

UN-EDITING AND NON-EDITIONS: THE DEATH
OF DISTANCE, THE NOTION OF NAVIGATION, AND
NEW ACTS OF EDITING IN THE ELECTRONIC MEDIUM

Abstract: The logical and pragmatic outcome of social theories of editing, as has been suggested, is editions that take into account the materiality of the text to such a degree that they can exist only immaterially, in the electronic realm. This paper explores a juncture, one at which the accumulation of textual archival materials associated with social theories of editing meet their natural home in the electronic scholarly edition, and one at which large collections of materials in electronic form meet their equivalent in the world of the ever-growing body of scholarship, available in electronic form, that is associated with the primary materials that lie at the heart of the textual scholar's concerns. With the electronic medium embraced editorially, the next major concern to be addressed by those interested in the edition, especially those exemplary textual scholars who have invested significant effort accumulating digital archival material, is the proper navigation of that material.

The recent convergence of social theories of editing and the rise of the electronic medium has had a significant impact on the scholarly edition, to be sure. While it is unlikely that editors ever fully forgot that "the material forms of books, the non-verbal elements of typographic notations within them, the very disposition of the space itself, have an expressive function in conveying meaning",¹ literary studies was re-awakened to such significance by figures such as McKenzie and McGann in the mid-1980s² – and re-awakened at a time when efficient and affordable methods to store and disseminate such conveyers of meaning were coming into being. Such methods, tied to the rise of accessible computing beginning at approximately the same time, have brought about

¹ D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Text*, The Panizzi Lectures 1985 (London: The British Library, 1986) 8.

² See Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983) and *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991) among others.

significant change in the field of textual studies – perhaps most noticeably, as discussed by Schreibman, in the role of the textual scholar for the past decade; “the release from the spatial restrictions of the codex form”, Schreibman notes, “has profoundly changed the focus of the textual scholar’s work. Throughout the 1990s, rather than synthesising, the textual scholar accumulated.”³ In addition to acknowledging the value of the electronic medium to editing and the edition, the recognition given to the products of such accumulation confirms critical recognition of the process of ‘unediting’ and an increased attention to the ‘materiality’ of the texts that are the objects of our consideration.⁴

Perfectly adaptable to, and properly enabling of, social theories of editing, the electronic medium has brought us closer to the textual objects of our contemplation, even though we remain at the same physical distance from them. Like other enabling communicative and representative technologies that came before it, the electronic medium has brought about a “death of distance” – a notion, as discussed by Paul Delany, that comes from a world made smaller by travel and communication systems, one in which we have “the ability to do more things without being physically present at the point of impact”.⁵ The textual scholar, accumulating an archive of textual materials, does so for those materials to be, in turn, re-presented to those who are interested in those materials. More and more, though, it is not only primary materials, textual witnesses for example, that are being accumulated and re-presented. The death of distance applies to primary materials, the

³ Susan Schreibman, “Computer-Mediated Texts and Textuality: Theory and Practice”, *A New Computer-Assisted Literary Criticism?*, ed. R. G. Siemens, spec. issue of *Computers and the Humanities*, forthcoming.

⁴ See Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1996) 4–5 and *passim* and Randall McLeod, “UNEditing Shak-speare”, *Substance* 33.4 (1982): 26–55 for the possibilities associated with the term *unediting*; on *materiality*, see Margareta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text”, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993): 255–283 as well as Kathryn Sutherland, “Revised Relations? Material Text, Immaterial Text, and the Electronic Environment”, *Text* 11 (1998): 17–30.

⁵ Paul Delany, “Virtual Universities and the Death of Distance”, *Text Technology* 7.3 (1997): 49–64, at 50.

direct objects of our contemplation, as well as to the objects that have the potential to inform further our contemplation.⁶

As a field that is at its heart concerned with evidence of communicative acts, to textual scholarship the observation of technology bringing about the death of distance may not be especially significant, for acceptance of such an observation is implicit to the discipline. Indeed, forms of writing, the scribe, and the printing press brought about 'deaths' of distance as well. And, further, one might say that much of the traditional work of the textual scholar – especially that concerned with the presentation of a text and representation of its variant versions – works towards a death of distance in itself, for the production of information associated with a scholarly edition (an extensive textual collation, for example) allows those who use that edition to accomplish much without requiring a physical presence at the various places that might house those materials represented in that edition. Diminishing distance as it does, such representation serves us well – for different reasons, certainly, than those materials presented in electronic editions based on extensively-accumulated materials, but such representation serves us well nonetheless.

