The Progress of Error: or, the Recursive Eighteenth Century

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Abstract

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Digital archives of early modern printed materials—on Early English Books Online, Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Google Books, and Project Gutenberg, among others—are rife with scanning errors, incomplete metadata, typos, and other odd, frustrating artifacts of mediation. Each technological change in writing brings its own version of problems in preserving and mediating our print history—problems which may, paradoxically, proliferate errors as they seek to correct prior mistakes. “The Progress of Error” traces a history of these fractious, recursive, debates about error correction and mediation in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when editors, printers, and critics squabbled over the best means of preserving classical texts, Shakespeare, Milton, and early English ballads. I argue that the literary past is literally made of mistakes and attempts to correct them which go out of control; these errant corrections are not to be fixed in future editions but rather are constitutive of Enlightenment concepts of mediation, criticism, sensory perception, historicity, and agency.

Editor and satirist Alexander Pope played both sides of the error correction and creation game, translating and editing texts at the same time as he reveled in satire’s distorting lens and its potential for correcting others’ moral and intellectual failings. Classical editor Richard Bentley, a target of Pope’s scourge in the first edition of the *Dunciad*, practiced extraordinary editorial hubris in insisting that he could conjecturally correct not just typos in Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost*, but entire lines that he felt were blots on the poem’s design and style. Lewis Theobald followed Bentley’s

intellectually provocative but over-reaching, bombastic style when he turned his scrutiny onto Pope's editorial methods: his *Shakespeare Restor'd* was a method composed of broken lines and phrases as he animadverted on his rival's work. Less sharp-tongued but even more ambitious, Thomas Percy undertook a gigantic editorial vision of composing a world history of poetry in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* and related editorial projects, many of which were left unfinished: a hodgepodge of misprisioned scale and poetic scope. Correction's effects thus extended beyond fixing a particular error in a poem or play; the protocols engendered new technologies of social behavior in print and new forms of mediating agency.

I am fascinated by those printer's errors and scanning glitches, those moments when mediation goes awry. Following Marshall McLuhan, media historians Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin have used the term "remediation" to consider how digital technology refashions media across forms and genres. With McLuhan's background in early modern literary criticism in mind, I adapt the term for the study of print technology. I fold in related meanings of remediation—to remedy a mistake, to intervene in a situation, to renovate a landscape—to describe an emergence of literary effects generated by the iterative interventions of textual error correction. I pay attention to editors' critical vocabularies of mediating conjectures, surveying prospects, and sifting through reams of information. The same debates about errors in perception and transmission of knowledge which engaged Enlightenment philosophers such as Francis Bacon, George Berkeley and John Locke took place on the margins of pages as editors debated how to use these new tools of mediation. My dissertation historicizes and breaks down these protocols and interactions into their smallest radical units—errors—with the goal of theorizing how

these procedures have come to constitute both objects of study and critical practices in the field of literary study. It is a meta-reflective experiment in mediating among fields of book history, media theory, experimental poetics and digital art, and disciplinary histories to ask questions about where we may go next.

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The biggest professional and technological lessons of my life came from my work as an undergraduate at the *Columbia Daily Spectator*. I have joked many times over the years that this dissertation is a way of theorizing every mistake I made at the newspaper, but, really, what stands out to me now are the friendships that still endure from those late nights. It took a moment of realizing that Ben Wheeler and I had been having the same

recursive conversation about Paul Auster's *City of Glass* for more than ten years to help me find an organizing principle for this work.

I thank my friends and colleagues for their support over many years. It has been extraordinary to see my cohort at Columbia grow into extraordinary scholars, teachers, and friends over the years. Fred Bengtsson, Jen Buckley, Alicia DeSantis, Tara Gellene, Marina Graham, Musa Gurnis, Mary Kate Hurley, Adam Hooks, Alvan Ikoku, Abigail Joseph, Anjuli Raza Kolb, Ruth Lexton, Sara Murphy, Adela Ramos, Christine Varnado, and many others have been my wonderful interlocutors, editors, teaching colleagues, and sounding board.

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Hofstadter and recursive jokes. My mother, Lea Ann Boone, has been my biggest supporter and best idea-generator over the years, and I cannot thank her enough. She helped me copy-edit this project, although I am sure that I have introduced even more errors into it as I have revised it! I regret those errors—and yet, that is also the thesis of this dissertation!

An Apology for Errors

ERRATA

With Directions to the Binder

Candid Reader: My not *Revising the Sheets*, by Reason of my Distance from the Press, and (almost) constant Illness, has occasion'd some *Literal* escapes, and some few ERRORS, Injurious to the Sense, (and indeed, in a *History of Errors*; it wou'd be strange, shou'd the Printer not make some too), however, the Reader is desir'd to pardon FAULTS of less Moment, and to correct these which follow—

But if I inlarge, I shall make an *Errata* in my very *Errata*…

And so, Reader, fall to and wellcome; for as to rest of my *ERRORS*, I leave 'em to thy Eye, to discover, and to thy Candour to pardon; or if my *whole BOOK* must pass for *ONE GREAT ERROR*, (without Smile or Excuse), I must say thou haft no Stomach to a New Life—And so Farewel—

--John Dunton, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton* (London, 1705)

Introduction: The Progress of ‘The Progress of Error’

SING, Muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
May find a Muse to grace it with a song),
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent Error twines round human hearts;
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The poisonous, black, insinuating worm
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine!
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine;
Truths, that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach.
--William Cowper, “The Progress of Error” (1782)[1]

“Intermittently over the last year, I’ve found myself fumbling around an idea about critical temporalities. That is: ideas keep moving, keep developing, even after you’ve locked them down in print or pixels. You continue developing your own ideas, one hopes, but the others who encounter your ideas also develop them as well, often in very new directions. And given how much critical development takes place in the negative (demonstrating the fundamental incorrectness of previously held ideas, as opposed to building beside or on top of those ideas), the conclusion I keep being drawn back to is that everything that we are today arguing will someday be wrong.”
--Kathleen Fitzpatrick, “Being Wrong” (2013)[2]

Remediation and Remediation

The title of this dissertation comes from William Cowper’s “The Progress of Error,” a mock-epic about moral remediation, the acknowledgement and reparation of one’s sins. “The theorist could never reach” such moral remediation because devotion is ongoing, dependent on repetition for its powers of correction. It is a practice, not an idea or an abstraction that one can play with. Cowper’s first line is also a re-mediation of an epic convention of beginning *in media res,* in the middle of the action, and invoking the

[1] William Cowper, “The Progress of Error,” in *The Task and Selected Writings*, ed. James Sambrook (New York: Longman, 1984), 251.
[2] Kathleen Fitzpatrick, “Being Wrong” Planned Obsolescence December 29, 2013 http://www.plannedobsolescence.net/blog/being-wrong/

Muse for assistance in mediating a poetic scene in the epic tradition. He pauses in the middle of the trope with a parenthetical note about his doubt that a Muse could assist: a signal that he is really working in the mock-epic, an adaptation of the epic form through the distorting lens of satire. *Only* a theorist could reach that terminology. Cowper's poem traces an alternative, errant path through the eighteenth century as a century obsessed with conjectural histories about the progress of knowledge—although that term had satirical distortions embedded in it, as Matthew Prior pointed out in his 1718 poem *Alma: or the Progress of the Mind*: "Are we in life through one great error led?"[3]

In appropriating "The Progress of Error" from Cowper I am working with a play on words: there is remediation in the sense of remedy of one's errors, and there is the process of re-mediating a form into a different media or genre. I take the term from Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, who coined the term to theorize the refashioning of older media into new media, especially virtual reality media. In *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Bolter and Grusin propose what they call a double logic of remediation: that the process is always constituted by a tension between the strategy of *transparent immediacy* (making the medium invisible, suggesting an unmediated experience of pure content) and the strategy of *hypermediacy* (emphasizing the medium, celebrating or even exaggerating its presence).[4] Bolter, for his part, is remediating his previous work *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing*, first published in 1991, then republished in 2001 with considerable revisions.[5] Both editions

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[3] Matthew Prior, *Alma: or the Progress of Mind in The Poetical Works of Matthew Prior* (London: printed for W. Strahan, 1756), 233.
[4] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media.* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), 8-9.
[5] Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing* (New York: Routledge, 1991/2001). Explaining some of the changes he made, he notes: "I have also shortened this

of that book contain wide-ranging reflections on interface and writing technology, with considerable debt to post-structuralist theories of erasure and *écriture*. Bolter had experimented with rendering the book in new media through Storyspace, a 1990s experimental interface in hypertext-enabled storytelling used by theorists, novelists, poets, and other writers interested in playing with mediation.[6] Both the overreliance on Derridean wordplay and the Storyspace interface seem dated now—the hypertext version is not accessible to readers or users, sitting unusable on a server as an artifact of a bygone era. As a conjectural history of the progress of electronic writing, *Writing Space* had come to reflect the obsolescence of the form and theories it had once pioneered. Yet these critical mediations were not useless for Bolter; they enabled him to write *Remediation* as a kind of recursive remaking of previous ideas about media technology.

Bolter and Grusin fill their book with examples from visual and new media—the perspectival tricks in seventeenth-century Dutch still-life paintings by Vermeer, or the immersive interface of a first-person-shooter video game. These plays with visual perspective have it both ways: they toy with the viewer's sense that he is immersed in the image, but they contain small glitches to remind him that that immersion is an illusion. Those moments of realizing of one's mediated state are frustrating, pleasurable—and theorizable into narratives of progress (virtual reality and special effects are getting more and more technologically adept!) or decline (we're losing a sense of the real!). As

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second edition by eliminating many prophetic claims that did not come true or were simply made irrelevant by the development of hypertext in directions I had no foreseen" (2001 edition, xii).

[6] Two of the most famous Storyspace experiments are Michael Joyce's *Afternoon* (1987, published by Eastgate systems in 1990) and Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* (1995), a remediation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and L. Frank Baum's *Patchwork Girl* which plays with digital images of woodcuts so as to highlight the many kinds of inscription technology at play in the story and interface. Yet, like *Writing Space*, *Patchwork Girl* cannot be accessed by readers/users because it requires such an old operating system. Just there is something ironic about an inaccessible, immaterial writing space, there is something deliciously Frankenstein's monster-like in its half-material, half-immaterial existence.

Writing Space points toward its own obsolescence, *Remediation*, too, invites a kind of reader participation in remaking the book in new contexts—a fitting flexibility for a critical work about mediation.

I work with textual, visual, and digital materials to test out the usefulness—and possible promiscuity—of the term in eighteenth-century texts. I extend Bolter and Grusin's criticism by arguing that the double logic of remediation is most apparent—and most epistemologically generative—when we notice errors and try to correct them, only to generate more. I try out the term in eighteenth-century genres of dream visions, conjectural criticism, satires of learning, theories of mind and language, and conjectural history: genres, I argue, which practice both kinds of remediation (remedy and adaptation) in exploring that paradox of producing error out of reiterated attempts at correction.

The eighteenth-century editors and authors under study in this project are consumed by remedy and re-mediation alike: they are gleeful to point out others' mistakes, defensive about their own, imaginative in their animadversions and attacking language. Editor and satirist Alexander Pope played both sides of the error correction and creation game as he translated and edited texts at the same time that he reveled in satire's distorting lens which served to correct others' moral and intellectual failings. Classical editor Richard Bentley, a target of Pope's scourge in the first edition of the *Dunciad*, practiced extraordinary editorial hubris in insisting that he could correct not just typos in Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*, but entire lines that he felt were blots on the poem's design and style. Lewis Theobald followed Bentley's intellectually provocative but over-reaching, bombastic style when he turned his scrutiny onto Pope's editorial methods: his

Shakespeare Restor'd was a method composed of broken lines and phrases as he animadverted on his rival's work. Less sharp-tongued but even more ambitious, Thomas Percy undertook a gigantic editorial vision of composing a world history of poetry in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* and related editorial projects, many of which were left unfinished: a hodgepodge of misprisioned scale and poetic scope.

In my work, that twinned error correction-proliferation is a method as much as it is a subject. I come at the subject from my time working as a college newspaper editor who, overwhelmed by the nightly grind of correcting the next day's pages, began to doubt her ability to remedy a typo without introducing more of them. During that time, paste-ups became a remnant of the past as digital editing systems became standard in newsrooms. At first I was sure I could blame my proliferating errors on the problematic shifts in agency created by the digital interface. As the nights grew longer, I became fascinated by the interactions of multiple forms of mediators (writers, copy-editors, various tiers of section editors in the institution, interfaces, anonymous tech support, printers, the various ghosts in the machine who seemed to delay the getting the paper in on time three of five days a week) who were sometimes in conflict in unpredictable ways. I was already immersed in eighteenth-century studies as an undergraduate, so I reflected on my own situation as it related to Samuel Johnson, who engaged with all these critical debates about the production of knowledge through inevitable error in his own journalism, dictionary-making, and editorial work. My practice led me to theorize: errors are most noticeable at moments of technological and institutional changes in mediation.

From journalism to the academy, errors loom large. In *Error and the Academic Self*, Seth Lerer describes that terror of realizing one's reverse corrections: "I do not think

I have ever published anything that did not have an error in it. Typos have crept in and escaped proofreading. Miscitation and mistranslations have refused correction. Facts and judgments have, at times, seemed almost willfully in opposition to empirical evidence or received opinion."[7] Errors take on lives, wills, and agencies of their own in Lerer's evocative, pained phrasing; that agency combines and is amplified by the social behavior of other members of the academy whose professional identity is constructed through noticing and correcting the errors of others: "Referees for publishers, and after them, book reviewers often begin well and well-meaningly," Lerer continues. "But praise soon shatters into pedantry, and reports and reviews will often end with catalogs of broken lines and phrase: errata uncaught by editor or author, blots on the reputation of the scholar's knowledge or critical acumen." Lerer concludes this description of an error-determined life with a flourish: "It's as if I've led an erroneous life, as if what should be toted up on the pages of the book of judgment… are not achievements but mistakes. We live, in the academy, by blunder."

Kathleen Fitzpatrick takes the possibility of being wrong as an opportunity to reflect on what it means to produce academic work in disciplines that change over time. Fitzpatrick, who currently serves as Director of Scholarly Communication at the Modern Language Association, comes at the subject of wrongness and writing from her own experience of seeing institutions for scholarly publishing in decline for multiple reasons. Her first book, *The Anxiety of Obsolescence*, went through multiple publishers before being published digitally through Vanderbilt University Press on an interactive interface called CommentPress, which allowed public commenting on paragraphs of her work

[7] Seth Lerer, *Error and the Academic Self: The Scholarly Imagination, Medieval to Modern* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 1.

which she then incorporated into the print monograph.[8] She could be wrong—or unsure, or experimental, or disputative—on a scholarly platform, and that record became as important as the ideal of producing brilliant readings, devastating critiques, unassailable knowledge. Fitzpatrick writes: "The use of this critical humility, in which we acknowledge the mere possibility that we might not always be right, is in no small part the space it creates for genuinely listening to the ideas that others present, really considering their possibilities even when they contradict our own thoughts on the matter."[9] Both practically and optimistically, Fitzpatrick took a major roadblock in her scholarly work and turned it into the subject of her future work about scholarly publishing. In a blog post—a medium that's both material and immaterial, erasable but also shareable, she extends that work into epistemology as she poses questions about what kinds of critical forms of errancy might be important in the future. In this way, she joins Bolter and Grusin in figuring obsolescence and contingency—the most frustrating or terrifying things about contemporary scholarly work—as something worth studying as a media event with historical precedents.[10]

I can reach back even further to argue for the value of studying provisionality, contingency, and error as crucial scholarly values in the history of media studies. In *The*

[8] Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996). She reflected on the experience in her next book, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).
[9] Ibid.
[10] Warning against too much optimism about digital scholarship as a means of transforming scholarly editing, Gary Taylor and Peter Robinson have written essays about the contingencies of textual editing and preparing digital scholarly editions of work at a moment when funding, format, and professional status are in flux. Those essays are now fifteen years old, and many of their concerns have only been exacerbated. See Gary Taylor, "c:\wp\file.txt 05:41 10-07-98" in *The Renaissance Text: Theory, Editing, Textuality*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 44-54 and Peter Robinson, "Ma(r)king the Electronic Text: How, Why, and for Whom?" in *Ma(r)king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page*, ed. Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, Anne C. Henry (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2000), 309-28.

Printing Press as an Agent of Change, Elizabeth Eisenstein used an epigram from the eighteenth-century printer Joseph Ames as he tried to compile his own account of the progress of printing: "I do ingenuously confess that in attempting this history of Printing I Have undertaken a task much too great for my abilities the extent of which I did not perceive at first."[11] Ames' warning has echoed recursively through each of Eisenstein's book's revisions, critiques, and reevaluations since its publication in 1979: not as an apology for mistakes, but as a frank admission of the contingencies involved in printing, disciplinary trends and crtiques, institutional changes, and, more generally, the progress of knowledge. Eisenstein's book had a long gestation, drafting, and revision process, which traces back to 1963, when she wanted to correct the doom-saying exaggerations of the president of the American Historical Association who warned about the loss of historical awareness in an age of media saturation. She contrarily noted that the *glut* of historical publications threatened to make the discipline incoherent and fractious; then she read McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, which "seemed to take mischievous pleasure in the loss of familiar historical perspectives."[12] Though she felt that *The Gutenberg Galaxy* "seemed to testify to the special problems posed by print culture rather than those

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[11] Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), ix. She is quoting Joseph Ames, preface to Typographical Antiquities or the History of Printing in England, Scotland, and Ireland, ed Thomas Dibdin (London, 1810, reprinted from 1749), I:12. In its paperback edition published in 1980, the book was condensed from two volumes to one. The text of the introduction is adapted slightly in the second edition, which has been retitled *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For an assessment of the celebrations and critiques of Eisenstein's work, see *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, eds. Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

[12] Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, x. Later she notes the way that McLuhan's arguments seemed to go through a period of obsolescence before they were reanimated by media theorists: "Although Marshall McLuhan's work stimulated my historical curiosity, among many of my colleagues it has been counter-productive, discouraging further investigation of print culture or its effects. Concern with the topic at present is likely to be regarded with suspicion, to be labelled "McLuhanite" and dismissed out of hand. I hope my book with help to overcome this prejudice and show that the topic is not incompatible with respect for the historian's craft" (xvii).

produced by newer media," that book nonetheless inspired her because it "provided additional evidence of how overload could lead to incoherence." She published the first versions of her work as literature reviews of gaps in scholarship and "Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought: A Preliminary Report."[13] The publication of *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* in 1979 brought significant attention; as I discuss in the third and fourth chapters, many historians disagreed with the scope of her argument, her use of "agent" and "agency" as a slippery slope toward technodeterminsim, and her use of mostly secondary sources. To those concerns, she noted that the work was an assessment of the current historiography—a provocation to do different kinds of work.

Reflecting on the influence of her work thirty years later, she explains the value of conjecture and provisionality: "Especially when I was writing about the preservative powers of print (a theme assigned special importance and hence repeatedly sounded in the book), I could not help wondering about the wisdom of presenting views that were still in flux in so permanent a form"—a nod to recursion and self-reflection. This is not an excuse or an admission of error; rather, it is a reasonable assessment of how the progress of knowledge actually works through debate, refinement, revision, and even consolidation of what had seemed iconoclastic. She continues: "The reader should keep in mind the tentative, provisional character of what follows. This book should be read as an extended essay and not as a definitive text."[14] I read Eisenstein for her interest in reassessing her own work and considering its changes; in this dissertation's foray into a

[13] Eisenstein, "Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought" *Journal of Modern History* 40 (1968), 1-56.
[14] Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Modern Europe*, xvi.

fields invested in studying variations in the objects they study, I want to stress the value of the provisional and the contingent over the definitive in my own methodology.

