (lighting, set, costume, sound design) that might either support or oppose such conventionally realistic acting choices. My notes also do not make any explicit reference to the video performance accompanying the text. While they may draw connections between the play-text and hypothetical performance, they do not address the choices made in our own production. Users are free to compare the text to the video performances, but the notes do not provide them with any context regarding our own choices, either in terms of acting, staging, or design.
2.19 Access and Accessibility

The use of conventional performance is, in itself, not a problem, nor do I mean to criticize either the aesthetic itself or its ubiquitous use in the multimedia editions. An advantage of conventional performance is that it appears instantly familiar to users accustomed to seeing a similar style of acting and a similar treatment of script-as-text in most commercial film and television, as well as mainstream theatre. The conventions enumerated above are the general conventions with which most users are already comfortable, and that familiarity allows users to largely ignore the aesthetic and performance style and focus instead on the dramatic content, the fictional story of the play.

The issue with the editions’ treatment of performance is not error but omission. The use of performance without comment or context conflates the authority of the artists with that of the author, and, more significantly, conflates a particular and modern aesthetic of performance with ‘performance’ as a category. In the case of Shakespeare, the conflation of a modern conventional aesthetic with the universal or categorical idea of performance supports the arguments for Shakespeare’s timeless appeal, and the modernity and universality of his themes. The conception of Shakespeare as “for all time” has been used as a strategy for selling editions since at least the First Folio. By eliding the choices that go into preparing and presenting the production, directors distort the play’s historical and theatrical context by adapting it into a modern framework, then claim to have discovered the play’s modern resonances, thus justifying and naturalizing the entire endeavour. This manipulation becomes more egregious and obfuscating when attached to Shakespearean exceptionalism, as in John Barton’s representation of ‘modern’ Shakespeare opposed to ‘archaic’ Kyd and Marlowe in the Playing Shakespeare series (Barton). As Sarah Werner argues in her critique of these projects, by eliding the “traces of the labour that theatre and film and video artists do in breathing life into the scripts for their audiences,” these projects risk concealing the processes that they seek to illuminate, namely the decisions “interpretive choices at stake in Shakespeare” (Werner 345).

The use of conventional performance for the multimedia editions’ performance materials is understandable. Conventional performance itself is a widely recognized aesthetic – which also happens to be my preferred style in my own theatre and production work – and its familiarity to
the editions’ presumed audience gives it advantages, as discussed above. The use of conventional performance is roughly analogous to the use of modernized spelling and regular speech-headings in a print edition: it is an editorial choice that distorts the material’s historical features in order to make the content more readily accessible to a modern audience. Some editors might take exception to any such distortions, calling, with Randall McLeod, for “un-editing,” or else decrying any modernization as emendation in disguise, as in Michael J. Warren’s treatment of punctuation (Warren; McLeod). The vast majority of scholarly editions engage in a great deal of such editing, while making a point of providing clear demarcations identifying the editor’s work and the author’s, as well as providing a rationale for such emendations as are made. Most readers do not look for such materials, and might even prefer not to be troubled with them, but the presence of the editorial apparatus satisfies both the ethical imperative and the pedagogical one.

At present, the multimedia editions supply a less-than-complete editorial apparatus for their textual materials, and no apparatus for their performance materials. In Gabler’s terms, the apparatus represents

the editor’s ammunition (as it were) for establishing the edited text in that editorial ‘agency’ endeavour of strengthening the author-text lifeline. Annotation and commentary, in contrast, support a second ‘agency’ function falling to editors, especially in the older traditions of editing: namely, one of mediating the text, or work, and of a text’s or work’s meaning, to readers. (Gabler 44)

The elision of such “ammunition” in the presentation of performance materials conflates editorial/artistic agency with authorial agency, and the edition with the text, positioning the editions’ artists as Delery’s “subjects presumed to know” (Delery).

The kinds of discussions led in most classrooms are likely well-served by conventional performance, which allows users to focus on the play’s content, what Elam calls its dramatic, rather than theatrical, aspects (Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama 98). According to Elam, a spectator at a play derives from the conventionalized onstage happenings a range of dramatic information which enables him to translate what he sees and hears into something quite different: a fictional dramatic world characterized by a set of physical properties, a set of agents and a course of time-bound events. (Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama 98)

In a majority of teaching situations, this dramatic world – the plot, characters, and themes of the work – are of greater concern to both teachers and students than the details of performance, let
alone the range of potential performances. At the same time, the format of the multimedia edition provides an opportunity to introduce students to exactly that range. At the very least, an assessment of the performance’s aesthetic would acknowledge that conventional performance is useful for certain kinds of discussions, but precludes the artistic choices that result in productions such as Robert LePage’s *Elsinore*, Peter Sellars’ *Merchant of Venice*, Strehler’s *Tempest*, or the Philip McKee/Clare Coulter Lear. The corollary to Elam’s description of spectatorship is that unconventional “onstage happenings” draw an audience’s attention to themselves, and thus to the theatrical, rather than serving as transparent vehicles for the dramatic content. Margaret Jane Kidnie usefully articulates a notion of conventional performance that is unstable and dynamic, a perpetually-redefining relationship between a notion of the work and the consideration of its iterations. For Kidnie, the notion of the conventional production is unstable, yet identifiable within its period:

This is not to say that at any given moment it is impossible to identify texts and performances that are regarded as authentically Shakespearean; however, the production which today seems fully to capture or embody a supposed original – and this is true whether one speaks of text or performance – enjoys only a potentially temporary and limited currency. (Kidnie 9)

The multimedia editions and their promotional materials argue that accessibility – whether figured in terms of familiar technology, mode of distribution, or style of performance – can aid users in overcoming the challenge of unfamiliar material, and specifically the cultural apprehension and intimidation that has accrued to Shakespeare (what the educators of the Ashland Festival have termed “Shakes-fear”). Much of the work of an edition or a performance is in making the unfamiliar, alienating, frightening Shakespeare familiar and comprehensible. Accessibility becomes evident as a Procrustean bed, a network of distortions designed to configure Shakespeare into a mode that is less challenging, to give users (and especially first-time users) a sense of contact. A great deal of analysis, in editorial theory as in performance criticism and technique, is concerned with the shifting boundaries of those distortions, determining which are acceptable (even necessary), and which are deleterious or misleading. As Worthen, Kidnie, Verdecchia, and Dessen point out, much performance criticism is concerned with locating the boundary between ‘Shakespeare’s play’ and ‘the director’s (or actor’s) vision’, frequently implying or blatantly proclaiming that too much movement from the former to the latter is a fault in any production (Kidnie 153). Accessibility as a strategy enables users to take
form as transparent, in order to focus on content – in the case of Shakespeare, the language and fictional action of the dramatic text. At the same time, such a strategy elides the relationship between form and content – the ways in which Shakespeare’s plays take advantage of early modern stage practices for direct address, cross-gender disguise, visual allusions, or spectacle (consider how often masques, songs, fights, and dances are cut in modern productions); the ways in which printing Shakespeare’s plays in a folio constitutes an argument for their cultural value; the ways in which the dramatic script presupposes familiarity with poetic, rhetorical, and theatrical technique. Some aspects of pedagogy are well-served by this version of accessibility – notably, the first-order teaching requirements of introducing students to the ‘story,’ the play’s dramatic fiction. Many higher-level pedagogical imperatives, however, in particular those dealing with analysis and critical thinking, depend on an inverse approach, in which the seemingly familiar is made alien, and offered up for examination.
Chapter 3: Watch While You Read

3.1 Overview

This chapter examines multimedia Shakespeare editions’ most striking design element, the situating of text and performance side-by-side within a digital framework. This design is more prominent in the video-based projects (Shakespeare at Play, Sonnets, Heuristic, PerformancePlus, and WordPlay), though it is a core element of the audio-based projects as well (Explore Shakespeare, Luminary). The dual-stream design links the rhetoric of these projects to dual-language editions, and to editions that pair a modernized, edited text with facsimiles of its original documents. The layout – two versions positioned symmetrically but separately – reinforces an equivalence and parity between the versions, while the user’s ability to view both simultaneously invites critical comparison. Paradoxically, the positioning of the two elements side-by-side argues that they are identical, or at least analogous, while also creating the conditions for doubt, and providing tools for investigation of that doubt. The invitation to compare the two elements both reinforces and undermines their equivalence, and makes apparent some of the work of the editor (or translator, or artists), extending the possibility of critical evaluation to that work as well.

The framework for chapters 3 and 4 is based in the relationship between edited, modernized texts and corresponding facsimile images of original, unedited, documents. Peter Shillingsburg argues that the affordances of digital editions – specifically the ability to present an edited text alongside high-quality facsimiles of the original document – mean that “students of a text will more readily than was ever the case in print editions be able to confront textual cruxes for themselves” (Shillingsburg, Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age 166). Sarah Neville responds that Shillingsburg’s claim is “overstated,” reasoning that in such editions, rather than encountering the text directly, users are instead confronted with the entire constellation of editorial interventions (Neville 5–6). The result of this encounter – unless it is contextualized by a discussion of editorial labour and its rationale – is that “[t]he authority of the editor to speak on behalf of the text is therefore not diminished by the affordances of the new technology, but actually intensified” (Neville 6). The corollary of the intensification of editorial authority is a diminishment in users’ inclination and capacity for critical engagement. This chapter will
consider multimedia Shakespeare editions as variations on the kind of document visualization that concerns Shillingsburg and Neville, an, in a similar vein, as variations on dual-language editions. This consideration is particularly apt in terms of the editions’ positioning of the relationship between text and performance, which, in the logic of the split-screen video editions especially, take on analogous characteristics to the unedited facsimile original and the edited, mediated, modernized translation. Chapter 3 is broadly concerned with bolstering and investigating Shillingsburg’s argument, examining the ways in which the dual-stream design enables users to move productively from one element to the other, as well as ways in which the design works rhetorically to argue for the equivalence of both versions, while drawing users’ attention to the distinctions between them. This chapter applies Neville’s critique in terms of the elision of artistic labour, the function of the conventional, modernized, mediatized performance to tacitly argue for the multimedia performance as an authentic and accessible rendition of Shakespeare, rather than a new original work. The next chapter will engage more fully with Neville’s argument in terms of editorial labour, positioning, and transparency, examining the multimedia editions’ approach to annotation and editorial theory.

Shillingsburg’s argument about facsimiles moves beyond the core proposition of the multimedia Shakespeare editions, shifting from the role of visualizations and multimedia documents as explanatory tools to propose that their very presence invites and supports a critical engagement by an edition’s users. Positioning edited text side-by-side with document visualizations, Shillingsburg suggests, enables users to evaluate the editor’s work, in terms of the steps taken to make the original document accessible to its imagined audience. As Neville argues, these steps include “the reproduction or transmission of primary documents to make them accessible at a practical level” but also “a series of actions designed to make their edited texts more accessible at an intellectual level” (Neville 5, italics Neville’s). My argument is that the dual-stream design of the multimedia editions argues for an equivalence and parity between text and performance, figured as alternate versions of the same authorial work; the design, per Shillingsburg, invites and supports a critical evaluation of that equivalence, but also, per Neville, elides many of the mediating steps involved in building the equivalence, thus only partly equipping users with the necessary tools for an informed critical appraisal.
3.2 Codes and Coding

The dual-display design of the multimedia Shakespeare editions evokes Neal Stephenson’s comparison between command line interface and graphical user interface (GUI). Initially dismissive of GUI-based operating systems’ tendency to conceal their “underlying gutwork” beneath layers of “spackle,” Stephenson eventually and grudgingly concedes that, for most users, the command line interface is difficult and daunting, while the GUI enables users to accomplish relatively difficult tasks quickly and efficiently, without requiring a great deal of technical knowledge. In either case, the code is a set of instructions for accomplishing a task, with the command line offering a less mediated but more demanding access, suitable for specialists, and the GUI providing a more mediated and less demanding access, ideal for lay users. The conceptual design and layout of the multimedia Shakespeare editions posits the Shakespeare text as a kind of command line or source code – potent and direct, but only available to those with a range of specialized skills – and the performance as a kind of GUI – mediated and accessible if, per Stephenson, laden with “promiscuous metaphors.” The framing and media for these projects, however, quickly complicate this distinction.

Marketing statements and project descriptions position the difficulty of Shakespeare not only as a result of unfamiliar context and conventions, but also as a consequence of mis-coding, of treating a set of performance instructions as though they were a legible literary text. Shakespeare at Play’s website declares that “Shakespeare wasn’t meant to be read… His words were meant to be brought to life in performance” (“Shakespeare at Play - Home”, emphasis added); WordPlay’s director, Jessica Bauman, explains in a website video that “these plays were never really intended to be read” (Bauman, Why WordPlay Shakespeare?, emphasis added); Heuristic Shakespeare’s website claims that “Shakespeare wrote his plays to be seen and heard, not read” and a quote from Ian McKellen on the same page further explains that “[r]ead[ing] the script of any play is a problem, even for professional actors” (Heuristic Media). I will return to the difficulties of reading play-texts, but I wish here to examine the claims being made in terms of intention and authority. In these formulations, Shakespeare is still difficult because of the distance between his context and the users’, and because of the formal difficulties of reading dramatic works, but also because the play-text was not the work’s intended reception, at least for a general audience. The play-text is thus made to represent both the proximity to the author
described by Kidnie – and signaled by phrases such as “Shakespeare’s text,” “Shakespeare’s words,” “Shakespeare’s language” – but at the same time does not reflect authorial intention, which is more clearly and directly expressed through performance. The performance, then, is a kind of GUI, a user-friendly experience of the inaccessible code, while simultaneously operating as a more true, more authentic, more authorial transmission of the intended work. This argument moves drama away from the realm of literary works such as novels and short stories, in which the text is a direct expression of the work, and toward other forms of works such as film and television screenplays, comics scripts, sheet music, or choreographic notation, in which the text represents an initial form and structure, hinting at – but never fully describing – the finished form of the work.

To muddle my metaphor somewhat, shifting from command line to source code, the claims made in the multimedia Shakespeare editions’ descriptions and marketing, and reinforced in the rhetoric of their design, promote and reinforce the notion of Shakespeare’s text as code, in the sense of a set of instructions for performance. This relationship still invites the kind of critical, comparative relationship suggested by Shillingsburg, in that users can examine the text and the performance in order to learn how such instructions can function, but also to evaluate whether the artists have accurately or successfully translated the code into performance. The emphasis on performance as the – authorially, historically, artistically – intended mode of production for Shakespeare’s work thus positions the artists as essential, while simultaneously diminishing their contribution. If the text is the code on which the performance is based, and the performance is the intended elaboration of that code (in the literal sense of elaboration as “working out”), then the artists are essential solely for their technical knowledge, as experts in interpreting the code of the text and literalizing it through sound and movement, voice and gesture. Largely absent from this model is the consideration of the artists as collaborators rather than elaborators, as co-workers making choices that substantially affect both the nature and reception of the work. For this reason, conventional performance is essential to the rhetoric of these projects, as it highlights the artists’ technical contributions, while relegating their efforts to a more-or-less successful enactment of the Shakespearean code.