One of the reasons that such representation serves us well is that we understand the tradition out of which that material has come; thus, we understand, almost intuitively, the end-product of the traditional scholarly edition in its codex form: how material is presented, what the scope of that material is, how that material is being related to us and, internally, how the material presented by the edition relates to itself and, further, to those materials beyond those directly presented (secondary texts, perhaps). This is not so, yet, for the scholarly edition in the electronic medium; at the moment, our understanding of these things as they relate to the scholarly electronic edition is just being formed.

My paper, the opening thoughts of which I have entitled "Un-Editing and Non-Editions", attempts to explore this critical junc-

⁶ For example, we welcome editions such as *Arden Shakespeare CD-ROM*, Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, and others of the same kind because of their ability to include, in ways that are not possible in print editions, a significant body of materials that assist in informing us about matters related to the works those materials intend to illuminate.

ture, one at which the accumulation of textual archival materials associated with social theories of editing meet their natural home in the electronic scholarly edition, and one at which such large collections of materials in electronic form meet their equivalent in the world of secondary materials, the ever-growing body of scholarship, available in electronic form, that is associated with the primary materials that lie at the heart of the textual scholar's concerns.

The logical and pragmatic outcome of social theories of editing, as has been suggested, is editions that take into account the materiality of the text to such a degree that they can exist only immaterially, in the electronic realm. Once the electronic medium is embraced editorially, the next major concern to be addressed by those interested in the edition, especially those exemplary textual scholars who have invested significant effort accumulating digital archival material, is the proper navigation of that material.

Shakespearean apparatus? Explicit textual structures and the implicit navigation of accumulated knowledge⁷

Associating the concerns of the humanist with issues of technology, Northrop Frye commented over a decade ago that

three of the most seminal mechanical inventions ever devised, the alphabet, the printing press, and the book, have been in humanist hands for centuries. The prestige of humanists in the past came largely from the fact that they lived in a far more efficient technological world than most of their contemporaries.⁸

⁷ I wish to thank the Killam Trust, and the University of Alberta, for its generous support during the time in which this article was written; "Shakespearean Apparatus" appears here with the kind permission of the editors of *TEXT*. Versions of this paper were pre-printed in *Surfaces* 8 (1999): 106, 1-34 <<http://www.pum.umontreal.ca/revues/surfaces/vol8/siemens.pdf>> and presented at the MLA Committee for Scholarly Edition's "Creation and Use of Electronic Editions" panel at the meeting of the Modern Language Association, San Francisco (28 December 1998); this paper also draws upon some material from earlier conference presentations.

⁸ Northrop Frye, "Literary and Mechanical Models", *Research in Humanities Computing 1: Select Papers from the ALLC/ACH Conference*, ed. Ian Lancashire (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991) 3-13, at 7f.

The technologies to which Frye draws attention – the alphabet, the printing press, and the book – are, notably, associated foremostly with textual culture; his comments, which were presented as a keynote address at the 1989 joint international conference of the *Association for Computers and the Humanities* and the *Association for Literary & Linguistic Computing*, would contextualize that conference's consideration of comparatively recent computing technology with relation to its more established predecessors. While acknowledging that text and the machinery involved in its creation, manipulation, and dissemination have had a firm place at the centre of the humanistic identity, one of the main points of Frye's address is found in an argument that is directly associated with what is often acknowledged to be the source for the idea of *hypertext*: this is Vannevar Bush's "As We May Think", in its expression of the idea of "building a trail of many items" through textual materials.⁹

⁹ Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think", online repr. from *Atlantic Monthly* 176 (July 1945): 101–108 <<http://www.isg.sfu.ca/~duchier/misc/vbush>>. During World War II, Bush was Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development in the United States. Writing in the July 1945 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, he outlined concerns about the increasing difficulty of managing the growing body of scientific knowledge. He states:

There is a growing mountain of research. But there is increased evidence that we are being bogged down today as specialization extends . . . Professionally our methods of transmitting and reviewing the results of research are generations old and by now are totally inadequate for their purpose . . . The difficulty seems to be, not so much that we publish unduly in view of the extent and variety of present-day interests, but rather that publication has been extended far beyond our present ability to make real use of the record. The summation of human experience is being expanded at a prodigious rate, and the means we use for threading through the consequent maze to the momentarily important item is the same as was used in the days of square-rigged ships.