The historian Anthony Grafton wrote one such critical review of Eisenstein's work, for his own long scholarly history has trained him in dealing with archives, documents, and particular histories over sweeping arguments.[15] In *Defenders of the Text*, he traces his own scholarly career across Europe as he completed his dissertation and worked with various archives with distinct protocols, histories, and approaches to humanist study. These distinctions are the bread and butter of a textual historian of humanism: "The scholar reasoning about a difficult text works within a set of context. Personal needs and circumstances, professional customs and institutions, long-standing intellectual and technical traditions, and recent polemics all shape his method and help to dictate his conclusions." It is striking that both Eisenstein and Grafton can make gestures to contingency and yet operate at different ends of argument about the protocols of historical research and argument. Grafton uses contingency as an argument for particularity, as he uses his own career of gaining expertise to reflect on the disciplinary knowledge that classicist editor Richard Bentley amassed in his own career of close textual scrutiny at the end of the seventeenth century: "He is the prisoner of his own tastes and obsessions, interests, and insensitivities. His deceptively modern-sounding arguments often address now-forgotten and unlikely issues or follow from now-obscure and alien premises."[16] Grafton would surely disagree with my own reading of Bentley's career in the second chapter of this dissertation, arguing that it has been distorted by my

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[15] Anthony Grafton, "The Importance of Being Printed," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XI:2 (1980), 265-286.
[16] Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: Traditions of Scholarship in the Age of Science 1450-1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 12. He assesses Bentley's career from 12-21.

own modern-sounding investments and thought experiments. But what if one could study the effects of these distortions and alien premises by engaging in them—somewhere between Grafton's immersion in the past and the Eisenstein's worry about the glut of discrete historiographies which may correct errors of fact, but not errors of interpretation or theoretical argument?

Reading through Distortion

The best illustration of my claim that error correction is proliferative is a scan of the facing errata and first page of Stephen Lobb's 1697 treatise, *The Growth of Error*[17] (see fig. 1). I discovered this image, this book by accident: I had searched for earlier articulations of "the progress of knowledge" on the Early English Books Online database and found this religious text, affixed with an errata sheet that shows the material manifestations of printers' mistakes even as one's immaterial errors are supposed to be corrected through reading. At multiple points in the dissertation, I argue that this kind of serendipitous errancy in the realm of digital remediation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts may be a site for different kinds of scholarship and knowledge production. I devote less space to interpreting these errors or correcting them than I do to theorizing their spread in more zoomed-out terms. Editorial historian Marcus Walsh argues that focusing on the editors' own particular misunderstandings, misjudgments, and other errors in methodology ignores their larger contributions to the larger discipline, for "most of their more consequential theoretical statements, and by far the greater number of their

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[17] Stephen Lobb, *The growth of error being an exercitation concerning the rise and progress of Arminianism and more especially Socinianism, both abroad and now of late, in England / by a lover of truth and peace. (*London: printed for John Salisbury, 1697).

practical textual decisions, involved issues of interpretative judgement rather than of textual description, collation or genealogy." To focus on the gaps in their knowledge of textual transmission is "likely to reveal areas of weakness rather than of strength, or rather to show them in the early stages of what might credibly be though an evolutionary science."[18] Where Walsh gives a historical, progressive account of the development of scholarly apparatus and its functions for enabling interpretative interventions, I juxtapose these interventions with other genres like the dream vision, reinstaurations of learning, empiricist essay, conjectural history, Menippean satire, and the georgic. These juxtapositions serve as thought experiments about the more speculative mediating qualities of textual criticism, a discipline that, after it threw off the claims to being a science in the nineteenth-century, has stressed its systematic protocols, consolidation, and institutional bona fides as a historicist practice that does rarely indulges in speculation.

The genre of critique has propelled the progress of knowledge about textual transmission; Jerome McGann has even played with remediating a canonical text in the discipline, W.W. Greg's "The Rationale of the Copy-Text" as "The Rationale of the Hyper-text" (fittingly, that remediated essay appears in multiple print and digital versions, as McGann has taken that rationale to heart).[19] Others have framed their critiques as motivational calls for crisis and intervention, which yielded Randall McLeod's extraordinary "FIAT fLUX," an illustrated-yet-iconoclastic polemic about the failures of twentieth-century textual criticism to interpret, understand, or even notice

[18] Marcus Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing: The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18-19.

[19] Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism.* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, reprint 1983/1992), and "The Rationale of the Hypertext" in *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web* (Cambridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 53-74. The essay appeared in *TEXT* 9 (1996) 11-32 and was revised by McGann for his professional web site http://jerfferson.village.virgiinia.edu/rossetti/rossetti.html. See also: W.W. Greg, "The Rationale of the Copy-Text," *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950-51), 19-36.

consequential variants in image and design. Writing as Random Cloud as part of his unconventional critique, he issued a scathing indictment of previous editors who claimed systematic, sustained attention to detail: "This period, though it includes the rise of systematic literary study of English letters in the university, also exhibits the greatest diversity, and hence the greatest error, of editorial renderings that are attempting to be authoritative…."[20] Even McLeod's detractors have found the essay to be important to the discipline; its iconoclasm has become part of the textual criticism canon as scholars have incorporated his interests in design into their protocols of attention. For my part, writing twenty years after the publication of "FIAT fLUX," I study it as an experiment in dual forms of remediation: of refashioning image and textual media, and of remedying a discipline's protocols, goals, and illusions.

The term "remediation" is especially felicitous for recontextualizing Lerer's, Fitzpatrick's, McLeod's, and, indeed, my own preoccupation with error, for the coinage remediation only appears to be same word as the more traditional uses of the word in relation to remedy and correction. Mediation and remedy do not have the same root and are only *resemble* each other in having the same spelling.[21] The link between remediation and re-mediation is an error generated (but not really theorized) by Bolter and Grusin. I argue that there is productive play between the two words that is created by the misprision: there is a recursive power to the work of having to go back and re-read the neologism. But re-reading is not limited to distinguishing between the two as just one

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[20] Randall McLeod/Random Cloud, "FIAT fLUX," *Crisis in Editing: Texts of the English Renaissance.* Papers given at the 24th Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto 4-5 November, 1988. New York: AMS Press, 1994, 61-172, 148.
[21] For an etymological history of the term "mediation" in the Enlightenment, see John Guillory, "Enlightening Mediation." *This Is Enlightenment*, Clifford Siskin and William Warner, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 37-66.

meaning or the other; rather, it revels in the slipperiness of the conflation between refashioning and committing an error. Kevis Goodman shares my interest in this slipperiness in an eighteenth-century context, as she studies the ways that the georgic genre plays with “an implicit conjunction between remedy and mediation.”[22] As I shall discuss in the fourth chapter, the eighteenth-century georgic figures poetic labor as an ongoing process of remediation of the world through translation and criticism; in this contemporary context of error-prone, reflective scholarly media, it may point the way to considering Fitzpatrick’s imagined future of scholarly labor as errancy. Thinking of scholarly work as creative remediation allows for experimentation, testing, and assessment of historical change that is not successive but recursive, in its dilation on how past errors pose possibilities for recombination and re-mediation.

In *Remediation*, Bolter and Grusin use the coinage as a kind of keyword experiment in the tradition of Marshall McLuhan.[23] McLuhan described his work in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* as being a kind of “mosaic approach” in which quotations, data, and reflections are juxtaposed with one another in order to generate new directions of thought: “the alternative procedure would be to offer a series of views of fixed relationships in pictorial space. Thus the galaxy or constellation of events upon which the present study concentrates is itself a mosaic of perpetually interacting forms that have undergone kaleidoscopic transformation.”[24] Neil Rhodes traces McLuhan’s one tile of McLuhan’s interest in the mosaic form to his graduate work at Cambridge, where he read

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[22] Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 23, 152n.

[23] They have reformulated and repurposed their work in a number of places, and they treat these republications and refashionings as critically productive. See for example, “Remediation,” *Configurations* 4:3 (1996), 311-358 and “‘Remediating McLuhan,” *The Legacy of McLuhan*, eds. Lance Strate and Edward Wachtel (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc., 2005), 323-343.

[24] Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), [i].

F.R. Leavis and Denys Thompson's *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness*, which arranged images from advertising in a tessellated form to play with distinctions of high culture and low culture reading.[25] McLuhan could juxtapose that critical awareness with his one of his dissertation's subjects, Thomas Nashe, who also played with form, mediation, and high/low distinctions in his early modern poetry. "What Nashe called 'gallimaufry' (motley, medley), McLuhan called 'mosaic,'" writes Rhodes. Furthermore, "the experimental quality of Nashe's style, with its mixture of neologism, acoustic effect, and a sliding between high and low elements, has prompted comparisons with much later writers, notably Joyce. These comparisons may be specious or misleading, but the point here is that they show that Nashe may give the *appearance* of modernity to the modern reader." With that genealogy we can see McLuhan start to use the mosaic approach for diachronic investigations that juxtapose formal qualities across time and space.[26] To add another mosaic tile to this textured intellectual background, Nashe's and Joyce's visual-verbal wordplay designs appealed to McLuhan's later interest in concrete poetry forms that were flourishing around him in the 1960s.[27] For McLuhan,

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[25] Neil Rhodes, "On Speech, Print, and New Media: Thomas Nashe and Marshall McLuhan" *Oral Tradition* 24:2 (2009). Speaking of contingencies that limit access and research: "Since Cambridge University Library will not lend out the thesis in any form, and also imposes a strict embargo on quotation from it, this work has understandably not featured much in discussions of McLuhan and his subsequent intellectual development."

[26] In her afterword to *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, Eisenstein reassess her book's project and describes at one point how McLuhan's work led her to become "concerned with the diachronic as well as with the synchronic aspects" of print technology" (318).

[27] See Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 136-169. To give just one example of Cavell's extraordinary mosaic of research: "The Brazilian concretists "cite Joyce's term 'verbivocovisual,' though without citing Joyce…. McLuhan had used the term *verbivocovisual* in the October 1957 issue of *Explorations* as the title of one of the items in which he identifies the 'staccato stutter of the typewriter' as 'really close to the stutter that is oral speech.' *Verbi-Voco-Visual Explorations* (1967) became the title of *Explorations* 8 when it was published separately by Something Else press, which was closely tied, through its publisher, Dick Higgins, to the concretist movement. Indeed, Emmett Williams's landmark *Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, published in the same year by Higgins's press, listed McLuhan's book on its dust-jacket, describing it there as an 'early fusillade (1957)…trained comprehensively and comprehensibly on the word: taps for the written culture, a victory salvo for the oral revolution'" (143). Cavell's book is a brilliant historical account of McLuhan's

these creative, multimedia juxtapositions across time and space are generative because they are not fixed: they insist on reimagining a poetic, critical medium for new kinds of sensory perception.[28] In this space, juxtapositional errors may be promiscuous, social, and transformative.

I situate McLuhan's work in studying how media are forms of sensory theory in relation to eighteenth-century discussions of mind, perception, and language. Notably, those theories—from John Locke to Bishop Berkeley—are more concerned with identifying the sources of error than they are with articulating the positive formations of these claims. As with Lobb's already erroneous edition of *The Growth of Error*, the digital remediation of Berkeley's work and its errata sheets also poses some moments of reflection on irony and design (see fig. 2). In the chapters that follow, I examine Pope, Bentley, Theobald, Percy, and other authors and editors as though they were in an Oliver Sacks study of neurological errors and disorders,[29] as they generate work and visions of the world through distorted sensory perceptions of sight, sound, and even touch. When errors proliferate—when they concatenate into satires and/or new visions of the world—they produce more than just shame and humiliation. They produce epistemological wonder.

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intellectual history and influence, but it also takes seriously McLuhan's interest in non-linear approaches to media theory across time and space.

[28] There are many other tiles to McLuhan's intellectual history, but because I am going to return to the form of concrete poetry as an unconventional probe for thinking about the history of media transmission across space and time, I want to add Mary Ellen Solt's own salvo for her 1969 anthology *Concrete Poetry: A World View*. Solt argues that the form allows for "…the concrete poet is concerned with establishing his linguistic material in a new relationship to space (the page or its equivalent) and/or to time (abandoning the old linear measure)." See Solt, *Concrete Poetry: A World View* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1969), 7. I will puzzle over this claim to engage with a media object that operates outside of linear dimensions of time and space as I discuss the ways that editors historicize and artifactualize textual and image objects, how they frame their mediations over format, time, and space. Even thus far in the introduction, we can see how Walsh, McGann, McLeod, Eisenstein, and Grafton might have very different thoughts on their objects' position in time and the space of the page.

[29] Oliver Sacks, *The Mind's Eye*. (New York: Random House, 2010).

In this way, I depart from a strict historicist approach to studying the material cultures of error, as that way has already been paved by bibliographers and historians of material culture like Walsh, Jerome McGann, Anthony Grafton, David McKitterick, Ann Blair, Peter Stallybrass, Margreta de Grazia, and above all D.F. McKenzie, who coined the useful phrase, “the sociology of texts.” All of these writers have engaged, often critically, with Eisenstein’s work—yet even in their criticism they treat her as a crucial interlocutor. For example, McKitterick has studied thousands of errata sheets and correctors’ notes, leading him to prioritize this kind of scholarly attention to distinct materialities: “Texts are not fixed. They are always mobile—at the time of writing, the time of production, the time of publication, and over the course of time, quite apart form in the hands of different readers.” He frames his argument as a commonplace, an idea that’s reasonable in its practicality: “This is well known to historians of reader response, to social scientists and to literary and art critics alike. But it is not always fully understood from a bibliographical point of view; and without a clear understanding of bibliographical issues *there are dangers in constructing historical, literary or critical theory.”*[30] I welcome that danger here, and I interrogate some of the reasons why material historians might harp on that attention to detail, in favor of spinning outward toward speculation—and maybe even toward the ahistorical yet generative errors of anachronism, conflation, and counterfactual history.

In advocating a strategy of reading the eighteenth-century obsession with correcting and proliferating mistakes of apprehension, perception, and communication, Zachary Sng recommends a practice of oscillating between two meanings of error:

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[30] David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order, 1450-1830.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 97.

> To read the rhetoric of error in a set of texts therefore means two kinds of reading at once. The first is a reconstruction of the rhetorical strategies that such texts employ to produce the category of 'error' and to allow for its containment or conversion into gain. The second is an examination of how error itself produces a vertigo-inducing suspension of the strategies revealed by the first reading.[31]

Sng looks to semiotic theory to perform this oscillation, but I appropriate this strategy in the realm of mediation, where McLuhan's mosaic approach enables reading both ways at once: "To conduct both of these readings simultaneously involves a close consideration of the thematics of these texts as well as their theoretical registers, but the goal is not thereby to arrive at the knowledge of one's superiority over the other, or even a consistent opposition between the two." Sng's work on error retraces post-structuralist theories of polyvalence and incommensurable meaning, sometimes so much so that it feels like a rehearsal of close readings rather than a series of new insights. Yet this idea of letting multiple readings exist together is a good way of thinking about the oscillating relationships among the 1991 and 2001 editions of *Writing Space* and *Remediation,* among competing eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare, even among this dissertation and the forms it may take in the future. They are conjectural histories of media that both trace a trajectory of texts and readings; crucially, they also point to their planned obsolescence by exposing and dilating on their own errors of version, reconsideration, and thought experiments that have outlived their usefulness.

Anticipating this possible charge of obsolescence, McLuhan extended his terminology to include the technology of the probe that provokes new kinds of connections (even if they occur by means of generating error). Elena Lamberti describes their functionality as stemming from their incomplete theorization:

[31] Zachary Sng, *The Rhetoric of Error from Locke to Kleist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

> A probe or gloss is a dynamic rhetorical device envisaged as a textual addition that creates a series of related patterns of knowledge inside and outside the text itself. If reader reads through the probe—that is, if they see it as a window opening on a broader textual and contextual landscape—they read in depth, investigating and discussing possible meanings, links, and further implications.[32]

She situates the device in the tradition of Francis Bacon's aphorisms from *The Advancement of Learning*: "The probe is used to convey a broken knowledge." Seen in terms of Bacon and McLuhan, what Lerer describes frustratedly as "broken lines" of listed errors at the ends of academic reviews may also be an opportunity for refashioning of knowledge.

This approach to indulging in the contingencies and accidents of knowledge production requires making allowances: tolerating imprecision, over-proliferation, promiscuity, and as forms of broken knowledge that may generate new ideas if they are remediated recursively (and not just rehearsed). As a probe, the term "remediation" has a kind of numinous power in being defined and redefined by its context and proliferating uses. In the preface to *Remediation*, Bolter and Grusin describe its coinage in what appear to be deliberately vague terms:

> It was in May 1996, in a meeting in his office with Sandra Beaudin that RG was reported to have coined the term *remediation* as a way to complicate the notion of "repurposing" that Beaudin was working with for her class project. But, as most origin stories go, it was not until well after the fact, when Beaudin reported the coinage to JB, who later reminded RG that he had coined the term, that the concept of "remediation" could be said to have emerged. Indeed, although the term *remediation* was coined in RG's office, neither of us really knew what it meant until we had worked out together the double logic of immediacy and hypermediacy.[33]

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[32] Elena Lamberti, *McLuhan's Mosaic: Probing the Literary Origins of Media Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 43.
[33] Bolter and Grusin, viii.

In a review of *Remediation*, Matthew Kirschenbaum detects a slippage in Bolter and Grusin's coinage: a problem of claiming agency in narrating this scene:

> This is writing that itself bears the mark of multiple mediations, from the willfully passive construction of its syntax … to the flutter of the keyword remediation from an italicized presentation to scare quotes and back again. I dwell on such details not to be clever, but rather because those visible stress-marks, and the placement of this vignette in the volume's preface (where it is labeled, tongue-in-cheek, as an "origin story") both underscore the extent to which language itself is about to be recycled and repurposed in the project that follows.[34]

I want to mediate between the theorists Bolter and Grusin and their critic Kirschenbaum to propose a creative alternative: that we sit with the problem of agency that Kirschenbaum notices not as (only) as a charge about unclear writing, but as an opportunity to theorize the productive errors of describing collaborative agency. What is unclear in the syntax may be a critical slippage, but it may also be an error that reveals an epistemological problem of co-writing in the single-author-centric genre of an origin story, indeed a story of critical-poetic inspiration. I shall assess those moments when I discuss the challenges of rendering competition and collaboration in Shakespeare editing as something more than just a series of social disputes, and rather as evidence of iterative correction by many hands as an engine for alternative forms of agency. I can say that Kirschenbaum's noticing an error produced an epistemological revelation for me—a creative dance of correction and extension of the probe.

Kirschenbaum continues his critique of Bolter and Grusin's super-flexible use of the term "remediation" in its already-useful contexts:

> For remediation is not in fact a neologism or a new coinage but rather a paleonym, a word already in use that is recast in wider or different terms: remediation is a word commonly encountered in business, educational,

[34] Matthew Kirschenbaum, "Media, Genealogy, History" *electronic book review 9* (1999). http://www.altx.com/ebr/reviews/rev9/r9kir.htm

> and environmental contexts to denote remedy or reform. Bolter and Grusin do acknowledge this later in the book by discussing remediation's usage by educators (59), but "remediation" (the word's) status as a paleonym itself becomes questionable when we realize that Bolter and Grusin clearly expect *Remediation* (the book) to perform exactly this kind of reformative work—most broadly as a corrective to the prevailing notion of the "new" in new media.[35]

Here is a different kind of origin story about the proliferating—indeed, purposefully, argumentatively remediating and generative—meanings of the term: Because Bolter and Grusin gesture at the other meanings of remediation in professional contexts of education and environmental cleanup, I had labored under the false impression that the words remediation (as remedy) and re-mediation (as refashioning of media) did have the same root. I was corrected, gently, in a job interview in which I was describing my work. I was stunned and embarrassed, briefly, but then I remarked that I was performing a similar kind of critical error to Richard Bentley, who notoriously claimed to be editing erroneous homonyms in *Paradise Lost*. It was a save—a flippant correction—but it later generated an insight about Bentley's willfully erroneous practices. I not only fixed an error, but I used that act of correction to concatenate into a larger theory, choosing not to erase its existence but to highlight it in this introduction as the explanation of my method.

