

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

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## CHAPTER EIGHT THE DEVELOPMENT OF READERS' EDITIONS<sup>1</sup>

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Since we do not *know* what Shakespeare wrote,  
someone has to *decide* what Shakespeare wrote,  
on the basis of the evidence available at a particular time.

Editors are the people who decide.

GARY TAYLOR, 1986

Michael Hunter speaks directly to the purpose of this chapter in asking, 'What is an edition for? The answer surely is that it has to provide something that would not otherwise be available.'<sup>2</sup> An edition specifically edited and designed for adults reading Shakespeare aloud in community is not otherwise available and consequently is the practical aspect of this thesis—modern Readers' Editions. This chapter clarifies the editing guidelines for this unique series, the needs of which are founded on empirical research of several different reading groups over the course of almost fifteen years. Members of these groups range from 9 to 85 years old (although the majority are between 30 and 75), male and female, a broad range of occupations and interests, and group size ranges from 6 to 40 members. The time structures and reading formats vary, although reading is always in a circle. One monthly group reads an entire play aloud in one evening with some time for discussion, and the evening includes a pot-luck supper with two rules: dessert is not allowed until the end of Act 3, and everyone must take home their own leftovers. A different monthly group meets in a bookstore after hours and reads the play very briskly without stopping for stage directions, discussion or breaks, then retires to a pub to exchange views. Another group

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1. A prototype print edition of a Readers' Edition, *The Comedy of Errors*, is provided with this thesis.
  2. Hunter, *Editing Early Modern Texts*, 36.

meets weekly for two hours with some discussion, generally reading an act per week, while another weekly group runs a two-hour guided close read with a great deal of discussion. Some groups hold additional meetings in preparation for an upcoming film or stage performance where a play is read either straight through over the course of a weekend or in selected segments with discussion. Another group reads an entire play each New Years' Eve with pertinent food, drink and costuming. Some groups are private, meeting in someone's home, while some are public and meet in a library or theatre bar or other appropriate venue.

Direct observation and participation in these groups, as well as questioning other groups across the country, has led to the development of these Readers' Editions. Over the years certain design and editorial attributes have been requested by readers or group leaders. These include such elements as larger type for easier reading; every line numbered to facilitate referencing for discussion; charts of lines per character for apportioning parts; brief character descriptions for assigning roles; pronunciation guides for names; glosses easy to find at a glance; deletion of unnecessary glosses; a map of places mentioned in the play; motifs to be aware of; pertinent notes that alert readers to threads that reappear, motifs that tie a play together, or passages that particularly reward close attention; and various other details to assist non-expert readers. The intent is to provide a heuristic experience for the community reader, as opposed to a didactic experience for students.

Kastan argues that not only such 'vulgar' material considerations as design, format, layout, typeface, even paper, become 'part of the text's structures of signification', but that literature exists 'only and always in its materializations, and that these are the conditions of its meaning rather than merely the containers of it'.<sup>3</sup> Empirical evidence reveals that not only *what* is offered on the page but *how* it is visually offered actively shapes its intelligibility. The Readers' Editions are meticulously shaped for community readers in the knowledge that the presentation of the play on the page as well as its accompanying apparatus can be essential to a new reader's level of comfort and apprehension.

#### DIFFERENT TYPES OF EDITING AND EDITIONS

As John Jowett plainly states, the question is 'not whether to edit, but how to edit'.<sup>4</sup> Every text of Shakespeare, including the original quartos and folios, has been mediated by agents

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3. Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*, 5, 4.

4. John Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 113.

other than the playwright. The editorial treatment of Shakespeare depends on the kind of edition to be produced, which presumes an acknowledgement of different editions for different users—the variety of users requires a variety of editions. It may seem obvious at this point in history that it is neither desirable nor attainable to create a definitive edition that accommodates all users, but Stanley Wells recently complained: ‘There is, as I constantly but with little success try to persuade publishers to acknowledge, no such thing as a definitive edition.’<sup>5</sup>

Leah S. Marcus is concerned that most editions of Shakespeare are ‘too uniform, too much alike, too often geared to the same audience’ and that instead of expecting ‘an infinite array of textual and dramatic possibilities’ to unfold within one version, a greater range of focused editions should be encouraged.<sup>6</sup> Wells agrees that plays can be properly edited ‘in different ways to suit different readers.’<sup>7</sup> Jowett also concurs that ‘no single format can meet all needs.’<sup>8</sup> Because it is not possible to have an unmediated Shakespearean text, all we can do is choose which mediator or type of mediation we would like to use for a particular purpose. Various editions executed with different orientations would each be the best edition possible to a specific group of users.

John Pitcher describes the process by which he arrived at his editorial stance that what may seem obvious to an editor may be obscure to a reader. He argues that it is necessary today to provide fuller and more elaborate illumination of the text than that to which scholars have been accustomed. For example, when Posthumous in *Cymbeline* refers to Dian and a boar in his volatile speech, Pitcher at first felt it would be impertinent to note that the references indicate the inverted order, virgin and beast, yet student papers and even discussions with peers at Oxford convinced him that ‘this trust in the obviousness of things was misplaced.’<sup>9</sup> This trust is even more misplaced when editing for lay readers for whom it is essential to make what is unfamiliar seem familiar, to be explicit for those readers who feel they lack the skills or resources to interpret for themselves or even to recognize significant

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5. Stanley Wells, ‘On Being a General Editor’, in *Shakespeare Survey 59: Editing Shakespeare*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 48.
  6. Leah S. Marcus, ‘Editing Shakespeare in a Postmodern Age’, in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 142–43.
  7. Stanley Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare for the Modern Reader* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 78.
  8. Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text*, 163.
  9. John Pitcher, ‘Why Editors Should Write More Notes’, in *Shakespeare Studies 24*, ed. Leeds Barroll (New Jersey, London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 58.

moments, threads of implication, or symbolism. Many lay readers have had little exposure to historical or social contexts that aid understanding of what an academic might consider to be 'obvious' text. At the same time there are academic issues that a lay reader is generally not interested in, such as arcane textual variants or parallels in the texts of contemporaries of Shakespeare, such as Spenser or Sidney.

There are various types of specialist editions. A *type facsimile*, popular before the photographic process was developed, emulates the unamended original on a printing press in a new type setting, warts and all. The most faithful to an original is a *photographic reprint facsimile*, although it can truly represent only the one original that is actually photographed or photocopied.<sup>10</sup> A *diplomatic* transcript does not attempt to visually mimic the original but does reproduce the exact spelling, punctuation and capitalization in a new type setting, a type of edition that Wells claims is truly suitable only for a few.<sup>11</sup> A *bibliographic* edition is concerned with the details, problems and comparisons of the printed texts including the typography, layout, paper and binding. A *variorum critical commentary* is not a work of textual scholarship, but a collection of various critical responses to the text; occasionally a variorum appears separate from the text itself since the text of a variorum is inherited from some other authority. A *parallel-text* edition provides two or sometimes all three texts of a Shakespearean play to be read and analysed side by side.<sup>12</sup> A *critical* edition is generally defined as one which does not reproduce a text already in existence but is developed by a textual critic or team of critics who establishes an authoritative scholarly edition based on research in palaeography, typography, bibliography, criticism and editing, as well as some issues of the material object such as format and imposition.<sup>13</sup> A *non-critical* edition might present a version of the text with only minimal textual involvement by the editor or a cheap-print edition for non-specialists which can include extensive apparatus for students or avid armchair readers. Outside of these main versions are *niche* editions such as art volumes, miniatures for collectors, actors' editions, fetishistic editions, and numerous

10. Randall McLeod, in a late twentieth century movement, believed the reader who surrenders 'the beholder's share' of the original text to editors 'forgoes something essential to aesthetic and historical experience' in 'Un "Editing" Shakespeare', 38.

11. Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare*, 63.

12. See Bernice W. Kliman and Paul Benjamin Bertram, eds., *The Three-text Hamlet: Parallel Texts of the First and Second Quartos and First Folio*, 2nd ed. (Brooklyn: AMS Press, 2004).

13. David C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 347.

digital versions with various features such as hypertext or live action.<sup>14</sup> There are no modern editions specifically designed for adults reading aloud together.

#### READERS' EDITIONS<sup>15</sup>

Today's growing congregation of non-academic adult Shakespeare readers is reminiscent of the Victorians who attended readings of Shakespeare both private and public in a desire to participate in 'a larger intellectual movement'.<sup>16</sup> Just as the Victorians' readerly involvement with Shakespeare, their admiration of his complexity and acuity, their delight in his wisdom and their unfaltering recognition of the works are credited with the active contribution to his status in the nineteenth century, so can today's readers be instrumental in a resurgence of popular esteem for Shakespearean works. Most people recognize that Shakespeare is part of our shared history, and thus becoming familiar with reading the works increases one's self-confidence and inspires a pride in a cultural resonance that lasts a lifetime. The pleasure of the reading in community is no small factor in a group of this sort, which is enlarged by the stimulus of others' minds in the discussions of the plays. It is the desire to facilitate and broaden this experience that guides the development of the Readers' Editions.