His proposed solution is the oft-discussed memex, a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. It is an enlarged intimate supplement to his memory . . . [which operates by] associative indexing, the basic idea of which is a provision whereby any item may be caused at will to select immediately and automatically another. In his explanation of how this device would operate, he outlines that individuals build "a trail of many items" that tie together related documents.

Bush's discussion of the problems – specifically that of management – associated with the gross accumulation of scientific knowledge is re-articulated by Frye in a discussion of the Wissenschaft period of humanistic knowledge accumulation; on this period, Frye (1991) comments:

its great scholars amassed an awesome amount of information. Its imaginative model was the assembly line, to which each scholar 'contributed' something, except that the aim was not to produce a finite object like a motor car, but an indefinitely expanding body of knowledge. (4)

The problems associated with Wissenschaft-era accumulation have been more recently elaborated in the terms of the *new humanist* by Bill Winder, who concludes that our own period, the neo-Wissenschaft era, "brings with it . . . issues of retrieval and reuse", noting that the challenge for us is to be "as efficient at retrieving the information we produce as we are at stockpiling it"; we are to do so with the assistance of the computer, the "humanist's machine".¹⁰

My intention in tracing such a development – Frye's thoughts on the technologies of humanism and on Wissenschaft-era accumulation, Bush's earlier comments on much the same as well as the idea of hypertext, and Winder's argument about the new humanist's role and our own neo-Wissenschaft era – is to suggest an appropriate context for the concerns of this paper, a paper in which I tread a path others have walked before. The frame of reference for my paper is *text*, and the textual edition, with a promise in my title of discussing the navigation of textual structures and, presumably, hypertext. Within this frame of reference, it is especially important to note the appropriateness of the specifically-humanistic context into which Frye and Winder relocate the challenge presented by the more scientifically-oriented Bush. This is appropriate not only because of the way in which hypertextual theory has, in recent years, seen assimilation into a common humanistic understanding of what

¹⁰ William Winder, "Textpert Systems", *Scholarly Discourse and Computing Technology: Perspectives on Pedagogy, Research, and Dissemination in the Humanities*, ed. R. G. Siemens and William Winder, spec. issue of *Text Technology* 6.3 (1996): 159–166 at 164 f. and also in *Computing in the Humanities Working Papers* (April 1997) <<http://www.epas.utoronto.ca/epc/chwp/winder2/>>.

it is one means by *text*,¹¹ this is so, also, because of the way in which a new humanistic understanding of text – and the textual edition¹² – contributes, firstly, to a notion of hypertext that has evolved significantly since its early articulation by Bush and, secondly, to the problem of information management and navigation that was articulated some fifty years ago by Bush, and has been re-articulated since by Frye and Winder, among others, with regard to the materials that lie at the heart of humanistic pursuits. Lastly, my title's reference to "Shakespearean apparatus" is intended to narrow that

¹¹ Oft-cited in reference to this are *Hypertext Hypermedia and Literary Studies*, ed. Paul Delany and George P. Landow (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1991) and *The Digital Word: Text-Based Computing in the Humanities*, ed. Paul Delany and George P. Landow (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1993); George P. Landow, *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992) and *Hyper / Text / Theory*, ed. George P. Landow (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994); Ted Nelson, "A New Home for the Mind", *Datamation [PlugIn]* 41.1 (1995) <<http://www.datamation.com.PlugIn/issues/1995-Jan-15/xanadu.html>>, rpt. from *Datamation* (March 1982): 169–180; and Christopher Keep, Tim McLaughlin and robin [sic.], *The Electronic Labyrinth* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1995) <<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/elab/elab.html>> (as a primer on hypertext), among others.