As I was being corrected about conflating the roots of "mediation," the interviewer also pointed out that my writing has a recursive quality to it. He meant it in a complimentary way—it was a risk in scholarly writing, but he believed it had paid off in what I had submitted. My writing has always been described as recursive, whether in complimentary or critical terms, because I'm invested in juggling and jumbling many different sources together to probe what happens. The most inspiring comment I heard in graduate school was that we, as students who had already succeeded in undergraduate

[35] Ibid.

English departments, already knew how to close-read texts—so that meant that we could learn how to do something else. That "something else" wasn't articulated—we were meant to find it ourselves. It wasn't even meant to be found or recovered from something "out there": it was to be practiced, corrected, reflected on, taught, and shared as a recursive process of learning and doing scholarship. For many reasons, I found that exhortation more enabling in the classroom, where I could present the same challenge to students in my classes and share their befuddlement, excitement, push-back, and experimentation. This project is a record of trying to do that in my own scholarly writing, performed with many moments of doubt, attenuated attention, pedagogical experiments, and revelations along the way.

At many points, it has felt both like a secular "Progress of Error" and like Cowper's monumental work of meditation on objects and media, *The Task*. Cowper's *Task* appeals to my belief in mediation as a recursive exercise. His description of reading the newspaper reminds me of my past in journalism—and, crucially, it is also a figure of the complex printed mediations in the dream vision poetry, editorial variorums, and miscellanies that I am analyzing.

> What is it but a map of busy life,
> Its fluctuations and its vast concerns?
> Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
> That tempts ambition.
> …
> Here rills of oily eloquence, in soft
> Meanders, lubricate the course they take;
> …
> The dearth of information and good sense
> That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
> Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
> There forests of no meaning spread the page
> In which all comprehension wanders lost;
> While fields of pleasantry amuse us there,

With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion.[36]

At an obvious level, this is a description of a printed page for social interactions, with retired, isolated Cowper observing the din and debate from afar. Cowper sees the printed newspaper page as a kind of mosaic in McLuhan's terms, a series of juxtaposed discourses. The alliterative "rills of oily eloquence" enacts the very sliminess it describes—it is the very paradox or error that poetic language has always been good at rendering. "Forests of no meaning spread the page" is a picture of the very scenes of information overload that have been the subjects of decline narratives for centuries. Cowper's poem also participates in the georgic mode that Goodman has traced in her history of georgic media; I use it here as a kind of touchstone of my self-administered tasks of recursively returning to my own past experiences in media to reflect on what the future might hold for my own scholarly labor.

Remediation as Critical Making

Because I have spent more time thinking about remediation in the classroom, I have tested it out in many contexts other than the eighteenth century—especially in new media theory and anonymous Internet art and poetry collectives that delight in errors made by anonymous agents. I draw from critical approaches that are promiscuous, self-indulgent, and experimental for juxtapositions that are unexpected and even ahistorical. In this way, I am actually quite distant from Cloud's call for scrutiny as a means of conferring authority:

[36] William Cowper, *The Task*, ed. Sambrook, 139-40.

> Our conclusions must be partial; inevitably we are consigned to some kind of error….Taken as a whole, the body of editorial modification and commodification can constitute a map of misreadings, not only those of our naive selves, but also those of our culture at large. I think it takes exacting textual criticism of authoritative documents to force editing to disclose such a map, for without an external discipline those who wander in editing will simply become what they behold.[37]

I may even fall into the errancy of wandering without external discipline because I am drawing so promiscuously as a kind of sustained thought experiment in recursion as mediated reflection. I am willing to be wrong.

My approach in the dissertation is synecdochal—I am less interested in assessing the meaningfulness of the particular content of corrections or presenting a material history of their presence on so many pages. I close-read some texts but not others, and I am most interested in texts that are easy to close-read for literary meaning but then take it on too well, generating "artifacts of procedure" that evince the arbitrariness of any method to reveal knowledge. I am inspired by Johanna Drucker's work in critical bibliography for the ways that she engages with many of the terms, methods, and goals of textual and digital scholarship, only to turn back and reflect on what assumptions she has been laboring under.[38] Like Bolter and Fitzpatrick, she makes visible the ways that disciplinary obsolescence is related to technological change, as when she introduces her work on experimental typography: "The research for this book was begun in an era in which semiotics was considered a useful interpretive tool, but the writing is concluded at

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[37] Cloud, "FIAT fLUX," 148, 150.

[38] See Johanna Drucker, "Intimations of Immateriality: Graphical Form, Textual Sense, and the Electronic Environment." *Reimagining Textuality: Textual Studies in the Late Age of Print,* ed. Elizabeth Bermann Loizeaux and Neil Fraistat (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2002). 152-177 and "Digital Ontologies: The Ideality of Form in/and Code Storage—or—Can Graphesis Challenge Mathesis?" *Leonardo* 34:1 (2001). 141-45. When Laura Mandell was working on an essay about digital humanities scholarship, she wrote to Drucker to ask a question about her work. Drucker sent back not just an answer to the question but a full revision of the essay—she seems to be committed to treating her work recursively. See Laura Mandell, ""What's the Matter? What Literary History Neither Hears Nor Sees" *New Literary History* 38.4 (2007) 755-776, 775.

a moment in which semiotics has become the object of historical and historiographical inquiry."[39] Her writing can be dense with critical terms of her own making and which she has adapted from others; her sentences often flip back on themselves as she recursively reflects on how she's producing knowledge through the technology of critical writing. For example, here is her explanation of her argument in "Intimations of Immateriality," an allusion to Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" as well as a critical remediation of what Drucker worries is a too-settled distinction between materiality and immateriality in media studies, wherein the materiality of code is ignored when it is idealized into "just" digital form:

> Configured meaning is an aesthetic, structural, and substantive part of linguistic form. Consideration of configured meaning (in which configuration is taken to be part of textual information) allows us to revive the philosophical inquiry into the relation between sense and form. This can be explored initially in the interrogation of the identity of the letter, and then at the level of text, document, and archive. The exploration always asks how the visual forms of language inform the production of meaning in the electronic environment, and, in turn, how the immaterial text of the electronic domain offers the fundamentals of 'ideality' of sense in relation to visual, graphical form through an examination of configured meaning at the level of the text.[40]

Each sentences builds complexity on the previous one, mostly by explaining how those previous sentences are constrained by prior ontologies and epistemologies. It feels nearly Cowperian in its circumlocution around a particular subject which is both material (a sofa, a newspaper for Cowper; a letter, an archive for Drucker) and immaterial (faith, ontology). The unclear antecedent in the sentence that begins "this can be explored

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[39] Drucker, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art 1909-1923* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1. She ends the introduction with a similar barb: "My own project has become historicized as well as historical, and that suggests to me that this is an appropriate moment to draw it to an end" (8). The monograph itself is a finite form, but she continues to reflect on the historicity of scholarly discourse and interventions in her later work.
[40] Drucker, "Intimations of Immaterality," 155.

initially" is telling, I think, not of a usage infelicity but rather of the hugeness of Drucker's project and the ways that her critical writing demands recursive reading and reformulating. Indeed, the best way I can work with her ideas is to *make* them, so I can have something concrete and material to read as I am exploring the ontologies she is unmaking.

This project has a thesis that can be terrifying or exhilarating: every attempt to correct an error ends up proliferating errors. We could reconceive of Lerer's "academic life … as blunder" as being like living in a poorly rendered virtual reality: in which all perspective was off in some ways, where typos, miscitations, mistranslations, misjudgments, and broken views manifested themselves as perspectival errors created by sloppy or perverse coders. A typo would look like an errant pixel, perhaps, or a mistranslation from Latin to English would be a glitch in the code as it has been translated from one medium to another. As Norman Klein puts it in his provocatively ahistorical study of special effects, any study of perception and its wonders demands a recursive method of description and analysis and a play with historicity: "This book is designed as a computer 450 years old: the chapters, index, notes. This 'Baroque' structure helps me explain how 'software' since 1550 has serviced special effects." He finds his method in the Baroque period and then adapts it to a critical survey, knowing that such a survey produces artifacts of perspective and sensory disorientation that he will highlight as generators for his inquiry: "When a text in a book generates special effects, what does that look like? … For the tone of the writing to be sensory and atmospheric, in the sense of special effects, I need to mix in the fictive and novelistic. The tactile and auditory in

effects belong in writing."[41] Lori Emerson makes a similar kind of argument that we must account for how our immersive experiences with print and digital media enable recursive thought: "It's not just that we irremediably see the book through the lens of the digital but that the technology of the book finds its way into the digital—the book, reconfigured in our minds and in actual fact by the digital."[42]

For that reason, I experiment in this dissertation with digital remediations that introduce errors into texts, images, and sounds as a way of theorizing remediation through error-prone practice. I am working in a contemporary art movements called "the New Aesthetic" and "the glitch aesthetic," which revel in glitchy reality, in which one notices pixelations, distortions, and failures to render as moments to reflect on mediation. The vaguely named "New Aesthetic," which began as a provocation by media futurist James Bridle to collect examples of visual glitches that introduced epistemological problems into their networks, bears some resemblance to the aesthetic debates from the beginning of the eighteenth century and then extended toward theorizing the sublime. Eighteenth-century aesthetic debates remediated images into concepts and engendered new forms of writing to share these theories. The New Aesthetic and glitch aesthetics are also committed to critical writings that both describe and theorize these new ways of seeing but also maintain the errors and glitches as non-assimilable objects as "an attempt to 'write' critically about the network in the vernacular of the network itself."[43] And yet that writing produces charges of misprision—in much the same way that the more Lerer

[41] Norman M. Klein, *The Vatican to Vegas: A History of Special Effects* (New York: The New Press, 2004), 16-17.
[42] Lori Emerson, *Reading Writing Interfaces: From the Digital to the Bookbound* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 135.
[43] James Bridle, "The New Aesthetic and Its Politics" booktwo.org June 12, 2013 http://booktwo.org/notebook/new-aesthetic-politics/

worried about mistranslations of his Latin texts, the more they seemed to appear crucial to his work. Bridle argues: "it is as much work as criticism: it does not conform to the formal shapes—manifesto, essay, book—expected by critics and academics. As a result, it remains largely illegible to them … I think the deeper and more interesting aspect of this misreading of the New Aesthetic is that it directly mirrors what it is describing: the illegibility of technology itself to a non-technical audience."

In his essay "glitches are us," Alex Reid points out that astronaut John Glenn's coinage of the term "glitch" was originally associated with a surge in intensity, and thus a glitch is a moment when we realize that our perception of the world is always already mediated by technologies of vision: "Whatever agency we attribute to our subjective experience exists inasmuch as the subjective relations with both the external world and our internal processes are glitchy and leave some uncertain space."[44] That moment is not the time to pick up the scourge but rather an opportunity to re-see the world and one's relation to it. Reid sees these glitches not as errors to be corrected but rather as errors to be pressed on for epistemological inquiry: "glitches … introduce thought and agency (and rhetoric) but also allow us to understand composing as natural, technological, discursive, and social all at once." The error-prone world is generative of new ways of knowing. Error is a challenge to ontology because correcting it is supposed to make the error disappear. If it is not detected, is it an error? If it is not corrected, is it an error? If it is corrected, what does it become?

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[44] Alex Reid, "Glitches Are Us," digital digs, May 22, 2012. http://alex-reid.net/2012/05/glitches-are-us.html

Chapter 1: The Circular Ruins of Alexander Pope: Theorizing the Poetics of Remediation

"I herde a gret noyse withalle
In a corner of the halle,
Ther men of love-tydynges toddle,
And I gan thiderward beholde;
For I saugh renynge every wight
As faste as that they hadden might,
And everych cried, 'what thing is that?'
And somme sayde, 'I not never what.'
And whan they were all on an hepe,
Tho behynde begunne up lepe,
And clamben up on other faste,
And up the nose and yën kaste,
And trodden fast on others heles,
And stampe, as men doon aftir eles.
Atte laste y saugh a man,
Which that y [nevene] nat ne kan;
But he semed for to be
A man of gret auctorite…"
--Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Hous of Fame,* (c.1379)[45]

"At first, his dreams were chaotic; a little later they became dialectical. The foreigner dreamed he was in the center of a circular amphitheater, which was somehow the ruined temple; clouds of taciturn students completely filled the terraces of seats. The faces of those farthest away hung at many centuries' distance and at a cosmic height, yet they were absolutely clear. … He understood that the task of modeling the incoherent and dizzying stuff that dreams are made of is the most difficult work a man can undertake, even if he fathom all the enigmas of the higher and lower spheres—much more difficult than weaving a rope of sand or minting coins of the faceless wind. He understood that initial failure was inevitable. He swore to put behind him the vast hallucination that at first had drawn him off track, and he sought another way to approach his task."
--Jorge Luis Borges, "The Circular Ruins" (1940, tr. 1946)[46]

Introduction: Modeling the Incoherent and Dizzying Stuff of Dreams

[45] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The House of Fame, The Riverside Chaucer*, third edition, general editor Larry Benson (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987), ll. 2141-2158, 373.
[46] Jorge Luis Borges, "The Circular Ruins" (1944) *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (New York: Penguin, 1998), 97.

The last line of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Hous of Fame* leaves the poem famously unfinished: whom does the speaker, a not-quite author figure called Geffrey, encounter? What is his great authority?[47] What are his interactions with the allegorical figure of Fama, the goddess who presides over the dream vision? In the classical tradition Chaucer is referencing and refashioning, Fama is an arbiter of all utterances and how they will circulate in the world—as preserved literary forms, eternal truths, ephemeral snippets, misquotations, apocrypha, or things in between. Her choices are arbitrary and capricious, her supplicants' fortunes contingent and precarious. At this unfinished ending, the visitors to the House of Fame clamber to seek a final answer to their queries as to their literary statuses, but they cannot determine the outcome. They are left with an unresolved "hepe" of "tydynges," or scraps of rumor and miscellaneous information—it is difficult to distinguish signal from noise. In this way, the poem theorizes itself as a self-same member of the aporetic, staticky stuff that circulates in the House of Fame.

In this chapter, I read the poem as an account of remediation, the refashioning of disparate media into new forms, as it dramatizes the ways in which "media are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other."[48] The poem is also a remediation itself, as it is constituted of translations of older texts and extended allusions

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[47] One can read the poem historically as situated in Chaucer's time at court, and read *The House of Fame* and the Parliament of Fowls as political allegories to the marriage of King Richard II to Anne of Bohemia, among other political intrigues he observed. As an allegory, it is situated generically to draw on traditions form the *Roman de la Rose*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, among many others. The poem itself already casts some doubt onto the idea of a single interpretation of a dream—say, as an allegory that stands for one particular situation—and leaves them as multifarious and open-ended. See Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and Michael St. John, *Chaucer's Dream Visions: Courtliness and Individual Identity* (London: Ashgate, 2000).
[48] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2000), 55.

that ekphrastically reframe older media in the text.[49] Chaucer's dream vision is "an allegory on the processes of reading and writing, … raising questions concerning inspiration and transmission, as well as interpretation and authority, that destabilize tradition instead of reaffirming it"[50]—a remediation about the process of remediation. It is a virtuosic infinite regression that figures a recursive churn of literary productions which is never resolved and cycles forward without an apparent direction or resolution. Jorge Luis Borges builds such a metafictional rubric in "The Circular Ruins," in which the dream vision of a ruined temple generates a creative space for imagining new literary productions elsewhere in the collection of *Ficciones*—at the end of the story, the dreamer realizes he was but a figure in another man's dream, a point on a line of infinite regression. Like "The Library of Babel" and "The Garden of Forking Paths" (also collected in *Ficciones*), "The Circular Ruins" figures an alternate imaginative spatial configuration of literary texts that comment on their own textuality in a mirror hall of epistemology: a dream vision of recursive writing. So what happens when the dream vision of Fama undergoes another iteration of translation in eighteenth-century print media, in which those scraps are all the more abundant and multifarious?

Alexander Pope's *Temple of Fame*, published in 1715, is not as obviously strange or unstable as Chaucer's dream vision. Pope works with the third section of *Hous of Fame*, though he draws material about theories of distorted aurality from the second book without explicitly citing his Chaucerian source. He contracts the meaning of Fama from

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[49] As when the speaker, Geffrey, sees panels that retell stories from the *Aeneid*, and he worries that he is not up to the task of describing their beauty.
[50] Deanne Williams, "The Dream Visions," *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Seth Lerer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 149.

that of generalized rumor to a reference to one's literary reputation or Fame,[51] an interpretation he solidifies when he adds a moral—"Then teach me, heaven! to scorn the guilty bays, / Drive from my breast that wretched lust of praise"[52]—to what had been unfinished and open-ended. In the Advertisement, he claims he has completely refashioned the source material, yet in so doing he indicates his work's status as a remediation. He has taken "the hint of the following piece" from Chaucer: "The design is in a manner entirely altered, the description and most of the particular thoughts my own" yet "wherever any hint is taken from him, the passage itself is set down in the marginal notes."[53] Pope's composition is immediate—"most of the particular thoughts my own"—but it is also mediated through footnotes that explain the translations from the earlier author's work and its conventions of the dream vision genre.[54] *The Temple of Fame* is a poem about the double logic of remediation in a printed translation: Pope situates his literary reputation by immersing his speaker in the dream vision—which reflects the immersive experience of dreaming itself—and hyper-mediating that experience in his acknowledgement of genre and the interface of textual media.

Error does not appear in Pope's translation, though she is an allegorical figure who attends Fama as another interfering mediator in other dream visions of print culture from the period.[55] In Dryden's translation of Book Twelve of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

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[51] For an account of how the word changed meaning from the medieval period to the eighteenth century, see A.C. Cawley, "Chaucer, Pope, and Fame," *Review of English Literature* 3 (1962), 9-19.
[52] Alexander Pope, *The Temple of Fame*, *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope*, ed. Herbert Davis (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), ll. 521-22, 132-46.
[53] Pope, "Advertisement to *The Temple of Fame,*" 132.
[54] The heavy epigraphs to this chapter are another frame on this phenomenon.
[55] Most famously she appears in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie-Queene* as half-serpent, half-woman, spewing papers and junk:
"Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,

(published in *Fables, Ancient and Modern* in 1700), she lurks on the margins of the scene with the other destabilizing figures:

> Error sits brooding there; with added train
> Of vain credulity and joys as vain
> Suspicion, with sedition joined, are near;
> And rumours raised, and murmurs mixed, and panic fear.
> Fame sits aloft, and sees the subject ground,
> And seas about, and skies above inquiring all around.[56]

Robert Lloyd, always attuned to his own minor status as a professional poet, wrote a dream vision of "The Temple of Favour" (published posthumously in 1774), in which he figures literary reputation and lasting fame as a series of repetitive ministrations to Fame. John Dryden, Samuel Otway, and John Gay must continually re-scale the mountain to the Temple "built by dame Error's hasty hands" to varying degrees of success and "repeat their lives, their work, their fame" to maintain their place in the canon.[57] The situation is always precarious:

> Lethargic Error for a while
> Deceives him with her specious smile,
> And flatt'ring dreams delusive shed
> Gay gilded visions round his head.
>
> When, swift as thought, the goddess lewd
> Shifts the light gale; and tempests rude,
> Such as the northern skies deform,
> When fell Destruction guides the storm,
> Transport him to some dreary isle
> Where Favour never deign'd to smile.
> Where waking, helpless, all alone,
> Midst craggy steeps and rocks unknown;
> Sad scenes of woe his pride confound,
> And Desolation stalks around. (ll. 140-54)

And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthy parbreake all the place defiled has." (Book I, Canto I, ll.)