Kastan's remark represents a prevailing attitude toward lay readers: 'Reading an edited text is a remarkably convenient way to engage the play, especially for students who, however naively, merely want to read it'.<sup>17</sup> Even more 'naive' are non-academic community readers who, in truth, do 'merely' want to read the play and find great contentment therein. With more than a decade of experience in working with adult non-specialist readers, the need for an edition specifically for this market has become evident. The Readers' Editions proposed here present Shakespeare in a new way for a new readership. Margaret Jane Kidnie recognizes

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14. Neil Freeman's *The Applause First Folio Editions of Shakespeare in Modern Type* (Vancouver: Folio Scripts, 2001) are diplomatic editions with original punctuation and capitalization in the belief that Shakespeare provides clue for actors in the accidentals; every verso is blank for actor and director notes. *A Frankly Annotated First Folio Edition* by Demitra Papadinis (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010) focuses on sexual innuendos to the point where every play is effectively turned into pornography.

15. The Readers' Editions use CreateSpace.com, owned by Amazon.com, Inc. A PDF file of the interior and a separate PDF of the cover are uploaded to one's account. Upon approval, which can take up to twenty-four hours, a physical and digital proof is produced. Upon acceptance of the proof, the book is available worldwide on Amazon.com and also available for bookstores to purchase at bookstore cost. Retail cost is set by the account holder. When ordered, CreateSpace prints the book on demand, ships it, and deposits money into one's bank account. Account holders can order unlimited copies of their own books at cost, which is about \$2.50, plus shipping.

16. Ziegler, 'Women and Shakespeare', 215.

17. David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare After Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 69.

that, 'Scripts exist as texts—as words on a page—and so rely entirely on printed or written conventions to convey meaning to a reader.'<sup>18</sup> The Readers' Editions propose to facilitate the process of conveying meaning to a reader and to make the unfamiliar familiar. The guiding principle is in accord with Barbara Mowat's argument that within the necessity of responsibly edited texts, the editor should defer to the needs of the reader, not of the author.<sup>19</sup>

*The Comedy of Errors*, a printed copy of which is included separately with this thesis, was chosen as a prototype for a Readers' Edition for these reasons:

- It is short and thus efficient for constant experimentation with ideas of layout and design. As H. H. Furness wrote regarding his experimentation with various typefaces, sizes and formats of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1869, his first variorum edition: 'Eight times did I remodel the first twenty pages of that volume. As it now stands, it seems a task of no special difficulty, but no one who has not tried it, can imagine what entanglements impeded me at every step.'<sup>20</sup>
- Original speech headings and stage directions are manifestly corrupt in this play and confront the editor with difficult decisions and solutions that can be applied to other plays.
- The variety of verse and rhyme forms allows for experimentation of formatting to visually clarify the text.
- There is no quarto, thus a certain layer of complex decisions are removed, allowing a foundation of guidelines to be developed before adding the folio versus quarto decisions.
- The play is unfairly dismissed as a silly farce, challenging the editor to devise methods to subtly encourage a reader's explorations of the rich layers and intricate thoughts, as well as to encourage community discussion.

## ISSUES OF EDITING

When making the text transparent and clean for community readers reading aloud, it is not useful to go as far as Steven Urkowitz delightfully envisions: a loose format, magazine-style sidebars with discussions of textual variants or antecedent texts, 'treats in the margins'

18. Margaret Jane Kidnie, 'The staging of Shakespeare's drama in print editions', in *Textual Performances: The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama*, eds. Lukas Erne and Margaret Jane Kidnie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 158.

19. Barbara Mowat, 'The Problem of Shakespeare's Text(s)', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 132 (1996): 26–43.

20. H. H. Furness in a letter to C. M. Ingleby, 1871, quoted in James M. Gibson, *The Philadelphia Shakespeare Story: Horace Howard Furness and the New Variorum Shakespeare* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1990), 61.

such as costume design or diagrams of movement, portfolios of images to help readers visualise stage action, political and theatrical history, and other features that might showcase ineffable beauties, 'the wildly imaginative irreverancies' and 'intractably irreconcilable multiplicities' of Shakespearean content.<sup>21</sup> The totality of that vision remains for another edition.

The general editorial guidelines for the Readers' Editions are outlined below, based on what personal experience shows to be most useful for the expected demographic.

#### APPARATUS

The typical apparatus of a scholarly text includes general information about the author and the text, a rationale of the edition, the foundation of the text, facsimiles of the original when possible, the source material in detail, explicit history of the composition of the work, the editorial methods used, arguments for the presentation, collation variants, a publication history, its critical reception, a staging exploration, theatre history, a glossary and annotations. The 2011 Norton Critical Edition of *Antony and Cleopatra* is 378 pages, only 108 of which is the play text. Hunter declares that 'the apparatus is one of the most crucial parts of an edition, codifying and encapsulating for the reader's benefit all the research that the editor has done to make sense of the text at both a general and a specific level.'<sup>22</sup> Hunter, however, is considering academic readers, not lay readers, as lay readers are rarely concerned with the editor's research. Taylor recognizes this issue in his comments that a critical edition with apparatus, 'the proper object of a scholar's labour, will be used by "critics"; it should not be confused with a mere "popular or reading edition".'<sup>23</sup>

The only apparatus provided in the Readers' Editions is what pertains to the interests of community readers in a reading circle. Because most of the new Shakespeare reading groups are comprised of people unfamiliar with reading the text aloud, the Readers' Editions provide some tips on reading, on understanding the important difference between thee/thou and you, verse versus prose and rhyme, and pertinent details specific to the play, such as motifs and themes. Each play book includes a map and a dramatis personae similar to that created by Alfred Graves in *The Shakespeare Reading Circle*, as described in chapter

21. Steven Urkowitz, 'Brother, can you spare a paradigm?', *Critical Survey* 7, no. 3 (1995): 297–98. Personally, this would be a splendid vision to actualise.

22. Hunter, *Editing Early Modern Texts*, 92.

23. Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 254.

six, that provides not only character names but also their acts and scenes and very brief descriptions of the main characters, where germane, for casting purposes. The back matter of each book includes a list of questions to instigate group discussions, as has been shown historically in chapter six to be a popular attraction, plus a chart similar to those of T. J. King showing how many lines per character per scene so reading parts can be divided as equally as possible.<sup>24</sup> Readers' Editions also include minimal commentary relevant to readers' interests such as connections, symbolism, motifs and foreshadowing. It is expected that the Readers' Editions will vary in the elements within this limited apparatus, but they do not aspire to replicate what already exists in scholarly editions.

Contrary to contemporary editing theory, the Readers' Editions of *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello* are unabashedly conflated as community readers typically operate on the principle that if it is Shakespeare, they want to read it; they are not aware of today's trend to print the multiple versions as multiple texts.<sup>25</sup> Community readers are generally not aware that—amongst the academy—whilst A. C. Bradley's perceptions on Shakespearean tragedy 'are still respected, his critical premises are not'.<sup>26</sup> They are not aware that the New Bibliography has been largely discredited and is out of fashion or that it even existed, that close reading is often disparaged, nor that a modern facsimile of a text in a library today 'misrepresents the unstable reality of the book'.<sup>27</sup> Certain aspects of these and other important critical issues may eventually filter down to lay readers, but in general they simply enjoy reading the plays aloud together and exploring the text and issues on their own critical terms. Scheil's research into the numerous records of the Women's Clubs indicates that those readers, as

24. Thomas J. King, *Casting Shakespeare's Plays: London actors and their roles, 1590–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 96–257.

25. A conflated or constructed text comprised of lines from both quarto and folio when available is one that many scholars consider to be a text that Shakespeare himself never wrote or imagined and that quarto and folio texts represent distinct and coherent versions of the play—and of our ideas of Shakespeare—that should not be combined. The academic trend today is to present *King Lear* as not one play but two, as also *Othello* and a three-text *Hamlet*. As early as 1725 Pope included alterations between texts, as did Granville-Barker in 1927, *Prefaces to Shakespeare: Hamlet* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd., 1927) and Madeleine Doran in 1931, *The Text of King Lear*, vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1931). Editors Gary Taylor and Michael Warren edited *The Division of the Kingdoms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) in which some claim a new orthodoxy of non-conflated editions was established. See also Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993), 255, in which they argue that, 'As a result of this multiplication, Shakespeare studies will never be the same'.

26. John Bayley, *The Character of Love: A Study in the Literature of Personality* (New York: Collier Books, 1960), 43.

27. Stephen Orgel, 'What Is an Editor', in *Shakespeare Studies 24*, ed. Leeds Barroll (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 26.

today's, expect Shakespeare to provoke 'debate and discussion rather than passive reading'.<sup>28</sup> It is this debate and discussion that not only excites the mind but engenders community and should not be deemed the exclusive province of scholars or actors.