The language of codes, coding, and decoding pervades discussions of works and texts. Tanselle describes verbal works as employing language, an “intangible medium;” such works must be
converted into a form of “tangible representation” in order to be stored – on paper, magnetic tape, hard drives, etc. – from which they are eventually reconstructed in the act of reading. The document – the work stored in a physical medium – “in effect becomes a set of instructions for reconstituting the works” (Tanselle, “Editing without a Copy-Text” 5, quoted in Worthen 9). Tanselle’s argument here bears some examination, as it combines several acts of coding and decoding that are relevant to my case studies. First, the work is converted – coded – into a “set of instructions:” idea becomes language, dance becomes notation, symphony becomes score. That set of instructions is then stored in a relatively permanent medium: inscribed onto paper, recorded on magnetic tape, burned onto a CD. Storage involves its own set of codes as well: print has its own logic and conventions, as do discs and drives. Finally, a reader or other user decodes the stored instructions in an attempt to reconstruct the original work, either as a mental process or in physical re-enactment. As John Miles Foley notes in his consideration of print ‘recordings’ of oral epics, every part of this process is fraught and susceptible to loss and distortion (Foley 107). Foley distils these coding processes into three procedural questions: “What gets recorded? What gets published? What gets received?” (Foley 102). Each of these stages is both lossy and generative, introducing possibilities for loss of original information, and for various kinds of distortion and amplification. Foley’s exploration of oral epics is not, of course, identical to the case of dramatic works, but it is analogous in important ways, among them, the fact that coding the work into storage on paper tends to emphasize only certain aspects of the work, reducing – or distilling – a complex multi-modal performance to a sequence of words, a text. Foley’s model also calls attention to the function of writing and print as a technology for the storage and playback of performance media. Like the algorithms used for storing music or video files on a computer, the process of storing a work in a tangible medium involves compression, a reduction of complex information to a simpler form, which then depends on a process of extraction during playback or “reconstituting”. As Worthen points out, that extraction is only possible, or only possible with accuracy, if the user possesses the contextual knowledge to make sense of the codes: “the ‘instructions’ provided by these forms of storage are not sufficient in themselves to produce the work: without an understanding of the conventional workings of production, these ‘instructions’ are illegible” (William B Worthen 10). Conventional performances and editions perform the labour of inscribing or describing these conventions for audiences unfamiliar with them, and this is a central claim of the multimedia
projects. In the case of Shakespeare’s plays and poems, certain aspects do become illegible or inaccessible without the appropriate prior knowledge, not only of theatre practice, but also of vocabulary, cultural context, and rhetoric. Other aspects become misleadingly legible, offering gaps in the “instructions” which enable users to interpolate a variety of interpretive frameworks that may not have been within the scope of the work as originally conceived, but become valid readings in new contexts. A modern reader may well imagine female roles played by women, scene transitions communicated via lighting changes, or music cues supplied through recorded sound. Any teacher or actor who has had to present *Othello* to high school students knows that, no matter how dignified the performance, some portion of the audience will snicker at “Here is my journey’s end, here is my butt,” as original meanings become overwritten with new, generative (if unfortunate) associations. As Worthen suggests, and as Foley argues, Tanselle’s model of ‘instructions’ does not result in a 1:1:1 relationship between the conceived work, the stored code, and the user’s playback, but rather a complex process of recording, publishing, and reception, with interpretive gains and losses at each step. Johanna Drucker offers a useful reminder that computer programming code, mythologized as “mathematically perfect and self-consistent”, divorced from materiality yet authorizing iteration, is itself as much a materially-bound document as any other kind of text, subject to the affordances of its media (Drucker 137). Tanselle’s model of instructions takes its metaphor of code from cryptography, in which messages are converted, stored, and reconstructed back into their original forms. Drucker’s model, productively linking computer programming, textuality, and book design, considers coding as “constrain[ing] the possibilities of reading…through provocation, not mechanical transmission” (Drucker 154). The design rhetoric of multimedia Shakespeare editions, as currently configured, employs its provocations forcefully, but labours to disguise them as mechanical transmission.

### 3.3 The Work

As Shillingsburg suggests, positioning two versions of the work side by side invites users to compare the versions, using each to understand the other, and using both as a means to evaluate the edition’s success. As Neville argues, most users require more than a simple invitation to compare and evaluate, especially when the differences between the two versions are grounded in technically-skilled practice. As a category in textual studies, the idea of the work signals a
concern with the ontological status of a literary or artistic product, and a fundamental distinction between the artistic product and the material medium conveying it. The concept of the work thus emerges from a fundamental but artificial distinction between material documents and the immaterial ideas that they document. Since works cannot be accessed except through documents, users must apply a variety of criteria in order to determine whether a document represents a new version of a familiar work or an example of a new, original work. Moreover, users must distinguish faithful iterations from unfaithful ones – or, applying a more analog model, more faithful iterations from less faithful ones – and thus determine what criteria are applied to make such distinctions. Most discussions of *Hamlet*, for example, take the First Quarto, Second Quarto, and First Folio texts to represent iterations of a single work, designated as Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Likewise, any given performance of *Hamlet* is discernible as an additional iteration of that same work. At some level, multiple texts, different editions of those texts, different productions based on various texts, and different performances of a given production can all be recognized as ontologically linked, i.e. as partially-distinct iterations of the same work. The choice to base an edition or a performance on one text rather than another is a judgement on the work underlying the play. So, too, is the choice to base an edition on an extant document at all, or on a hypothesized authorial document (manuscript, foul papers, fair copy), or on a set of theatrical conventions. Questions of authorship and authority often revolve around considerations of the work, determining which iterations should be considered authoritative or authentic, and for what reasons. As M. J. Kidnie argues, the idea of the work in Shakespeare enables discussions of text and performance as equally valid instances of the authorial, Shakespearean, work, rather than conflating the work with the authorial text (as Tanselle indicates), such that performance then stands in “a second-order, adaptive relation as a performance of the text” (Kidnie 28, emphasis mine). In Shillingsburg’s formulation, “[e]ach copy represents the work; no copy represents the work fully (Shillingsburg, *Textuality and Knowledge* 115). Neither centre nor circumference, the work exists in productive tension with iterations; it is not an underlying Platonic ideal, consistent across iterations, nor is it the sum total

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18 Of course, the ‘Bad Quarto’ theories surrounding Q1 already complicate this equivalence, introducing doubts about the document’s fidelity to the authorial work.
of all possible iterations. The Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR),
developed in 1993 by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions,
addresses some of the relationships between iterations from a perspective of practical
description, specifically intended to support the design of library catalogues. The purpose of
FRBR is more descriptive than ontological, though the two concerns quickly blend together,
particularly in discussions of dramatic works (Tillett).

9 FRBR Group 1

3.4 The Text

For W. W. Greg, Fredson Bowers, and many of the New Bibliographers, an understanding of the
processes and practices of early modern printing would enable an editor to “strip the veil of print
from the text,” thus capturing – or at least approaching – a version of the work that more closely
reproduces the author’s conception (Bowers, *Bibliography and Textual Criticism* 8). Much of
Tanselle’s work shares this desire to understand print and other transmission media in order to
commune more directly with the authorial text, and thus with the author. Authors, like works,
like performances, are thus defined as much by absence as by presence, and Shakespeare –
because of the potent combination of his cultural capital and the lack of any authorial documents
– is a particularly apt figure for this desire to communicate with an author/authority (Galey, *The
Shakespearean Archive*). This desire marks a significant point of difference between the New
Bibliographers (and Tanselle) and theorists of social authorship such as D. F. McKenzie and Jerome McGann, who advocate for a materialist view of textuality that positions authors within a network of agents, such as publishers, editors, and printers; a specifically Shakespeare-oriented view of social bibliography was proposed by Margareta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass (de Grazia and Stallybrass). These positions represent opposing trajectories: where Tanselle, Greg, and Bowers seek to understand the material medium in order to shear its influences away from the author’s text, McGann et al are interested in authorial agency as a process of playful, creative, and/or oppositional interaction between the immaterial idea and the material medium. Their studies are thus concerned with distinguishing the author’s ideas from the affordances of the medium, with a view to understanding the resultant art-work as emerging from the collaborations and collisions of the author and the networks of production.

The dual design of the multimedia Shakespeare editions attempts to have it both ways, presenting the text as a purely authorial work, and the performance as a collaborative iteration, still rooted in Shakespearean authority, but realized through the artists as interlocutors – literally speaking for Shakespeare. The edited, mediated, digitized text stands in for the original authorial text precisely because of its positioning alongside the performance. The performance, likewise, establishes its status as an approachable, accessible rendition partly through comparison with the text. This dynamic muddles Shillingsburg’s terms, in that the edited text – which in his model would stand in for user-friendly accessibility – here becomes associated with fidelity and difficulty, whereas the performance represents both a mediatized accessibility and an authorial original. In both cases, the affordances of a relatively new digital medium are used in order to provide access to documents – or representations of documents – in ways that would not have been possible previously. Shillingsburg and Tanselle consider text as the arrangement of words and punctuation of which a work is composed, organized yet distinct from any physical medium, a view that echoes McGann’s discussion of a work’s “linguistic codes,” as distinct from its “bibliographic codes,” the elements of design and material production (Shillingsburg, Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age 42–47; J. J. McGann 57–58). The text is thus perfectly reproducible and transmissible, maintaining its essential shape and meaning across a variety of documents. The text is also, as Kidnie points out, “the form of production still most closely associated with the hand of the author,” partly because of its perceived stability (Kidnie 144).
3.5 Drama and Theatre: Elam

Editors considering the work that underlies a Shakespeare play often need to decide whether their edition takes the literary product or the theatrical product as the authoritative work. Editors, scholars, and performers have justified their allegiance in one direction or the other by arguing for a Shakespeare that best represents their preference: Shakespeare the poetic genius, Shakespeare the theatrical visionary, Shakespeare the literary dramatist, Shakespeare the elitist, Shakespeare the populist. The argument of Greg and his followers has been that the work is to be found in authorial production, thus in Shakespeare’s manuscripts; since these are not extant, the next best option is to find – or construct – a text that most closely resembles the lost original. As Shillingsburg puts it, the goal of critical editing is “to create texts that restore lost original forms or to emend an existing text so that it resembles what the editor thinks the author aspired to, but was thwarted by various agents or circumstances” (Shillingsburg, Textuality and Knowledge 117). In the case of Shakespeare, there is division within the camps as well as between them. The theatrically-oriented approach of Wells, Jowett, and Taylor’s Oxford editions asserts – to an extent – that the play-as-work is to be located in the performances of players, or the experiences of spectators, rather than in hypothesized Shakespearean manuscripts. Likewise, performance and training techniques such as Patrick Tucker’s Folio-centered approach take the play-as-work to be located in the First Folio, making the particular and peculiar arrangement of that printed text the authorizing agent for performance practice (Tucker). The design logic of the multimedia editions, intended to support a Tucker-like argument that treats performance as a working-out of the inaccessible text, nevertheless works against this model. Reading the text against the contiguous performance demonstrates that the dramatic text is more than simply instructions for performance. This in itself is hardly surprising, as Shakespeare texts (and play-texts in general) have been sold, consumed, studied, and enjoyed as reading materials for centuries. What makes dramatic texts challenging for a reader is not simply their status as code for performance, but also their confusion of codes, representing both a fictional narrative and an expectation that this narrative will be communicated through performance.
This confusion of codes is usefully represented by Keir Elam’s distinction between theatre and drama, as opposed to performance and text. Elam’s terminology, like much terminology in the field of drama/theatre/performance, is slippery and contested, but the underlying conceptual distinction is a valuable one. Elam distinguishes between ‘drama,’ a play’s fiction, the imagined events experienced by characters in the world they inhabit, and ‘theatre,’ the concrete actions performed by living actors before an audience, and including all other material aspects of production: lighting, costumes, set, music, and so on (Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* 2). As Elam acknowledges, this distinction is more of a conceptual exercise than a practical reality, since dramatic and theatrical codes are deeply intertwined; the distinction is thus analogous in some ways to McGann’s division between linguistic and bibliographic codes in a book, or Saussure’s binary of *langue* and *parole* in language (Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*; J. J. McGann; Saussure et al.). It is worth noting that the dramatic and the theatrical extend beyond one another as well; I do not intend to argue (and neither, I believe, does Elam) that the communication of fiction is the sole mode of theatrical performance. Performed actions and staged moments can exceed or overshadow the dramatic plot, and the drama—especially in the case of Shakespeare, whose plays are already loaded with cultural capital and familiarity—can exceed and overshadow the staged action.

Much of Elam’s argument is concerned with the efforts of both readers and spectators to parse the play’s narrative, an interest that is shared by the multimedia Shakespeare editions. Elam’s binary implicitly posits the diegetic fiction as the work of a play. His model implies that the ‘drama,’ the play’s narrative fiction, represents the play-as-work, with text and performance as alternate modes of expressing that work. This model is shared by Lennard and Luckhurst, who posit the drama as the play’s ontology, with reading and spectatorship as alternate and equally viable epistemological means of accessing the work, a model that resonates with the design and mandate of multimedia Shakespeare editions (Lennard and Luckhurst 15). In both reading and spectatorship, users must construct the linear sequence of fictional events out of partial cues,

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19 I use ‘diegetic’ throughout in the sense in which it is employed in film theory, as representing the fictional narrative of a work. This usage is common in film theory and some aspects of theatre theory, and is distinct from the Aristotelian use of ‘diegesis’ to refer to actions in a drama that are reported or narrated, as opposed to ‘mimesis,’ which indicates the staged or represented action.
synthesizing reported actions, flashbacks, ellipses, and lacunae into a more-or-less coherent story (Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* 119). Abstracting the fictional story from the narrated and represented events is a complex set of operations, involving sophisticated parsing of concrete signals – be they staged actions or printed words – into a construction of an imagined sequence of events (Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* 119). As editors, teachers, and artists have noted, the Shakespeare texts add to this already-challenging task a set of additional hurdles: unfamiliar language, layered rhetoric, obscure social conventions and historical referents, and early modern staging techniques. The interaction of dramatic and theatrical codes that Elam describes places an emphasis on plays as diegetic art, and thus elides other aspects of dramaturgy, such as thematics, historical context, poetry, or performative effect and affect. At the same time, an understanding of a play’s diegesis is the typical entry-point for novice readers and spectators, and thus the initial focus for teaching plays, whether in a literary or theatrical context. The design of multimedia Shakespeare editions emphasizes the notion of the diegesis as the essential work of the play, an emphasis that is in line with the introductory pedagogical approaches that these projects are intended to support. The multimedia editions’ emphasis on diegesis, coupled with the format of combining text with performance, makes an argument about the role of performance as a demonstration of diegesis through theatrical means.