[56] John Dryden, *The Twelfth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, from *Fables Ancient and Modern*, ll. 83-88. *The Works of John Dryden*, eds. Edward Niles Hooker, H.T. Swedenberg, Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956-2000), 4:409.

[57] Robert Lloyd, "The Temple of Favour," *The Poetical Works of Robert Lloyd*, ed. William Kenrick (London, 1774), ll.101-104

Lloyd situates Error specifically in a print marketplace of Fame that has been made by Pope and his battles with adversaries to attain fame and authority; he opts out of the race that Pope has chronicled—indeed, exacerbated—in the *Dunciad*: "I jostle no poetic name; / I envy none their proper fame; … Nor would, to gain a Monarch's Favour, / Let Dulness or her sons enslave her" (ll. 180-92). Error's powers of distortion are like Fame's in that they are arbitrary; her mistake-ridden texts may be ridiculed, but more likely they are forgotten and lost.

In the eighteenth century, what was already a self-aware, self-reflexive genre becomes even more so—it becomes recursive—as new hyper-mediations in printed text reorient the dream vision toward dreaming specifically in print, with poetic plays on fears of errors and arbitrary preservation.[58] Joseph Addison warns of a glut—"Had I printed every one that came to my Hands, my Book of Speculations would have been little else but a Book of Visions"—in the very headnote to another dream vision in the *Spectator*.[59] Pope remediates his *Temple of Fame* into the *Dunciad*, in which the Queen of Dulness replaces Fama as a mediator of authors' printed productions, and the *Temple*'s chatterings, boasts, and rumors become hyper-mediated in pedantic, discursive footnotes. In this chapter, I am less interested in close-reading elements of Pope's poetry and pointing to a chain of their allusions and references and more interested in abstracting the poetic language to see how remediation is figured and practiced as a strategy of theorizing media history in the dream visions. As an allegory, the poem already proceeds

[58] For a later version of this dream-vision phenomenon, see Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
[59] "To prevent this Inundation of Dreams, which daily flows in upon me, I shall apply to all Dreamers of Dreams, the Advice which *Epictetus* has couched, after his manner, in a very simple and concise Precept. *Never tell thy Dreams*, says that Philosopher, *for tho' thou thy self may'st take a Pleasure in telling thy Dream, another will take no Pleasure in hearing it.*" Joseph Addison, *Spectator* no. 524 Friday, October 31, 1717.

in abstractions, so these are my primes of analysis.[60] Georg Stanitzek theorizes that the dream vision genre is a model for theorizing media communication: "Communications by Fama are associated with certain dissimulations; this medium distorts every message because reception is only possible at the cost of simultaneous production. No message, no information, no understanding remains unaffected 'as such'; they all enter into continuous spin."[61] Under such a model of Fama, there is a kind of Heisenberg uncertainty principle of interpretation: one cannot observe a media interaction without somehow affecting it, without re-mediating it somehow. Stanitzek continues, "This is true not only for the wording of each individual message and the meaning of single pieces of information, it also holds for the criteria of selection, assumptions about relevance, and understanding that are constantly shifting." There is noise in the communication channels, noise which may be the distortions of errors, but it may also be the communication itself—the distinction is impossible to parse in the media space of the Temple. Instead of dissecting the individual channels of voices, I must read the poems in such a way that I can retain their inchoate quality that is refracted and redoubled through their mediations. The dream vision's special generic qualities of distortion derive from how the representations of media act in concert, as registered at the most obvious level by the frequent accounts of sensory overload, uncountable crowds, and multiplying media.

[60] For a book-length study of the correspondences between *The Temple of Fame* and *The Dunciad*, see John Sitter, *The Poetry of Pope's* Dunciad (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), especially 66-117. For example: "Pope at this point was following in the path of numerous other Augustan poets who had described the 'temple' of numerous other abstractions. As allegorical visions the 'temple' poem and the progress piece have many common tendencies, and one sees their successful—perhaps inevitable—fusion in the *Dunciad*. … Like *The Temple of Fame,* the *Dunciad* is rooted more deeply in abstraction than in fact, or, perhaps more accurately, the 'facts' are collectively subjected to an abstraction. Although it is true that much of the poetry is concerned with turning facts into something more significant, *The Temple of Fame* and the *Dunciad* occupy that particular province in which a poet seeks to organize certain historical facts by means of a single allegorical principle." (67-68).
[61] Georg Stanitzek, "Fama / Chain of Muses: Two Classical Problems of Literary Studies with 'the Media,'" trans. Peter Krapp, *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:3 (2002), 609-623, 612.

The dream vision is a literary strategy for configuring literary history as an emergent phenomenon, wherein the individual fortunes of an author or a text are subject to self-organizing forces that are not predictable from a single example. Clifford Siskin argues for emergence as a means for explaining how the increase of publications and the new social behaviors to sift these changes mark not just more stuff, but fundamentally different organizing qualities to literary productions in the middle and late eighteenth century. He takes the phrase "more is different" from complexity theory: "When the production of print accelerates in the eighteenth century—in kind and in quantity—the inclusive body of writing that was then called literature begins to exhibit emergent behaviours that we now experience under the rubric of Literature."[62] Remediation is the engine of emergence as texts are refashioned into the new forms and social behaviors that Siskin enumerates. The dream vision poem is an eighteenth-century genre that theorizes remediation as it is occurring and thus produces more writing about the media maelstrom. In what follows, I shall use Pope's *Temple of Fame* and *Dunciad* as tools to test some theories and queries about remediation.

How does the description of remediation as refashioning—reframing—older media serve to discuss complex systems? The Fama model does not proceed in an orderly

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[62] Clifford Siskin, "'More is Different': Literary Change in the Mid- and Late Eighteenth Century," *The New Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 795-823. Siskin continues to detail these behaviors in a chart and explanation."…The expansion of print in general lead to the formation of a mass market and the emergent behaviour of 'culture,' including commodification into 'high' and 'low' form. Increases in specific kinds of writing, such as the rise in anthologies, the popularity of collected editions and the spread of literary periodicals, lead to other emergent phenomena—in these three cases, the notion of a 'national tradition'; the apotheosis of key genres and the professional and academic enterprise of 'criticism.' A commodified culture in the form of a national tradition highlighted by rising genres and valorised by the institutions of criticism gave us Literature" (821-822). The phrase "more is different" comes from P.W. Anderson, "More is Different," *Science* 177: 1694 (1972), 393-396. For popular, non-specialist accounts of emergence theory, Siskin cites Kevin Kelly, *Out of Control: The Rise of Neo-Biological Civilization* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1994), Steven Johnson, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software* (London: Penguin, 2002) and John H. Holland, *Emergence: From Chaos to Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), among others.

fashion through stages of mediation or frames of perception—the turbulence is the key—and so with Pope's metaphors I propose some alternative vocabulary of emergence, mosaics, and pageants for working between frames and the Fama chaos.

As it has been theorized by Bolter and Grusin, the critical term "remediation" relies heavily on visual media to explain and develop the term and its utility—what happens when we consider the work of *genre* in remediation, rather than in the visual frames of media? How does one genre remediate another? Why do the genres of speculative world-building such as the dream vision, science fiction novels and films, virtual reality games and interfaces, and Borgesian philosophical tales serve theorists like McLuhan and Bolter and Grusin—and, in earlier historical genres, poets like Pope—so well for rendering a space to work out the emergent properties of remediation?

Does the term "remediation" refer to a process or to a state? Thus far, I have been shifting back and forth between the two usages in order to make the case for a recursive relationship between process and state: one reinforces the other. What does one get out of this critical indistinction, given the model of Fama that depends on oscillation as a source of its power? How does the poem render the destabilizing sensory experience of dealing with oscillation, in aural, visual, and spatial perception?

Given the Fama model's eccentric, unpredictable play with juxtaposing media from different time periods, how can we use the model to discuss contemporary versions of the dream genre? How does the Fama model promote alternative forms of new media scholarship that take up the challenge of rendering multiple channels of media at once?

Finally, what does it mean to notice the ways in which scholarly reframing of critical terms and concepts is itself a practice of remediation? What other kinds of critical protocols are enabled by playing with these recursive properties of literary criticism?

'Wild Order' Is an Emergent Behavior

As I have traced it so far, the model of remediation that *The Temple of Fame* exemplifies is one of authorial frames on top of frames on top of frames: Pope translates and annotates Chaucer, who in turn refashions Ovid and Virgil, among others. Yet the poem itself is not about orderly stages or processions of media at the Temple; it is instead a series of encounters with teeming chaos, in which crowds of people are vying with allegorical figures for an abstraction, Fame. I have used the frame is a kind of organizing structure to contain these multitudes—an imposition of an author function, in Foucauldian terms, to spatialize the field of literary productions under survey.[63] But that spatizalization is already problematic at the beginning of the poem, when the speaker cannot situate himself—"I stood, methought, betwixt earth, seas, and skies"—and is further bewildered by "a wild promiscuous sound / Like broken thunders that at distance roar / or billows murmuring on the hollow shore."[64] Sensory perceptions of space are fundamentally uncertain and irresolvable into a composed scene as the confusion

[63] Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 113-138. For example: "the name of an author remains at the contours of texts—separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence. It points to the existence of certain groups of discourse and refers to the status of this discourse within a society and culture. The author's name is not a function of a man's civil status, nor is it fictional; it is situated in the breach among the discontinuities, which gives rise to new groups of discourse and their singular mode of existence" (123).
[64] *The Temple of Fame*, ll. 11, 22-24. All future references to the poem will be parenthetical.

progresses. It should be noted, too, that Chaucer's "Geffrey" is not the speaker in Pope's poem and thus some of the authorial play is lost in the translation; the focus instead is on the complexity of the fray rather than on an individual experience, a kind of zoomed-out fractal perspective of the authorial self-consciousness from Chaucer's *Hous*.[65]

To return to a thought experiment from the introduction, how would one render this scene in visual media, and what might that remediation reflect back onto the poem's Fama theory of media communications? Here I am most directly inspired by Alan Galey's essays about Shakespeare editing and the history of information, in which he plays with the forms of anachronism and decontextualized readings of Shakespeare's plays to situate them in a contemporary space of reflection about media. Galey begins "Networks of Deep Information" with a provocatively anachronistic reading of Milton's "Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet VV. Shakespeare" (published as the epigraph to a 1632 edition of the plays) as a poem about computing: "Milton also evokes a form of textual transmission familiar to anyone who uses a personal computer, that of making exact copies in an instant and on practically any scale. As anyone who has suffered major data loss can attest, modern computing forces upon us an equivalence between copying and preservation."[66] For Galey, this anachronistic reading inspires a critical reflection on

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[65] At the end of "What is an Author?" Foucault asks four questions for respatializing the field of study: "What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where does it come from; how is it circulated, who controls it? What placements are determined for possible subjects? Who can fulfill these diverse functions of the subject? What matter who's speaking?" (138). *The Temple of Fame* dramatizes these four questions as a pageant of competing modes of discourse which come from near and far; in the action of the poem, these discursive fragments are circulated, set against one another, recombined, and judged by an arbitrary figure, Fame.

[66] Alan Galey, "Networks of Deep Information: Shakespeare and the History of Information." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 61.3 (2010). 289-312, 290. See also: Galey, "Signal to Noise: Designing a Digital Edition of *The Taming of a Shrew*." *College Literature* 36.1 (2009). 40-66. The anachronistic close-reading is a virtuosic go-to move for Galey. For an essay about making a digital edition of an early version of *The Taming of a Shrew* (note the article difference), he close-reads the Chorus's speech from the Prologue of Henry V, a kind of warning about over-reaching one's territory. Galey paints a double scene of the stage and the digital edition: "Most of us, sadly, do not have a muse of fire that would ascend the brightest heaven of invention,

digital Shakespeare studies: it is not so much that Milton was prescient about computers; rather, the anachronistic close-reading creates a valuable artifact of reflection about limit cases. Galey continues:

> His texts have come to stand as both ideal and limit case for the concept of information which, in its modern guise, emerged from a late twentieth-century cultural formation that still dominates much current thinking about computing. Idealized as easily encoded, unproblematically transmissible data, Shakespeare's texts supposedly flow naturally into new digital forms of analysis, so that Shakespearean compatibility with digital media has become a truism.[67]

Galey then pivots from his generative anachronism to a historicist study of how Shakespeare bibliography is intertwined with twentieth-century information theory, and how that double history might make us think about our complicated investments in digital humanities scholarship. I see the many iterations of *The Temple of Fame* as another poem one can read anachronistically to understand the history of media and its emergent behaviors.

There is a precedent for invoking such a multimedia thought experiment to discuss *The Temple of Fame*, as the editor of the Twickenham edition of Pope's collected works, Geoffrey Tillotson, has compared the two poems in terms of other media: "For Chaucer's cinematographic speed and lightness there is Pope's Handelian tempo and harmony, for Chaucer's narrative, Pope's scene."[68] Or we may consider the *mise en abyme* technique from visual art, cinema, video games, and virtual reality of showing

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a kingdom for a stage, and princes to act; the screen obviously cannot hold the vasty fields of France, nor can we expect pixels to cram within this electronic O the very casques that did affright the air at Agincourt. It is not the brightest heaven of invention, but a more practical kind that must happen right there in the playhouse if the venture is to succeed. As the Chorus proposes this distinction, it becomes apparent that his apology for the inadequacies of the stage is really not an apology at all. This is the Shakespearean version of the defense Microsoft has been known to make of its operating systems and Web browsers: the bugs are not really bugs, but features" (41).

[67] Ibid.

[68] Geoffrey Tillotson, notes to the Twickenham Pope, cited in Sitter, 69.

miniaturized pictures within pictures, stories within stories, frames within frames in order to represent infinite replication in the dreamscape—the term literally means "to be placed into the abyss." The dream vision necessitates a multimedia experience to account for its play with perspective, sensory confusion, and techniques of inscription. Lev Manovich describes such a state of confusion in multimedia environments: "Often, the two goals of information access and psychological engagement compete within the same new media object."[69] For the comparative practices of this chapter, we can say that Temple poems render this competition with *media that are new*, such as the newly proliferative and self-organizing print media of the early eighteenth century, and not just the new media objects under his purview in *The Language of New Media.* Manovich's goal in that book is to define some characteristics unique to new media objects while also drawing historical connections to the language of early cinema, which developed so robustly as to make a full discipline of techniques, theories, and technologies. That robustness, even glut, creates opportunities for conflation and distinction alike in Manovich's survey, creating a kind of Temple of Fame for media technologies of past and present: "*Along with surface versus depth, the opposition between information and 'immersion' can be thought of as a particular expression of the more general opposition characteristics of new media—between action and representation*. And just as is the case with surface and depth opposition, the results of this competition are often awkward and uneasy." In this

[69] Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2001), 216, italics original. Manovich begins the book with a personal narrative of his errant path toward new media studies and a kind of dream vision about what he wishes he could study in early cinema culture: "I wish that someone in 1895, 1897, or at least 1903, had realized the fundamental significance of the emergence of the new medium of cinema and produced a comprehensive record: interviews with audiences; a systematic account of narrative strategies, scenography, and camera positions as they developed year by year; an analysis of the connections between the emerging language of cinema and different forms of popular entertainment that coexisted with it. Unfortunately, such records do not exist. Instead, we are left with newspaper reports, diaries of cinema's inventors, programs of film showings, and other bits and pieces—a set of random and unevenly distributed historical samples" (Manovich, 6).

jumbled dreamscape, the anachronistic confusion of media technologies across time periods may not always be an error; it may also serve to provoke emergent behavior.

The Temple is located in a liminal space, and the speaker is able to both zoom in on small details of the scene and zoom out to assess the larger prospect, to dizzying effect:

> A train of phantoms in wild order rose,
> And, join'd, this intellectual sense compose.
> In Air self-balanc'd hung the Globe below,
> Where Mountains rise, and circling Oceans flow.
> Here naked Rocks, and empty Wastes were seen,
> There Tow'ring Cities, and Forests green,
> Here sailing Ships delight the wand'ring Eyes,
> There Trees, and intermingled Temples rise.
> Now a clear sun the shining scene displays,
> The transient landscape now in clouds decays. (ll. 8-20)

Pope's indefatigable antagonist John Dennis, who seized on every small detail of his rival's poetry as material for critique, cannot abide this perspectival play: "If the whole Creation was open to his Eyes, he must be vastly high. Let it appear then by what follows, what a Master he is of Perspective. …"[70] Dennis's critique evinces the double logic of remediation: he claims he is taken out of the immersive experience of the poem because he notices the errors of Pope's hyper-mediated perspective that attempt to compose tiny details and panoramic scope at the same time.

Let us appropriate Dennis's critique into a new context of the multimedia thought experiment: this rapidly expanding and contracting perspective may be familiar to those who play interactive interface video games. Steven Johnson calls this perspective "the long zoom" and names it as the defining "way of seeing" of the 21st century. The long

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[70] John Dennis, "Remarks upon Mr. Pope's translation of Homer. With two letters concerning Windsor Forest, and the Temple of Fame." T*he Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. Edward Niles Hooker (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1939-43), II: 139**.**

zoom is self-aware of its work in scaling up and down to mediate the emergent behavior we can now conceptualize through technologies that mediate the very small and the very large to our understanding. The long zoom is attuned to infinite regressions, "the fractal geometry of chaos theory in which each new scale reveals endless complexity. And this is not just a way of seeing but also a way of thinking: moving conceptually from the scale of DNA to the scale of personality all the way up to social movements and politics — and back again."[71] Johnson is writing a piece about the video game designer Will Wright, whose *Spore* was, in 2006, a way of making emergence theory fun: the game is a series of stages of procedural, iterative world-building stages in which tweaking individual details aggregates into larger social and environmental adaptations and behaviors.

Pope had rendered such aggregating social behavior of insects in his translation of the *Iliad*:

> As from some rocky Cleft the Shepherd sees,
> Clust'ring in Heaps on Heaps, the driving Bees.
> Rolling and black'ning, Swarms succeeding Swarms
> With deeper Murmurs, and more hoarse Alarms
> Dusky they spread, a close embodied Crowd,
> And o'er the Vale descends the living Cloud.[72]

As Dennis fulminates about the erroneous, indistinct language for describing a swarm of bees, he manages to detail everything that's fascinating about Pope's emergence theory *avant la lettre*:

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[71] Steven Johnson, "The Long Zoom," *The New York Times Magazine*, October 8, 2006. The programmers are especially interested in moments where the game seems to encounter an error and the program must "learn" new behaviors: "They know that a certain percentage of their users will be building creatures deliberately designed to foil the procedural animation system. Those creatures won't likely be 'fit' in a traditional evolutionary sense, in that they will be less skilled at collecting food or avoiding predators. But they will be perversely satisfying to players keen on exploring the boundaries of the Spore architecture. … 'Our philosophy is," [Spore executive producer Lucy] Bradshaw said, "if it's going to break, it should break funny.'"

[72] Alexander Pope, *Iliad*. ll. 111-16.

> The first Line here presents with a Contradiction in Terms; for while Bees are a close embodied Crowd, how can they possibly spread? Besides, what does the Translator mean, by a close embodied Crowd? What Tautology, what Fustian is this? As if every Crowd was not close. And what does he mean by embodied? What Idea to the Mind does that Word clearly and distinctly present? In short Crowd is nothing but a Botch, and a meer Crambo to Cloud. For who ever heard of a Crowd of Bees? A Crowd of any thing implies Confusion; but it appears by the following Lines of Virgil, that Bees, when they swarm, are under Command, and by consequence, not without Order…[73]

In identifying this "way of seeing" in Pope's poetry, I am not making a claim for Pope's (or Dennis's) prescience; rather, I'm observing that Pope's poetic talent for composing perspectives is suited for theorizing how "ways of seeing" and composing affect—indeed, effect—"ways of thinking." Strikingly, Dennis's critique of Pope resembles a frequent criticism of Manovich's own slipperiness in rendering his new media theory, that he is insufficiently focused on *distinctions* in his desire to draw connections among disparate objects. In *New Philosophy for New Media*, Mark B.N. Hansen detects a "a more obscure theoretical incapacity to see beyond contemporary framings of media, [resulting in] a picture that constantly threatens to reduce new media to a mere amplification of what came before."[74] Hansen's critique is that Manovich is too concerned with the formal qualities of the objects he is studying and insufficiently historical, a danger that comes from surveying across time and space in the tradition of McLuhan's work.