¹² In the context of some humanities computing techniques, Paul Fortier, "Babies, Bathwater and the Study of Literature", *Computers and the Humanities* 27 (1993–4): 375–385, notes that it is text that is at the heart of concerns in literary studies. On hypertext and scholarly editions, see Landow, "Hypertext" and "Footnotes, Endnotes, and the Experience of Reading Hypertext", <<http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/hypertext/landow/vp/reading.html>>, George P. Landow, *The Digital Word and Digital Image – The Electronic Text* <<http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/hypertext/landow/vp/etext.html>>; Charles B. Faulhaber, "Textual Criticism in the 21st Century", *Romance Philology* 45 (1991): 123–148; Jerome McGann, "The Rationale of HyperText", *Text* 9 (1996): 11–32 <<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/public/jjm2f/rationale.html>>; John Lavagnino, "Reading, Scholarship, and Hypertext Editions", *Text* 8 (1996): 109–123, rpt. *The Journal of Electronic Publishing* 3.1 (1997) <<http://www.press.umich.edu:80/jep/03-01/reading.html>>; R. G. Siemens, "Disparate Structures, Electronic and Otherwise: Conceptions of Textual Organisation in the Electronic Medium, with Reference to Editions of Shakespeare and the Internet", *The Internet Shakespeare: Opportunities in a New Medium*, ed. Michael Best, spec. issue 2 of *Early Modern Literary Studies* 3.3 (1998) 6.1–29 <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/03-3/siemshak.html>>; and the articles in *The Literary Text in the Digital Age*, ed. Richard J. Finneran (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996) among others.

focus slightly, gesturing toward the process of scholarly annotation – a process which has, for a generation of humanists interested in electronic textuality, become a touchstone for hypertext’s incorporation into the electronic scholarly edition – and, specifically, gesturing to annotation as it might apply to the examples on which I rely in this paper drawn from the work of Shakespeare.

*What We Already Do: Presenting and Annotating the Text
of Shakespeare’s Sonnet 138*

Perhaps the best way to begin is with a practical example, one taken from Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*, and one with which many may already be familiar: “When my love swears that she is made of truth” (number 138).

A good print edition’s rendering of Sonnet 138, taken from G. B. Evans’ recent edition (101), is given in Figure 1.1. There is much that is familiar – and, to my mind, much that is reassuring – about such a presentation. We understand, in looking at an example such as this, that the text has been modernised and regularised. We also understand the ways that the various parts of the text – the sonnet and its textual apparatus and annotations – interrelate with one another.

For one used to working with such an edition regularly, the reading eye moves seemingly in a natural manner (should one wish it to) between the lines of verse and the lines of textual commentary. Seeing that there are no accidental variants listed, one presumes that only substantive variants are being treated; using the information given, related versions of the sonnet can be reconstructed. And, noting that there is nothing by way of gloss and interpretive notes on the page, the trained reader may also, without thinking much about it, use a finger or bookmark for easy passage to the commentary’s assumed place later in the book (256–257; see Figure 1.2). A note in that commentary, I should add, discusses the mutual association of sonnets 138 and 144 through their printing¹ in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599) and directs us to it. It also directs us to other texts, primary and secondary materials, that can inform our reading of the sonnet. Fingers or bookmarks may hold places in the book, and the eye and mind may move about, working from place to place – text, textual apparatus, and

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When my love swears that she is made of truth,
 I do believe her, though I know she lies,
 That she might think me some untutored youth,
 Unlearnèd in the world's false subtleties. 4
 Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
 Although she knows my days are past the best,
 Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
 On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed. 8
 But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
 And wherefore say not I that I am old?
 O love's best habit is in seeming trust,
 And age in love loves not t'have years told. 12
 Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
 And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

Sonnet 137

1 fool, Love,] Malone; foole loue, Q; fool, love, Tucker 2 behold,] Gildon²; behold Q 3 see?] Gildon; see:
 Q 5 eyes,] Gildon¹, Capell; eyes Q 11 this is not,] Sewell¹; this is not Q; quoted, Tucker (after Capell)
 12 face?] Gildon²; face, Q 13 erred] Gildon (err'd); erred Q 14 transferred] Gildon (transferr'd);
 transferred Q