#### MODERNISATION OF SPELLING

The aim of modernisation for the community reading group is to remove some of the strangeness of an early modern text, making it more accessible to readers who might feel alienated by unfamiliar writing or spelling conventions. Although it would dismay the New Bibliographers to see the spelling modernised, the focus of the Readers' Editions is clear communication with regularised spelling while maintaining the richness of the original language when possible. As David Bevington observes, the decision of whether to edit in modern or old spelling or to adopt a compromise 'is still an unresolved issue in the academy', and it should not be expected that all editions be entirely consistent.<sup>29</sup> Brian Parker recognizes an important factor for readers in that 'the subjective relevance and the objective pastness of Shakespeare are both involved in his significance for us'.<sup>30</sup> In the Readers' Editions, there is an eclectic combination of modernising elements that straddle a community reader's desire to understand the text while at the same time remaining conscious of the pastness of the text, thereby maintaining the connection between author and reader across four hundred years. This guideline informs the spelling: When the original words are similar and familiar to today's and the choice does not interrupt the metre, there is no question of regularising the spelling, as in changing *countrie* or *courtrey* to *country*. At the same time, the Readers' Editions walk a fine line between updating some words such as *vilde*, *murther*, *corse*, and *parfit* so as to remove stumbling blocks for lay readers, while leaving those that provide flavour without confusion, as *infortunate*, *mushrump*, *porpentine*, *my self*, aided by a simple gloss when necessary. A trickier decision relates to homonyms such as *travel/travail*, *metal/mettle*, *antic/anticke/antique*, or *moth/mote*, each of which must be determined individually in context. Wells reminds us, 'There is no moral superiority in belonging to the class of readers best served by an old-spelling edition'.<sup>31</sup> As the Readers'

28. Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, 38.

29. David Bevington, 'Modern spelling: the hard choices', in *Textual Performances: The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama*, ed. Lukas Erne and Margaret Jane Kidnie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 144.

30. Brian Parker, 'Richard III and the Modernizing of Shakespeare', *Modern Drama* 15, no. 3 (1972): 322.

31. Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare*, 14.

Editions are American texts, modernised words follow American spelling rules.

#### ACCIDENTALS

'Accidentals' (as opposed to 'substantives') were defined by the New Bibliographer W. W. Greg as the semantically insignificant textual elements that supposedly can be altered without altering the meaning, such as capital letters, punctuation, diacritical marks, italics and even general typography; substantives are readings that directly communicate the author's meaning. Accidentals have been in dispute since the eighteenth-century, as discussed in chapter three. Many scholars argue that these elements cannot be considered accidental, and some believe them critical.<sup>32</sup> The Readers' Editions methodology in various accidentals is outlined below.

#### PUNCTUATION

One small example of a historical change in attitude towards certain punctuation is evident in exclamation marks in *The Taming of the Shrew*: the 1623 First Folio uses not one, but the 1864 Globe edition adds 221 exclamation marks. Most editions today have somewhat fewer of these marks than the Globe edition but invariably more than the folios or quartos. The Readers' Editions are quite conservative, following the folio punctuation as much as possible and allowing the text itself and the situation to indicate to a reader how emphatic the vocalising should be, agreeing with Wells' argument that the aim of punctuation should be to give the reader 'such pointing as is essential to intelligibility without attempting to impose on the text interpretative nuances and directions.'<sup>33</sup> The other extreme is Taylor's insistence that Shakespeare never punctuated his manuscripts nor used capital letters at the beginnings of sentences or verse lines; consequently, Taylor sets the entire play of *Macbeth* with absolutely no punctuation and few capitals, allowing readers to 'decide for themselves how to interpret the words.'<sup>34</sup>

32. See chapter three regarding the attitude toward punctuation. In 1911 in *Shakespearian Punctuation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), Percy Simpson promoted the hypothesis that 'play-house punctuation' directs the actors how to speak. John Dover Wilson in his New Bibliographers work turned Simpson's hypothesis into a discovery that is still followed by some today, as in Peter Hall's *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players* (London: Oberon Books, 2003) and Freeman's *Applause First Folio*. Bruce R. Smith maintains that semicolons and colons say nothing about logical relationships between parts of speech but signal breathing spaces, 'Prickly Characters' in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David M. Bergeron (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 34.

33. Stanley Wells, *Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 33.

34. Gary Taylor, 'The Tragedy of *Macbeth*' in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 1170.

The guideline for the Readers' Editions is that punctuation is not only the representation of grammatical structure, but to a certain and limited extent can also represent speech pauses and rhythms of speech. There is no concern in these editions to punctuate for actors' interpretations, but only to help readers both understand the text and speak it in such a way that the other readers in the circle understand the speech. The punctuation is not strictly modernised according to today's grammatical rules, just as the spelling is not fully modernised.

#### CAPITALIZATION

In the comparison below between a few lines in Act 1.1 of Q1 and F1 *King Lear*, it quickly becomes apparent that the capitals and other accidentals, as well as spelling, were at the time perceived as flexible:

*Bast.* Neuer my Lord, but I haue often heard him maintaine  
it to be fit, that sons at perfit age, & fathers declining, his father  
should be as ward to the sonne, and the sonne mannage the re-  
uenew. QUARTO 1608

*Bast.* Neuer my Lord. But I haue heard him oft main-  
taine it to be fit, that Sonnes at perfect age, and Fathers  
declin'd, the Father should bee as Ward to the Son, and  
the Sonne manage his Reuennew. FOLIO 1623

The use of capitalised words beyond the first words of sentences and verse lines has occasionally been proposed as indicators of extra emphasis. The 'bountiful use of capitalized words' in the Everyman series edited by John F. Andrews does not actually follow the folio text but adds more capitals in an attempt to suggest the flavour and perhaps the rationale of Renaissance capitalization.<sup>35</sup> The first exploratory versions of the Readers' Edition of *The Comedy of Errors* retained the F1 capitals, but in practical use with readers it was noted that the capitalisation calls too much attention to itself and provides an emphasis that often appears to be arbitrary, thus confusing readers.

In the Readers' Editions, extra capitalisations are limited to entities such as Fate, Death, Time, etc., principally in apostrophes so that a reader can more easily recognize to whom or to which entity a character is speaking.

35. John F. Andrews, ed., *Measure for Measure, the Everyman Shakespeare* (London: J. M. Dent, 1994), xxxvii. In a private email, Andrews mentioned that he would probably not use the capitals if he were to edit the series again.

## PARENTHESES

Parentheses are banished by Wells and Taylor from the 1986 Oxford *Complete Works* as 'inappropriate to a dramatic text'.<sup>36</sup> But in many cases the folio or quarto parentheses can be integral to a reader's comprehension, especially in Shakespeare's lengthy, complex thoughts. In the example below from the Readers' Edition of *Macbeth*, 1.2.8–21, a lay reader is better able to follow the thread of the conversation when the original Folio parentheses surround the interruptions of the parenthetical thoughts:

Doubtful it stood,  
 As two spent swimmers that do cling together  
 And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald  
 (Worthy to be a rebel, for to that  
 The multiplying villanies of Nature  
 Do swarm upon him) from the Western Isles  
 Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied,  
 And Fortune on his damnèd quarry smiling,  
 Show'd like a rebel's whore. But all 's too weak:  
 For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name)  
 Disdaining Fortune, with his brandish'd steel,  
 Which smok'd with bloody execution  
 (Like Valor's minion) carv'd out his passage,  
 Till he fac'd the slave: (MAC 1.2.7–20)

The Readers' Editions retain parentheses for parenthetical thoughts when deemed necessary for clarification, but remove them around vocatives, shown below, as unnecessary and confusing to today's community readers:

*You do look (my son) in a mov'd sort.* (TEM 4.1.146)  
*Tell her (Emilia) I'll use that tongue I have.* (WT 2.2.51–52)

## GLOSSES AND ANNOTATION

When reading Shakespeare aloud in community, it is distracting to hunt for the gloss of an unfamiliar word. Most editions set the material at the bottoms of pages and include longer notes in the back matter. The Bevington collected works sets a line number only when a line includes a glossed word, which is convenient for glosses but not for finding lines for discussion or reviving a reading mid-play. The Barnes & Noble editions, excellent for single readers, include short glosses at the beginnings of lines and longer annotations

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36. Noted by Howard-Hill, 'Shakespeare's Earliest Editor', 119.

on the facing versos, necessitating leaving the text regularly. The Folger trade editions set all glosses and annotations on the facing versos. In the Readers' Editions, a format has been specifically developed for reading aloud, a *substitution gloss*: the gloss is a one- or two-word substitutable definition to the right of the line, just an inch or so away from the word itself and able to be scanned while reading the line, as shown below and in Appendix A. Glossed words are noted with a small black dot; occasionally text is paraphrased in parentheses.

**IAGO**

O Sir, content you.	<i>(don't worry about that)</i>
I follow him, to serve my turn upon him.	
We cannot all be Masters, nor all Masters	
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark	<i>notice</i>
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave	
That (doting on his own obsequious bondage)	<i>servile</i>
Wears out his time, much like his Master's ass,	
For naught but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd.	<i>dismissed</i>
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are	
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,	<i>outward appearances</i>
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,	
And throwing but shows of service on their Lords . . .	

(OTH I.I.43–54)

The short gloss on the right allows new readers to quickly substitute the word while reading aloud and thus carry on with the play, and new listeners can easily substitute the words in their minds if the reader does not.<sup>37</sup> This does limit the exploration of the layers of complexity in some words, but research shows that reading circles generally prefer to initially understand the text easily and proceed with smooth readings; enthusiastic and close readers will explore more fully using other resources.

Annotations in a left sidebar are as minimal as possible and phrased more as exploratory notes or questions than explanatory answers.<sup>38</sup> Occasional original illustrations are used only when the use of such can quickly enhance comprehension.