In his account of *Spore*, Johnson is reframing what is now basically a truism from McLuhan: media technologies are not just representations of how we see—they construct

[73] Dennis, II: 124. "Crambo" is an eighteenth-century rhyming game in which players tried to exhaust a rhyme for a particular word: a constraint-based poetic genre that depends on recursive and absurd accumulation, a fitting artifact of procedure for this study!

[74] Mark B.N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004), 32. I take Hansen's criticism seriously and I suppose I risk some of that same obscurity and wrongness in my own approach here, although I do not claim to be tracing a historical progression.

our concept of what vision is, what objects to examine, how to examine them, and how to compose those ideas into media that will let other people see in them in explicable, knowable, shareable ways. In her monograph on technologies of vision in eighteenth-century satire, Katherine Mannheimer argues for how theories of visuality and aesthetics emerged from mediations of optic technology on the printed page. She writes: "Just as vision was becoming the ever-more favored mode of encountering the world, the world itself was arguably becoming 'more visual.' In the natural sciences in particular, the invisible was becoming visible: from microscopes to air-pressure gauges, technology opened up to the observer a new dimension of ocular perception and consciousness…"[75] Theories of visuality emerge from print's ability to render optical technologies' frames within frames; those theories then loop back into poetic language of perception and consciousness. Pope has a facility for rendering the self-replicating, self-organizing behaviors of what would much later be theorized as complex systems—and he does so in the highly replicable, organizable form of the couplet.[76]

[75] Katherine Mannheimer, *Print, Visuality, and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Satire: The Scope in Ev'ry Page* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 6.

[76] Peter Stallybrass and Ann Blair have traced other examples of bee behavior in their work on Renaissance and Enlightenment information storage systems. See for example, their work with German Quaker Francis Pastorius, who organized "his massive manuscript compilation *Francis Daniel Pastorious, His Alphabetical Hive of More than two thousand Honey-combs Begun in the year 1696.* Pastorius's 'Paper-hive," as he called it, was the final alphabetical 'digestion' of a series of smaller notebooks on diverse subjects…." He had remediated that system from humanist scholars who had in turn digested it from Plutarch's recommendation of keeping a common-place book. Blair and Stallybrass formatted Pastorius's hive into a table with columns for the Bee's Work (gathering nectar from, depositing pollen, making honey), how the bee's work corresponds to the Material Support of media (one gathers information from books, collects it promiscuously in marginal notes, arranges those juxtapositions in a common-place book). See Blair and Stallybrass, "Mediating Information: 1450-1800," in *This Is Enlightenment*, eds. Clifford Siskin and William B. Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 139-163, 151-52. Stallybrass uses the same material elsewhere to make a point about the extensive history of print databases and what we can learn from considering Renaissance forms of database work in digital humanities classrooms. See Stallybrass, "Against Thinking," *PMLA* 122.5 (2007), 1580-85. In that piece, Stallybrass argues against models of trying to replicate critical commonplaces of themes and close-reading in favor of doing things with texts like common-placing them to see what patterns emerge.

Here Pope is like Borges: a world-builder of alternate epistemological spaces, especially those that require "modeling … incoherent and dizzying stuff" as a mass. Borges's dreamer in "The Circular Ruins" is engaged in an ongoing, recursive process of dreaming and re-dreaming in order to make sense of his situation: "Each night he perceived it with greater clarity, greater certainty. He did not touch it; he only witnessed it, observed it, corrected it, perhaps, with his eyes. He perceived it, he *lived* it, from many angles, many distances."[77] Yet for Borges' dreamer, the proliferation of perceptions does not reveal the largest error: he is dreaming. In fact, those vivid scenes exacerbate the error, for they are so immersive that his dreamer loses track of his position as a mediator. He cannot be self-aware, be a critical figure, if he does not realize which genre he is participating in. From Chaucer to Borges and beyond, the dream vision oscillates between immersion and hyper-mediation; Pope's translation of the Fama model of mediation in Fame and the Dunciad shows a historical moment of print saturation when the genre becomes aware of its own mediating abilities, so much so that it can hyper-mediate itself.

This project takes its thesis—that efforts to contain errors have the paradoxical effect of proliferating them—from Pope's description of spontaneous generation in the *Essay on Criticism*, in which he figures the ways in which emergent behavior in worms could be mapped onto social critical behavior: "Those half-learn'd Witlings, num'rous in our Isle, / As half-form'd Insects on the Banks of Nile: / Unfinish'd Things, one knows not what to call, / Their Generation's so equivocal."[78] When a critic is prone to animadverting corrections, errors multiply prodigiously—like Dennis's willful

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[77] Borges, 98.
[78] Alexander Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 40-44.

misreadings, like the creatures in *Spore*. Ironically, Dennis describes his work of detecting and animadverting on these errors as a kind of emergent procedure of mediating the page with so much ink— the aggregation of small quips and corrections becomes one gigantic blot. He appropriates a line from Ben Jonson to account for his mass of corrections: "if a Man should go about to examine and correct them, he must make all they have done but one Blot. The Good is so entangled with their Bad, that forcibly the one must draw on the other's Death with it. A Spunge dipt in Ink will do all. ---Comitatur punici Librum Spungit."[79]

Dennis's criticism is comically literal-minded, but it is also a figure of itself: he zooms in on small details and gets overwhelmed by the larger picture of the scene, which is mostly conventional in its rehearsal of the tropes of an eighteenth-century prospect poem. He goes on: "Well! we will allow that from the prodigious Height where he stands, he might behold the Ocean. But could he possible from that Height discern the Mountains, the Rocks, the Wastes, the Forests, nay, such minute Objects, as the very Ships and single Trees?"[80] The Eighteenth Century Collections Online digitization of Dennis's pamphlet records a funny piece of marginalia here (see figure 3): a reader has written "Chaucer" in the margin next to Dennis's scathing critique of Pope's play with perspective. Chaucer does not describe the prospect in these specific terms in *Hous of Fame*, but the anonymous eighteenth-century reader's skepticism about how Dennis collapses the distinction between mediations is striking, for it demonstrates how the older version and translation interact on a specific reader's page in unexpected ways.

[79] Dennis, II: 117.
[80] Ibid.

This initial prospect of the Temple of Fame provokes multiple incidents of remediation. Pope has remediated Chaucer's dream vision into another familiar eighteenth-century poetic genre by folding in conventions of the prospect poem; this hybrid genre remediates the scene in both theoretical senses of the term as it "remedies" (and perhaps exacerbates) the disorientation of the scene with the conventions of another representational form. Dennis the critic seeks to remediate (in the sense of remedy) Pope's errors of perspective—and in fact does so, textually, by animadverting on each passage with more criticism and hyper-mediating his presence, thus generating more vociferous utterances to swirl around at the Temple of Fame. Finally, the digital scan of Dennis's animadversion indicates how an anonymous historical reader's experience of accessing and commenting on the connections between a medieval vision and its neoclassical translation in one period can be remediated and preserved with new technology—another kind of utterance to be added to the heap. The organizing principle of authorship frames these remediations by labeling and sorting the utterances as poetic lines, critical assessments, or anonymous marginalia. But the allegorical figure of Fama herself plays each of these channels at once as creator, arbiter, and scatterer. "Here is its self-referential organization," writes Stanitzek, "whatever enters into communication—or inversely: what Fama observes—is taken up and processed according to her own nonpreprogrammed [that is, non-predictive] criteria; Fama operates self-referentially, and in the manner of a process building on its own strength."[81] In so doing, she challenges a controlling conceptual frame of authorship in favor of something more chaotic that generates its own power from processes of self-organization, a "wild order" of a complex system of transmission.

[81] Ibid.

Strategies of Mediation: Interfaces and Inscriptions

As an over-determined liminal space, this remediated prospect of the Temple of Fame is a kind of poetic interface, a generic threshold that produces reflection on the epistemological implications of mediated perspective. So how does a swarm behave in such an interface, as mediated by the unit of the metaphor and couplet? In *The Interface Effect*, Alexander Galloway argues that the interface is less a defined technological feature (in a video game, say) and more of a conceptual threshold for understanding media. "Interfaces are not simply objects or boundary points," he argues, "they are autonomous zones of activity. Interfaces are not things, but rather processes that effect a result of whatever kind. … Interfaces are themselves effects, in that they bring about transformation in material states. But at the same time interfaces are themselves the effects of other things, and thus tell the story of the larger forces that engender them."[82] Galloway is arguing for the recursive quality of the interface, a quality that is dramatized—and in fact *tested*—in the infinitely refracting contests of mediation in *The Temple of Fame.* In sometimes sharp conversation with Bolter, Grusin, and Manovich, among others, Galloway argues that an interface is not solely (or even) a state but a process and, recursively, an effect of that process's work. Genre theorists have been making such an argument for some time: a genre is not a thing but an organizing behavior of a group of texts that change over time.[83] As it circulates in the heady print marketplace

[82] Alexander R. Galloway, *The Interface Effect* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), vii. See Hansen, 32-46 for a related critique.
[83] See Carolyn Miller, "Genre as Social Action." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984) 151-167. Miller's article is partly a review of what scholars of genre and rhetoric had published up to 1984, and though she

described by Pope (as well as Addison and, later in the century, Lloyd), the dream vision is a generic strategy, an interface, for translating literary history at a moment of concern about the ways in which their authorial legacy resembles that media maelstrom of the poem.

The poem represents multiple moments of interface, as in that introductory account of standing "betwixt earth, seas, and skies" or a few lines later when Pope's speaker encounters a stone material interface of literary historical memory:

> The wondrous rock like Parian marble shone,
> And seemed, to distant sight, of solid stone.
> Inscriptions here of various names I viewed,
> The greater part by hostile time subdued;
> Yet wide was spread their fame in ages past,
> And poets once had promised they should last.
> Some fresh engraved appeared of wits renowned;
> I looked again, nor could their trace be found.
> Critics I saw, that other names deface,
> And fix their own, with labour, in their place (ll.29-38)

The effects of Fama's interventions are iterated over and over again on this stone face as critics vie with authors for lasting fame, but these effects are also difficult to distinguish and require the "distant sight" that Dennis was so contemptuous of, an oscillating means of zooming in to observe particular disputes but rising above the fray to assess a longer legacy. Fama presides over the scene with this power of judicial mediation, but the speaker has his own abilities of remediating through poetic description and ekphrasis. There is a kind of contest of the multiple definitions of mediation taking place: Fama the

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does not describe her work as emergent, the article itself actually proceeds through a set of assessments of the field that gradually increase in complexity—including a chart of hierarchies and a list of generalized features that resembles what the programmers in *Spore* might produce as a game design document. Some excerpts: "1. Genre refers to a conventional category of discourse based in large-scale typification of rhetorical action; as action, it acquires meaning from situation and from the social context in which that situation arose. 2. As meaningful action, genre is interpretable by means of rules, genre rules occurs at a relatively high level on a hierarchy of rules for symbolic interaction. 3. …Genre is a form at one particular level that is a fusion of lower-level forms and characteristic substance…." (163).

allegorical mediator of literary history, whose judgments are carved on temples, libraries, museums, canons, versus the speaker-poet, who makes more media.

The ephemeral state of an author's fame is matched by the iterative process of remediation, be it in critics' remediations or in some other process of republication or refashioning that keeps it circulating in some form or another. There is a recursive relationship between media state and media process: to exist in a state (even an ephemeral one) means that one may circulate at the Temple and thus join the procession to be reformulated. An utterance must always have that temporary state, in a genre, say, in order to be eligible for the pageant. Paula McDowell argues for separating Pope from McLuhan's championing of him as Typographic Man: "Pope would never have dreamed of separating the technology of printing from its users. (In fact, his satire was criticized for being too personal.) He used the word 'print' chiefly as a verb, not a noun—to indicate a process, not a product."[84] McDowell's phrase "dreamed of" is ironic here, for in making a historicist claim about Pope's attitudes, she evokes the non-historicist mode of dreaming and visionary logic: the speaker of "The Temple of Fame" is dreaming, not the publicity- and legacy-obsessed author. Yet that irony is not a rejection of her claim for its rhetorical phrasing, but rather a note that making these kinds of distinctions may engender the very figurative leaps that are being criticized. Philosopher Daniel Dennett argues that in our contemporary media environment, we conflate states and processes of mediation to no unmanageable confusion,

> … living as we do in a world of abstract artifacts that jump promiscuously from medium to medium. It's no longer a big deal to go from the score, to the music you hear live, to the recorded version of the music. You can jump back and forth between media very rapidly now. It's become a fact

[84] Paula McDowell, "Mediating Media Past and Present: Toward a Genealogy of 'Print Culture' and 'Oral Tradition,'" in *This Is Enlightenment*, eds. Siskin and Warner, 229-46, 236.

> of life. It used to be hard work to get things from one form to another; that's not hard work anymore, it's automatic. You eliminate the middleman. …This removal of all the hard work in translation from one medium to another makes it all the more natural to populate your world with abstractions, because you find it's hard to keep track of what medium they're in.[85]

The genre of the dream vision, populated as it is by abstractions and poetic descriptions of process, is a way of accounting for this difficulty in keeping track of promiscuous mediations. In the Temple of Fame, one must embrace, or at least bear witness to, the fact of so many proliferating mediums and media.

This is a challenge for any critic, especially Galloway, who is a polemicist seeking to intervene on these theories of remediation. Early on, he even sounds a little like Dennis as he announces: "The remediation argument (handed down from McLuhan and his followers including [Friedrich] Kittler) is so full of holes that it is probably best to toss it wholesale."[86] Galloway challenges the idea of totally promiscuous mediation and remediation, for there are media artifacts that do not "jump" between states as easily as Dennett indicates they are able to do because the process of generally defined remediation would destroy the artifact. "Recorded sound may remediate performed music," Galloway writes, "but what is being remediated when a musician plays magnetic tape backward and hears for the first time a true sonic reversal (not simply the reversal of phonemes)?" He continues to pile up more difficult examples: "Or consider the computer. A computer might remediate text and image. But what about a computer crash? What is being remediated at that moment? It can't be text or image anymore, for they are not subject to crashes of this variety."

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[85] Daniel Dennett, "The Computational Perspective," *Science at the Edge: Conversations with the Leading Scientific Thinkers of Today*, ed. John Brockman (New York: Sterling Press, 2008), 115-128, 123.
[86] Galloway, 20-21. See Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

As Tillotson reminds us, Pope's dream vision is more obviously remediable through the language of cinema and music. Yet I am intrigued by the gauntlet Galloway throws down here: "So is a computer crash an example of non-media?" His challenge illuminates how he believes "the remediation hypothesis leads very quickly to a feedback loop in which much of what we consider to be media are in fact reclassified as non-media, thereby putting into question the suitability of the original hypothesis."[87] Pope's inscriptions in stone—which are both eternal in some spaces and liable to fade away in other, arbitrarily demarcated locations—may stand in for other kinds of inscription that the computer crash is indeed mediating: unpredictable code errors, sudden memory erasures, or even digital traces that we thought we had deleted but are still present in deep inscription that we cannot access.[88]

Such apparently alien artifacts might instead re-spatialize the field of media studies. In *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination*, Matthew Kirschenbaum investigates artifacts of digital inscription in digital storage and encryption that are not immediately legible through our methods of close-reading; in a move of ingenious recursion, he generates critical language by refashioning vocabulary from bibliography and textual studies for reading what had been thought to be "black boxes" of unreadable material. He distinguishes between the "formal materiality," which is not medium-specific and can abstract meaning through metaphors (as I have been doing thus far in playing with general definitions of remediation), and "forensic materiality," which "rests upon the instrument mark or trace, the inscription that is as fundamental to new

[87] Ibid.
[88] For further connections, see Pope's description of inscriptions that are susceptible to heat and cold, just like we're warned about keeping digital devices in normal temperature ranges: "Nor was the work impaired by storms alone, / But felt th'approaches of too warm a sun" (ll. 41-42).

media as it is to other impositions and interventions in the long technological history of writing." As Kirschenbaum sees it, "writing practices engender an eruption of tools and techniques to fix, expunge, and recover their meaning bearing marks and traces."[89]

This is an apt description of the situation at the Temple of Fame, and Kirschenbaum's work is a reminder that the ephemerality of fame that Pope worried about for his own authorial legacy in print has diverse manifestations in digital media.[90] They may include: traces we wanted to erase, legacies of authorial production in obsolete formats, pamphlets that get scanned into digital databases and preserve material traces that would have been forgotten otherwise, and many more odd artifacts of inscription. I shall return to these artifactual challenges later in the chapter when I consider the media of "glitch art" that plays with breaking digital media as a challenge to art and epistemology. Kirschenbaum argues that the experience of contending with these diverse types of inscriptions generates the "forensic imagination" in which we seek to imagine what it would be like to recover relics of the past and "construct legible records of what happened on the other side of a present singularity." The characteristics of this imaginative space should sound familiar from Pope's poem: "The prevalent aesthetic markers of the forensic imagination: extreme juxtaposition, or oscillation of spatial and temporal scale; a precision vocabulary that bespeaks an intimacy with industrial procedure and fabrication; beauty in novel proximity to mundane objects, here dust and

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[89] Matthew G. Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2008), 70-71.

[90] In his essay about Shakespeare and the history of information, Galey makes a similar reading of Milton's epitaph to Shakespeare: "Since a digital text's 'deep impressions' are merely positively or negatively charged electrons on a magnetized disk surface—or the microscopic impressions laser etched into an optical disk—the devices we now associate with computing provoke a complex set of responses to preservation, largely in the absence of a single trusted substrate for digital archiving. In digital media, preserving data means keeping numbers flowing" (Galey, "Networks of Deep Impression," 290).

debris that are revealed" to be precious materials.[91] That description echoes Pope's description of the Temple's outward face:

> The wall in lustre and effect like glass,
> Which o'er each object casting various dyes,
> Enlarges some, and others multiplies;
> Nor void of emblem was the mystic wall
> For thus romantic Fame increases all. (ll.131-36)

As an interface that enlarges, increases, and multiplies media, the Temple of Fame has different conceptual orientations than, say, a Renaissance memory palace, which sought to organize belief into discrete rooms for intellectual and spiritual accessibility.[92] Mary Carruthers writes of how errors do the work of reconfiguring a memory palace:

> For us, making a mistake of memory is a failure in accuracy, failure exactly to iterate the original material. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, problems involving memory-phantasms are described as heuristic (recollective) rather than as reproductive problems, and are due to a failure to imprint the phantasm properly in the first instance, thus causing confusion and recollective loss. … Forgetting is a technical error, due to such things as insufficient imprinting or mis-addressing, and errors of recollection are thus perceptual in nature, if the mind's 'eye' cannot see clearly or looks in the wrong place. But if one's images are clearly made, and if one's routes to them through the mass of individual phantasms stored in memory are properly marked, and fortified through practice, one will safely and securely find one's place.[93]

The highly reproducible generic components of the dream vision—ekphrasis, couplets, allusions, and, as I shall discuss in the next section, the repetitive rehearsal of the epic invocation—each have a multiplier effect in the interface. Swarms enter, and the interface proliferates that stuff not by consolidating it, but rather by dispersing it further.