The temptation in discussing the text/performance split in Elam’s terms is to equate the text to the dramatic and the performance to the theatrical. Discussions of plays as literary products (including Tanselle’s argument for valuing plays as authored texts) imply that the written play gives direct – or more direct – access to the dramatic fiction, whereas the performance is the domain of the theatrical. Much of the rhetoric surrounding the multimedia Shakespeare editions takes the opposite stance, in which the performance gives more direct access to the diegesis, and thus to the author. Elam’s argument, however, complicates either position. He posits that dramatic and theatrical codes intertwine and overlap throughout both text and performance, a position which the design and usage of the multimedia editions tends to support. The experience of reading a play and of watching a play is defined by slippage, in which the reader/spectator’s attention is sometimes drawn to the unfolding fictional events, and sometimes to the working-out of those events through staged action. Early modern dramatic texts are in many ways more slippery than modern published plays, partly because the conventions for writing and printing
plays were being developed, and partly because the texts used for printing reflect a variety of sources, from authorial manuscripts to playhouse prompt-scripts. The slipperiness is augmented both in text and performance by the meta-theatrical references to performance that occur throughout these plays; playful puncturing of the drama/theatre distinction appears to have been a source of pleasure for early modern audiences and players. Even in a model that posits theatrical performance as the semiotic representation of a dramatic diegesis, the relationship between script and performance is complex. The play-text is neither a rigorous set of instructions for a particular performance nor is it a straightforward rendering of a dramatic fiction; rather, it encompasses a multi-layered and often fragmentary process whereby a dramatic fiction is rendered into a performance, and its corollary, the process whereby a performance can be understood as communicating a dramatic fiction. These processes are neither static nor stable, and depend on constantly-shifting staging practices and narrative conventions. The rendering process – in each direction – is both lossy and generative, suppressing meanings in the original and eliciting new ones, both intentionally and inadvertently.

Even a relatively standard stage direction such as “Enter the Ghost” intermingles dramatic and theatrical codes. In Hamlet’s dramatic fiction, the Ghost appears on the “platform” at Elsinore; it “comes,” it “stalks,” and, in its second appearance in 1.1, it seems – dramatically if not necessarily theatrically – to move through multiple locations with alarming speed. However it moves, appears, and disappears, in the play’s diegetic action the Ghost does not “enter,” i.e. step into the locus of the action through a tiring-house door or trap-door in the stage. Conversely, in the performance’s theatrical manifestation, whatever does enter from that door to the stage is certainly not a ghost. A set of instructions for performance – shorn of diegetic detail – would name an actor, and might designate a costume or appearance, which may or may not match the description provided by Horatio. In performance, a combination of codes cues the audience to interpret this actor’s entrance as the appearance of a ghost: reactions from the other performers, spoken dialogue, the actor’s costume and gait, makeup, gestures, music or other sound; in a modern performance, lighting, projections, and/or special effects. Lennard and Luckhurst frame the epistemological distinction between reading and spectatorship by associating the readerly encounter with openness and the spectatorial encounter with specificity. In the reader’s experience, the play is redolent with gaps which either enable a potential for a reader’s
imagination – choosing how to mentally ‘cast’ and dress the Ghost, for example – or else a more abstract ideation – focusing on a general sense of the scene’s action, with little concern for how it might be conveyed or contested by a concrete staging. In the spectator’s experience, they argue, the play is a sequence of already-made choices: the Ghost has been cast, dressed, and blocked; the scenes are rehearsed, and their rhythm, tempo, gesture, and movement set; these choices may either close off or open up the spectator’s ability to imagine alternate choices (Lennard and Luckhurst 34). The comparative design of the multimedia editions has the potential to bridge these epistemological gaps, calling attention to what is left open in the text, and to what is closed off by performance, and vice versa. The projects gesture toward this opportunity, but often fall short of properly equipping users to take advantage of the format. The format also draws users’ attention to the ways in which text and performance are already multiply-coded, slipping unpredictably from a diegetic what to a performative how and back again.

### 3.6 Multimedia Traditions

In his discussion of illustrated editions of Shakespeare, Elam argues that the illustrations operate as a “semiotic genre marker, advising the reader that the dramatic text can be read not only as a linguistic artefact but also and above all as the verbal blueprint for action designed to register on the ocular plane” (Elam, “Editing Shakespeare by Pictures: Illustrated Editions” 250). The shift from “not only… but also” to “above all” is evocative of the slippery rhetoric of the multimedia Shakespeare editions and their design. Elam’s examination points to an older and longer tradition of multimedia supplements in editions, with rhetoric similar to that of the newer digital projects. The use of illustrations, Elam argues, draws users’ attention to the visual aspects of the work, priming users to read for staged action rather than the fiction alone. Illustrations included in editions, however, are themselves often a mixture of dramatic and theatrical codes, freely mixing recollections of performance with renditions of the plays’ fictional elements, as in Elam’s examples of illustrations of the storm and sea in The Tempest (Elam, “Editing Shakespeare by Pictures: Illustrated Editions”). François Boitard’s illustration for the play in Rowe’s 1709 edition, from the frontispiece preceding the title page, depicts the tempest-tossed ship in the middle-ground, with stormy waves in the foreground, a devil-filled sky above, and the tiny figure of Prospero (less noticeable than the devils due to size, composition, and contrast) in the background, against an outcropping of the island. This image may well remind the reader to
consider the visual impact of the play’s action, but it offers little insight into the techniques for staging this action (indeed, Boitard appears to have misunderstood part of the action as well, translating Ariel’s report of Ferdinand’s cry – “Hell is empty and all the devils are here” – into a literal image of airborne devils assailing a ship). Insofar as the illustration can be said to reflect stage practice, it is much closer to the practice of Rowe’s time, in which painted backdrops and set-pieces are used to indicate location, than to the relatively bare platform stages of the Globe and the Blackfriars.

10: François Botard, The Tempest; source: Wikimedia Commons

In a similar vein, Roger Chartier argues that the public, performative, oral nature of performance is often lost in the arrangement of punctuation in printed plays, designed for visual syntactical clarity rather than as a record for – and guide to – oral performance (Chartier 54). Chartier traces a development of punctuation in printing from the early modern period onward, as a trajectory from punctuation that focused on an oral performance of language to punctuation concerned with silent, visual reading and syntax (Chartier 64). Chartier’s primary example is Molière, though he
also references early modern English drama, citing Mortimer’s “unpointed” letter in Marlowe’s
Edward II, and Quince’s prologue in A Midsummer Night’s Dream 5.1, the former an example of
a text that is intentionally ambiguous in its writing but that becomes clear – one way or the other
– in speaking; the latter is an example of a text whose meaning is radically and comically
transformed by an incompetent application of punctuation in performance (Chartier 68–69).
Chartier’s observation on punctuation and orality gestures toward an important dual use of
printed play-texts: print’s function as a storage and playback technology enables both the
reconstruction of a ‘recorded’ performance (when readers “reconstruct” a performance from
imagination or memory) and the generation of new performances (when readers “read aloud or
recite” a speech or poem) (Chartier 67–68). Printed plays, like printed sermons and broadsheet
ballads, are both a record of a past performance and a seed for creating new performances,
whether staged or imagined. While reducing the traces of orality in printed drama makes reading
easier, for Chartier the practice represents a loss and a misreading, as it inappropriately removes
the theatrical coding from a work intended for theatrical reception (Chartier 54). This is not quite
the multimedia editions’ declaration that “Shakespeare was not meant to be read,” but rather an
emphatic demand, that Shakespeare and other dramatists should be read with both diegesis and
performance in mind.

What Elam’s distinction between theatre and drama reveals, then, is not a clear division in which
the text is dramatic and the performance theatrical. Even in a formulation that closely links the
play-as-work with the play’s fiction, both the text and the performance represent a mixture of
codes, providing not only the diegetic fiction of the play but a combination of that fiction and the
expectations or conventions for its representation on stage. Contrary to Elam’s point about
illustrations in play-texts, the script is not merely a “blueprint for action,” a set of instructions for
a performance. The script is both a (partial, contingent) set of instructions for constructing the
diegetic fiction of the play and a (partial, contingent) set of instructions for conveying that fiction
through the conventions of staged action. A reader encountering a play-text is tasked with the
challenges of attempting to parse both the fictional action and the script’s assumptions regarding
the staging of that action. In the context of modern readers encountering early modern drama, the
question of staging blends original practices (“how was it staged?”), performance history (“how
has it been staged?”), performance dramaturgy (“how could it be staged?”),
mediation/remediation (“how might it be adapted?”) and personal preference (“how would I stage it?”), inviting the reader not only to imagine possibilities, but also to consider how these possibilities might affect reception, how the received fiction is altered by making choices in staging and playing, or, conversely, how different playing and staging choices result in an altered reception of the fiction.

3.7 Productions and Adaptations: Kidnie

Worthen argues that “two moments of ideological labor intervene between the text’s ‘instructions’ and the realized work: a conventionalized practice for using those ‘instructions,’ and the rhetorical assignment of ‘authority’ to practices that follow the ‘instructions’ in a particular way” (William B Worthen 10). M. J. Kidnie picks up Worthen’s second ‘moment’ as the key concern of *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation*, extending the argument about culturally-determined codes, and also re-energizing the relevance of the work as a concept central to Shakespeare studies (Kidnie 7). Examining a variety of examples, from performances to editions, Kidnie deconstructs the binary of productions and adaptations, arguing that the distinction is determined not by any inherent quality in the iteration but rather by the needs of communities of users (Kidnie 7–8). Kidnie argues that the idea of the work, as a conceptual original which authorizes iterations, a known but never fully identifiable index against which all versions can be compared and judged, is essential to considerations of adaptation (Kidnie 9). The production/adaptation binary is developed by Linda Hutcheon, among others, and depends on stable categories: there is a clear original, which belongs to a particular medium, genre, and format, and which is then adapted into a different medium and/or genre, producing a new work which is rooted in the older work through a network of connections and departures (Hutcheon). Shakespeare’s *Henry V* is adapted from stage-play into a film, to become Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V*, for example. As Kidnie demonstrates, however, none of these categories is stable, and in Shakespeare’s case they are perhaps even less stable than elsewhere, since the work inheres in

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Kidnie uses ‘production’ both as a categorical term for any kind of iteration, and as a specific term for those iterations that are deemed to be faithful or genuine renditions of the work, in contradistinction to ‘adaptation.’ In order to clarify the relationship, I have opted for ‘iteration’ as the categorical term, with ‘production’ designating the faithful reproductions and ‘adaptation’ describing those that are deemed to be departures or anomalies.
multiple texts across printed and theatrical media, as well as in received (but restlessly shifting) cultural ideas. Kidnie’s argument is that, in any given moment, there exists a broadly identifiable and broadly consensual set of standards determining whether an iteration is a faithful transmission of the pre-existing work or a new work deriving from that original (Kidnie 7–8). These standards are constantly fluctuating, defined by communities of users in order to authorize certain kinds of iterations and to de-legitimize others, and therefore come into being in response to iterations (Kidnie 31). The work is thus constantly transforming, not only through the production of new iterations (as in Shillingsburg), but through their reception\(^2\). The conclusion of Kidnie’s analysis – the deconstructive move – is an argument that all iterations are in fact adaptations, each a reflection and a distortion of the work, and that their status as productions or adaptations is contingent and subject to change, but based in a set of standards which can be broadly described or predicted for a given moment:

Textual fidelity is an insufficient gauge of the work’s stability in part because any text, even the earliest one, functions only provisionally as a genuine instance, and because modern editors, even those preparing facsimiles, can never copy an existing text but must produce new textual instances that are either taken as the work or rejected as adaptations. (Kidnie 153)\(^2\)

The above is excerpted from a discussion of editions – specifically, of Mowat and Werstine’s Folger editions of Shakespeare, the basis for the Luminary apps – but the argument applies to any iteration, whether textual or performative: to copy is to edit is to produce, and therefore to adapt. Shillingsburg likewise resists the original document’s claim to special status, relegating it instead to the position of “first copy” (Shillingsburg, Textuality and Knowledge 115). Alan Dessen echoes Kidnie’s distinction between productions and adaptations in his discussion of directorial practices, dividing iterations into “re-scriptings,” which shape the text but leave the work intact, and “re-wrightings,” which fundamentally transform the piece, effectively creating a

\(^2\) Part of the value of Kidnie’s model, and part of its attraction for me, is that it place the consideration of works within the framework of identity studies. Kidnie’s deconstruction of production and adaptation echoes the conceptual models of cultural identity developed by theorists such as Judith Butler and Stuart Hall.

\(^2\) Kidnie’s conflation of adaptation with rejection is based in a particular (and familiar) model of reception, which is itself contingent; there are many contexts in which a ‘production’ is dismissed as safe and dull, while ‘adaptations’ are exciting and desirable.
new work, rooted in the original text, but with the director as its artist-author (Dessen, *Rescripting Shakespeare* 3). FRBR provides a visual model for Kidnie and Dessen’s binary, in which the Family of Works is arranged around a hypothetical prime meridian, the “Cataloguing Rules cut-off point,” which describes the tenuous border between a new expression of the original work and a new work based on that original (Tillett 4). The representation of the cut-off point as a dotted line is in keeping with Kidnie’s argument, in that this is an indistinct, contested, and permeable border (Kidnie 7–8).

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**FRBR Family of Works**

3.8 Conventional Performance, Conventional Text

If, as Kidnie argues, adaptation is an iteration which is in some way recognized as “a departure from the thing itself,” then a production is an iteration which can be taken as an example of the work (Kidnie 9). As in Chapter 2, I use the term ‘conventional’ to refer to the assemblage of elements and techniques that mark an iteration as a production rather than an adaptation. For the purposes of multimedia editions, conventionality comes into play in the aesthetic choices of the performance materials (the selected acting technique, casting, costume, movement, intonation), the mediation of the production (the ways in which camera technique, editing, and sound design
frame and present the performance), the arrangement of the text (visually on the screen, surrounded by paratexts), and in the digital framework (the function and design choices involved in combining text and performance on the screen, the touchscreen interface, scrolling text, playback controls, hyperlinks, and menu design). The signifiers of conventional text are sometimes at odds with those of conventional performance. Taking *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as an example, conventional performances likely emphasize continuity of action, such that there is no narrative break between 2.2 and 3.1 as a sleeping Titania remains on stage, or between 3.2 and 4.1 as the sleeping lovers remain on stage. The textual arrangement, particularly in the Folio, emphasizes division, arranging the play into a five-act structure with discrete scenes, labeled on the page and spatially arranged into units. This textual arrangement is carried over into modern editions from the Folio, in which the five-act structure is, at least in part, a cultural-rhetorical argument designed to equate Shakespeare’s plays with the works of classical playwrights, and, not coincidentally, to justify the reader’s purchase of the lavish and pricy tome. From the perspective of modern users (for example, teachers and students in a high school English class in Ontario), a division into acts and scenes is an expectation of the textual arrangement of a Shakespeare play, and the fact that multimedia editions adopt this format has less to do with an informed and considered textual-historical choice than with conformity to users’ expectations and needs. In the design considerations for *Shakespeare at Play*, we placed an emphasis on minimizing what user experience (UX) designers refer to as ‘friction’: any barrier which the product’s design poses to the user’s (perceived, anticipated) interaction with the product. From a UX standpoint, if the user needs to spend time and effort considering how to access content or functions, then the product is badly designed. This priority is often in direct contrast with the needs of critical pedagogy, which prizes radical slowness, elasticity, and considered decision-making, calling attention to the frameworks and assumptions that make a given approach intuitive or instinctual. Conventionality in design creates a sense of familiarity, as in skeuomorphism, enabling users to reach content without thinking about format. To take another example, all multimedia editions except for *WordPlay* use vertically scrolling text, such
that a single unit of text\textsuperscript{23} takes up one screen, in which the user scrolls up or down to reach earlier or later lines. This vertical arrangement of text might be surprising, given that most users encounter printed Shakespeare plays in codex form, as bound books with pages, but the vertically scrolling interface is familiar to users who encounter it regularly in the layout of most webpages and many electronic publications.