*LAYOUT AND DESIGN*

Michael Olmert articulates the importance of the physical appearance on the page in a pivotal example from 1560: 'The Geneva Bible's popularity had everything to do with its

37. Readers remark that the gloss dot, which may feel slightly obtrusive at first, quickly fades in the process of reading.

38. Examples of annotations are shown in Appendix A.



the typography, formatting and design. Linda McJannet recognizes the importance of the visual presentation in the early quartos and folios: 'Making the material text more readable was an important step in creating a drama that has survived both in the theatre and on the page.'<sup>41</sup> McJannet argues that the mimetic features of the page—headers, footers, body—as well as entrances that appear visually on the left and exits on the right can simulate entering and exiting a stage and thus 'assimilate utterance to the human body.'<sup>42</sup> However, the Readers' Editions limit the visual interruptions on the page as much as possible—all stage directions are on the same left alignment to maintain a visually clean reading space.

#### VERSE AND PROSE AND SHARED LINES

In some quarto and folio texts the verse is apparently set inappropriately as prose, and modern editors make sure to reset it properly into verse. The Readers' Editions will only reset the text as verse if it is abundantly clear that the prose is simply a mistake, as it appears to be, for instance, in much of *Antony and Cleopatra*. However, prose will not be forced into unmetrical blank verse. Nor will two short lines be arbitrarily set as one shared verse line, as often happens, as shown below. Only unambiguously iambic pentameter lines will be set as shared:

Fig. 3: A clipping from a First Folio facsimile.<sup>43</sup>

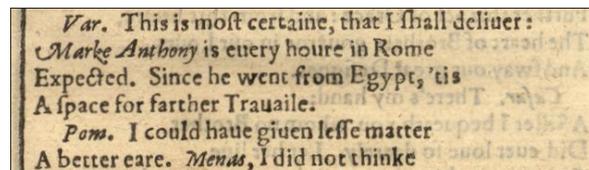
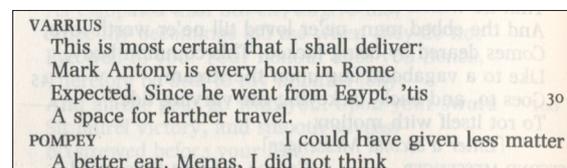


Fig. 4: The same text from The Oxford Shakespeare.<sup>44</sup>



(ANT 1.5.28)

Prose is traditionally set in justified text blocks and provides an instant visual recognition

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41. Linda McJannet, 'Elizabethan Speech Prefixes: Page Design, Typography, and Mimesis' in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David Bergeron (London: Associated University Presses, 1996): 45.
42. *Ibid.*, 48.
43. Internet Shakespeare Editions, University of Victoria, [http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/facsimile/bookplay/Bran\\_F1/Ant/614/](http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/facsimile/bookplay/Bran_F1/Ant/614/).
44. Wells, *The Complete Works*, 1008.

of the form as opposed to verse or songs. In the Readers' Editions, prose is set in phrasings to make it easier for lay readers to understand it and to read it aloud understandably.<sup>45</sup> The visual distinction of the prose is not as instantly recognizable as when it is set as justified text, but lay readers rarely realize the significance; an understanding of the words is more important. The eye of someone familiar with the critical difference between verse and prose can still recognize the form by the lack of initial capitals.

Below are examples from *Antony and Cleopatra* of a traditional prose setting versus a Readers' Edition phrased prose setting:

ENOBARBUS

Alack Sir, no, her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure Love. We cannot call her winds and waters, sighs and tears: they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report. This cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

**ENOBARBUS**

Alack Sir, no, her passions are made of nothing  
but the finest part of pure Love.  
We cannot call her winds and waters, sighs and tears:  
they are greater storms and tempests  
than almanacs can report.  
This cannot be cunning in her;  
if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

(ANT 1.2.153–158)

#### RHYMED VERSE

Shakespeare uses rhyme very specifically. Lay readers enjoy noticing the rhyme and discussing what it might signify in the context of the play. The Readers' Editions lay out certain rhyme patterns to make them noticeable and more comfortable for readers. When the rhyme is clearly signified, readers enter into it with more gusto. Below are examples of rhyme settings from *The Riverside Shakespeare* and from the Readers' Edition of *Comedy of Errors*; both are at actual size (also note the line numbers in both editions).

45. A community reader was heard to say of someone else in the circle, 'I know Nigel doesn't understand what he's reading because when he reads, I don't understand what he's reading'.

Fig. 5: A clipping from *The Riverside Shakespeare*.<sup>46</sup>

E. Dro. Say what you will, sir, but I know what  
I know:  
That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand  
to show;  
If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave  
were ink,  
Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.  
E. Ant. I think thou art an ass.  
E. Dro. Marry, so it doth appear  
By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear.  
I should kick, being kick'd, and being at that pass,  
You would keep from my heels, and beware of an ass.

(COM 3.1.11–18)

Fig. 6: A clipping from the *Readers Edition*, *The Comedy of Errors*.<sup>47</sup>

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**  
11 Say what you will, sir,  
12 but I know what I know:  
13 That you beat me at the Mart  
14 I have your hand' to show; *slap marks*  
15 If your skin were parchment,  
16 and the blows you gave were ink,  
17 Your own hand-writing  
18 would tell you what I think.  
**ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS**  
19 I think thou art an ass.  
**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**  
20 Marry, so it doth appear  
21 By the wrongs I suffer,  
22 and the blows that I bear.  
23 I should kick, being kicked,  
24 and being at that pass,  
25 You would' keep from my heels, *had better*  
26 and beware of an ass.

(COM 3.1.11–26)

Setting rhyme so clearly encourages new readers to become conscious of textual details and to feel empowered by that consciousness. It provides readers with a guide to the rhythmical organization of the text and helps them identify the form and thus the conventions of that form. Malcolm B. Parkes also emphasizes that this type of graphic treatment assists a

46. G. Blakemore Evans, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 122.

47. Robin Williams, *Readers' Edition, The Comedy of Errors* (Santa Fe: The Shakespeare Papers, 2014), 48.

reader 'to recognize the contribution of the stanza form to the "message" of a poem.'<sup>48</sup> His research reveals how intuitive and ancient this type of layout is in that medieval scribes relied 'exclusively on layout and rhyme when presenting verse for readers, to evoke in them the responses required by a poetic text.'<sup>49</sup>

#### ACT AND SCENE DIVISIONS

Only one Shakespearean quarto includes any act or scene divisions: the 1622 *Othello* labels Acts 2, 4, and 5 and one scene, Act 2.1. In the 1623 F1, six plays have no division of any kind; *Hamlet* marks Acts 1 and 2; eleven plays are divided into acts but no scenes. The eighteen remaining plays include varying degrees of act and scene divisions: *Antony and Cleopatra* has one act and one scene defined, Act 1.1; *All's Well That Ends Well* has five acts but labels only the first scene in Act 1.

In Wilson's Cambridge edition, as well as in the Pelican, the Arden, and the New Penguin, the divisions have a lack of prominence, whilst the divisions in the Oxford edition are particularly minimal. Community readers, however, have shown that they appreciate the partitioning of the text. Prearranged subsections allow readers discrete points at which to take breaks, ask questions, discuss and clarify or leave. The act and scene divisions also provide spaces for very short synopses that prepare readers to understand the following action. The Readers' Editions not only demarcate acts and scenes clearly, but there is also a progress bar at the bottom of each page so participants always know where they are within the play, as shown below. This is particularly useful in groups that read an entire play straight through as the spirits of flagging readers can be sustained by the promise of dessert at the end of act three, especially if they can visually discern when that might be.<sup>50</sup>

48. Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: Punctuation in the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 100.

49. *Ibid.*, 101.

50. In certain plays such as *Antony and Cleopatra* in which there are many extraordinarily short scenes, adjustments are made in the Readers' Editions to allow the reading to flow smoothly.

ACT 4.3 • 1-22

**Act 4 • Scene 3:** A street in Ephesus (97 lines)  
 [Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse are convinced the town is full of witches and plan to escape on the next boat. They are even more convinced of witchcraft when they meet the Courtesan with whom Antipholus of Ephesus dined earlier.]

[Enter Antipholus of Syracuse, wearing the gold chain.]

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE** [to the audience]

1 There's not a man I meet but doth salute me  
 2 As if I were their well-acquainted friend,  
 3 And every one doth call me by my name.  
 4 Some tender' money to me, some invite me; offer  
 5 Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;  
 6 Some offer me commodities to buy.  
 7 Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,  
 8 And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,  
 9 And therewithal' took measure of my body. that being done  
 10 Sure these are but imaginary wiles; insidious tricks  
 11 And Lapland Sorcerers inhabit here.

[Enter Dromio of Syracuse with the purse of ducats demanded by Antipholus of Ephesus.]

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

12 Master, here's the gold you sent me for—  
 13 what, have you lost the picture' image  
 14 of old Adam new apparelled?

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE**

15 What gold is this? What Adam dost thou mean?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

16 Not that Adam that' kept the Paradise, who  
 17 but that Adam that keeps the prison—  
 18 he that goes in the calf's-skin' that was kill'd leather jacket  
 19 for the Prodigal': he that came behind you, biblical prodigal son  
 20 sir, like an evil angel, and bid' you forsake insisted  
 21 your liberty.