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[91] Kirschenbaum, 251-52. He takes these particular characteristics from close-reading Nicholson Baker's novella *The Mezzanine.*

[92].The classic studies are Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (1966) (London: Random House, 1992); Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).

[93] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 77-78.

Theorizing *in media res*

In explaining the affective possibilities of the forensic imagination, Kirschenbaum cites Lisa Gitelman's formulation: "inscription is a form of intervention."[94] Pope's speaker evinces this desire to record "meaning, identity, and intentionality"[95] at the Temple of Fame—but his intervention will be temporary while Fama's judgment will be decisive in the world of the poem. What *The Temple of Fame* registers, then, is the attempt to intervene, to find other means of mediation that will subvert Fama's power and to seize a creative identity as an author who can remediate the scene. Here Pope's focus on Fama as Fame rather than as gossip indicates the ways in which meaning, identity, and intentionality become over-determined in this imaginative space.

The Temple is an amalgam of architectural styles—a building version of an animadversion as rendered in alternating plain and italic types—which are historically recognizable as classical or Gothic, but also taken out of time by their subsumption into the interface.[96] Susan Stewart theorizes this attempt to recontextualize the past in other media forms, to create artifacts as a strategy to "bypass the contingencies of time: by

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[94] Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 3.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Steven Johnson presents the Gothic cathedral as an interface: "'The principle of the Gothic architecture,' Coleridge once said, 'is infinity made imaginable.' The same could be said for the modern interface. Where the flying buttresses of Chartres rendered the kingdom of heaven in stone, the information-space on the monitor embodies—'makes imaginable'—the otherwise invisible cotillion of zeros and ones whirling throughout microchips." *Interface Culture: How New Technology Transforms the Way We Create and Communicate* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 42. Though Galloway does not mention the popular science texts about media interfaces that have saturated the techno-populist market in recent years, he has some moments of conceptual agreement and disagreement with Johnson.

creating new antiques, the author hopes to author a context as well as an artifact."[97] A collection of these artifacts makes up a "distressed genre" in Stewart's terminology, "in order to emphasize their artifactual nature—that is, their guise of self-referentiality," a guise that in the Temple of Fame has been present, albeit with different goals and textures, since Chaucer adopted the form. For Pope, the self-referentiality is an attempt to authorize his fame-seeking. Stewart continues in a key that sounds much like Kirschenbaum's digital forensic imagination, here attuned to artificial classicism: "The period's deepening historical awareness of the classical world was supplemented by a rising archaeology that demonstrated both the reappearance and disappearance of the past. Thus the desire to produce speaking objects, objects both in and out of time, seems an inevitable outgrowth of his development." The Temple of Fame is an interface for those kinds of historical and ahistorical interventions.

Speaking theoretically and not technically, Galloway calls the interface an "allegorical device that will help us gain some perspective on culture in the age of information," as it stands for "thresholds, those mysterious zones of interaction that mediate between different realities."[98] His initial example of a textual interface is the epic convention of beginning *in medias res*, in the middle of the action wherein the poet invokes the Muse for assistance in mediating the scene:

> The poet does not so much originate his own song as serve as a conduit for divine expression received from without. … All media evoke similar liminal transition moments in which the outside is evoked in order that the inside may take place. In the case of the classical poet, what is the outside? It is the Muse, the divine source, which is first evoked and praised, in

[97] Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 66.
[98] Galloway, 54, vii.

> order for the outside to possess the inside. Once possessed by the outside, the poet sings and the story transpires.[99]

As Cynthia Wall notes, this is Pope's *métier*: she opens her critical assessment of his "Poetic Spaces" by noting his frequent appropriation of the epic convention of opening *in medias res*, in the middle of the action, "or, as we might say, in the midst of *spaces*" in order to carve out a place for composition. She cites the opening lines of *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, in which Pope is "besieged by aspiring authors": "So the poem acts pre-emptively, opening itself by closing the door, to create a sustained refuge of 419 lines where the poet can figure out how he got here in the first place."[100] Pope's framing thresholds are zones of media interactions that are always populated by swarms (of people, of printed materials); he evokes thresholds to separate authors from hacks, but the behavior of the swarm is too enticing for him to keep outside the story.

That scene of squabbling among authors is familiar from *The Temple of Fame* and the *Dunciad,* in which Pope appropriates the conventional epic invocation for his own devices.[101] He reiterates the interrupted invocation until it is an interface that not only

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[99] Galloway, 32. I turn to Richard Bentley's appropriation of the technique for a kind of editorial possession in chapter 2.

[100] Cynthia Wall, "Poetic Spaces," *Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope*, ed. Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 49. See also Murray Roston, *Changing Perspectives: Literature and the Visual Arts 1650-1820* (Princeton UP, 1990). Roston sees Pope's *Essay on Man* as negotiating between authorial presentation and classical genre: "That assertion is countered through the verse-essay by the implication that the poet himself has nonetheless succeed somehow in looking through the cosmic gradations, has perceived the order beyond, and may therefore serve, despite that general prohibition for mankind, as a trustworthy mentor for the reader. Yet the assumption of privilege is never conveyed, even indirectly, as resulting from a Miltonic ascent on the part of poet, an inspired vision of the heavens; only as the outcome of rational assessment and discrimination"—that is, participation in a genre (84). In the terms of this chapter, this is an oscillation between generically rendered perspectives and authorial hyper-mediation.

[101] Chaucer's *House of Fame* has several generic markers of Invocation in Book III:
"O God of science and of light,
Appollo, thrugh thy grete might,
This lytel laste book thou gye!
…
That in myn hed ymarked ys—
Loo, that is for to menen this,

registers estrangement in this media maelstrom, but also produces it. *The Temple of Fame* is an entire poem of being caught *in medias res*, as the speaker is always caught in the middle of a procession or on his way to another confusing prospect of "a structure fair / Its site uncertain, in in earth or air" (420-21) where he is caught in a bedlam of news, rumors, predictions, and more: "all neither wholly false, nor wholly true" (457). There is no way to distinguish what is outside and what is inside in this space:

> Above, below, without, within, around
> Confused, unnumbered multitudes are found
> Who pass, repass, advance, and glide away;
> Hosts raised by fear, and phantoms of a day
> ….
> Each talked aloud, or in some secret place,
> And wild impatience stared in every face
> The flying rumours gathered as they rolled,
> Scarce any tale was sooner heard than told
> And all who told it added something new,
> And all who heard it made enlargements too
> In every ear it spread, on every tongue it grew. (ll. 458-472)

Galloway begins with the epic invocation as a simple building block of the interface that he may use for a stable critical foundation for his media criticism. But Pope has shown that convention of entering in *media res* n to be a strategy of hyper-mediation and not just immersion. He has shown it to be malleable by means of its infinite replicability and capacity for figuring—and producing—complex behavior in print media. The indistinction of insides and outsides must remain that way; the poetic interface is not something to be broken down into smaller parts, for those parts are not predictive of the larger media phenomenon. Pope appropriates the epic convention for his satire, and, in his virtuosically repetitive remediation of the convention (stacking frames upon frames),

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The Hous of Fame for to descryve—" (ll. 1091-1105)

he also appropriates the conventional authorial behavior to express some anxiety about participating in such a vaunted form after the great epics of Homer and Virgil.

Pope's greatest play with remediating the epic convention for media commentary is in the *Dunciad*, in which the meddling hyper-mediator Martinus Scriblerus interrupts the very first line of the poem to draw the eye to the footnotes. Scriblerus's intervention is a play on Richard Bentley's and Lewis Theobald's conjectural criticism, as he indicates a supposed "variant" text which abstracts the first line of the *Aeneid* into media content: "In the first edition it was 'Books and the Man I sing.'"[102] Here is a proliferation of thresholds that are never crossed fully because they keep being reframed with more mediation: the opening lines of the author's invocation of a poetic muse are interrupted by a fictional-but-recognizable mediator's insertion of his own media.[103] Of course, Dennis is right there, ready to miss the point of this satire by training his critical faculties to the wrong place: "P. sings Books, and not an Action; and the Author who pretends in an Epick Poem to sing Books instead of singing an Action, is only qualified to sing Ballads."[104] Yet again, in making this petty point, Dennis actually describes what's fascinating about Pope's remediation of the convention from that of commencing epic action to that of multiplying mediations of abstractions: Pope makes the process of

[102] Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad*. n.1. in *The Dunciad in Four Books*, ed. Valerie Rumbold (New York: Pearson Longman, 2009), 97.

[103] The *Dunciad* has a kind of interface inside an interface; as it is dedicated to Jonathan Swift and ups the ante on his proliferating prefatory remarks to *The Tale of a Tub*, *The Dunciad* contains various dedications, advertisements, letters to the publisher, etc. For this space of textual interfaces, Galloway turns to Gerard Genette's theory of thresholds and *intraface* from *Thresholds* [*Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)]. We can imagine Scriblerus's notes as constituting "…this imaginary dialogue between the workable and the unworkable: the intraface, that is, *an interface internal to the interface*. The intraface is within the aesthetic. … The interface is indecisive fore it must always juggle two things (the edge and the center at the same time)…" (40).

[104] John Dennis, "Remarks on Pope's *Dunciad*," II: 361. I like to think of Dennis as being so wrong that he swerves back toward an interesting, compelling way of looking at Pope—a fitting critical move in the Temple of Fame.

iteration into a theory of itself. Where Galloway positioned the epic invocation as an interface, Stewart makes a similar formulation for what it mediates:

> This inclusive capacity of the epic depends upon a capacity for objectification as well as for distancing. The epic gathers and incorporates, in a reverent way, what has gone before it. Thus the epic marks the objectification or artifactualizaton of literature: literature as document, not so much absorbed into its context of production as a survival or remnant of that context.[105]

The temple poem is a recursively distressed genre: it is an older form that calls attention to how it has been translated, artifactualized, remediated over time, but it is also *about* that very subject as it records, allegorizes, and theorizes the processes by which the distressing gains its artifactual power.

Voices Are Authorized Artifacts of Sound

In describing the whispers and chatterings as scraps of stuff, Pope objectifies the sounds that echo in the Temple of Fame. They thrive in the medium of gossip, a kind of agar for growing print culture:

> But straight the direful trump of slander sounds
> Through the big dome the doubling thunder bounds;
> Loud as the burst of cannon rends the skies
> The dire report through every region flies
> In every ear incessant rumours rung,
> And gathering scandals grew on every tongue (ll.332-37)

As the Temple's physical location is over-determined as a liminal space, so too is it over-stated as an aural echo chamber, with adjectives like "dire" repeating in neighboring couplets, thunder "doubling" (the poem is full of stormy sounds), and the hoary clichés of both thunder and cannons being deployed in rapid fire. These lines literally enact the

[105] Stewart, 75.

proliferation of sounds they are describing. The sounds develop outrageous features and self-adapt like the emergent beings in *Spore*: "A thousand wingèd wonders fly / Borne by the trumpet's blast, and scattered through the sky (ll. 486-87). It is not just a synesthetic shift from immaterial sound to material stuff that can gather and grow, for Pope further artifactualizes them (in Stewart's vocabulary) when he allegorizes them in terms which echo his lines in *Essay on Criticism* about the spontaneous generation of bad criticisms—"When thus ripe lies are to perfection sprung, / Full grown, and fit to grace a moral tongue" (479-80)—and which call to mind Jonathan Swift's evocative description of "order from confusion sprung" from "The Lady's Dressing Room." The sounds take on lives of their own, lives which have social, textual histories generated by their remediation in the poem.

Sounds grow these extra poetic features in their remediation from aurality to textuality, thus dramatizing how the stage of mediation may create an author out of a listener. As electronic music composer, DJ, and critic David Toop puts it, "listening then is a specimen of mediumship, a question of discerning and engaging with what lies beyond the world of forms. When sound, silence, and other modalities of auditory phenomena are represented through 'silent' media, this association of mediumship becomes more acute."[106] Per the old saw about trees falling in a forest, sound requires a listener in order to be registered as having occurred—its presence is both immersive and dependent on a mediator. Here, Galloway's critique of Bolter and Grusin for their main

[106] David Toop, *Sinister Resonance: The Mediumship of the Listener* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Group Inc., 2010), viii. Toop began his career as a DJ before branching out to write in the popular music press in the United Kingdom. From his other book titles—which include *Ocean of Sound: Aether Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds* (1995), *Exotica: Fabricated Soundscapes in a Real World* (1999), *Haunted Weather: Music, Silence, and Memory* (2004)—one can get a sense that his work is *highly* recursive, as he juxtaposes examples from his encyclopedic knowledge of sound in literature, cinema, folklore, media technology, and all genres of music in order to combine and recombine insights.

focus on visual media actually presents a means for understanding their work in the realm of sonic media, for he has provided a means of understanding how the epic poet interfaces his muse by means of singing language into text.[107]

The Temple of Fame is a series of interfaces that create a sensory overload for the Pope's listener-speaker, which in turn generates an awareness of the multiple, conflicting channels of Fama and a space to realize his own mediating role as poet who seeks Fame. Toop's description of the experience is impressionistic—it is overwrought and vague at the same time—but it resembles Pope's listener-speaker's similarly over-determined situation:

> Dwelling in every written text there are voices; within images there is some suggestion of acoustic space. Sound surrounds, yet our relation to its enveloping, intrusive, fleeting nature is fragile (a game of Chinese whispers) rather than decisive … sound floating upwards or through the air, either writing itself in to the outer reaches of the human environment or thinning into unimaginably insubstantial states of materiality: thin, thinner, thinnest yet never quite nothing. Sound unearthed through written memory and other forms of inscription, on the other hand, is closer to metaphors of sediment, a collecting of dissipating earthly stuff: silt, dust and partial objects that must be sifted, as if by an archaeological dig, from other impacted matter underfoot. The problem, we realize from examining the ways in which sound is understood, is that sound is described through a fog of confusion.[108]

With his repetitions and clichés, Pope's listener-speaker is dramatizing that double logic of remediation: he is immersed in a chaotic sonic landscape and highly aware of the enabling limitations of metaphor in mediating that experience. Such an awareness is present in Chaucer's poem as well, as A.C. Cawley traces the appearances of the word "fame" in Chaucer's poem and argues for a "definite progression" from fame as rumor to consolidation in fame as the author's renown: "Fame is the end-product of countless

[107] Galloway, 34.
[108] Toop, viii, 34-35.

reports, chirkings, rounings, and jangles. Soaring heaven-wards in the Eagle's talons, he follows the upward course of all the sounds and words that are uttered on this earth until he reaches the heights of the House of Fame, where human noises are given a name and consolidated as fame or ill fame."[109] Pope's phrase "intellectual scene compose" from the beginning of the poem takes on multiple meanings of composing in vision and in text, of describing the remediation and artifactualization of his sensory experience that solidifies his authorial status. When he becomes a speaker, he gains a voice.

Mosaics and Pageants Produce Remediation

In composing those previous paragraphs, which are over-full with authors' names, I am conscious of how I have been mediating between so many voices. It is my attempt to stage a conversation among disparate, sometimes disputing critics who work across different mediums and critical traditions. In my criticism I am recursively replicating the diverse pageants of the *Temple of Fame* and the hyper-mediations of the *Dunciad*. This is Toop's critical method of inspired juxtaposition—he draws from the sounds of the *Aeneid* to Irish folklore to electronic music in his synesthetic riffing on the sonic "fog of confusion"—and it is also Marshall McLuhan's "mosaic or field approach" to configuring the intellectual and social space of print technology. *The Gutenberg Galaxy* is a series of long quotations from McLuhan's vast, wide-ranging library about the history of communication, with some glosses by McLuhan in the text and gnomic section headings that provoke connections between disparate authors and fields of study. In his author's note, McLuhan argues for the accretive value of the approach: "The alternative

[109] Cawley, 13.

procedure would be to offer a series of views of fixed relationships in pictorial space. Thus the galaxy or constellation of events upon which the present study concentrates is itself a mosaic of perpetually interacting forms that have undergone kaleidoscopic transformation—particularly in our own time."[110] McLuhan's book is configured as a progress tale of sorts from orality to literacy[111] to electronic media that also warns about implications of these sensory and intellectual changes. Critic Christopher Ricks detects more confusion than juxtaposition in McLuhan's writing, but his description is appropriate here: "The style is a viscous fog, through which loom stumbling metaphors."[112]

Pope figures a similar juxtapositional, hyper-mediated approach in the *Dunciad*, where "generic blurring immediately becomes both part and emblem of a parade of fundamental anarchy."[113] The stuff of confusion, the spontaneously generating media from the *Essay on Criticism* and *The Temple of Fame* become artifactualized as representatives of genres that recombine and reproduce more, different swarms:

> Call forth each mass, a poem, or a play;
> How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
> How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
> Maggots half-form'd in rhyme exactly meet,
> And learn to crawl upon poetic feet.
> Here one poor word an hundred clenches makes,
> And ductile Dulness new meanders takes;
> There motley images her fancy strike,
> Figures ill-pair'd, and similes unlike.
> She sees a mob of metaphors advance,
> Pleased with the madness of the mazy dance;

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[110] McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy,* [i].
[111] McLuhan's student Walter Ong remediated his mentor's work in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen & Co., 1982).
[112] Quoted in Marvin Kitman, "The Invention of Lasagna Made the Pullman Car Obsolete," *The Legacy of McLuhan*, ed. Lance Strate and Edward Wachtel (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc., 2005), 73-83, 74. The title of that essay is both a parody of and homage to McLuhan's juxtapositional "long zoom" approach to media history.
[113] Sitter, 10-11.

How Tragedy and Comedy embrace;
How Farce and Epic get a jumbled race;
How Time himself stands still at her command,
Realms shift their place, and ocean turns to land. (I.58-72)

In this mock-epic, Pope has refashioned his descriptions of proliferating media from older poems, performing the very process of remediation through genre as he's describing it. That recursion replicates itself further in criticism of the poem, as Sitter for instance engages more metaphors with which to describe the performance of the multitude: "Personification seems almost too somber a word to describe Pope's technique here: the literary quantities are animated into the puppet-like rapidity of 'the madness of the mazy dance' with great comic skill."[114] Sitter turns to other media—puppetry and animation—to render Pope's poetry, producing a kind of infinite proliferation of frames of remediation.

Pope himself performs a similar self-replicating media move as the inchoate sounds from *The Temple of Fame* aggregate into an entire book about the musical tortures of opera in the *Dunciad*. They clash and produce more confusion, more mediation:

O *Cara! Cara!* silence all that train
Joy to great Chaos! let Division reign:
Chromatic tortures soon shall drive them hence,
Break all their nerves, and fritter all their sense:
One Trill shall harmonize joy, grief, and rage,
Wake the dull Church, and lull the ranting Stage;
To the same notes thy sons shall hum, or snore,
And all thy yawning daughters cry, *encore*. (IV.53-60)

The Temple is an abstracted space for pageantry; "the ranting Stage" is a fully realized, three-dimensional space (and a genre) for these noises to resound and recombine in chaotic performance. Remediating Pope in music allows this spiral to spread further, as composer Elliott Carter was inspired by the final couplet of the *Dunciad*—"Thy hand,

[114] Ibid.

great Anarch! Lets the curtain fall; / And Universal Darkness buries All" (IV.655-56)—to end his 1961 Double Concerto with "a mad jazzy piano cadenza, spastic harpsichord, shrill brass, and furious drums… giv[ing] way to a disintegrating fade-out."[115] Carter's extraordinary climax is a kind of picture inside a picture of the organizing figure Alex Ross uses in *The Rest is Noise*, where he argues that critics registered all of the musical movements of the twentieth century, from atonalism to folk music to electronic music (and many, many other forms), first as noise before they embraced them: "Ultimately all music acts on its audience through the same physics of sound, shaking the air and arousing curious sensations. … What delights one group gives headaches to another."[116] Even before the advent of early twentieth-century atonalism and "found sounds" that pop up in Carter's works, Pope had rendered that affective excess in his description of how the proliferating operatic voices "break all their nerves, and fritter all their sense." Ross explains his juxtapositional method as embracing that difficulty in discerning "noise" from signal: "the story criss-crosses the often ill-defined or imaginary border separating classical music from neighboring genres ... [Composer Alban] Berg was right: music unfolds along an unbroken continuum, however dissimilar the sounds on the surface. Music is always migrating from its point of origin to its destiny in someone's fleeting moment of experience." His description of noises that jumble and cohere in unexpected ways, very much like what he sees in his subjects such as Carter—as well as what's happening in Pope's poetry and McLuhan's mosaic history of communication technologies.