These projects all present their users with conventional performances, carefully – though not always consciously – designed to register as productions in Kidnie’s sense, accurately following the instructions supplied by the text. The playing style is broadly realistic, mimetic rather than presentational, exhibiting a balance of heightened rhetoric and casual delivery which is the current trend in Shakespeare-for-the-screen. Cicely Berry’s notion of “truth for now” encapsulates the technique and its argument about the work, insofar as it balances the authenticity of “truth” with the accessibility, immediacy, and impermanence of “for now.” While the text and performance in these projects are linked by their identical or near-identical presentation of “Shakespeare’s words,” their focus is less on the words themselves and more on the words as conveyors of dramatic fiction. From the standpoint of these projects, to know a Shakespeare play is not to be familiar with a set of words, nor to understand a range of contextual referents or performance traditions, but rather to understand a set of fictional events, experienced by fictional characters in a fictional setting (though any or all of these may bear some resemblance to real events, people, and locations). The performance and a majority of the paratexts are designed to communicate the play-as-fiction, tacitly identifying that fiction with the Shakespearean work. Conventional production is a tool for focusing users’ attention on the play’s fiction, emphasizing character and action, and eliding gaps between the works’ original context and the users’ frame of reference. Other markers of the conventional style include a ‘realistic’ approach to casting, in which the performers’ age and gender approximates that of the characters, and actors’ ethnicity is taken into account such that performers playing blood

\textsuperscript{23} One sonnet in \textit{Sonnets}, one scene in \textit{Shakespeare at Play} and \textit{PerformancePlus}, a full play in \textit{Luminary}, \textit{Explore Shakespeare}, and \textit{Heuristic}. 
relatives will resemble one another physically\(^{24}\); an overall unity of design aesthetic in ‘setting’ or ‘concept’ (in *Shakespeare at Play* and *WordPlay*, the performance aesthetic is less realistic, and the framework of the digital design serves as a controlling aesthetic instead); a tendency toward local accents (British accents in UK productions, American accents in US productions); lighting designed for fictional setting and emotional tone.

Curiously, *Sonnets’* video performances serve as an excellent illustration of this style, since conventional performance is in some ways counterintuitive for a work of poetry, which ostensibly lacks a fictional plot or characters. The sonnets are primarily spoken by actors, and, as mentioned in Chapter 2, none of the performers reads from a text. The playing style, a balance of heightened rhetoric and naturalistic delivery, communicates the sonnet not as a recitation of a written poem, but as a set of thoughts or arguments, worked out in the moment, communicated out of a deep need. The reciter is constructed as a character, though not grounded in a fictional narrative, yet still articulating a complex relationship, an emotional verisimilitude, and a desire to use the sonnet’s images and arguments to connect to an addressee (superimposed over the user).

When planning productions for *Shakespeare at Play*, in design meetings and rehearsals, we often rejected ideas or choices that might have been more theatrically interesting, but that (we feared) would detract from the project’s goal of presenting a largely-uninflected version of the play. Diversity in casting was a thorny issue – in our own artistic work, we all push for more culturally-diverse casting as well as cross-casting; but for this project, we consistently became more conservative, worrying that audiences would view cross-gender casting or non-white casting as ‘adaptive,’ drawing focus toward the production choices and thus away from the work-as-fiction. The overwhelming whiteness of the *Shakespeare at Play* cast is a result of the turnout for the auditions (itself influenced by Shakespeare’s cultural status and Toronto’s performance milieu) and the contingencies of scheduling, rather than a coherent aesthetic

\(^{24}\) Even in productions that emphasize casting diversity, this insistence on ‘realism’ is doggedly persistent, and often expressed as a concern for audiences’ ability to “suspend disbelief.” Do audiences believe that performers are related to one another when their characters are? Given the actual age differences between performers playing parents and children, audiences seem capable of believing, or accepting, any number of patently unreal propositions, so it is odd that visible markers of ethnicity would present such an insurmountable barrier. See Djanet Sears’ “Play Equity and the Blindspots” for a cogent discussion of such practices and concerns (Sears).
agenda, but there is a larger conversation to be had – tying in to ongoing discussions of casting practices, diversity, representation, and inclusion – of the impact of casting on these projects’ desire for accessibility, and the balancing of Shakespearean authenticity with modern engagement.

3.9 Liveness vs. Liveliness: Performance and Dullness

J. L. Styan, James Hirsh, and others point out that, while performance can be used in the classroom as a recruitment tool, it is important to enlist the right kind of performance (Styan, “Shakespeare Off the Page”; Hirsh). Hirsh cautions that “[i]n showing a dull film that seems on the surface to be extremely faithful to the play, an instructor runs the risk of inadvertently giving students the impression that Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet is a dull play” (Hirsh 141). The argument implies that fidelity to the play equates to dullness in performance, though Hirsh cushions the assertion with the phrase “seems on the surface,” thereby also suggesting that a dull performance’s dullness renders it unfaithful, insofar as excitement is an inherent quality of the play. This is a version of recruitment/accessibility, which roots the liveliness of performance not just in liveness, but in a set of conventions that appeals to a given audience. In Hirsh’s case – as in many discussions of performance recordings in the classroom25, and in the construction of the multimedia Shakespeare editions26 – the assumed audience is modern students, considered as visually-engaged learners familiar with the conventions of modern film and television. The implication is that accessibility is not merely a function of performance, but requires particular kinds of mediation – conventional performance is familiar, and can thus argue for the play as exciting in a way which unfamiliar (dull, inaccessible, frustrating) performance cannot.

Borrowing vocabulary from Peter Brook, Styan argues for performance in the classroom as inherently lively, and thus a means of counteracting the deadness of the play-as-text (Styan, “Shakespeare Off the Page” 62). Styan insists on testing out ideas in performance, adjudicating


26 (Why WordPlay Shakespeare?; Colman; Bueckert)
readings and ideas based on what works in front of an audience. Styan inadvertently articulates a contradiction in this approach:

The true discipline of drama study is to find out how drama works, how it performs under the conditions for which it was written, how it communicates and affects an audience. For any point or meaning a play may carry lies in that electric circuit constantly flowing back and forth between stage and audience, where it is a felt experience. The object, then, is to provide an avenue for performance. (Styan, “Shakespeare Off the Page” 61)

In some of Styan’s discussion, and in much discussion of performance for classroom teaching, how the play “communicates and affects an audience” becomes evidence of “how it performs under the conditions for which it was written,” despite vast diachronic differences in both performance and audience. As Worthen argues,

by essentializing the ‘elasticity’ of non-realistic staging, Styan asserts a continuity between Shakespeare’s mode of theatricality and our own, and a continuity between the audience’s experience and the intention of the Author. The flexible stage is our opening to authentic Shakespeare: ‘The secret of what he intended lies in how he worked’. (W. B. Worthen, “Staging ‘Shakespeare’: Acting, Authority, and the Rhetoric of Performance” 14–15)

In this sense, Styan is emblematic of a widespread pedagogical practice which makes the classroom a place in which performance is both visible and invisible, used to enliven the text and demonstrate the richness of the play, while also itself being rendered as transparent and immediate, and as an avenue of access to Shakespearean authority and intention. Styan argues that “[i]f the student of drama has only the text of a play, he or she must perforce be actor and audience both; the true art of reading a play requires it” (Styan, “Shakespeare Off the Page” 64). This necessity is both an imposition and an opportunity. On the one hand, training the student-reader to be actor (or director or dramaturge) requires the development of a kind of literacy different from reading-for-content, and can involve guiding students to a recognition of the codes with which they are not familiar, i.e. demonstrating their illiteracy when it comes to analyzing scripts for performance. On the other hand, once learners gain some familiarity with performance techniques (even within the limited frame of conventional performance), they gain an interpretive agency as readers of dramatic texts, able to consider various interpretations and staging choices for a given play or scene.

At this point, learners can articulate not only that there are multiple options for staging a scene, but what effect different options would have for an audience’s experience of the play. In Deanna
Kuhn’s terms, further detailed in Chapter 4, this is a (partial, nascent) shift from the multiplist mode to an evaluationist one. With some context and understanding of performance practice and the play’s multiple possibilities, learners can begin to articulate why one might choose a particular playing choice rather than an alternative, what character or thematic information the choice might convey, or what sensory impression it would make for an audience experience. In W. G. Walton, Jr.’s example, learners with such context might be able to articulate not only that the “emotional distance between Juliet and her mother” is present in the Zeffirelli film but absent in Rakoff’s BBC version, they would have a basis for arguing what effect that choice might have, and why they would prefer one version or the other – or propose their own alternatives (Walton, Jr. 337). Such a framework would not prepare learners to consider Robert LePage’s *Elsinore*, or Robert Wilson’s *Hamlet: A Monologue*, or Giorgio Strehler’s *The Tempest*, or any number of other significant productions that do not rely on a conventional aesthetic or a straightforward transmission of the play’s fiction. Hence such a framework, which the multimedia editions gesture towards, is not a fully evaluationist model in Kuhn’s terms nor fully responsible scholarly editing in Shillingsburg’s terms, but it does prepare learners for a range of critical thinking tasks to do with text and performance.

3.10 Conventional Mediation

Multimedia Shakespeare editions’ use of mediation techniques is similarly innocuous, designed to be familiar and thus transparent. In the video-based projects, editing is used to cut multiple takes and angles into a single smooth flow; sound mixing is used to establish a continuity of action while the camera shifts from one image to another; the edit moves from wide establishing shots to close-ups and back in order to give a sense of location and important action; reaction shots are intercut with dialogue to visually indicate the reactions of non-speaking characters; length of shots and placement of cuts provides a comfortable rhythm and tempo to scenes. In the audio-based projects, sound mixing and editing are used to combine dialogue, sound effects, and music into a coherent sound-scape; multiple dialogue and sound tracks are cut together for a clean, clear sound, eliminating pauses and shaping rhythm and tempo; fade-in and fade-out effects signal the beginning and ending of scenes. The mediation borrows codes from, television, film, and radio drama, though the projects also experiment with design. WordPlay’s white background transforms the performance into animate book illustrations, evoking the early
modern bare stage by removing the performers from any set or background, and visually reinforcing the link between the text and the performance. *PerformancePlus* uses the video from the simulcast productions, so the mediation is re-purposed rather than created with the digital project in mind. The camera work and editing move from close-ups to wider shots, almost always focusing on the character currently speaking, so that viewers only sometimes see the reactions of other characters. Uniquely among these projects, *PerformancePlus* uses recordings of live performances, so that the user – like the cinema audiences for the simulcast – can sometimes see and often hear the live audience. This factor creates both distancing and connection – on the one hand, the user is further removed from the production, frequently reminded that they are receiving a second-order performance; on the other hand, the user is aware of the performance’s liveness, becoming included in the reactions of a larger audience rather than watching in isolation.

Most scenes in *Heuristic’s The Tempest* are built from stationary medium close-ups of whichever actor is currently speaking. The character occupies the centre of the screen, while a column on the left displays static images of each character in the scene, with that character’s name labeled in subscript (the closest any of these projects gets to directly integrating text and performance); when a character speaks, their image on the left is lit, while the others are dimmed. Each performer looks directly into the camera, making each speech a kind of direct address to the viewer.
According to director Richard Loncraine, research indicated that “comprehension went up when eye contact was made,” which supported this visual design (Phelan). The resulting format may help users to distinguish between characters, and it serves as a visual reminder of characters’ physical presence in a scene during the moments when they do not speak, a detail that is often lost in reading. There are also practical advantages in the filming process, as each actor need only spend a short time in the studio to record their own lines, which substantially reduces the cost of rehearsing and filming multiple-character scenes. The static camera also eliminates the need for a camera crew and additional equipment, which would be necessary for a more dynamic visual style. At the same time, this format loses the capacity of performance to show simultaneous action, and lacks even the limited simultaneity indicated through reaction shots. While the filmed performance provides a more limited perspective than staged performance, in that the composition of the shot determines the spectator’s field of vision, wider shots can still be used to show multiple characters on screen together, with actions and reactions in real time. 

*Heuristic*’s composition and editing may help users’ comprehension of the semantic text, but at the expense of showing characters’ and performers’ proximity, relation, and movement in space. *Heuristic*’s users experience performance through the sequential spatial and temporal logic of reading: one line following another, rather than intermingled and overlapping actions. In *The
Tempest 2.1 (screenshot below), this arrangement confuses as much as it clarifies, as the scene is made up of multiple conversations, in which Antonio and Sebastian’s comments are intended for each other, and only sometimes heard by the rest of the group. A conventional staged or filmed performance would group these characters separately, using proximity, vocal intonation, and line-of-sight to distinguish conspiratorial observations from public discourse. David Phelan’s review of Heuristic is loaded with a version of Kidnie’s terms, as he lauds the app’s performance approach as a “brilliantly direct line into the text,” in contrast to “a director’s over-weaning perception of the play,” or even “a big-name actor’s performance…striking enough (for which read self-indulgent enough) to make the text incoherent” (Phelan). The virtue of the app’s highly-mediated and artificial approach to performance is, for Phelan, that it provides users with “raw Shakespeare;” the authentic avenue to the work, then, is through the text, while the usual conditions of stage production (big-name actors, directors, performance pacing) are the adaptive features which threaten incoherence, creating a theatrical product which make for effective theatre, but is no longer the thing itself, the authentic Shakespearean work. Conventional productions are susceptible to criticism from the opposing direction, as in Richard Forsyth’s complaint regarding the audio performance in Luminary’s Macbeth. Forsyth finds that the performance displays “too much reverence for the language and not enough feeling for the characters behind the words,” a situation that he considers might “pass muster for English literature students but… is unlikely to do so for drama students” (Forsyth). The danger of such an approach is that the conventional performance, striving for clarity, fails to demonstrate the capacity of performance to be exciting and engaging, and so renders the play’s story dull and flat in the very effort to make it comprehensible (Forsyth).