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE**

22 I understand thee not.

Again we see how Antipholus of Ephesus is esteemed in his own town.

Lapland, the most northerly portion of the Scandinavian peninsula, is the legendary home of witches and magicians.

Dromio continues the puns on the leather uniform of the officer who arrested Antipholus of Ephesus.

72

Each small dot is a page, and each large dot is the beginning of an act.

### ACCENT MARKS AND APOSTROPHES

Lay readers tend to assume that any -ed ending in Shakespeare indicates an accented syllable and so they randomly pronounce it as such in the mistaken belief they are then speaking iambic pentameter, even though they rarely know how to define iambic pentameter. To avoid this confusion, the Readers' Editions maintain the apostrophes for missing letters as used in the folios, and use the grave accent to assure a reader of an accented syllable. This is explained in the front matter with the recommendation that readers should feel free to ignore the marks, but at least they become familiar with what the apostrophes and grave accents indicate, making them feel more comfortable with the text.

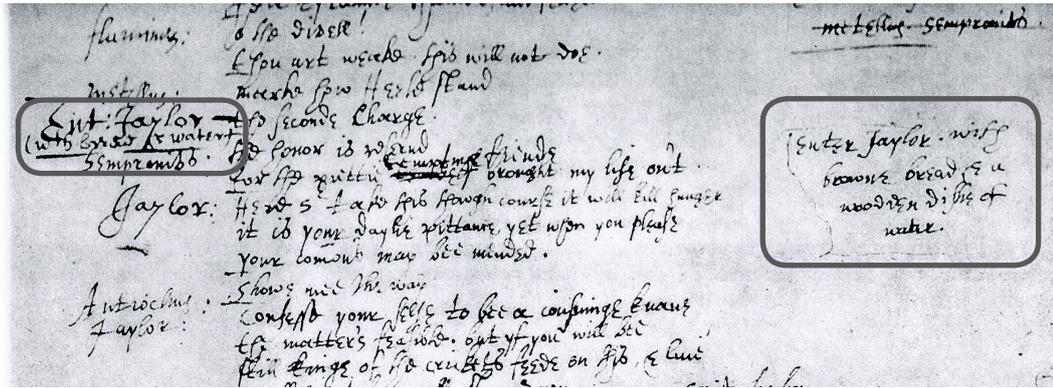
## LOCALITY AND STAGE DIRECTIONS

There are no localities specified in the quarto stage directions and only two general ones in the First Folio: the list of dramatis personae at the end of *Measure for Measure* includes 'The Scene Vienna', and at the end of *The Tempest* it states, 'The Scene, an vn-inhabited Island'. Shakespeare provides what we need to know about setting in the dialogue and there is generally no need for precise localisation. McKerrow argues, however, that 'many readers find it far easier to appreciate dialogue if they can place the characters somewhere. Without a locality they cannot *see* them, and if they are not *seen* their conversation carries no conviction.'<sup>51</sup> Fluidity and flexibility in the locations are often preferable to specificity when conceptualizing the dramatic action of a Shakespearean play, thus the Readers' Editions lean toward non-traditional treatments that encourage readers to generate their own possibilities 'in favour of greater openness and multiplicity.'<sup>52</sup> This must be balanced with the understanding that most lay readers have no experience in translating a play script into staged action and appreciate plausible suggestions for both localities and stage directions. It should be remembered that the virtual performance of a play as read is succinctly described by John D. Cox: It is 'what happens in the minds of readers.'<sup>53</sup> The Readers' Editions facilitate that virtual performance.

In extant play manuscripts, the original stage directions are difficult to place precisely. Below is a piece from Philip Massinger's 1630 play *Believe as you List* showing the Jaylor's entrance on the right, circled, as written by the playwright or scribe; another hand on the left, perhaps a prompter, has clarified exactly where he enters:<sup>54</sup>

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51. McKerrow, *The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text*, 12. Italic in original.
  52. Marcus, 'Editing Shakespeare', 137, 142.
  53. John D. Cox, 'Open stage, open page? Editing stage directions in early dramatic texts', in *Textual Performances: The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama*, ed. Lukas Erne and Margaret Jane Kidnie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 178.
  54. Philip Massinger, *Believe as you List*, BM MS Egerton 2828, fol. 20<sup>a</sup>, portion of Act V, scene ii, in W. W. Greg, *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Stage Plots, Actors' Parts, Prompt Books, Reproductions & Transcripts* (1931; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), plate 8.

Fig. 7: Circled on the right, 'Enter Jaylor with browne bread & a wooden dishe of water.'  
Circled on the left, 'Ent: Jaylor—(wth bread & water)'



It is not simply exits and entrances that need clarification. There are no stage directions for Romeo and Juliet's first kiss, for when kneelers arise from their knees, for many messengers to exit, nor for Lady Macbeth's action when, upon the discovery of the murdered king, Macduff and Banquo both say, 'Looke to the Lady' within ten lines of each other. In the first scene of *1 Henry VI*, Richard's first line, 'Speake thou for me, and tell them what I did', is followed by his father York's line, 'Richard hath best deserv'd of all my sonnes: / But is your Grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?' There are no stage directions to explain what happens here, although the context indicates that Richard has brought in the head of Somerset—does he throw it down, toss it to his father, make the mouth act as if speaking, shake it about, drop-kick it?

The Readers' Edition stage directions clarify the action while encouraging readers to consider the possibilities. The entrances of characters are enhanced when necessary to provide readers with a more comprehensive understanding of who has arrived on the scene and sometimes how they are related to each other, as shown on the following page. This is particularly important in the English history plays.

Although original stage directions have great significance for academics and questions of authority in any given text, they are not so fraught for community readers. Experience does show, however, that community readers do appreciate knowing what is original and what is editorial.<sup>55</sup> The traditional typographic treatment to distinguish the original text from the enhanced editorial text is to enclose editorial additions in square brackets. This presentation can become visually complex. Below are examples of a seventeenth-century

55. Lukas Erne, in reviewing the prototype Readers' Edition of *The Comedy of Errors*, confirms the need to differentiate Shakespeare's text from editorial, which encouraged a search for a typographic solution.

and a twenty-first-century typographic treatment of stage directions in *Julius Caesar*, Act 1.2, followed by the solution proposed for the Readers' Editions.

Stage directions in the 1623 First Folio:

*Enter Cæsar, Antony for the Course, Calphurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, a Soothsayer: after them Murellus and Flavius.*

Stage directions in the 2007 *Barnes & Noble Shakespeare* edition, edited by Andrew David Hadfield, with traditional use of square brackets set in roman type, plus bold roman for character names and light italic for both the original and editorial text:

[*Flourish.*] Enter **Caesar, Antony** [*dressed*] for the course,<sup>1</sup>  
**Calphurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius,**  
**Casca,** [*and*] a **Soothsayer** [*in a throng of Commoners*];  
after them, **Murellus and Flavius.**

The Readers' Edition sets the original text in semibold italic and editorial text in light italic. Square brackets throughout the play enclose all text that is not dialogue:

[*Enter Julius Caesar, Mark Antony dressed in a goatskin for the Lupercalia running course, Caesar's wife Calpurnia, Brutus's wife Portia, the senators Decius Brutus, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, and a Soothsayer; after them, the tribunes Murellus and Flavius, with a crowd of plebeians following.*]

The distinction in the Readers' Edition between original text and editorial text is clear yet unobtrusive. A brief explanation of these visual clues appears in the front matter of each play book, as shown in Appendix A.

#### EXEUNT AND MANENT

Although Wells has no scholarly compunction about changing *exeunt* and *manent* to English, the Readers' Editions maintain the Latin form.<sup>56</sup> It can be assumed that new lay readers will eventually read other editions, so by learning simple things such as *exeunt* and *manent*, readers will feel confident when confronted with other versions. Learning a few Latin terms not only strengthens the connections to the original experience without being overwhelming, but it also instils an additional touch of self-esteem in a reader.

56. Wells, *Re-Editing Shakespeare*, 78.

*SPEECH PREFIXES*

Speech prefixes are notoriously unstable, and that very instability can reward textual scholars with rich layers of complexity.<sup>57</sup> But community readers prefer the prefixes to be consistent throughout the play, and they appreciate the names spelled out in full not only so they can easily recognize the parts they are to read, but also to engage with the text more fully. Close observation has shown that readers have a difficult time finding their parts, for example, in the Riverside edition where Salerio and Solanio are identified as *Sal.* and *Sol.* directly within the first lines of their speeches. The Readers' Editions provide names set on their own lines and spelled out in full, as shown below.

**CLOWN**

312 Look you, the worm is not to be trusted,  
 313 but in the keeping of wise people:  
 314 for indeed, there is no goodness  
 315 in the worm.