Sonnet 138

138] A variant version of this sonnet was printed in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), the text of which (from the 1612
 edition) was reprinted by Benson through Evans (except Lintot) 4 Unlearnèd... subtleties] Q (subtillies); Vnskillful
 ... forgeries *'Passionate Pilgrim'* 6 she... are] Q; I know my yeares be *'Passionate Pilgrim'*; I know my yerces are
 Folger MS. 207.7 7 Simply I] Q; I smiling *'Passionate Pilgrim'* 7 false-speaking] Sewell¹, Capell; false
 speaking Q 8 On... suppressed] Q; Outfacing faults in loue, with loues ill rest *'Passionate Pilgrim'* 9 she
 ... unjust] Q; my loue that she is young *'Passionate Pilgrim'* 11 habit is in] Q; habit's in a *'Passionate Pilgrim'* (1st
 edn, 1599); habite is a *'Passionate Pilgrim'* (2nd edn, 1599), Gildon 11 seeming trust] Q; soothing young
'Passionate Pilgrim'; smoothinge tongue Folger MS. 207.7, Gildon 12 t'have] Q; to haue *'Passionate Pilgrim'*
 13 I... she] Q; I'le lye with Loue, and loue *'Passionate Pilgrim'* 14 And... flattered] Q; Since that our faultes
 in loue thus smother'd *'Passionate Pilgrim'*; Since y' o' faults in loue thus smothered Folger MS. 207.7 14
 flattered] Capell (flatter'd); flattered Q

Figure 1.1: Sonnet 138 and Textual Apparatus (ed. G. B. Evans)

commentary – associating each with each, but always with the text of the sonnet as the main point of interest; other materials are encountered in relation to it, and those that are encountered are present because of their ability to illuminate the sonnet.¹³

¹³ Should one wish another style of presentation, or the presentation of different text-related materials, one would use another style of edition: say, variorum (with a more conservative presentation and, likely, a wider textual collation, with a history of pertinent criticism; see Rollins' edition: William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, 2 vols. (New Variorum Edition), ed. Hyder E. Rollins (Philadelphia, London: Lippincott, 1944) 1: 353–355; later, this is seen in Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, or diplomatic/documentary (transcription or facsimile, or both, with notes and commentary off the page; see Booth's edition: William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Stephen Booth (New Haven, London: Yale UP, 1977) 118–119, 476–481).

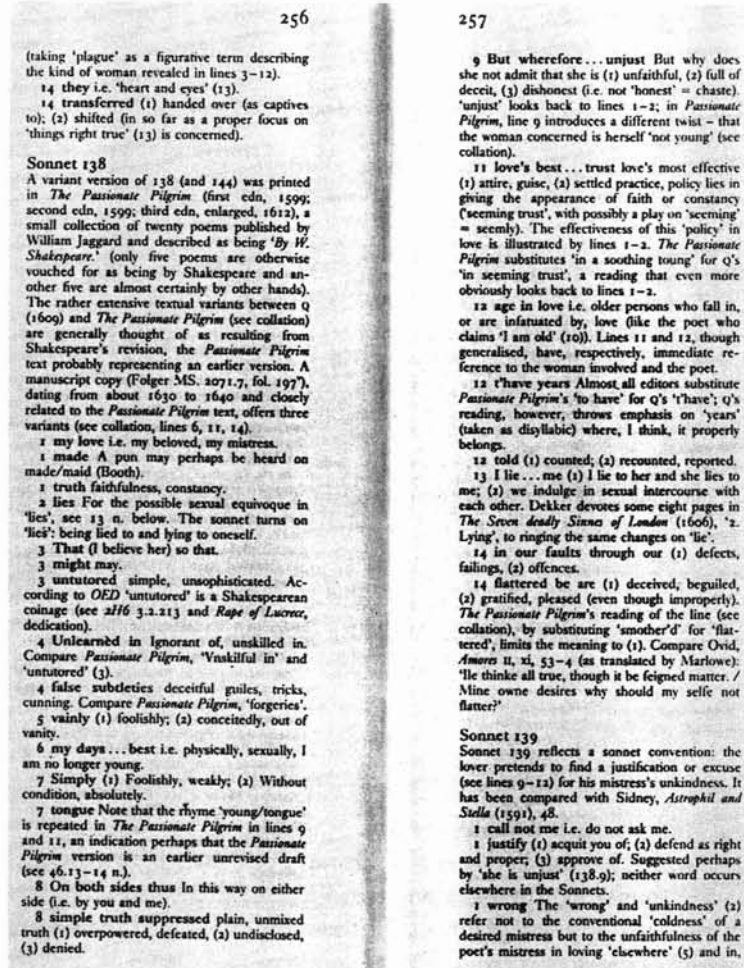


Figure 1.2: Commentary to Sonnet 138 (ed. G. B. Evans)

Such ideas about visually 'navigating' an edition are commonplace, and my conclusion regarding those ideas is equally so. Because we are familiar with the type of display (text, apparatus, and commentary) used by Evans, we already understand the ways in which such editions associate related texts and textual materials; moreover, we understand these ways to the extent that they are seemingly intuitive.