Shakespeare at Play was created as a hybrid of theatre and film vocabularies, and the rehearsal and production processes included frequent debates about how to balance the play’s narrative, its stage history, and our digital film tools. We didn’t use Kidnie’s vocabulary, but the stated goal was always to communicate the play’s fiction in a manner that was unobtrusive and ‘uninterpreted’, but still exciting and engaging. One point of contention was how to present Banquo’s ghost in Macbeth 3.4. Director Tim Chisholm planned to film the sequence twice, once with the ghost and once without, and in post-production to interweave shots from Macbeth’s perspective (with the ghost) with shots from the perspective of the other attendees (without the
ghost). Tim’s aim was to make it clear that the ghost was apparent to Macbeth but not to the others in the scene, using shot composition, camera movements, and editing to highlight the disorientation of the scene and Macbeth’s growing separation from his allies and Lady Macbeth. In my role as dramaturge, I argued that this was too much of a filmic intrusion into the performance. My argument was that the play as written, and as originally and traditionally performed, by explicitly putting the ghost in the scene, aligns the audience with Macbeth’s perspective. Making the ghost alternately present and absent presents the user with multiple perspectives on the scene, but weakens the sense of complicity and identification elicited by placing the spectator entirely within Macbeth’s worldview. We shot the scene in multiple takes, alternating between a shaky hand-held camera for shots of the ghost, and a stable mounted camera for shots of Macbeth confronting an empty chair. Tim’s argument was that this technique makes use of the possibilities of film – and the equipment and expertise available to us – to convey the tone and action of the scene; since we were going to make a multi-take edited scene anyway, it made sense to heighten the ghost’s impact in this way. My concern was that we would be muddying a distinction which the play establishes between the invisible dagger in 2.1 and the visible ghost in 3.4, through which the audience is placed further into Macbeth’s perspective, even as he alienates those around him. The compromise was to use the edited multi-camera scene, and to accompany it with an editorial note which articulates the way the audience’s perspective on Macbeth changes from 2.1 to 3.4:

The earlier appearance of the Witches tells us that supernatural forces are real and active in this play, but the Ghost’s invisibility to all but Macbeth suggests that it may be the product of his own madness. The audience can see the Ghost as well (unlike the dagger in 2.1), which means that we are implicated in Macbeth’s vision, whether it be a product of insanity or the otherworldly. (Shakespeare at Play: Macbeth)

The compromise is workable, and provides users with some tools for analyzing the difference between the text and the performance, but neither the in-scene notes nor the introductory materials discuss the overall aesthetic choices, the approach to filming and editing, or the choices and alternatives for this particular scene. While some of the projects do mention performance options and performance history, none of them references the specific performances integrated into the app, resulting in an overall product that seems disjunctive rather than cohesive. Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter 2, these projects largely fail to utilize artists’ expertise to
provide commentary about the text in performance generally, or the project’s embedded performance in particular.

3.11 Elaboration and Collaboration

*PerformancePlus*’ most robust section of paratext (described on the site as “Bonus Features”) is the “Artistic Insights,” a series of short videos in which the actors, director Antoni Cimolino, and other crew members discuss the play’s characters, themes, action, and relevance. The introductory segment, “Advice to Students Studying Shakespeare,” is particularly telling. Here participants address their comments explicitly to students reading Shakespeare for the first time. The most common suggestion from the cast is to read the text aloud. Colm Feore (Lear) and Brad

27 My focus is on *PerformancePlus*’ *King Lear*, the flagship production and template for the project, but I will make reference, in less detail, to the more recent additions, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. 100
Hodder (Edmund) are both emphatic on this point, while Maev Beaty (Goneril) chuckles through the suggestion that students attempt to convince their teacher to allow such an approach (Feore). Feore not only champions an oral and embodied reading as a first tack, but speaks dismissively, even derisively, of an academic approach to the text. “It’s not about thinking, it’s not an intellectual exercise – leave that for later,” Feore admonishes, echoing Welles and Hill. The arguments for orality as a tool for understanding Shakespeare take the notion of artists’ authority a step further than the other apps do, though within a shared rhetoric. Here, not only are actors uniquely qualified to interpret Shakespearean meaning, but they offer the tools and techniques of performance to students, in order to foster in students the same privileged understanding. There is, of course, much to be learned from an attentively oral and embodied practice of Shakespeare’s language, or any playwright’s or poet’s. As Feore exhorts, “[s]peak it, breathe it, move it, and then you will find yourself understanding it, in ways you could never predict, and it just suddenly becomes yours.” Hodder makes a valuable point in his argument that Shakespeare was “writing to sound;” while it may not be exactly the case that “the sound of the words often carries the meaning of the word,” nevertheless the practice of recitation aids the understanding of plays as poetry and as oral rhetoric, if not necessarily as theatre (Hodder). For Feore, vocal and embodied reading is not just an alternate approach but a superior one, and his advice is dismissive and distrusting of a scholarly approach to the text. “You will never go wrong if you inhabit it in that way [i.e. bodily],” he warns, “where you can go horribly wrong if you only read it, and think about it.” Feore’s conviction is grounded in a sense that the text, when engaged through orality and physicality, reveals “Shakespeare’s very gentle hand guiding you,” a position supported by Stephen Ouimette (Lear’s Fool), as he encourages students to seek “clues,” which are “all there in the text to find” (Ouimette). Feore does not provide any clarification on what “going horribly wrong” might entail in this context, as it could mean ‘misinterpret Shakespeare’ or ‘turn in a bad performance,’ though the implication – as I take it – is that these amount to the same thing. To perform Shakespeare correctly is to perform Shakespeare well, and vice versa.

Absent from these formulations is any discussion of the training which actors undergo in order to develop their instincts, nor the practical experience which hones those instincts, nor the creative capacity in which actors make the choices that add up to a performance. Like Welles and Hill’s polemic, Feore’s argument allies the student with the actor, and positions the academic “grey-
bearded professor” as the enemy. The student, via the actor, is Shakespeare’s intended audience, at one with “the groundlings…the unscholarly Globe patrons who walked in from the cockfight on the street” (Welles and Hill 475). This view of orality not only privileges the instinctual response as intuitively correct, it also privileges the conventional and familiar. Sarah Farb (Cordelia), in the same “Advice to Students” video, encourages students to “find words that you recognize. Don’t be overwhelmed by how they appear in a sentence, or words that you don’t understand – look for the ones that resonate, and, often, when you look at it, a Shakespearean speech, it boils down to one word, to the crux of the whole speech” (Farb). The message of this rhetoric is that students do not need to concern themselves with the “intellectual” – with historical context, performance aesthetic, or even with artistic training and theory – because the essence of Shakespeare’s meaning (located, naturally, in the words) is unchanging, and immediately accessible in the act of performing. The authority claim being made here goes beyond the other multimedia editions, asserting not only that actors have a unique claim to speak of and for Shakespeare, but that users can attain this authority for themselves by speaking as actors, and that this authority is available instantaneously, conferred in the process of reading the text aloud.

It is also worth noting that, with very few exceptions, the actors’ discussion of characters and themes is framed as diegetic information, rather than performance analysis. Geraint Wyn Davies, reflecting on his performance as Claudius and the Ghost, wistfully considers the benefits to a production of making Claudius and Old Hamlet virtually identical, an idea which he hit on too late for it to be incorporated into this production (Wyn Davies). Otherwise, the interviews are overwhelmingly characterized by explanations of the plays’ action, and of characters’ traits and motivations as established in the text. These explanations can be valuable, and they all reflect the priorities of a given production, but they almost never engage directly with the work of rendering a character attribute legible in performance, or with the ramifications of making one choice over another. These are all skilled and experienced performers, and their comments in the videos are edited and shorn of context; every video opens with the Stratford Festival logo, already featured prominently on the site’s banner. Indeed, the filmed performance itself serves to refute, or complicate, the rhetoric, offering the actors’ own performance as evidence of the skills involved in staging Shakespeare. The argument they express is part of a broad aesthetic understanding of
the relationship between actor and playwright, which becomes more extreme in the case of Shakespeare. In Verdecchia’s terms, these actors’ comments represent the “Worshipful” end of the directorial/aesthetic spectrum, concerned with “telling the story” or “serving the text,” formulations which position the artists’ ideal condition as transparent, in order to facilitate the encounter between audience and author/text/diegesis. It seems a significant omission, then, that PerformancePlus only includes production credits as transferred from the film version, as the final segment of the video performance; nowhere else on the site’s menu can a user find the names of the cast, director, and crew. While I would resist Sarah Werner’s claim that these projects omit the “traces of labour that theatre and film and video artists do in breathing life into the scripts for their audiences,”28 I would agree with her critique that the projects convey an understanding of performance and of Shakespeare that conceals the “interpretive choices at stake in Shakespeare” (Werner 345). To return to Neville’s refutation of Shillingsburg, the understanding of performers as elaborators emphasizes a contribution at the “practical level,” while omitting their contribution at the “intellectual level,” as artistic collaborators, agents of thoughtful provocation, rather than mechanical transmission (Neville 6). The dual-stream design of the multimedia editions thus encourages a critical curiosity in users, and invites them to compare the Shakespearean text to its unfolding in performance. At the same time, by neglecting – or refusing – to discuss aesthetic strategies and choices, these projects withhold from their users the tools that would enable them to engage as critical evaluators. In their current form, these projects can assist users in understanding the Shakespearean work through text and performance; with some additional development, they could valuably assist users in understanding text and performance not only as representations of the work, but as arguments about the work.

28 I am, admittedly, biased on this point.
Chapter 4: Mediating for Immediacy

4.1 Overview

Chapter 4 takes up Neville’s critique of Shillingsburg, examining the workings of a scholarly edition, and the signalling that editors do in order to enable users to engage the edition as a theory about the work, as well as an iteration of the work. Multimedia Shakespeare editions, in their current state, are a hybrid of scholarly editions and school editions, thus partly revealing and partly concealing the editor’s role in the project’s construction. While the incorporation of multiple versions of the work provides users with some basis for critical comparison, the lack of an overall apparatus deprives users of the support they would require in order to fully participate in that critique. None of the projects discloses or discusses its construction as a digital project, the goals of its editorial/design/production team in selecting the design, interface, and functionality. I take as a starting point Leah Vosko’s description of the “ethic of invisibility” which defines the role of the editor in much textual editing (Vosko 140, quoted in Cullen, “The Social Dynamics of Scholarly Editing” 3).29 Vosko’s notion of invisibility in editing echoes Neville’s argument, a range of pedagogical approaches, and the dynamic I have traced in Chapter 3 regarding the role of artists in multimedia Shakespeare editions: the positioning of editors, artists, or teachers as transmitters of the work rather than collaborators in its construction enables users to encounter the edition, lesson, or performance as a representation of the work, rather than a theory about the work. As I have suggested earlier, this in itself is not a problem, as users need to acquire a basic understanding of a work before they can engage with the distinction between the work and an argument about it. What Shillingsburg and Neville’s exchange suggests, however, is that there is value in providing users with the tools to recognize the argument that the edition represents, and that merely supplying multiple versions is not enough to support that process. In school editions of Shakespeare, editorial invisibility misrepresents both the text and the work, but it also enables students to engage with the play-as-fiction in a relatively

29 See Galey and Ruecker’s analogous discussion of the ethic of transparency in design in (Galey and Ruecker 406), and Hans Walter Gabler’s description of editors’ “hand-maidenly bashfulness – a sense of the editor’s self-effacing role in the service of texts and authors thoroughly in tune with the estimation they were (and are) held in by the rest of the world” (Gabler 45).
straightforward manner. In conventional productions of Shakespeare, directorial and
dramaturgical invisibility translates early modern stage and script (and print) practice into
twentieth and twenty-first century aesthetics, reinforcing an idea of Shakespearian universalism
and ‘relevance,’ but it also enables audiences to attend to the fiction of the play, using familiar
theatrical techniques in order to highlight the dramatic aspect of the production. In primary and
secondary education, pedagogical invisibility elides the teacher’s own subjectivity and
positionality, and conceals complexities and ambiguities in the material, in order to allow
learners to acquire a simplified (sometimes factually incorrect) model which will alter be broken
down, adjusted, or discarded as they progress to more advanced forms of learning.

4.2 Multimedia Editions and Editorial Strategy

The hybridity in multimedia Shakespeare editions’ approach to editing is partly caused by the
very different tasks involved in creating these projects. Some of them – Folger *Luminary,*
*Sonnets,* Cambridge *Explore Shakespeare,* and *Heuristic Shakespeare* – import their text from
scholarly print editions, and so can import the editorial apparatus from that edition as well. For
the most part, they adopt components of the apparatus rather than maintaining it entirely; none of
the projects currently includes a textual collation, though *Luminary* states that they intend to
integrate one at a later date. *Luminary,* *Sonnets,* and *Heuristic* also expand on the commentary
from the print edition, adding additional annotation created for the digital project, but without
any additional framing to introduce its purpose or design logic. *Luminary,* *Sonnets,* *Shakespeare
at Play,* *Heuristic,* and *WordPlay* all use performance recordings that were created specifically
for the project, and could thus include something like a textual introduction or artists’ statement
to serve as an apparatus-equivalent for performance. Such statements are almost entirely absent
from these projects, and to the extent that a user can find any such information, it is scattered
through marketing and press materials, and generally revolves around discussions of
“accessibility”.  

Finally, none of these projects currently includes any kind of critical discussion
of the digital project itself, its function as an edition, or the editorial intentions and principles
which guided its design. While there are clearly intentions and principles guiding these projects,

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30 See, for example, (Burton; Colman; Siede; Bueckert)
those principles are difficult to discern, especially for a first-time user. The projects’
commingling of elements is considered and deliberate, but none of the projects currently
provides an articulated rationale for its design aesthetics, its interface mechanics, or its use of
performance materials. This omission is more sharply felt because of the borrowed textual
apparatus, which demonstrates the underlying principles of critical transparency, and serves to
highlight the absence of a similar articulated treatment for the performance and the digital
design. As in art-works, intention in editions does not fully correlate to the results themselves,
which may fall short of the stated goals, or may have implications beyond the originating or
stated objectives.