**CLEOPATRA**

316 Take thou no care, it shall be heeded.

**CLOWN**

317 Very good: give it nothing, I pray you,  
 318 for it is not worth the feeding.

**CLEOPATRA**

319 Will it eat me? (ANT 5.2.312–319)

*SHINING PASSAGES*

As described in chapter three, as early as 1728 Alexander Pope marked in one way or another 'the most shining passages' for Shakespeare's readers. This may seem a tad prescriptive to academics, but readers have shown they enjoy it, especially new readers to whom Shakespeare can be rather overwhelming; they enjoy a guide that provides a focus and appreciation of the essence of selected text. As lay readers become more experienced, they learn to look for shining passages that are meaningful to themselves individually. In Smith's 1933 monograph written for the Chautauqua Home Reading Series, he notes how he

57. Much has been written about speech prefixes. See for instance Marcus, 'Editing Shakespeare in a Postmodern Age', 128–144; Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare's Modern Collaborators* (London: Continuum, 2008), 39–42; David Bevington, 'Working with the Text: Editing in Practice', in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 167–70; David Bevington, 'Determining the Indeterminate: The Oxford Shakespeare, a review', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (Winter 1987): 501–19.

appreciates when others call his attention to specific bits, to small scenes or lines that may have 'an exquisite touch which might easily escape the attention of the common reader' as he states: 'I quote this passage as but one example among many of scenes in Shakespeare's most familiar masterpieces which a reader—at least a reader like myself—may easily overlook until his attention is called to their interest and significance.'<sup>58</sup> To this end the Readers' Editions return to the historical use of a signifier to note particular passages, in this case darker line numbers, as shown below. The signification might indicate lines that are important to the story's undertones, or lines that have a richness of imagery that need an extra moment to absorb, that might prompt a group discussion, that bring together recurring motifs, or that a reader might simply enjoy more fully when focused attention is called to them, as Smith states, above. These editorial choices are based upon almost fifteen years of involvement with reading groups and identifying areas of interest from readers of all levels.

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE** *[to the audience]*

33 He that commends me to mine own content,  
 34 Commends me to the thing I cannot get:  
 35 I, to' the world, am like a drop of water,  
 36 That in the Ocean seeks another drop,  
 37 Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,  
 38 (Unseen, inquisitive) confounds himself.  
 39 So I, to find a Mother and a Brother,  
 40 In quest of them (unhappy) lose my self.

*in relation to*

*[Enter Dromio of Ephesus; this Dromio, an exact twin of the previous Dromio, lives in this city. He mistakes Antipholus of Syracuse for his own master (the Antipholus who lives in Ephesus), and this new Dromio is mistaken for the one who just left with the money.]*

41 Here comes the almanac of my true date:  
 42 What now? How chance thou art return'd so soon? (COM I.2.33–42)

*EXPLORATORY NOTES AND COMMENTS*

'Those who argue for a page unsullied by notes are often self-deceivers, willing to float through their reading on a wave of delusion,' states Alfred Harbage.<sup>59</sup> Although the Readers' Editions limit notes as much as possible, empirical evidence reveals that most reading circles appreciate a minimum of explicatory or exploratory notes to provide essential clarification and also as points for discussion. The Readers' Editions set these notes directly on the page

58. Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare*, 52, 50–51.

59. Harbage, *A Reader's Guide*, 6.

in which they are relevant because experience also shows that community readers rarely or never look to the front or back of the book for longer notes.<sup>60</sup>

	<b>ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE</b>	
<i>This losing of one's</i>	30	Farewell till then: I will go lose my self,
<i>self, finding one's self</i>	31	And wander up and down to view the City.
<i>transformed, absorbing it</i>		
<i>into another, etc., is a</i>		
<i>major theme in this play.</i>		
	<b>FIRST MERCHANT OF EPHEBUS</b>	
<i>Keep an eye on it.</i>	32	Sir, I commend you to your own content.

*[Exit the Merchant of Ephesus.]*

(COM 1.2.30–32)

The Readers' Editions employ word origins and meanings from the OED. Additionally, mythological, religious, historical and botanical references from a large variety of resources are examined to connect the lay reader more directly to the original experience. One example of a rediscovered association is in *The Winter's Tale* where King Leontes tells Antigonus, husband of Paulina who staunchly defends her pregnant Queen:

You Sir, come you hither:  
 You that have beene so tenderly officious  
 With Lady Margerie, your Mid-wife there,  
 To save this Bastards life. (WT 2.3.160–63)

In eight contemporary editions of the play, 'Lady Margerie, your Mid-wife' is glossed:

- 1) Used as a term of contempt: but a 'margery-prater' was the cant term for a hen; *Lady Margery* is thus a variant of *Dame Partlet* (75).
- 2) Perhaps equivalent to *Dame Partlet* (line 76), since *margery-prater* is recorded as a slang term for 'hen'.
- 3) A margery-prater was a slang term for a hen.
- 4) *Margery* (a contemptuous term for an uppity woman; "margery-prater" was a slang term for a hen).
- 5) *Lady Margery*: that old hen—a term of abuse like 'Dame Partlet' (line 75).
- 6) A derisive term, evidently equivalent to *Partlet* in line 76.
- 7) A derisive term, evidently equivalent to *Partlet* in line 76.
- 8) In underworld slang a 'margery-prater' was a hen, hence Margery was a

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60. If a group has a dedicated leader, that leader might explore other sources, of which there are many excellent ones already available.

contemptuous term for women, especially unruly ones; also a common name among midwives.<sup>61</sup>

It is traditional that editors rely on each other. In the Readers' Editions, a personal enthusiasm for the underlying significance of words led to a discovery of a different gloss for *Lady Margerie*: Saint Margaret of Antioch, the patron saint of mothers, pregnancy and childbirth, and to whom the Anglican parish church at the Palace of Westminster is dedicated, founded in the twelfth century and rebuilt by 1583.<sup>62</sup> Her cult was widespread and more than 250 churches in England are dedicated to her.<sup>63</sup> Saint Margaret is usually depicted standing above a dragon or bursting forth from it, which adds the potential for more complexity in Paulina's relationship with both her husband and Leontes and is typical of this type of poetic technique that Shakespeare habitually employs.

#### CONJECTURAL EMENDATIONS

Taylor argues that the textual situation in Shakespearean works, being at least at some points 'diseased', requires that editors occasionally resort to conjectural emendations that depend on assessments of probability and inferences about intention.<sup>64</sup> The Readers' Editions take seriously the argument of Marcus Walsh that to avoid a conjectural emendation is 'to practise the art of explaining corrupt passages instead of correcting them.'<sup>65</sup> At genuine textual cruces, where none of the surviving textual witnesses provides a reading that makes sense, it becomes the editor's responsibility to make sense for the reader. Walsh states that it is also the editor's responsibility for a conjecture to have 'validatable criteria for assessing

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61. 1) J. H. P. Pafford, ed., *The Arden Edition of The Winter's Tale* (1963; repr., London: Routledge, 1996), 51 n159; 2) G. Blakemore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 1628 n160; 3) Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstein, eds., *Folger Shakespeare Library: The Winter's Tale* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1998), 78 n198; 4) Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller, eds., *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare: William Shakespeare, The Complete Works* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2002), 706 n159; 5) Roma Gill, ed., *Oxford School Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale* (1996; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 36 n159; 6) Mario DiGangi, ed., *The Winter's Tale: Texts and Contexts* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 62 n160; 7) David Bevington, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 6th ed. (London: Pearson Education, 2009), 1543 n160; 8) John Pitcher, ed., *The Arden Edition of The Winter's Tale*, 3rd series (London: Methuen Drama, 2010), 216 n158.
62. Arnold Wright and Philip Smith, *Parliament, past and present: a popular and picturesque account of a thousand years in the palace of Westminster, the home of the mother of parliaments*, vol. 1 of 2, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1902), 263. POD reprint.
63. David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 289–90.
64. Taylor, *A Textual Companion*, 60.
65. A. E. Housman, *Manilius's Astronomicon, Book I* (London, 1903), xli, quoted in Walsh, 'Eighteenth-Century Editing, 130.

authorial meanings and authorial readings' to avoid it being viewed as merely individual and subjective.<sup>66</sup>

Shown below is small example from the Readers' Edition of *The Comedy of Errors* of a word that can be conjecturally emended to prevent having to explain a corruption. In the First Folio, the line now numbered 58, below, reads: 'And you said no'. This line appears, however, within a series of thirty-five rhymed couplets and should rhyme with 'hope'. The OED defines 'nope' as 'a knock or blow, esp. one on the head,' first used in print in 1684 but based on 'nolp' used in 1540. This word (in place of 'no') and its definition also make sense of the line following 'nope', as shown below.

**ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS**

55 Do you hear, you minion,  
56                                   you'll let us in I hope?

**LUCE**

57 I thought to have asked you.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

58                                   And you said, "Nope."

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

59 So come help, well strook,  
60                                   there was blow for blow.     (COM 1.2.55–60 in this Readers' Edition)

Lewis Theobald in 1733 emended 'hope' to 'trow' to create a rhymed triplet (trow, no, blow), but 'blow for blow' responds well to 'nope'. There probably remains a missing rhymed line following 'blow for blow' but editors have been reluctant to add an entire line to this admittedly puzzling sequence. The Readers' Editions opt for small conjectural emendations in non-critical places to attend to the needs of community readers; these complement and do not replace the essential explications in scholarly editions, such as: 'As the text stands, the pattern of rhyming lines is broken, and lines [55–60] make little sense.'<sup>67</sup>

*MISCELLANEOUS*

There are infinite other decisions to be made, always opalescent, rarely with discrete answers. Should asides, which are rarely printed in early plays, be diligently marked as the

66. Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton*, 121.

67. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, eds., *Folger Shakespeare Library: A Comedy of Errors* (1996; new edition, New York: Washington Square Press, 2005), 62.

editor perceives them or, as Jowett wonders, be left to 'the reader's interpretative discretion'?<sup>68</sup> Should 'crypto-directions', as Honigmann calls them, such as Othello's 'Oh, oh, oh' be replaced with an equivalent such as [*Othello cries out in pain*] so as not to 'mislead a modern reader'?<sup>69</sup> There is the question of conflations of quarto and folio texts, how to interpret foreign words, whether to use oaths and swear words, and more. Comprehensive guidelines will evolve, as they do in every series—based on primary research working with groups of lay readers—and there will be exceptions to the guidelines when it serves the reader.

#### NEW TECHNOLOGY OF BOOK PRODUCTION

Within this decade Stanley Wells was still able to complain that editors 'followed the all-too-common practice of marking up an already existing text and then having that typed'.<sup>70</sup> It is now possible to copy and paste the original text of a folio or quarto from which to work, which is the method used for the Readers' Editions.<sup>71</sup>

Historically, a determination of nineteenth- and twentieth-century editors—indeed since Edmund Malone in 1780—was to recreate a 'pure' text, the text that Shakespeare intended, no matter how unknowable. This has been interrupted by the acknowledgement of pressures outside the author's control that also shaped the texts, such as printers and compositors, politics, authorities, actors, playhouse practice. Marcus maintains that post-modernism 'famously embraces contamination, hybridity, heterogeneity and self-negation, and its celebration of these things is filtering into editorial practice'.<sup>72</sup> Intriguingly, this is reminiscent of the Renaissance production process for Shakespeare's plays in which a page correction was made on the press, yet the uncorrected pages were nevertheless bound into the books for sale. It was during the actual stage of printing that censorship and revision took place; Renaissance practice produced editions in which it is unlikely that any copy of a book was identical to any other copy. The concept that a book embodies a perfected state of work was not a Renaissance concept. 'Every copy was unique'.<sup>73</sup> Sonia Massai further

68. Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text*, 154.

69. E. J. Honigmann, 'Re-Enter the Stage Direction', *Shakespeare Survey 29: Shakespeare's Last Plays*, ed. Kenneth Muir (1976; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 123.

70. Wells, 'On Being a General Editor', 45.

71. The Internet Shakespeare Editions, supported by the University of Victoria, provides free access to quarto and folio texts of all the plays, <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca>.

72. Marcus, 'Editing Shakespeare in a Postmodern Age', 131.

73. Orgel, 'What Is an Editor?', 23.

explores the understanding that the instability of the text stems primarily from a Renaissance appreciation of the printed text 'as endlessly *perfectible*.'<sup>74</sup> Thus Renaissance readers almost certainly were reading different texts of the same work.<sup>75</sup> The Readers' Editions use a print-on-demand service, Amazon's CreateSpace.com, in which the play books can once again return to the Renaissance ideal wherein the text is continuously corrigible:

The early modern printed text was understood and treated as perfectible, and therefore never definitive. Readers were accordingly invited to contribute to its perfection by acting as graceful and patient correctors. . . . its perfection was regarded as an open-ended process.<sup>76</sup>

As reader feedback shows that changes are desirable to improve the experience, those changes can be effected immediately in the Readers' Editions, making the text more usable for a growing market of community readers. This type of production and printing process marks another major technological shift in book production that will impact Shakespeare editions and readers. A recognition of the constructed nature of editorial practice throughout the history of Shakespeare editions can relax the fear of textual chaos that is often discussed in light of today's digital texts with their myriad possibilities for generating reader-edited forms, unstandardised collations, alternate endings, as well as the print-on-demand publishing systems that allow corrected or revised editions into the marketplace with the upload of a PDF file. As Michael Best argues, the general agreement is now that the Shakespearean texts are 'ineluctably multiple' and that 'in many cruces there can be no final "accurate" version.'<sup>77</sup>

Regardless of the new ideas and possibilities, however, Shakespeare's text is essentially Shakespeare's text and will remain so throughout all the permutations now possible and in the future—the basic reality of *Hamlet* remains *Hamlet*. But there is joy in taking advantage of the technological possibilities for various readerships. Embracing change will not fundamentally alter Shakespeare, as has been shown throughout this thesis.

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74. Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*, 199. Italic in original. Gabriel Egan contradicts this theory of stop-press corrections in *The Struggle for Shakespeare's Text*, 193.

75. Orgel, 'What Is an Editor', 27.

76. Massai, *Shakespeare and Rise of the Editor*, 199.

77. Michael Best, 'Shakespeare and the Electronic Text', in *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text* (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2010), 155.

## SHAKESPEARE FOR EVERYONE—AGAIN

Matt Kozusko observes that Shakespearean scholarship 'is increasingly competitive and increasingly sophisticated, addressing minutiae and abstractions and contextual ephemera of little interest to the non-matriculating world'.<sup>78</sup> It is to this non-matriculating world that the Readers' Editions are directed, providing a familiar and focused textual surface which allows readers to proceed unencumbered and thus empowered in their inclusion into the cultural milieu of Shakespeare. Everyone is capable of reading and understanding Shakespeare's works if they so choose. The Readers' Editions can facilitate that process with an accessible text that also encourages the reader to probe beneath the surface. As Griffiths stated in 1889:

Ordinary intelligence and simple application are the only requirements for a fair grasp of the spirit and details of all Shakspeare's plays. Technical criticism will, in addition, bring out a multitude of side questions of intense interest.<sup>79</sup>

DeNel Rehberg Sedo asserts that 'shared reading is both a social process and a social formation' and is an important foundation for community.<sup>80</sup> For community readers, a Shakespearean play becomes an activity of discovery and imagination between the text and the reading circle. Shared experience, continuing education, cultural capital, fellowship, language amplification, mental stimulation, social intercourse, laughter, quiet pleasure—there are many reasons to encourage community readers of Shakespeare. One older member of a reading group in Santa Fe, New Mexico, expresses it this way: 'We came because we love Shakespeare. We stay because we love each other'.<sup>81</sup>

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78. Kozusko, 'The Shakspeare Society of Philadelphia', *Borrowers and Lenders*.

79. Griffiths, *Evenings with Shakespeare*, 3.

80. Sedo, 'An Introduction to Reading Communities', 2.

81. Personal statement from Jan Lurie, reader.

## APPENDIX A READERS' EDITIONS LAYOUT AND FEATURES

The examples below and on the following page display the details of the typographic formatting and design of a Readers' Edition to facilitate a community reading circle. The intricate relationship between form and content is intrinsically connected to use and readership. A printed prototype of this book is also included with this thesis.

*Number of lines in this scene  
so readers know how much time to expect.*

ACT 4.3 • 1-22

**Location of the scene and a brief synopsis of what to expect.**

▶ **Act 4 • Scene 3:** A street in Ephesus (97 lines)  
[Antipholus and Dromio of **Syracuse** are convinced the town is full of witches and plan to escape on the next boat. They are even more convinced of witchcraft when they meet the Courtesan with whom Antipholus of **Ephesus** dined earlier.]

**Stage directions are expanded to help explain the action and the characters. The words in bold type are from the original text; the words in light type are added for clarification.**

▶ [Enter Antipholus of Syracuse, wearing the gold chain.]

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE** [to the audience] ◀

1 There's not a man I meet but doth salute me  
2 As if I were their well-acquainted friend,  
3 And every one doth call me by my name.  
4 Some tender' money to me, some invite me; offer  
5 Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;  
6 Some offer me commodities to buy.  
7 Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,  
8 And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,  
9 And therewithal' took measure of my body. that being done  
10 Sure these are but imaginary wiles; insidious tricks  
11 And Lapland Sorcerers inhabit here.

▶ [Enter Dromio of Syracuse with the purse of ducats demanded by Antipholus of Ephesus.]

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

12 Master, here's the gold you sent me for—  
13 what, have you lost the picture' image  
14 of old Adam new apparelled?

▶ **ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE**

15 What gold is this? What Adam dost thou mean?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

16 Not that Adam that' kept the Paradise, who  
17 but that Adam that keeps the prison—  
18 he that goes in the calf's-skin' that was kill'd leather jacket  
19 for the Prodigal': he that came behind you, biblical prodigal son  
20 sir, like an evil angel, and bid' you forsake insisted  
21 your liberty.

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE**

▶ 22 I understand thee not.

72

◀ These stage directions clarify to whom a character is speaking.

**Character names are spelled out in full and are set on individual lines.**

*Again we see how Antipholus of Ephesus is esteemed in his own town.*

*Lapland, the most northerly portion of the Scandinavian peninsula, is the legendary home of witches and magicians.*

*Dromio continues the puns on the leather uniform of the officer who arrested Antipholus of Ephesus.*

*Every line is numbered so those reading the same book can refer quickly and easily to specific lines.*

A progress bar on each page tells a reader where she is in the play. Each small dot is a page, and each large dot is the beginning of an act.

Headers to find acts, scenes, and lines.

ACT 2.2 • 96–121

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**  
 96 The one, to save the money that he spends  
 97 in tiring; the other, that at dinner they  
 98 should not drop in his porridge.