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[115] Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007), 404.
[116] Ross, xi, xiii.

McLuhan takes the dark, chaotic *Dunciad* couplet that had inspired Carter and draws a line from Pope to modernist print culture: "This is the Night from which Joyce invites the Finnegans to wake."[117] He ends *The Gutenberg Galaxy* with a series of short sections about Pope as a Typographic Man: "Pope's *Dunciad* indicts the printed book as the agent of a primitivistic and Romantic revival. Sheer visual quantity evokes the magical resonance of the tribal horde. The box office looms as a return to the echo chamber of bardic incantation."[118] In the discrete unit of a single section heading in a book about a gigantic sweep of time, these three sentences teem with visual and sonic media from different historical periods. Primitivism, Romanticism, tribalism, bardic orality—all are revived and jumbled together in that sentence to evoke the historicity of print consciousness and its forward-looking qualities that enabled cinema and media capitalism. The media juxtapositions recall the processions of tribes and bards at the Temple of Fame; they also resemble the structure of the Temple itself, with its mismatched Gothic and classical styles. The section heading is a mosaic that reflects and enacts the progress narrative of *The Temple of Fame*'s account of emergence through remediation. Fittingly for a book about how perceptions of spaces change as more tools are discovered to see objects inside them, that section heading is an example of infinite regression, with each revival or forecast containing a picture of itself. The texts and authors quoted in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* are part of a clamor; their communications and

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[117] McLuhan, 263.

[118] McLuhan, 255. The section headings that precede this section indicate how McLuhan's work has influenced Galloway, Toop, and especially Bolter and Grusin, who contributed an essay called "'Remediating' McLuhan" to *The Legacy of McLuhan* (pp. 323-45). (That essay was one of many forms that the theory of remediation would take in addition to its publication as a full-length book.) For example: "Nobody ever made a grammatical error in a non-literate society, The reduction of the tactile qualities of life and language constitute the refinement sought in the Renaissance and repudiated now in the electronic age, The new time sense of typographic man is cinematic and sequential and pictorial, Typography cracked the voices of silence…" (238-50).

theories emerge from the juxtapositions between blocks of quotations. They are also subject to change with new configurations. In this way, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* is a kind of thematic, methodological remediation of Pope's *Temple of Fame* and *Dunciad* in its narrative of sensory overload that creates the mediating power of authorship.[119]

I want to use this point about the self-replicating tendencies of remediation to consider the critical framework of James McLaverty's *Pope, Print, and Meaning,* a monograph that works in biography, theory, and book history to tell the details of Pope's participation in the production of his works. Published in 2001, McLaverty's monograph theorizes the hyper-mediations of the *Dunciad*'s proliferating prolegomena and footnote-studded pages by turning to Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia. To make the term useful, McLaverty (and Bakhtin) must make a functional critical slippage (a metaphor) in registering these "voices" that are really printed words. As Toop has indicated, there is always a distinction between the sounds that voices make and their textual condition, a kind of artifactualization of the voice when it becomes part of silent media. The *Dunciad*'s voices are especially artifactualized, as they are quotations, parodies, and burlesques that depend on their textuality to serve their generic purpose of replicating prodigiously.

[119] McLuhan's authorial status is such that he was literally artifactualized in Woody Allen's 1977 film *Annie Hall*. As he stands in line to see *The Sorrow and the Pity* at the movie theater (a media frame within a frame), Allen's Alvy Singer overhears a stranger paraphrasing one of McLuhan's concepts incorrectly. He argues with the amateur media theorist and conveniently pulls McLuhan into the frame to huff: "you know nothing of my work!" McLuhan also appears in David Cronenberg's 1983 film *Videodrome*, as the media prophet Brian O'Blivion (played by Jack Creley), who communicates only through a television broadcast signal, never face to face. O'Blivion helps disseminate a videocassette called *Videodrome*, which carries a malevolent, noisy signal that causes brain tumors to generate spontaneously in anyone who watches it. Technological recursion is rendered as body-horror in Cronenberg's film.

To explain heteroglossia, McLaverty has to paraphrase and synthesize multiple essays by Bakhtin, which he is reading in translation—that is, he remediates Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia through multiple frames in order to activate it:

> By heteroglossia Bakhtin means the stratification of language into various dialects or languages. These dialects are social, attached to groups of generations; they express points of view, ideological positions; they compete to describe the world. Any utterance takes its meaning from its relation to both prior and alternative utterances; one speaks always in response to an already spoken question. A literary genre can recognize and build positively on this dialogue or try to suppress it. Any utterance, great or small, is subject to centripetal forces trying to unify language (or gain hegemony for one dialect) and centrifugal forces recognizing social diversity and development.[120]

This distillation is stranger than it appears to be, as though the frames of remediation through translation, synthesis, paraphrase are replicating "heteroglossia" through the *distorting* lens of Pope's *Dunciad* and its chaos instead of merely being condensed into a summary. In that last sentence, McLaverty adds more figurative language of centripetal and centrifugal forces to describe the vectors of communication—together with textual voices, that's a lot of figurative language, very nearly a "mob of metaphors." It is a mob that describes mob behavior, or the emergent qualities of so many circulating voices that cohere by genre or some other classification, only to recombine in other contexts. He may be inadvertently calling up Pope's own description of generic mixing through "figures ill-paired" from the *Dunciad* in order to describe Bakhtin's own description of generic mixing. In McLaverty's new context, Bakhtin's own voice from his writings has become a kind of artifact that recursively takes on the characteristics of that text, the *Dunciad*, which it's been used to describe and theorize.

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[120] James McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 85. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

McLaverty describes his rubric in graphing terms—"What is needed is a grid on which Pope's work can be plotted"—that can be said to remediate the Russian formalist's theory into a visual medium that reflects Pope's own dense grid of authorial, paratextual interventions on the pages of the *Dunciad*. The grid is enabling for McLaverty in part because of the limitations in its applicability:

> The *Dunciad* Variorum in some respects looks like a work attempting to break the bounds Bakhtin sets for poetry by coming to terms with heteroglossia. Its prolegomena, appendices, and footnotes show it to be a truly many-voiced work. And yet its very bibliographical complexity suggests a reservation that must enter the analysis and may ultimately determine its outcome. The Variorum is more aware of other books, and of itself as a book, than it is of other voices. In many ways this adds a welcome refinement to Bakhtin's account, which tends to remove authors and their voices from the muddle of publication, with its economics, censorships, and corruptions. The utterances Bakhtin accounts for are idealized, the products of some sphere of equality and freedom, whereas those Pope is concerned with are commodities….[121]

What's striking about McLaverty's turn to "heteroglossia," then, is that he overloads the first few pages of the chapter with description of Bakhtin's theory, but the theory becomes less useful to him after he voices this caveat. I'm left wondering how useful the term really is for him—except that it produces that insight about the distinction between voices and "voices" in print. In McLuhan's mosaic terms, the juxtaposition of Pope and Bakhtin creates a kind of productive gap in which McLaverty may mediate his own theory of Pope's authorial status.[122] Perhaps this productive distortion is often the remediating function of critical vocabulary, of critical voices that are appropriated into new conversations, thus changing both the lens and the object under examination. Texts

[121] McLaverty, 84, 86.

[122] Neil Rhodes notes the convergent evolution of these two ideas about multiple channels of voices by McLuhan and Bakhtin: "The oral polyphony that McLuhan recognized in Nashe … is what Bakhtin recognized first in Dostoevsky and later in Rabelais as he merged his own theory of polyphony with a concept of the carnivalesque. But McLuhan seems to have reached this point quite independently of Bakhtin, since his Rabelais study was first translated into English in 1968 and Dostoevsky in 1973."

are quoted in fragments that are decontextualized and recontextualized: in Dennett's terms, the critically abstracted pieces of texts jump between media (and critics) easily.[123] We see that phenomenon most visibly in the hyper-mediations of the *Dunciad* itself.

Thus far, I have tried to perform that kind of productive distortion in this pageant of critics and their various textual offerings to the Communications Temple of Fame. McLaverty's translating, synthesizing, paraphrasing, and applying "heteroglossia" is a replication (and proliferation) of the frames of mediation in the *Dunciad*; I have noticed a similar tiling effect with Bolter and Grusin's "remediation." Bolter and Grusin remediate McLuhan not just conceptually but structurally in their book about that concept, in which they accumulate examples and juxtapose theories, historical examples, and close readings of new media objects. *Remediation*'s design is a mosaic of text, images, and notes on the wide vertical margins that are deliberately left undigested into the paragraphs of text. The method is also the object is also the effect.

Mosaics, Pixels, and Glitches in the Temple of Fame

With these replicating metaphors of sight, sound, structure, and chaos in critical narratives about media history, there is also a tactile question of preservation: What holds these mosaics together? They can be reassembled in new critical contexts to demonstrate

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[123] Dennett would probably want to gloss over the voice/textualized "voice" distinction, but that glossing over is a critical move that he's practicing consciously in order to articulate an argument about how normal abstraction is in our critical consciousness of media: "The idea of abstraction has been around for a long time, and 200 years ago you could enliven a philosophical imagination by asking what Mozart's Haffner Symphony is made of. It's ink on pieces of paper. It's a sequence of sounds as played by people with various stringed instruments and other instruments. It's an abstract thing. It's a symphony. Stradivarius made violins; Mozart made symphonies, which depend on a physical realization but don't depend on any particular one. They have an independent existence, which can shift from one medium to another and back" (123).

and retheorize remediation infinitely, but then what? One can rearrange the tiles of a mosaic endlessly, but arguments and crystallized insights are what endure as quotable material in critical discourse. If Fame's and Dulness's mediating powers are capricious and their decisions are arbitrary, what kinds of criticism can account for this contingency and unpredictable emergent behavior?

With its multiple revisions and versions, the *Dunciad* is a record of tight authorial control, but it is also one that registers its own contingencies. Even from a practical standpoint, citing the different editions Pope rewrote and revised produces more mediation and more footnotes, as Catherine Ingrassia and Claudia N. Thomas have noted in their introduction to *More Solid Learning*, where they self-consciously note that "new perspectives" on Pope with critical apparatus could replicate the very features that Pope objects to in his critique of pedantry.[124] Ingrassia and Thomas's new perspectives come from critical theory that scholars found productive to apply to Pope at the historical moment when the academy was taking stock of how feminism, performance studies, and other forms of cultural studies would change the objects under their purview. Here I want to try out a new tool with which to create a critical theory of media distortion: how does contemporary media theory about—and experiments in—"glitch" technology let us understand something new about Pope's (and McLuhan's, and Bolter and Grusin's, among others') theories of mediation?

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[124] Catherine Ingrassia and Claudia N. Thomas, *More Solid Learning: New Perspectives on Pope's* Dunciad. (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2000). For example: "…the seductive momentum of Pope's couplets traps the reader within the poem and often softens the obscurity of a line or allusion. That is the genius of the text. A piece of writing inextricably tied to the impulses and passions of popular and consumer culture appears elevated, transhistorical, and canonized. …. Literary scholarship on *The Dunciad* perpetuates Pope's model and potentially replicates the binaries he constructs within the poem." (23-24).

Glitches are artifacts of technological malfunctions like static, pixelated images, and other digital distortions. The term was coined by astronaut John Glenn in 1962 to refer specifically to a sudden change of voltage in electrical current, but it has been abstracted to apply to instantiations of technological error, especially in the digital realm.[125] Even in its technical context, it is difficult to distinguish cause and effect in a glitch. The spike could have a cause that was knowable or it could be random; likewise, the effect of the surge could be predictable, devastating, disfiguring, unnoticed until later observation, or any combination of those things. With regard to *The Temple of Fame*, this context renders that poem's numerous storms into glitch generators: in a thunderstorm, electricity changes states as it moves through the medium of water vapor to the ground, observed visually as a flash of lightning and sonically as a rumble of thunder. It appears "betwixt air, seas, and skies" and changes states in these contexts.

Glitches are compelling tests of Galloway's challenge about what counts as media: are they media themselves, or are they accidents that halt processes of mediation? Glitch artists and theorists are interested in finding these accidents in "the wild" and capturing them via screen-grab—for example, a digital video feed or a video game may freeze, pixelate, re-color, or fragment the image, or Google Maps may have a problem rendering an aerial prospect from its satellite and produce weird artifacts of highways that appear to buckle or lead nowhere.[126] Or these artists may also generate glitches

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[125] See Curt Cloninger, "Glitch Linguistix: The Machines in the Ghost/ Static Trapped in the Mouth," *GLI.TC/H READER[ROR] 2011*, eds. Nick Briz, Evan Meaney, Rosa Menkman, William Robertson, Jon Satrom, Jessica Westbrook. (Unpublished Books, 2011) (http://gli.tc/h/READERROR/GLITCH_READERROR_20111-v3BWs.pdf, 23-41), 28.
[126] See Clement Valla, "The Universal Texture," Rhizome.org July 31, 2012. http://rhizome.org/editorial/2012/jul/31/universal-texture/ "Our mechanical processes for creating images have habituated us into thinking in terms of snapshots - discrete segments of time and space (no matter how close together those discrete segments get, we still count in frames per second and image aspect ratios). But Google is thinking in continuity. The images produced by Google Earth are quite unlike a photograph that

deliberately by introducing errors, deletions, interpolations, or foreign objects into code, if it can be accessed and mediated through a text editor or some other interface. Glitches are like the digital form of Stewart's distressed "new antiques," except they produce alien artifacts rather than familiar patinas of historicity.

As in Toop's notes about how sounds signal a moment for a listener to notice the medium—a sound has to be turned into something else in order to be shared, whether it's described in words or recorded in some sonic media—glitches have to be remediated in order to even exist, and thus they present moments for reflecting on how humans mediate themselves through digital technology. Peter Krapp describes the art and music movement: "If computers can become equal performance partners via complex self-referential processes of digital signal processing for musical composition and audiovisual display, then 'the separation between man and machine disappears in the proliferation of transaction were the artist neither acts nor navigates interactively,' as one glitch pioneer conjectures."[127] The easiest glitches to engineer are the ones that involve forcing an image file such as a jpeg into another kind of media file like a text file. New media performance artist Curt Cloninger seeks to theorize glitches with a familiar term, heteroglossia, in noting how glitches indicate a moments where the mediation between humans and machines is somehow distorted, where they seem to be talking past one another. Cloninger cites Bakhtin's "The Problem of Speech Genres": "Each text (both oral and written) includes a significant number of various kinds of natural aspects devoid

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bears an indexical relationship to a given space at a given time. Rather, they are hybrid images, a patchwork of two-dimensional photographic data and three-dimensional topographic data extracted from a slew of sources, data-mined, pre-processed, blended and merged in real-time. Google Earth is essentially a database disguised as a photographic representation."

[127] Peter Krapp, *Noise Channels: Glitch and Error in Digital Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 67. Krapp is quoting Achim Stepanski's liner notes to 2001 composition *Clicks and Cuts 2*, produced by the recording collective Mille Plateaux, named for Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's influential theoretical work of the same name (see Krapp, 143n.)

of signification... but which are still taken into account (deterioration of manuscript, poor diction, and so forth)."[128] These moments that challenge signification are still voices in a dialogic text: "There are not nor can there be any pure texts. In each text, moreover, there are a number of aspects that can be called technical (the technical side of graphics, pronunciation, and so forth)…." As glitches, these specifically digital instantiations of technical aspects take on lives of their own; they are "speaking" in ways that present even more challenges to the problem of speech genres. They talk in code that is fundamentally different from speech that signifies through words, metaphors, and tone. They are ephemeral artifacts that change state and meaning as they are preserved, translated, remediated, and shared in new formats.[129] Cloninger's turn to Bakhtin can be seen as one way of answering Lev Manovich's call in *The Language of New Media* to develop "a theoretical analysis of the aesthetics of information access as well as the creation f new media objects that 'aestheticize information processing.'"[130] Is that new language a remediation of older media studies vocabulary from film studies into new genres for new objects, as Manovich often points to, or are there other languages that get remediated in the creation of these aesthetic theories?

As with McLaverty's analysis, it's worth noting that Cloninger front-loads his essay with Bakhtin but never exactly articulates the payoff of the citation, and many of the connections I've made above are my own glosses, extrapolations, and reframings. Cloninger never crystallizes his insights about Bakhtin and instead presents a bunch of

[128] Cited in Cloninger, 28.
[129] The question of their ephemerality and preservation seems important to consider, perhaps in conversation with Paula McDowell's essay about the history of "ephemerality" as a concept. See "Of Grubs and Other Insects: Constructing the Categories of 'Ephemera' and 'Literature' in Eighteenth-Century British Writing," *Book History* 15 (2012), 48-70.
[130] Manovich, 217.

remediated images from various contexts in order to give a pre-history of glitches without digital media: an "analog" glitch of the Book of Durrow from 600 AD that is decaying as the inscribed pigment eats the vellum medium, or Gerhard Richter's extraordinary *Woman Descending a Staircase*, a gigantic oil painting from 1965 that appears from a glance to be a larger-than-life-size blurry photograph. His essay is a mosaic of these remediated images, as under-theorized as his appropriated critical vocabulary but suggesting an alternative form of argument out of their juxtapositions. This is perhaps the point of the exercise (or a generous reading of the essay): Cloninger describes why Bakhtin is so useful for critics to make juxtapositions of disparate historical artifacts because "Bakhtin is like gaffer's tape. He adheres tightly when suitably applied, but he releases his grip quickly when it is time to decouple things and move on to new locales and configurations."[131] Though Cloninger never makes the explicit connection here, it's fitting that gaffer's tape is used to secure electrical equipment on film and television sets, so the comparison becomes a way of mediating among the glitch's original meaning of a surge in a current, cinematic media technology, and the mediating technologies of theory. He emphasizes the contingency of his criticism, in order to match the glitchy digital objects he is examining.