4.3 Scholarly Editions, Academic Editions, School Editions

Shillingsburg makes a delicate distinction between scholarly editions and academic editions,
insofar as academic editions are concerned with setting out a best version of a work, while
scholarly editions are concerned with multiple versions of a work (Shillingsburg, “A Slight
Conflict of Aims: Scholarly vs. Academic Editing”). In this analysis, as elsewhere, Shillingsburg
omits commercial editions from consideration, characterizing them as editions designed to sell to
a particular market, and thus to an extent understandable as versions of an academic edition
(replacing ‘best’ with ‘most commercially viable’) and also outside the scope of a discussion of
rigorous editing practices (Shillingsburg, “A Slight Conflict of Aims: Scholarly vs. Academic
Editing”; Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*). Since school editions – and
their manifestation in multimedia Shakespeare editions - conflate Shillingsburg’s notion of
academic editing and commercial editing, I consider them as their own category, albeit a
nebulous one, precisely because their principles are so ill-defined. The key factors for scholarly
editing are self-consciousness and transparency (Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the
Computer Age*; Gabler). Editors of scholarly editions should be as explicit as possible regarding
their intentions and methodology, and should be rigorous about following the methods that they
set out. Paramount for Shillingsburg is the scholarly editions’ sense of fidelity to the original
work, conceived as a source of authority; at the same time, an editor’s ability to articulate her
own formal orientation (i.e. where she locates the authority of the work that will drive the edition
– author, document, aesthetic, sociology) not only establishes the editor’s credibility, but also
enables the edition to be of use to editors or scholars interested in different formal orientations
(Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age* 26). A well-constructed apparatus, by making the editor’s orientation and methods explicit, enables “persons wishing that another orientation had been employed” to identify the editor’s interventions and biases or interests supporting them, and thus to compensate in other directions. Shillingsburg also emphasizes a shift away from an objectively “best” or “right” text (that mainstay of Shakespeare editing in the 18th and 19th centuries) and toward a clearly articulated subjective position: it is the editor’s responsibility to set out the goal of the edition, and then to scrupulously ensure that the edition lives up to that goal (Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age* 74).

While Shillingsburg is adamant that there is no one right way to approach editing, he is equally adamant that there are wrong ways, and the specific wrong ways that he articulates describe some of the failings of school editions and of the multimedia Shakespeare projects:

> It is wrong to edit without knowledge of alternative viable methods or without declaring one’s own methods and goals. It is wrong to edit without knowledge of all the materials witnessing composition, revision, or transmission of the text. It is wrong to edit without sufficient regard for the need to proofread. It is insufficient to argue: I am a scholar; therefore, my edition is scholarly. “Trust me” is an inadequate explanation of editorial methods. (Shillingsburg, *Textuality and Knowledge* 94)

Hans Walter Gabler, thinking specifically about digital scholarly editions, goes further in positing the scholarly edition as an intellectual project in its own right, for which the editor, rather than the originating author, is the organizing agent and guarantor of quality. Gabler places the edition’s legitimacy with the editor, with a corresponding shift in the relation of the edition’s elements (Gabler 45). The scholarly edition – and especially the digital scholarly edition – is not a core text with surrounding appendages, but rather an interrelated network of strands which includes the text, its author-oriented aspects such as the textual introduction and collation, and its user-oriented elements such as general introduction and commentary (Gabler 44). Part of the shift from representation of the work to theory about the work is based in this revaluation of elements, since it is the interplay between the text, apparatus, and commentary that demonstrates the editorial argument and communicates it to users. Gabler emphasizes the scholarly edition’s transparency both as an ethical imperative – clearly delineating between the authorial work and the editorial perspective – and as a pedagogical imperative. When the editor is clear about the edition’s goals, the edition’s user is able to engage critically, analyzing both the editor’s stated
goal and the degree to which the edition as a whole and any individual decision in it supports or
deviates from that goal (Gabler 44).

Significantly for multimedia Shakespeare editions, Gabler is particularly interested in the
affordances of digital platforms, in terms of their ability to foreground multimedia materials and
incorporate them fully into the edition’s relational web, as well as their possibilities for dynamic
annotations, navigation, and linking. Like Shillingsburg and Neville, Gabler’s explicit interest is
in facsimiles and document visualizations, but his consideration of such materials easily extends
to audio and video performance recordings (Gabler 50). In the context of multimedia
Shakespeare editions, rising to the challenges outlined by Gabler would mean treating the
performance recordings not only as rich texts in their own right (and thus deserving, even
requiring, introduction, analysis, and commentary) but also treating them as digital elements in
their own right within the networked edition, to be tagged for searchability, linked to related
commentaries or ideas across the edition/project, and potentially open to user comments and
community tagging.

4.4 School Editions and Curricula

School editions as a category are not mentioned in Shillingsburg’s list, though they combine
some aspects of commercial work, some aspects of modernizing work, and many aspects of
“wrong ways to edit,” insofar as their process is often un-self-conscious, often without
“knowledge of alternative viable methods” (or at least without acknowledgement of such
methods), and almost always “without declaring one’s own methods and goals.” The multimedia
Shakespeare editions without a basis in print editions, *Shakespeare at Play*, *WordPlay*, and
*PerformancePlus*, are especially egregious in this regard, lacking even the borrowed aspects of
apparatus that the other projects include, and failing to specify the source for their text.

School editions of Shakespeare are more common than those of most other authors, because
Shakespeare’s unique status creates a constant market for classroom texts, and an ever-growing
supply of old editions from which material can be re-purposed. Shakespeare is a relatively stable
element in Canadian, American, and British school systems, though generally relegated to
English courses and thus to the realm of literature and reading, rather than theatre and
performance (Olive 4). While current Canadian curricula tend not to mandate any particular
works or authors, Shakespeare is routinely invoked in curricular policy as an example of the kind of source material with which students ought to be familiar (Ontario and Ministry of Education). The Common Core curriculum, developed as a proposed new standard for pedagogy in American primary and secondary schools, similarly focuses on skills development, leaving the choice of texts/works open to educators and boards. Shakespeare, however, is the only author listed by name in the document31, again as an example of the kind of content which students ought to be able to read and understand at higher levels of competence (English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 11-12 | Common Core State Standards Initiative). Sarah Olive argues that Shakespeare is valuable to educators because he can function in two opposing pedagogical approaches to cultural works. In traditional curricula, Shakespeare represents an idea of culture considered as “a group of items, or experiences, exposure to which and familiarity with which will lead to the concrete outcomes of being (perceived as) educated and cultured” (Olive 6). In more recent, skills-oriented curricula, Shakespeare’s works represent rich literary and historical documents, valuable for an approach in which “‘culture’ in its more egalitarian, anthropological sense of ‘the society we live in’ can also be figured as a means of education” (Olive 6, italics Olive’s). Moreover, curricula such as Ontario’s may also incorporate Shakespeare as an example of work that spans multiple media, useful for analysis of mediation and translation (Ontario and Ministry of Education). Olive raises an important contradiction in Shakespeare’s curricular status: while this inclusion is an argument for Shakespeare’s continued value and relevance, the very act of making Shakespeare compulsory also betrays a lack of confidence in the appeal of the material, suggesting “the possibility that, if left to consumers (students, parents) and producers (teachers, schools), Shakespeare might not be taught” (Olive 40). This contradiction is at the heart of the promotional rhetoric of the multimedia Shakespeare editions, which take for granted that Shakespeare will be both compulsory and intimidating, thus necessitating a set of tools that enables teachers to demonstrate the material’s ability to thrill and allows students to bypass the language and access the fiction.

31 A fact that has caused some consternation, as in Richard Shaffer’s screed in the Chicago Tribune (Shaffer).
School editions are generally designed to meet curricular needs that are served by treating the play as a self-consistent whole, omitting the issue of multiple and conflicting documentary witnesses, ignoring the history of multiple and conflicting interpretations and emendations, excluding the scholarly editions’ textual introduction and collation, and often neglecting performance considerations altogether. Dealing with the play as an expression of a coherent and consistent fiction supports teaching methods and curricular standards based on facts-oriented testing and essay composition (Olive 20). Even exercises concerned with mediation and adaptation tend to follow Hutcheon’s model rather than Kidnie’s, treating the play as a knowable literary object, whose characters, plot, or dialogue can then be transposed into another medium, such as film or comics. The multimedia Shakespeare editions are largely designed to support such pedagogical strategies. WordPlay’s ‘modern translation’ in particular reinforces the idea that the text has a singular, stable meaning, while Shakespeare at Play and PerformancePlus present this kind of stability, contesting it to an extent through notes and commentary. At the other end of the spectrum, Sonnets and especially Luminary do excellent work in demonstrating that the text is a rich site for deep interpretation as well as disagreement, even if they do not yet extend that understanding to the performance. Not only do they offer multiple perspectives, but both projects present their scholars as personalities, as knowledge-producing agents with particular interests and perspectives, rather than as the invisible labour of glosses and comments attached to a name and title. Where Luminary innovates engagement and control by letting users choose which Experts’ commentary to view and which to hide, linking experts’ notes to their images and biographies, Sonnets goes even further by presenting much of its scholarly commentary as video, and thus as performance. With the exception of Duncan-Jones’ notes, drawn from the print edition, and Don Paterson’s parallel commentary, drawn from his own Reading Shakespeare’s Sonnets: a new commentary, all the other expert commentaries appear, like the app’s presentation of Shakespeare’s sonnets, in the split-screen format with video above and matching text below (Paterson). Moreover, each expert is a performer of at least one sonnet,

32 If that – Explore Shakespeare’s lack of attribution makes it virtually impossible to link any given note or element to a particular human agent, at least without looking up the print editions that make up the app’s source material.
demonstrating both the value and the limitations of scholarly knowledge as it attempts to reproduce actorly technique.

4.5 Pedagogical Models – Simplification to Complexity

Clayton Delery criticizes the concept of school editions generally, arguing that the semblance of a coherent text is created by veiling editorial labour. Delery repositions Vosko’s “ethic of invisibility” into a Lacanian analysis in which the editor’s self-veiling amounts to a phallic usurpation of the author’s power, such that the editor is presented implicitly as the “subject presumed to know” (Delery). The concern, for Delery, is that such editorial concealment discourages readers from approaching the work and the edition critically, rendering them into passively accepting consumers of content; conversely, when editors are transparent about their own labour and the gaps in the text, users are invited to be critical of the text as a representation of the work, and of the edition as a representation of the text (Delery). Delery provides an analysis of the ways in which some school editions (especially commercial digital editions), pedagogical approaches, and conventional performances achieve a kind of accessibility through the concealing of labour and the conflation of their intermediaries’ efforts with the author’s work. The trade-off for school editions, simplified pedagogy, and conventional productions is that complexity and positionality are concealed, but the simplification makes material available to novice learners.

The fundamental principle of the school edition of Shakespeare is that learners who are new to complex material will benefit from having that material simplified in early encounters, and, conversely, that learners who encounter complex material without simplification are liable to become frustrated and alienated (Wellington 162). A great deal of advice on teaching Shakespeare posits teachers as stuck mediating between, on the one hand, curricular policy mandating the importance of Shakespeare, and, on the other hand, indifferent students riddled with “Shakes-fear.” The very title of the No Fear Shakespeare graphic novel adaptations assumes that fear is the starting point for most students approaching Shakespeare, an assumption that is repeated throughout the press and marketing for multimedia Shakespeare editions. School editions represent a problematic but effective strategy of mediating between these two extremes, a strategy that echoes the use of performance and technology in the classroom. Delery overstates
his case, railing against the simplifications of school editions and the implied hierarchy that they propose between “students” and “scholars” (Delery 71). Most teachers at the high school or early undergraduate level would support the idea that a simplified edition – or performance, or pedagogical strategy – is needed in order to engage early learners, and to prepare them for the later complexity that will be presented through scholarly editions, more advanced pedagogy, and more complex performances. Delery, Neville, Shillingsburg, Gabler and others agree that the ultimate goal for editions and for teachers should be to support and prepare learners for critical engagement, enabling them to evaluate not only the work but also the edition. Multimedia Shakespeare editions accomplish this task reasonably well, to varying degrees. The danger, however, is less in the initial simplification, and more in failing to signal that simplification, which can leave learners unprepared for more complex approaches later on.

4.6 Epistemological Development – Kuhn

Deanna Kuhn’s model of epistemological development positions the trajectory from simplification to complication within a larger framework, in which learners’ progress form simpler to more complex understanding of content is based on a deepening understanding of knowledge itself. The stages of epistemological development that she articulates are useful for understanding both the advantages and the risks of the multimedia Shakespeare editions’ pedagogical strategies. Kuhn is explicitly interested in the contours and development of critical thinking, which she identifies as primarily involving “metacognitive – rather than cognitive – competencies” (Kuhn 17). Critical thinking thus extends beyond an understanding of content to “the art of thinking about your thinking” (R. Paul, quoted in Kuhn 17). Epistemological knowing (“How does anyone know?”, “What do I know about my own knowing?”) is most relevant to adolescent and early adult learning, and “may be the most fundamental underpinning of critical thinking” (Kuhn 18, 23). Mapping the development of epistemological understanding to research on neurological and cognitive development, Kuhn describes four progressive stages of epistemological understanding, which mark the progress of learners as they engage with knowledge acquisition, knowledge production, and knowledge evaluation. Kuhn’s second stage is the “absolutist stage,” relevant to school editions, in which learners conceive of reality as stable and directly knowable, and thus capable of being represented or misrepresented by assertions and statements that vary in accuracy (Kuhn 22). While the level of critical thinking at
this stage is rudimentary, Kuhn notes that this stage is significant in terms of learners’ engaged assessment of facts and evidence. Since a “certain truth” can be accessed through “direct apprehension or the authority of experts,” absolutists can judge a given statement as factually “correct or incorrect in relation to this truth” (Kuhn 22). Thus, “the absolutist stance allows for the acquisition of elementary critical thinking skills that serve as a foundation for more advanced forms of critical thinking that may develop later” (Kuhn 22). The absolutist stance echoes characteristics of the multimedia Shakespeare editions and of school editions more generally, in terms of the notion of Shakespeare’s text as code, a set of instructions that may be followed in correct or incorrect ways, as well as in strategies of glossing and annotation that treat the text as having a single unambiguous meaning.