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE**  
 99 You would' all this time have' prov'd,  
 100 there is no time for all things.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**  
 100 Marry, and did, sir: namely,  
 101 in no time to recover hair lost by Nature.

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE**  
 102 But your reason was not substantial,  
 103 why there is no time to recover.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**  
 104 Thus I mend it: Time himself is bald, and therefore  
 105 to the world's end, 'will have' bald followers.

**ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE**  
 106 I knew 'twould be a bald' conclusion;  
 107 but soft, who wafts us yonder?

*[Enter Adriana and her sister, Luciana, beckoning. They both mistake Antipholus of Syracuse for Adriana's husband. Adriana berates him for his earlier responses to Dromio of Ephesus. She takes his arm.]*

**ADRIANA**  
 108 Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange' and frown,  
 109 Some other Mistress hath thy sweet aspècts;  
 110 I am not Adriana, nor thy wife?  
 111 The time was once when thou, un-urg'd, wouldst vow  
 112 That never words were music to thine ear,  
 113 That never object pleasing in thine eye,  
 114 That never touch well welcome to thy hand,  
 115 That never meat sweet-savor'd in thy taste,  
 116 Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carv'd to thee.  
 117 How comes it now, my Husband, oh how comes it,  
 118 That thou art then estrangèd from thy self?  
 119 Thy "self" I call it, being strange' to me:  
 120 That, undividable, incorporate,  
 121 Am better' than thy dear self's 'better part.'

*[Antipholus of Syracuse tries to leave.]*

Room for readers to write their own notes.

These are ideas to think about. Sometimes they are questions to discuss in a reading group.

Darker line numbers indicate passages that particularly reward close reading and discussion.

Gloss dot.

Gloss (minimal definition): Substitute the gloss for the word with the gloss dot or the phrase enclosed by gloss dots.

Multiple glosses in one line are separated by semicolons.

Phrases in parentheses are explanations rather than definitions.

Phrases in brackets are editorial comments.

There is a lot of the play text on the double-page spread so a reader can see a good deal of the progress at one time.

## APPENDIX B

### READERS' EDITIONS APPARATUS SAMPLES

The example below and on the following pages displays the type of minimal apparatus in a Readers' Edition that is specific to the needs of community readers.



## Motifs and themes to watch for

---

Shakespeare always uses motifs (repetitive patterns) or themes (universal ideas) to weave a play together. Below are some that you will notice in *The Comedy of Errors*. Perhaps assign a reader to keep an eye out for references of a particular sort and to be responsible for leading a short discussion about that motif at some point. It is worth the trouble to notice and talk about these ideas—it always leads to deeper understanding and appreciation.

**Appearance:** Every Shakespeare play involves a discrepancy between *appearance and reality*. Besides the obvious discrepancy of the twins being confused for each other, watch for other ways in which appearance (in many forms) is not what it seems.

**Family:** This play begins and ends with family issues—loss of, searching for, misidentified as, trouble within, reunion of, creating anew. These issues act as stimulation for some of the other themes.

**Time:** Time is very specific in this play. It is one of only two plays in which Shakespeare sets the play in (sort of) actual time.

**Self/new self/metamorphosis:** There is a lovely thread of *self*—losing one's self, finding one's self in someone else, being re-formed as another self, etc.

**Bondage:** Almost every character suffers from some sort of bondage, be it emotional or physical. This bondage unites the characters or offers parallels to each others' situations.

**The chain:** The chain, which is actually a *carcanet* (*KAR ka net*), threads throughout the play. A carcanet is a choker with a hanging jewel, set with gems and pearls; the word comes from Old French, *carcan*, which is an iron collar used on prisoners.

**Gold:** Notice how you can specifically track the gold—as money and as the chain—throughout the play. Gold acts to unify and connect everyone.

**Money/trade/merchants:** Business, money, transactions, trade, merchants, etc., weave throughout the play. Money or the lack of it impacts the lives of most of the characters in some way.

**Sea and water:** The play begins in water; tears drop into the sea; there are attempts to escape by sea; in the final scene their goods are pointedly taken *off* the boat and they remain on dry land. Water becomes an emblem of separation, of loneliness, of isolation, of regeneration.

**Duty:** We see various sorts of duty and obligations in this play—between husbands and wives; masters and servants; duties owed to friends and associates, to the state and the church, duty owed to one's self, etc. This is tied in with law and order.

**Law and order:** From the first scene through the last, law and order is appealed to and complied with.

19

As can be seen on the examples on this page and the next, the explanatory material for each play is similar yet particular to that play.

## Verse, prose, and rhyme

You can completely skip this information if you like! But for those of you who might have an interest in knowing the difference between verse, blank verse, prose, and the various sorts of rhyme—and what Shakespeare is telling you by the uses of these techniques—then here is a very brief primer.

### VERSE

Most lines of any Shakespeare play have ten (sometimes eleven) syllables; these lines are called *verse*. You can tell when the lines are in verse because every line starts with a capital letter (and has ten syllables). Each line also has a definite pattern of sound, like a heartbeat, with an emphasis on the *bum*:

ba **BUM** · ba **BUM** · ba **BUM** · ba **BUM** · ba **BUM**

Technically, each **ba BUM** is called an *iamb*, which is one *foot* in a line of poetry. Because there are five iambs in each line, Shakespeare's verse is called *iambic pentameter*.

▶ Thou **art** a **Villain** to **impeach** me **thus**.  
I'll **prove** mine **honor** and mine **honesty** . . .

This is what forces Shakespeare to put words in an odd order and to add or delete syllables by using accent marks and apostrophes—so they will fit into the rhythm of the line. There can be several peculiarities in an iambic pentameter line (including an eleventh syllable or disrupted meter), but that's basically it for this play.

### BLANK VERSE

*Blank verse* is simply lines of verse that don't rhyme. Most of the text in all the plays is in blank verse.

### PROSE

Lines that are not verse are *prose*. That is, prose lines are not limited to ten syllables and they do not have to conform to the iambic pattern of sound. You can recognize prose because the text is *not* capitalized at the beginning of each line. In most books, you can see the prose easily because the lines of text are justified, making prose look like blocks on the page (shown below, left). In this book, I chose to divide the lines by phrases to help make them easier to understand (shown below, right). This creates uneven line lengths but still, the first lines are not capitalized and the lines are not limited to ten syllables.

Prose tends to be less formal than verse; it can change the tone of a scene from madness to sanity, from passion to reason, from heightened thought back to earthiness.

▶ Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude,  
this drudge or Diviner laid claim to me,  
call'd me Dromio, swore I was assur'd to  
her, told me what privy marks I had about  
me, as the mark of my shoulder, the Mole  
in my neck, the great Wart on my left arm,  
that I, amaz'd, ran from her as a witch.

Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude,  
this drudge or Diviner laid claim to me,  
call'd me Dromio, swore I was assur'd to her,  
told me what privy marks I had about me,  
as the mark of my shoulder, the Mole in my neck,  
the great Wart on my left arm, that I, amaz'd,  
ran from her as a witch.

Lines from  
The Comedy of Errors.

Lines from  
The Comedy of Errors.

Empirical evidence shows that community readers initially appreciate simple explanations and look forward to expanding their knowledge and engagement gradually.

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You can completely skip this information if you like! But for those of you who might have an interest in knowing the difference between verse, blank verse, prose, and the various sorts of rhyme—and what Shakespeare is telling you by the uses of these techniques—then here is a very brief primer.

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ba BUM • ba BUM • ba BUM • ba BUM • ba BUM

Technically, each **ba BUM** is called an *iamb*, which is one *foot* in a line of poetry. Because there are five iambs in each line, Shakespeare's verse is called *iambic pentameter*.

Lines from Antony  
and Cleopatra.

► Now **for the love of Love** and **her soft hours**,  
Let's **not confound the time with conf'rence harsh**.

This is what forces Shakespeare to put words in an odd order and to add or delete syllables by using accent marks and apostrophes—so they will fit into the rhythm of the line. There can be several peculiarities in an iambic pentameter line, including an eleventh syllable or disrupted meter. *Antony and Cleopatra* is full of complex and disrupted meter, so don't worry if the lines don't fall precisely into the iambic pentameter framework.

### BLANK VERSE

*Blank verse* is simply lines of verse that don't rhyme. Most of the text in all the plays is in blank verse.

### PROSE

Lines that are not verse are *prose*. That is, prose lines are not limited to ten syllables and they do not have to conform to the iambic pattern of sound. You can recognize prose because the text is *not* capitalized at the beginning of each line. In most books, you can see the prose easily because the lines of text are justified, making prose look like blocks on the page (shown below, left). In this book, I chose to divide the lines by phrases to help make them easier to understand (shown below, right). This creates uneven line lengths but still, the first lines are not capitalized and the lines are not limited to ten syllables.

Prose tends to be less formal than verse; it can change the tone of a scene from madness to sanity, from passion to reason, from heightened thought back to earthiness.

Lines from Antony  
and Cleopatra.

► Truly I have him: but I would not be the party  
that should desire you to touch him, for his  
biting is immortal: those that do die of it, do  
seldom or never recover.

Truly I have him:  
but I would not be the party  
that should desire you to touch him,  
for his biting is immortal:  
those that do die of it,  
do seldom or never recover.