Formalising Associations in the Electronic Medium

It is that intuition on which most of us draw when we approach the scholarly edition in the electronic medium – an artifact that is increasingly being referred to as the hypertextual edition or the electronic edition. Before turning to a discussion of the electronic edition, though, let us consider one further aspect of the print edition. In the print edition, the idea of the “trail of many items” upon which Bush pontificated is implicit, it is understood to exist, and rarely needs explicit articulation. While we regard such association of one thing and the next as something that can be navigated intuitively on the page or across several pages, and while in our familiarity we regard the structures through which we navigate to be implicit, a trail is clearly and explicitly there. That trail is established by the editor, based on materials left us by the author and others, and is presented to us in a familiar, accepted manner.

What we typically do now when we bring such a text into the electronic medium – that is, when we do it as professionals with attention to scholarly standards – is to formalise, to make explicit, the seemingly intuitive relation of one thing and the next; we build, hypertextually, that trail of many items of which Bush spoke. This is a relatively straightforward procedure, wherein (over one or more electronic documents) materials associated with the central text are presented, and the individually-associated bits of information are hypertextually linked. As many of us know, passages for which there are variant readings or annotations are, in a hypertextual edition, marked in such a way that the reader knows that selecting that textual passage (with a mouse, pointing and clicking) will lead to a display of variant readings or annotations; such passages would be associated, again typically, by lines of code in the electronic text that set out exactly that, if a certain piece of marked data is selected, another piece of specifically-demarcated data will be displayed. By way of example, in our text of Sonnet 138 the following relationship of materials that are presented in the print edition would be formalised by hypertextual links:

Text (l. 14): And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

Marked text (as per Evans' edition):¹⁴ And in our faults by lies we flattered

Linked to (textual apparatus):

Q; Since that our faultes in loue thus smother'd *'Passionate Pilgrim'*;
Since y^t o^r faults in loue thus smothered *Folger MS. 2071.7*

The relation of the text to materials in the commentary operate in a similar fashion, as follows:

Text (l. 14): And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

Marked text (as per Evans' edition): flattered be

Linked to (commentary [Evans' ed. 256-7]):

are (1) deceived, beguiled, (2) gratified, pleased (even though improperly). *The Passionate Pilgrim's* reading of the line (see collation), by substituting 'smother'd' for 'flattered', limits the meaning to (1). Compare Ovid, *Amores* II, xi, 53-4 (as translated by Marlowe): 'He thinke all true, though it be feigned matter. / Mine owne desires why should my selfe not flatter?'

Selecting a passage of marked text would lead us from that text to its linked apparatus and/or commentary, much as our mind, and fingers might work together with the print edition itself.

While no such electronic adaptation of Evans' edition exists, many hypertextual editions are as straightforward, and as useful, as this; such is the case with the electronic prototype of the New Variorum Shakespeare Edition¹⁵ and the editions proposed by the Internet Shakespeare Editions project.¹⁶ Other editions, with such

¹⁴ This represents the expansion of Evans' abbreviation for the phrase "And ... flattered".

¹⁵ Demonstrated at the 1999 meeting of the Modern Language Association on the panel "The New Variorum Shakespeare in the Electronic Medium" (and throughout the conference; see Gregory Crane et al., "The New Variorum Shakespeare in the Electronic Medium", A panel at the Modern Language Association meeting, Chicago [December 29, 1999]; the electronic prototype of the New Variorum Shakespeare Edition follows this path, making excellent use of straightforward hypertextual linking to render navigable its large and complex body of text-related materials.

¹⁶ See Michael Best, "Foreword", *The Internet Shakespeare: Opportunities in a New Medium*, ed. Michael Best, spec. issue 2 of *Early Modern Literary Studies* 3.3 (1998) 1.1-4 <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/03-3/foreword.html>>, "A Mazèd World: Connecting, Selecting and Internetting Shakespeare Performances", presented at the 1999 meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America, rpt. online <<http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Annex/Articles/SAA1999/index.html>>, and his *The Internet Shakespeare*; and Internet Shakespeare Editions, gen. ed. Michael Best, University of Victoria <<http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/>>.