Kuhn warns that “[p]eople can spend entire lifetimes within the protective wraps of…the absolutist stance in which assertions can conflict but disagreements are resolvable by appeal to direct observation or authority” (Kuhn 22). More than Delery’s concern with usurped authority, Kuhn’s warning represents an actual risk posed by the simplified engagement that multimedia Shakespeare editions utilize. By failing to signal – in the manner of a scholarly edition – the rhetorical strategy involved in simplifying textual, performative, and design complexities, multimedia Shakespeare editions create the conditions for a limited understanding, and a resistance to the complexity that learners encounter in later stages. Ian Stewart and Jack Cohen bring up the same concern in their “lies-to-children” model of pedagogical development: “a lie-to-children is a statement that is false, but nevertheless leads the child’s mind towards a more accurate explanation, one which the child’s mind will only appreciate if it has been primed with the lie” (Stewart et al. 41). While Cohen and Stewart admit that the flippant term has garnered criticism, they point out that the process they describe is ingrained in widespread teaching practices. Pointing to common examples of lies-to-children in science teaching (typically in North America and the UK), Cohen and Stewart cite the simplified treatment of magnetism as opposing poles, the “solar system” model of atomic and molecular structures, descriptions of single-celled organisms as “primitive,” and the notion of DNA as a “blueprint” (Stewart et al. 42). Importantly, Cohen and Stewart note that learning is not a process of cumulative accretion, building up a “timeless edifice of facts” (Stewart et al. 42). Rather, conceptual models are developed at certain ages, and then must be unlearned, sometimes with difficulty, in order to give
way to newer, more complex models – which may themselves prove to be higher-order simplifications to be unlearned at a subsequent stage, in a process known as “cognitive conflict” (Wellington 39). Cohen and Stewart echo Kuhn’s warning about the risk of learners stagnating at an early stage (Stewart et al. 41). Many of the simplified models of science listed above are raised by Cohen and Stewart as examples of the “vaguely remembered lies-to-children” that represent the level of scientific knowledge in an unfortunately large proportion of public discourse. Without necessary intervention on the part of learners, teachers, or both, simplified and misleading models can congeal, leaving learners with the sense that they fully understand an idea or a work, allowing them to mistake the simplified version for a vision of the thing itself. In the context of Shakespeare in popular discourse, the pervasive notion that Shakespeare invented a broad swath of words and phrases now in popular use represents such a lie-to-children that has, for many, ossified into an unexamined and inaccurate ‘truth,’ as evidenced by responses to David McInnis’ recent challenge of the narrative (McInnis).

The third or “multiplist” stage of Kuhn’s model involves a recognition of the validity of multiple viewpoints, but without the capacity to effectively analyze their respective merits (Kuhn 22). This stage, both progressive and problematic, equates the lack of absolute truth with utter relativism, in which all opinions are equally valid: “because all people have a right to their opinions, all opinions are equally right” (Kuhn 22)33. The multiplist stage is alarmingly characteristic of the discourse of social media and internet comments. This stage is characteristic of multimedia projects with multiple strands of commentary, such as *Sonnets, Luminary*, and to a lesser extent *Heuristic*, in that learners recognize that knowledge is produced by human agents in the form of assertions, observations, and arguments, all of which are contingent, uncertain, and potentially biased. Learners at this stage understand that a work can have multiple legitimate

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33 This stage reflects a typical experience of internet search results, in which expert and non-expert opinions are intermingled and rendered interchangeable by search algorithms. Folksonomic ranking can alleviate or exacerbate that difficulty, enabling communities to identify results that are useful, but also further obfuscating the basis on which results are ranked. O’Neill on YouTube Shakespeare discusses some of the positive aspects of this phenomenon (engagement, agency, diversification) as well as some of its negative consequences (ambiguity, obfuscation) (O’Neill). See also Rowe on digital editions and the need to balance crowd-sourced commenting and engagement with certain kinds of gate-keeping and community standards (a balance that her designs for Folger *Luminary* attempt to enact) (Rowe). FRBR’s taxonomy and information architecture are, in part, intended to clarify the confusion of search results, at least as they pertain to library catalogues (Tillett).
interpretations, but they are also less inclined to exercise their critical faculties, as they are faced with a landscape of “equally right” opinions, with “no basis for judging the strength of an argument, except possibly its power to persuade” (Kuhn 22).

Kuhn’s fourth and final stage, reached only by a minority of learners, is one of evaluative epistemology. At this stage, learners understand that “all opinions are not equal and knowing is understood as a process that entails judgment, evaluation, and argument” (Kuhn 22). Critical thinking is essential to learners at this stage, and here the process of critical thinking involves a more complex and rigorous set of competencies than the absolutists’ fact-checking. Evaluative epistemologists “see the weighing of alternative claims in a process of reasoned debate as the path to informed opinions, and they understand that arguments can be evaluated and compared based on their merit” (Kuhn 22). While the absolutist stance privileges objectivity to the point of casting varied opinion as a failure of information, and the multiplist stance privileges subjectivity to the point of denying the possibility of meaningful distinction, the evaluative approach is “successful in integrating and coordinating the two, by acknowledging uncertainty without forsaking evaluation” (Kuhn 22–23). In terms of Shakespeare editions, then, an evaluationist approach would consider an argument for emending a line not only in terms of a more “correct” text or the opinion of a given critic, but rather in relation to a larger position or agenda regarding the practice of emendation, the goal of the edition in question, and the text being constructed. Kuhn’s evaluative stage resonates with Neville, Shillingsburg, and Gabler’s calls for transparency in editorial practice, precisely as a means of providing users with the tools they need in order to critically evaluate the edition’s goals and methods.

4.7 Framing the School Edition

Without too much difficulty, the absolutist mode of school editions could fit into an evaluative model, or something resembling Shillingsburg’s insistence on transparency and positioning. What is primarily required is a separation of the simplification strategies from the related but distinct imperative to conceal those strategies from users. This move would require the edition or project to be explicit about its goal and methodology: to recruit novice learners by presenting a simplified version of a complex topic. The multimedia Shakespeare editions’ press and media materials very nearly achieve this goal, falling short in the small but significant failure to
consider or declare their approach as a conscious tactic, rather than as the Shakespearean work itself. Against Gabler’s notion of the digital scholarly edition as a fully-networked relational web, in which every element can be independently linked to every other element (Gabler 54), multimedia Shakespeare editions offer a more limited but more intuitive alternative, offering the user a dual-stream interface with limited annotation of the text alone\(^{34}\). The choice not to annotate performance may be an unfortunate loss, but with some editorial framing it can at least be justified as an intentional decision in the edition’s design logic. Many aspects of these projects’ design seem intended to serve as tools for recruitment, one of the initial tasks in pedagogical scaffolding (Wood et al.). As described by Wood et al in their original research, recruitment is the tutor’s effort to “enlist the problem solver’s interest in and adherence to the requirements of the task,” an effort that is echoed in much discussion of performance as a tool for teaching Shakespeare, in multimedia editions and otherwise. Discussion of performance as lively, exciting, engaging, and accessible, as well as the use of performance recordings in the classroom through modern media – from Welles and Hill’s phonograph recordings to LPs, film, video, DVD/Blu-Ray, and now apps, YouTube clips, and streaming digital video – all represent strategies of recruitment, tools for overcoming students’ presumed fear and frustration in response to Shakespeare and drama in print. Again, the issue is not the use of these techniques, but rather the relatively simple but delicate task of signposting them for users, which would provide the editions’ designers with an opportunity to explain some of their choices while also acknowledging, in Shillingsburg’s terms, a particular formal orientation and the knowledge of alternative legitimate methods and goals.

4.8 Digital Affordances: Level Selection

One of the challenges of scholarly editing consists in the difficulty of constructing an edition that serves readers’ desire for a readable version of the work, while also satisfying the requirements of laying out the multiple nature of the work and the editor’s vision for the edition (Eggert 103; Shillingsburg, Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age 37). In the balancing between school

\(^{34}\) Gabler, like McGann, is both overly optimistic about the affordances of digital hypertext and needlessly dismissive of the codex book, which has proven a remarkably effective and versatile interface for storing and accessing information.
editions and scholarly editions, and the pedagogical strategies represented by each, one of the challenges for editors and for teachers is the need to introduce simplified versions of works and concepts in a way that acknowledges further complexity without frustrating learners at an early stage. Such signposts become, in effect, another form of scaffolding, a way of limiting the learners’ focus in the current moment while also pointing out that the present text is provisional, and indicating the direction and scope of other versions. One potential advantage of digital editions – or at least a pedagogical strategy that they model – is the ability to acknowledge up front that higher levels of complexity exist, while giving users the option to conceal these levels from view and engage only with the simplified version or versions. The learner is given a beginner’s version as a default, but with the ability to select greater complexity when she feels ready, or when a peer or tutor advises her to do so.

A number of the multimedia editions use the affordances of digital design in ways that indicate intentional scaffolding for users at different levels of ability. The most relevant example is *Heuristic Shakespeare*, whose settings enable users to select from three levels of annotation. Level 1 comprises “straightforward explanations of difficult words and phrases. A mixture of Arden Shakespeare notes and additional Heuristic Shakespeare notes,” and is aimed at beginners, or users who desire simple, unambiguous, and largely un-scholarly annotation (Heuristic Media). Level 2 is an intermediary stage, and includes “complete Arden Shakespeare glosses and commentary,” though “some notes have been abridged, but you can expand these to see the full note text” (Heuristic Media). Here, the user experiences more interruption from the notes, but can scan the abridged note and decide whether to return to reading the play or pause to expand the note and read it in its entirety. Level 3 presents “complete and unabridged Arden Shakespeare glosses and commentary, with complete textual variations” (Heuristic Media). The “additional Heuristic notes” are labeled as such, identified with a quill icon that expands at a touch to reveal the message “This is a Heuristic Shakespeare note,” though this assiduous labeling does not indicate the note’s originator. Even the app’s credits listing does not clarify this point, listing Sir Ian McKellen and Professor Sir Jonathan Bate as Series Editors, as well as a range of Heuristic Media employees whose specific roles are not explained. The effect here is, to an extent, the confusion of authority decried by Delery, though here the contribution of an individual editor or editorial team is abstracted into the authority and branding of the app itself,
as well as the overarching authority of “Arden Shakespeare.” Level 1 annotations provide
glosses for a number of terms that the higher levels leave unglossed, such as “tempestuous” in
the opening stage directions of Tempest 1.1, or “keep below!” several lines later. The expandable
notes of Level 2 have an additional impact, as the app initially displays only the note, while the
expanded version includes a hyperlinked citation, most often to the Oxford English Dictionary,

enabling users with an active internet connection to link directly to the relevant entry and
compare it to the note. Level 3 options display the full text entry, with the hyperlink already
visible. The use of full Arden notes as indicators for the app’s highest level of sophistication
implies that less advanced or less confident users would be intimidated by the scholarly edition,
and thus benefit from a simplified version of the Arden commentary. This simplified version cuts
down the more complicated notes, but also adds additional glosses for terms and phrases that the
Arden editors do not gloss, assuming users to be already familiar with them. The implication is
that users at earlier stages of expertise will desire or benefit from a more contained reading
experience, in which notes clarify the text but do not direct the user outward to other sources,
whereas more experienced users will prefer a more “radiant” model, which leads from the text to
other texts and back again. Heuristic also offers users control over display elements, though
these are presented as a series of on-off toggles rather than a planned progression. Users can opt
to turn off “Definitions” entirely, removing the underline indicators that signal the availability of
a gloss or note, and disabling their hyperlinks, leaving only the plain play-text. Similar controls
also enable the removal of the line numbers, highlights, and user-generated notes.

The user controls in Cambridge’s Explore Shakespeare offer a similar combination of skill-level-
based options and user preference. The annotation menu presents a set of options analogous to
Heuristic’s, presenting users with the choice of “Standard glossaries,” “Academic glossaries,” or
“Academic notes” (Agant Ltd.). In the Cambridge apps, these options are cumulative, so a user
can opt for an unadorned text, or else add any level or combination of commentary. The
difference between “Standard” and “Academic” glossaries is only in the choice of which terms
are glossed – there is no corresponding change in the wording of the glossaries themselves. Both
sets of glosses are short pop-ups, offering functional but limited clarifications, without much
depth or exploration of broader contextual meanings. “Triumph,” in A Midsummer Night’s
Dream 1.1.19, for example, is glossed as “public festivity,” omitting reference to the Roman
practice of triumphs celebrating victory in war by presenting defeated enemies to the public view, a consideration that links Hippolyta in to Cleopatra and Tamora. “Academic notes,” imported from the New Cambridge editions, include historical details, descriptions of early modern staging practices (as well as some editorially-invented staging notes), some textual notes, references to editorial practice, and notes on sources and intertexts. Attribution for these notes is extremely murky in the apps, as editors are named only in the project’s general credits, and then only as part of an “Authors and Editors” team, which includes the general editors, edition editors, and Shakespeare himself, with no clear division; the editor or education team that composes the apps’ classroom exercises is not identified at any point. Other features of the app, including classroom activities and exercises, scene synopses, and infographics, can also be toggled on and off, enabling users to customize their reading experience. Finally, Folger’s Luminary Shakespeare apps provide users with control over the annotation function, in that users can select some, all, or none of the app’s Experts. Based on a contributor’s biography and sample notes, a user can elect to ‘mute’ all annotations from that Expert, picking and choosing which annotators’ notes to display, if any. This selectivity encourages users to identify the style and perspective of each expert, and enables users to choose seams of commentary that relate to their particular interests in a given reading session. The Internet Shakespeare Editions apply similar design to annotations, enabling users to toggle the underline indicator on or off. Internet Shakespeare Editions also applies the customization function to textual variants, enabling users to display variant texts inline, and to select which variants to show and which to hide. While the multimedia editions’ options for customization do not represent the editorial rigour and transparency of a scholarly edition, they do gesture toward increasing complexity and networks of knowledge beyond the edition itself. The customization enables the projects to negotiate between the imperatives outlined by Samuel Johnson in his Preface, of using notes, “a necessary evil,” to enable the “close approach” which “shews the smaller niceties,” without obscuring “the beauty of the whole” (S. Johnson).

4.9 Transactive Memory Systems and Editorial Networking

Neville employs the theory of Transactive Memory Systems, or TMS, as a foundation for imagining the future of digital editing. TMS is a concept drawn from psychology that is currently being applied to a broader range of group dynamics, including theories of workplace
management and information access (Brandon and Hollingshead; Sparrow et al.). The key idea of TMS theory is that when humans encounter a new piece of information, our brains must very quickly determine whether it is necessary to remember the information itself (storage) or to remember where the information can be found (access). By effectively outsourcing parts of our memory, we form networks of expertise based on certain kinds of recognition and trust. In a marriage, one partner might be better at remembering and organizing the social calendar, while the other is better at knowing where items are stored in the house. Over time, friends and relatives, and the couple themselves, will learn to address invitations and scheduling questions to the former partner, while reserving inventory inquiries for the latter. TMS theory offers insights into the processes whereby individuals identify one another’s areas of competence and – often unconsciously – modify their own memory-retention patterns to utilize interpersonal networks. Neville argues that TMS theory provides an opportunity and an imperative for editors to demonstrate the basis of their expertise, which necessitates a demonstration, in turn, of that expertise’s dependence on other experts, as well as its authorization by users. At the same time, Neville argues, the affordances of the digital scholarly edition enable a productive tension between editorial authority and modern users’ reliance on Web 2.0 resources such as Google and Wikipedia. These resources form a powerful and continuous aspect of many users’ extended memory, a constantly-accessible network that can be employed to verify or clarify authorial and editorial claims (Sparrow et al.). At the same time, such resources represent Katherine Rowe’s notion of the ‘good-enough’ edition, reinforcing satisficing behaviour and the kind of surface-level unambiguous simplicity offered by badly-constructed school editions.

In many ways, Wikipedia is the worst version of Delery’s ‘subject presumed to know’: an aggregate authorship composed entirely of anonymous editors. At best, in Kuhn’s terms, these resources encourage a multiplist perspective, in which editorial authority is no more or less valid or valued than a Wikipedia entry, blog post, or minimally-relevant article that turns up through Google’s folksonomic algorithm. A carefully-demonstrated display of editorial practice, then, serves partly to insulate editors against the incursion of such resources, but more crucially to illustrate the difference between a satisficing process and a rigorous edition. By showing the networked, contingent, and skilled knowledge underlying an edition’s arguments – demonstrating editorial authority as constructed rather than assumed – a digital scholarly edition
calls into question users’ reliance upon Google, Wikipedia, and other Web 2.0 resources. Since users can easily reference these resources to verify or contest editors’ claims (and, indeed, their credentials), Neville argues, editors “can no longer rest secure that their readers will passively accept claims to authoritative knowledge” (Neville 15). Conversely, a digital scholarly edition, in which such knowledge is explicitly “constructed and contextualized” would serve as a resource and a lesson for evaluative epistemologies, aiding users in recognizing how and why a rigorously-constructed and cited editorial comment can be more authoritative and trustworthy than a satisficing answer proposed by a search engine algorithm (Neville 15). The TMS model, and the insistence that editors (especially of digital editions) need to be transparent and declarative of their intentions and processes, importantly reinforces similar calls for editorial transparency issued by Shillingsburg, by Gabler, and by Wells, Taylor, and Jowett in the Oxford Shakespeare. Recognizing the impossibility that any edition of Shakespeare should be definitive, Wells et al argue that “[o]f the variety of possible and desirable undefinitive editions, one asks only that they define their own aims and limitations: that they be self-conscious, coherent, and explicit about the ways in which they mediate between their writer and reader” (Stanley. Wells, William Shakespeare, a Textual Companion 3–4). The insistence on rigorous self-consciousness, coherence, and explicitness is no small request, and the modifier “only” belies both the importance and the difficulty of this aspect of an editor’s task. Gabler makes a similar request, arguing that “the clearer editors are, and have been, about what they are doing, the closer they have come to it” (Gabler 47). Gabler goes further than the Oxford editors, emphasizing the pedagogical and user-oriented value of this editorial transparency, which positions a user “to interact with the edition text...both as critic, and, in response to the edition’s recorded potential of textual alternatives, as re-assessing supplementary editor” (Gabler 48). Within the context of the multimedia edition, as Michael Best notes, the editor has a significantly expanded opportunity (and, arguably, responsibility) for annotating and contextualizing performance materials (Best, “The Text of Performance and the Performance of Text in the Electronic Edition” 269). The question for the future of multimedia editions, whether they continue to be produced as apps or take other forms, is how they will engage with the presentation and contextualization of performance as well as with their digital design, and what criteria their editors will use in order to annotate these aspects of the projects and link them to the text and textual tools.
4.10 Toward a Scholarly Multimedia Edition

It would be a relatively simple task for the multimedia Shakespeare editions, as they are currently configured, to provide an introduction that frames their editorial, aesthetic, and design approach as a particular kind of recruitment. It would be more challenging, though ultimately more rewarding, to extend the logic of these projects’ vestigial textual apparatus into a full scholarly endeavour that takes up not only the editorial selection of the text but also the dramaturgical selection and construction of the performance, and the information architecture of the overall digital design and functionality. One risk of such an endeavour is that it could become infinitely recursive, tracing every textual, material, design, aesthetic, and performance choice in an attempt to describe a never-ending constellation of possible options. When the limited number of documentary witnesses to a Shakespeare text already make variorum editions intimidating for many users, an edition that attempted to enumerate a full range of performance choices would be paralyzing.

The projects themselves already provide gestures and tools that could be more widely and more consciously deployed. PerformancePlus’ “Director’s Cut” function highlights the difference between the scripted text and the performance text, and could easily be augmented to frame practical considerations of cutting; a more ambitious design might incorporate a tool to enable users to construct their own cut text. My dramaturgical notes for Shakespeare at Play draw users’ attention to performance cruxes, and to some of the factors that go into making one choice rather than another, within the framework of conventional production. Some of PerformancePlus’ commentaries demonstrate possibilities in this regard as well, including Cimolino’s analysis of the costume aesthetic for Lear, and, more broadly, the precedent of having actors share their insights regarding the play (if not the production). A more considered stream of commentary could take on the edition’s embedded performance, offering a rationale for its overall aesthetic as well as for some key choices, thus empowering users to determine whether they find the edition’s overall aesthetic mission appealing or convincing, and to evaluate any given aesthetic choice in terms of its link to that aesthetic, evaluated against other possible orientations. Luminary’s “Audio Plus” feature offers a limited vision of alterity, hinting at the possibility of additional performance choices. While practical limitations on production and storage make it difficult to produce and include a more robust range of alternative
interpretations, this feature hints at the utility of a small, well-chosen selection, though it would still benefit from discussion – in text, audio, or video – of the desired or intended effect of one version or another (Saeger et al. 273). None of the projects currently offers any useful consideration of the aesthetic strategies in the performance’s mediation, in terms of camera work or sound design. There are some useful hints and gestures in the materials surrounding the editions, as in Loncraine’s explanation of *Heuristic*’s static camera, or Chisholm’s blog entries regarding *Shakespeare at Play*’s evolving film aesthetic (Chisholm). A multimedia Shakespeare edition need not – and probably should not – become a treatise on the finer points of sound dramaturgy or film editing theory, but a strategic discussion of key aesthetic choices could support users’ understanding of media adaptation, provoking discussion of gains and losses in rendering a Shakespeare work through one performance context/style/medium as opposed to another. In this regard, discussion of conventional performance - especially in terms of casting - could be particularly instructive and valuable, linking to larger aesthetic, cultural, and political conversations about ‘neutral’ aesthetics, and what kinds of identities (bodies, accents, ethnicities, genders) are read as transparent as opposed to meaning-constitutive.

Digital projects are often treated as performances, enacting their argument rather than articulating it (Galey and Ruecker). The goal of app-based projects in particular is to achieve an intuitive design, which succeeds precisely when users do not need to think about its operations. The challenge for these projects, should they attempt to develop into scholarly editions, will be to consider what aspects are worth articulating and how users might engage with such descriptions. *Shakespeare at Play* began on the iBooks platform, largely because of the availability of iBooks Author, Apple’s free authoring software, which enabled us to produce the initial version of the project by creating its content and selecting design options, rather than having to learn the coding required to create an equivalent project from scratch. By the time we were releasing our second production, we found that we were jury-rigging and fighting the built-in design. For example, we wanted the split-screen interface with scrolling text, but iBooks Author is designed with codex-like flipping pages as its default. In order to keep the video window static and have the text scroll, we had to embed the script as an image, rather than as a text file. As a result, the app treats the text as a single undifferentiated illustration, rendering it unable to search individual words. When we were designing the app version, we could sort out
these issues with the developers, but some of them remain in the iBooks editions. Apple provides a surprisingly robust built-in dictionary, which is included in the operating software for the iPad and iPhone. Thus, when we were designing the glossary function for Shakespeare at Play, we could be much more selective than many editions would, as we did not need to replicate any glosses that were already covered by the dictionary. We could focus on particularly obscure terms, more commonplace words that appear in the plays with unusual context-specific meanings, and difficult rhetorical figures. When we designed the web beta, however, the Apple dictionary would no longer apply, leaving gaps in the glossary that will need to be filled in at a later date. These are relatively minor aspects of the overall design, but they help to position the project as a process made up of a network of decisions and contingencies, rather than as a static product. Ultimately, it would be tremendously valuable for the design team to outline how they imagine the edition being used, and by whom; such a description could only be provisional, and conjectural, but would provide users with a basis for understanding – and evaluating – the edition’s selection and configuration of elements and functions. Users – and users of digital products in particular – tend to re-purpose existing tools to serve their own needs, or to discover unintended possibilities built into the tools’ design. An articulation of a project’s goals would provide users with a basis from which to communicate their explorations and innovations, with the potential to surprise the original designers, and to participate in the projects’ ongoing development.
Conclusion

An all-too-common conversation in digital humanities involves re-shaping humanities disciplines to incorporate digital tools and techniques, with a focus on the capabilities of digital tools to support, augment, and enrich the humanities’ existing efforts. The corollary discussion is less common, and deals with the application of humanities methodologies to digital technologies. That aspect of digital development that is concerned with machine learning and algorithmic functions – especially prominent in the education technology sector – can be at odds with humanities pedagogy. While machine learning can be effective at predicting behavior and providing content based on users’ existing preferences, humanities pedagogy is often concerned with the reverse: identifying existing preferences in order to introduce learners to content and perspectives that challenge rather than reinforce their beginning positions. In the context of multimedia Shakespeare editions, that aspect of machine learning is analogous to the projects’ recruitment strategies of using familiar forms and new media, making Shakespeare accessible by making an accessible Shakespeare. Humanities pedagogy, by contrast, provides the scholarly apparatus – thus far, inconsistently and intermittently deployed in these projects – that encourages users to identify their own initial preferences and biases, with the goal of working beyond and against them. This goal requires a critical engagement and evaluation not only with the projects’ content, but with the ways in which the projects shape, present, and communicate their content. There is a pragmatic question of how to incorporate a scholarly apparatus while still retaining these projects’ intuitive and attractive design. While I share Gabler’s excitement about digital editions’ capacity for volume of content, variety of content, networking of content, and commentary/analysis of all these functions, a full engagement with these possibilities rapidly becomes unwieldy, resulting in a product that makes linear reading all but impossible, undoing the advantages of the digital projects’ approachability. Digital design, as represented in some of the multimedia Shakespeare editions and in projects such as the Internet Shakespeare Editions, offers some models for flexible interfaces that can contain large amounts of data and metadata.

35 For a jarring account of the gaps between this conversation and current political and economic realities, see Audrey Watters’ recent “The Stories We Were Told about Education Technology (2018)” (Watters).
while making strategic, dynamic choices about what to display and how, enabling users to seek out additional detail or to conceal it for a more direct reading experience.

The multimedia Shakespeare editions, as currently constituted, tread a path between the concealed-labour accessibility of a school edition or conventional performance and the demonstrated-labour complexity of a scholarly edition. While the projects’ current design takes advantage of the potential of performance as recruitment and as an explanatory tool, it does not yet marshal the potential of the format to demonstrate the relationship between the dramatic fiction and the theatrical materiality. Whereas the reader of a novel or short story is tasked with constructing the literary fiction based on textual cues, the reader of a dramatic text must both construct the fiction and imagine a staging – however tentative, fragmentary, or ahistorical. The reader of literary fiction (at least within the standard primary and secondary school approaches to such reading) is thus primarily an interpreter, while the reader of plays becomes both performer and director of her imagined stagings. With some additional framing and scaffolding – a thoughtful but compact consideration of key performance choices and their intended effect on reception, a description of the embedded performance’s intentions and the aesthetic decisions meant to convey them, linked to a few provocative scenes or moments – these projects could supply users with a powerful tool for analyzing performance and exploring the impact of choices on performance and reception.

Anecdotally, when I have discussed and presented *Shakespeare at Play*, and when I have attended discussions and demonstrations of similar digital projects, attendees’ initial response is often to suggest additional tools that might be added, or to ask why a particular function was not already included. Digital technologies are often viewed as all-encompassing, and digital projects are still subject to the same kind of utopian blue-sky thinking that colours some of McGann’s initial considerations from nearly three decades ago. Digital projects are particularly vulnerable to the fantasy of a complete (and constantly updating) archive, a fantasy that continues to haunt Shakespeare studies (Galey, *The Shakespearean Archive*). This group of projects, for all their shortcomings, has managed to create a set of digital Shakespeare tools that balances the drive for completeness with a workable, sometimes even elegant, design. Like any edition or performance, they instruct their users through direct use, while also leaving room for users to play creatively and navigate their own path. Incorporating a complete Shakespeare text with a matching
performance and analysis tools accomplishes a limited completeness, while still retaining enough simplicity to engage the projects’ intended users. While the app-based aspects of these projects may not last, their underlying design structure – the type of materials being integrated, the framework for presenting them – can be replicated using web-based designs and digital publishing platforms such as Scalar and Omeka. Such tools would allow artists and editors to create and publish similar projects in formats that are free, web-based, and supportable through academic institutions, enabling an increase in access as well as greater possibility for links with other institutional resources. Like digital design, editorial transparency risks becoming infinitely complex, with a constantly-expanding apparatus addressing every design choice, programming option, and aesthetic decision. Like the projects themselves, their editorial introductions will need to find a balance between letting the project speak entirely for itself and articulating every minute detail, and users will inevitably judge the results as having strayed too far in one direction or the other. These attempts, however provisional, have the potential to expand the responsibilities of editors – and the discourse of editing – further beyond textual matters to design, dramaturgy, and pedagogy.

As much as “accessibility” has been a touchstone in my research, I have only barely brushed up against accessibility studies proper, a field that can greatly inform the development of multimedia Shakespeare editions and similar projects. One possible avenue for such projects and research to pursue would examine the role that multimedia editions can play in increasing access to Shakespeare’s works among users with limited vision or hearing, and ways in which the material interface tools (touchscreen, displays, mouse, keyboard) may need to be adjusted for users with various physical needs. The integration of performance, audio commentary, and modern English ‘translations’ can be valuable to English language learners, providing an entryway into the language through performance.

In this early moment, as digital multimedia editions are awkwardly developing from incunabula and school editions toward a more defined format and scholarly editions, there is less need for an exploration of possible additional functions, and more need for an emphasis on ethics and responsibilities. An investigation of these projects – and my own experience with Shakespeare at Play – shows that much of the projects’ design was arrived at by accretion and bricolage, as a result of many individual decisions working toward unarticulated principles, as well as
accidental discoveries. What is needed now is an exploration of the projects as they stand, and an attempt to articulate their guiding principles, which may not be the same across all the projects, or even among all the elements in a single project. Pedagogy and editorial theory give us a spectrum between two extremes, with “amplification through simplification” at one end and complexity plagued by alienation at the other (McCloud). One of the challenges has been how to productively engage in the (arguably necessary) simplifications in one stage of the process, while planting seeds or placing signposts that frame those simplifications, and indicate to learners that there is more knowledge and more complexity to be found at later stages. The cognitive shifting of re-evaluating and transforming earlier models may be necessary or productive to energize learning, but the attendant danger is that learners will accept the simplification as a complete model, and resist or reject the complexity when they encounter it. The affordances of the digital edition offer a work-through, by enabling users to customize their level of difficulty and engagement. Users can thus control the appearance of the text, displaying a level of commentary that meets their current needs (or the needs of their instructor, class, or project). At the same time, the process of selecting these options makes the scaffolding visible as scaffolding, demonstrating to users that there are higher levels of complexity beyond their current level of engagement. The annotation, linking, and navigation tools that make the scaffolding visible can also be used to demonstrate editorial labour, connections, and expertise, opening the edition toward a model of networked scholarship (Weinberger 402–03; Neville; Gabler).
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