In some ways, Cloninger's dense essay resembles Martinus Scriblerus blundering into the footnotes of the *Dunciad* with his pedantic flights of fancy. With that

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[131] Cloninger, 28. Cloninger is playing with the idea that "perhaps philosophers are like adhesives." He sets a scene for a pageant of theorists to perform juxtapositions so he may reflect on what theorists of new media take and give back to critical theories that pre-date the media objects under analysis: "Plato is like Elmer's Glue: he is ubiquitous; he holds things together well enough; and everyone has swallowed him at a young age unawares without any immediately fatal results. Derrida is like duct tape: it is tempting to apply him to everything, but if you apply him too liberally to problems that need a less than all-encompassing approach, the results will be very sticky and munged-up with a bunch of deconstructive residue which largely obscures the original problem. If McLuhan is a thin rubber band (more or less useful in his analysis of media), then Debord is a thick rubber band (trying earnestly to outwit the trap of media spectacularization), and Baudrillard is a silly band (resigned to play in a mediated simulacrum)."

comparison, it's also possible to think of Scriblerus as a glitch that Pope introduced into the media of the poem. To be sure, Pope controls his bad mediator Scriblerus in the *Dunicad* while glitch artists let their interpolations run amok. Scriblerus is like a glitch that gains sentience and takes on a life of its own outside of its initial medium[132] as he is remediated by Pope himself and others who embraced his satire of learning. The *Dunciad*'s satire of Dulness becomes a program or a protocol to follow in order to satirize other texts and intellectual methods; Scriblerus generates associational practices in the Scriblerus Club (of which Pope and Swift were members), the Kit-Kat Club, and the Connecticut Wits.[133] Martinus Scriblerus's errors become authorized and authorizing when he "writes" his memoirs in 1741 as a collaborative production of the Scriblerians (mostly John Arbuthnot). McLaverty notes how Scriblerus became a picture within a picture of critical methods: "Unintentionally, Pope created through Scriblerus the critical voice that came to dominate mid-twentieth century criticism of his poetry. … This

[132] The funniest, most poignant example of this phenomenon is the 2012 animated film *Wreck-It Ralph*, which takes place in a video arcade game. Wreck-It Ralph (voiced by John O'Reilly) is the unhappy villain in a video game, but he just wants to be a hero in another story. He travels through the electrical current of the game—there is even a "Surge Protector" security guard who checks to make sure that characters stay in their own games—to visit a popular racing game called Sugar Rush, a kind of car chase through Candy-Land. There he encounters a flickering, pixelated character named Vanellope von Schweetz (voiced by Sarah Silverman) who can never participate in the races because she is a glitch: "everyone here says I'm just a mistake and that I wasn't even supposed to exist." A pariah who hangs on the edges of the game's world and causes trouble, she can't leave the game because she is stuck in the medium. She learns how to use her glitchiness to zap through certain stages in the races, giving her a superpower of sorts that she can use to win races and be a featured character in the game after all.

[133] As they met at Yale during the 1780s, the Connecticut Wits were Joel Barlow, David Humphreys, John Trumbull, and Timothy Dwight, all of whom went on to more serious careers in American poetry. The Connecticut Wits deployed Scriblerian methods and the character himself in the *Plagi-Scurriliad*, the *Progress of Dulness*, and the *Anarchiad*, a satire of the Articles of Confederation which they claimed (impossibly, waggishly) Pope had plagiarized sixty years earlier. See John P. McWilliams, Jr., *The American Epic: Transforming a Genre 1770-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). "Assuming that any reader must know the famous ending of *The Dunciad* ('Lo! Thy dread Empire, Chaos! Is restor'd; / Light dies before thy unreading word'), the American poets politicized it to serve as the climactic couplet of their first number: 'Thy constitution, Chaos, is restor'd; Law sinks before thy uncreating word.' Pope's literary Dulness has evidently become the lesser evil. The Word America needs is one of Law, but the only constitution restorable through popular clamor is the constitution of Chaos, rather than the Constitution creating federal unity" (81).

interpretation of Scriblerus seriously reduces the dialogic energy of this section of the apparatus by identify a single, shared critical position, and it leads to a diminished role for the particular in the poem."[134] Scriblerus is a glitch that (who?) generates recursive satirical and critical behaviors.

In Cloninger's critical context, glitches perform like satires in how they distort objects we think we know. His essay appears as a perfunctorily formatted version of a presentation from a glitch media conference, collected in a digital journal of those presentations called GLI.TC/H READER[ROR] 20111, so the speech genre is further problematized in this new context. Like Cloninger's, the essays are recursive not only in their analyses but also in their remediations from performance/presentation to essay to digital document. In their introduction to the journal, the editors—who call themselves GLI.TC/H/BOTS as a challenge to concepts of agency and coherent collective authorship—play with how the digitally printed format shifts the performative priorities of the conference presentations. They indulge in coding wordplay that needs to be seen and mulled over in order to be understood:

> The GLI.TC/H algorithms favor these rubric.cube$:
> function rubrix() {
> var deconstructive != generative;
> var fractures != constructs;
> var inaccurate != accurate;
> var misuse != use;
> var absent != present;
> var revealing the system != denying the system;
> var glitchspeak != language;[135]

By imitating and translating the Python coding language in order to synthesize new theoretical provocations out of juxtapositions, the GLI.TC/H/BOTS are being playful

[134] McLaverty, 99.
[135] "GLI.TC/H/BOTS," FWD: READER[ROR], 12.

with the objects they are examining and sharing.[136] The hybrid language is deliberately frustrating, funny, provocative, cute, superficial—or all of those things—but it seems to be composed to keep the language and the objects under study as "difficult" as possible. They seem to want to keep glitches weird, and so they make the language that describes, translates, synthesizes, and analyzes them weirdly, so that the artifacts are not subsumed into clear communication. They want to preserve the noise by making more of it, perhaps as a barrier against assimilation. Yet I will risk some assimilation here to note that those pairings resemble that "mob of metaphors" that generates chaos in the *Dunciad*. That chaos spontaneously generates connections and more metaphors.

Glitches are phenomena that can be studied through Kirschenbaum's forensic materiality in that they are traces of something gone awry in a code, yet they also provoke the forensic imagination as they hint at some kind of agency that is mysterious, sometimes beautiful, and random. As Kirschenbaum theorized it, the forensic imagination engages with extreme juxtapositions, oscillations between states and scales, technical vocabulary that may be mystified by metaphor, exhaustive details of one's own procedures, and unlikely moments of awe in the mundane. The glitch aesthetic incorporates these criteria into contingent, self-consciously strange and estranging, self-reflexive theories about the sparks that fly from interactions between humans and machines. Though they are clunky, those theories may travel to other contexts—say, to Pope's poetry in this chapter.

[136] Galloway is critical of how corporate media have appropriated the language of "play" and the term has become ubiquitous, if not also sinister: "one 'plays around' with a problem in order to find a workable solution," thus conjoining play to labor and creating "ludic capitalism." There's some question, then, as to what it means for the GLI.TC/H/BOTS to seize it back: "Romanticism and cybernetic systems theory: play today is a synthesis of these two influences. If the emblematic profession of the former is poetry, the latter is design. The one is expressive, consummated in an instant; the other is iterative; extending in all directions. … Today's ludic capitalist is therefore the consummate poet-designer, forever coaxing new value out of raw, systemic interactions (consider the example of Google)" (28).

Glitches are manifestations of errors or noise that distort the signal—in allegorical terms, they are like Error and Fame presiding together at Dryden's or Lloyd's Temple, their interventions visible as effects with indeterminate causes. Deanne Williams and other digitally-minded medievalists have noticed how "with no apparatuses to discern between true and false things, the information that is collected in the House of Fame resembles nothing so much as the Internet,"[137] yet this is the critique leveled, sometimes too glibly, at many forms of media, print included. Fame and Error are mediators; in this digital context they can be said to be allegorical figures of algorithmic sorting as they determine the preservation status of an artifact in arbitrary ways, even as their supplicants try to infer some larger patterns of intentionality or means of intervening in the procedure. As Dennett puts it:

> An algorithm is an abstract process that can be defined over a finite set of fundamental procedures—an instruction set. It is a structured array of such procedures. That's a very generous notion of an algorithm—more generous than many mathematicians would like, because I would include by that definition algorithms that may be in some ways defective. …You can take any bit sequence at all and feed it to your laptop as if it were a program. Almost certainly, any sequence that isn't designed to be a program to run on that laptop won't do anything at all—it'll just crash. Still, there's utility in thinking that any sequence of instructions, however buggy, however stupid, however pointless, should be considered an algorithm. Because one person's buggy, dumb sequence is another person's useful device for some weird purpose, and we don't want to prejudge that question. (Maybe that 'nonsense' was included in order to get the laptop to crash at just the point it crashed!)[138]

Even in deliberate glitch creations where the "purpose" is creative, intentionality is difficult to pin down because while a human may insert these changes to the script, it is difficult to predict the immediate effects of those interventions as they disrupt code and

[137] Williams, 162-63. Williams also cites Ruth Evans, "Chaucer in Cyberspace: Medieval Technologies of Memory in the House of Fame," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer: The Yearbook of the New Chaucer Society* 23:1 (2001), 43-69.
[138] Dennett, 124.

algorithmic functions. Glitches also problematize how to gain a vantage point for a historical perspective of change over time in that they present the possibility of artifacts that cannot be saved or retrieved in a malfunction—fatal systems errors—how can you make safeguards to see what you can't predict as a source or effect of weird glitch? The GLI.TC/H/BOTS ask a related question in the self-reflexive language of how an algorithmic instruction "returns" information: "What does saying 'glitch is/has formed communitie[s] or even a genre' actually return?"[139] They worry about the desire to contain glitches or domesticate them in a genre and want to preserve (or create) some alternative forms of associational practices that challenge conventional ideas about collectivity and intentionality. Genres can be self-organizing, however, as they change priorities and members over time, so it may happen that these objects glitch (or send a surge through) the concept of genres by highlighting contingency and malleability as priorities in any genre formation.

The uncertain digital fortunes of glitches resemble the textual proliferations of satire, in which an author may have deliberate targets of distortion, but interpretations can veer wildly out of control. We see that phenomenon in Dennis's stubborn, long-winded misreadings of Pope's writings, in Pope's appropriations and ventriloquisms of his dunces' language, in Scriblerus's peripatetic travels. At a panoramic level, we can see the widespread artifacts of satire's proliferation in J.V. Guerinot's 1969 bibliographical study, *Pamphlet Attacks on Alexander Pope.*[140] Pope's satires sent spikes of electrical current through Grub Street, provoking more authors to participate in the fray of hackery,

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[139] Ibid.

[140] J.V. Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks on Alexander Pope 1711-1744: A Descriptive Bibliography* (London: Methuen Press, 1969). This descriptive bibliography surely deserves some new media attention from Zotero or another citation-aggregating system.

pedantry, and satire. In a descriptive bibliography such as Guerinot's, the goal is summary and breadth of these concatenations—a zoomed-out approach to study the patterns of print proliferation that McLuhan argues is the most appropriate way to view Pope's work: "His intense concern with the *pattern* of action in his armed horde of nobodies has been mistaken for personal spite. Pope was entirely concerned with the *formalistic pattern* and penetrative and configuring power of the new technology. His readers have been befogged by the 'content' obsession and the practical benefits of applied knowledge."[141] McLuhan is not being querulous here; his insistence on pattern over content is an argument for the ways that the mosaic approach generates not just new insights about a particular work but different kinds of arguments about change over time.

The New Aesthetic: Is Curation a Form of Theorizing, a Social Behavior, or Both?

Glitchy pixelated images are the digital versions of McLuhan's mosaics, not only in their similar appearance but also in their properties to theorize accumulation and transformation of media. In 2011, media analyst James Bridle began collecting glitches and other images that displayed "the eruption of the digital onto the physical" as a means of exploring how we "see like digital devices."[142] Bridle called this phenomenon "the New Aesthetic" and curated a Tumblr (or image-sharing blog archive) of these images that displayed strange interactions between people and their tools. As epigrammatized for optimal dissemination on social media, the New Aesthetic claims that "the look is

[141] McLuhan, 262-63.
[142] James Bridle, "#sxaesthetic." booktwo.org. March 15, 2012. http://booktwo.org/notebook/sxaesthetic/ Bridle announced the experiment on Really Interesting Group blog on May 6, 2011 http://www.riglondon.com/blog/2011/05/06/the-new-aesthetic/. He housed the experiment at newaesthetic.tumblr.com.

metaphor" for new collaborations between humans and technology. That vision is both immersed in a digital media environment and attuned to noticing when the frames don't match up, when there's a glitch that reminds us of our technologically hyper-mediated vision. [143]

The liminal but hyper-mediated prospects at the House and Temple of Fame are literary predecessors to the images rendered by surveillance drones. In poems such as *Windsor Forest*, Pope participated in eighteenth-century debates about aesthetics in the garden and natural landscape; the curators of the New Aesthetic tumblr disseminated an image that literally zooms out to marvel at the aerial views of brightly colored Dutch tulip fields that look like pixels: "it looks like the earth corrupted and stopped rendering correctly."[144] Glitches are especially vivid reminders of how weird these interactions between humans and technology can be—they are manifestations of how metaphors are productive errors (x is not really y, but the juxtaposition generates new ideas).

In the initial stages of publicizing the New Aesthetic, the goal was collection rather than the articulation of a fully fleshed out theory—for definition was what the New

[143]Although I see the New Aesthetic as a vivid example of Bolter and Grusin's double logic of remediation, Bridle's initial provocation and popularization owed more to Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the rhizome. The New Aesthetic was discussed at length on Rhizome.org, a new media art and criticism blog. The rhizome is itself a self-replicating metaphor about self-replication. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

[144] "jaymo." "Flying Over the Tulip Fields in Anna Paulowna." The New Aesthetic tumblr, February 4, 2013. http://new-aesthetic.tumblr.com/post/42296196669/thejaymo-flying-over-the-tulips-fields-in-anna This citation is difficult to format because it is a tumblr post that has been reblogged several times and the name of the photographer (presumably Anna Paulowna) has been lumped into the title of the post, then affixed with commentary by jaymo. Bibliographers, academic institutions such as the Modern Language Association, and publishing institutions such as the Chicago Manual of Style developed guidelines for citing printed animadversions and aggregations—that is, they developed social and institutional means of proliferating (and enforcing) these behaviors, which in turn produced more writing, more citations. As Siskin would put it, more is different on the Internet: Digital humanities scholars are still working on a way to account for just how to record reblogs, unacknowledged appropriations from others' blogs, and Internet hat-tips, among many other behaviors.

Aesthetic problematizes in its foregrounding of seeing over explaining.[145] What's important is to juxtapose and assemble, and then reassemble the images into new configurations to record the political and social implications of a world newly seen by drones, surveillance cameras, webcams, and other digital devices. Those image-arguments are then remediated onto more screens in the shareable social media catalog of the New Aesthetic tumblr. The New Aesthetic tumblr shared work by the GLI.TC/H collective, yet the two glitch purveyors could not be more different in self-presentation or media attention. Where the GLI.TC/H/BOTS add weirdness to what they're disseminating in embellished language that's difficult to understand, Bridle makes his concept easy to digest and share. As a result, the GLI.TC/H/BOTS have not been domesticated into popular media, where the New Aesthetic has been promoted and talked about frequently in media and digital art communities in the last few years.

Writing about the New Aesthetic panel at the technology media conference South by Southwest (SXSW) in 2012, science fiction novelist and "Dead Media" theorist Bruce Sterling calls it "attempted imposition on the public of a new way of perceiving reality" but wonders what it amounts to beyond novelty or quirkiness. He worries that it is easy to share in a tweet—"hey, this is cool"—but has little substance behind it:

> Those cats just don't herd yet; that puzzle is still in its pieces. One can try to cluster them, in a vague ecumenical way, by saying, 'This is how contemporary reality looks to our pals, the visionary machines.' But that's not convincing. I recognize that this is an effective, poetic formulation, and I'm touched by that, but it's problematic. When you abandon the feel-good aspect of collectively discovering new stuff together, and start

[145] Bridle: "But what has also been brilliant is that other people have pitched in. I first realised that NA was 'a thing' not in that first blog post (I would have given it a better name) but when people started responding and writing about it. They started coming to me, bringing things, and saying 'is this New Aesthetic?' or even 'I think this is 'New Aesthetic' and I'd go yes, possibly, or better, why do you think that? Names have power—here he interrupted his talk and blog post about the talk with a slide of Aleister Crowley, for reasons that I could not exactly interpret!—"giving something a name gives you power over it, but it also gives other people power too. Other people can pick up your tool and use it" ("sxaesthetic.").

> getting rigorous and picky about what you're actually perceiving, the New Aesthetic Easter eggs rather overflow their wicker basket.[146]

From unherdable cats to overflowing baskets of Easter eggs, Sterling stacks up images and metaphors in order to criticize the cutesiness of the New Aesthetic's image-sharing platform. Just as Bolter and Grusin and McLaverty replicate the very qualities of the phrases they appropriate in their criticism, Sterling cannot help but make more vivid images in his critique of the New Aesthetic's tendency to disseminate weird images. Pope, too, evinces a hyper-productive pleasure in accumulating that which he is criticizing in the *Dunciad*.

Sterling's succession of metaphors for chaos that cannot be contained is more apt as a *description* than a criticism of the New Aesthetic's possibilities of proliferation through self-organizing social behaviors in digital media. The New Aesthetic is not just a means of aestheticizing the ways in which we see like digital devices; it is as a theory of the proliferation of these images of technologized vision, wherein under-theorized sharing and accumulating is the engine of new protocols and behaviors. It theorizes its own transmission through the lens of glitches that would impede or distort it in unexpected ways. As the GLI.TC/H/BOTS built glitchiness into their work in order to self-reflexively remediate the effects of their examinations of weird objects, so too we might say that the New Aesthetic builds in superficiality in order to reproduce the slipperiness, ubiquity, and "dumbness" (they don't speak for themselves) of these glitched images. The GLI.TC/H/BOTS and Bridle each claim to resist collecting the glitches into a genre, yet they have revealed how genres are made out of priorities and critical protocols rather than out of labels.

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[146] Bruce Sterling, "An Essay on the New Aesthetic." *Wired*: Beyond the Beyond blog, April 2, 2012. http://www.wired.com/beyond_the_beyond/2012/04/an-essay-on-the-new-aesthetic/

Some of these protocols look like errors, as library historian Matthew Battles points out in his critique of the New Aesthetic's proliferating metaphors: "…the New Aesthetic is practicing something like the pathetic fallacy—that time-honored conceit of poets that attributes feeling to inanimate objects. Indeed there is an element of pathetic fallacy here, which promises all the richness and poetic power poets have used it to body forth."[147] Battles situates this generative poetic error in eighteenth-century philosophical treatises which sought to pin down and theorize causes and effects in the world: "It's an attempt to frame something akin to Spinoza's notion of *Natura naturans*—nature 'naturing'—nature expressing itself in its unfolding, a process whose edges we barely touch." Pathetic fallacy may be an error, but it is a generative one, as Battles acknowledges. Seeing like a device may mean limited, problematic forms of recognition, but, like Sterling's replication of protocols he was trying to criticize, these errors are themselves records of incomplete, error-prone attempts to intervene in unstable agencies and interactions.[148] As Battles puts it: "There is a strong sense that with computers and their networks, *something* is going on in there, something emergent and radically other, which nonetheless does begin to infiltrate our edges."[149] Who and what are acting and interacting in these alien artifacts may be difficult to describe or theorize: what's inside the glitchy artifact and what's outside (in its circulation and remediations) are difficult to distinguish in the infinite regression of mediations and remediations. The edges are difficult to discern as they become glitchier.

[147] Matthew Battles, "But It Moves: The New Aesthetic and Emergent Virtual Taste." metaLAB@Harvard. April 8, 2012. http://metalab.harvard.edu/2012/04/but-it-moves-the-new-aesthetic-emergent-virtual-taste/
[148] Bruno Latour has not weighed in on the New Aesthetic yet, but his work on Actor-Network theory may be compelling to describe how glitches produce distorting, amplifying, generative, and destructive interactions among agents. See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[149] Ibid.

The mediations that are most obvious to track are those social behaviors of sharing and recontextualizing in social media platforms. In recent years, the phrase "curate" has gained currency in the realm of social media; curation is no longer just a professional marker that indicates one's institutional affiliations with a museum or a library, as it may also describe a behavior that anyone can practice, even anonymously. Thus one curates a Tumblr full of images, quotations, memes, reblogs, and commentary to share with other users, or one curates a Pinterest page to indicate one's tastes. Curation in this context is not primarily a top-down imposition of professional status and taste-making, but rather a bottom-up, self-organizing jumble of varying intentions, usage patterns, lenses of selection, and audiences. There are, of course, real worries to be registered about de-professionalization and de-institutionalization of museums and libraries if anyone can be a curator. Who or what is Fame in this scenario, who are authors, what is the work of an editor beyond selection?

Yet for Bridle and other Tumblr curators, the change to crowd-sourcing one's objects of interest has enabled more, different kinds of study. At the SXSW panel, art critic and then-editor of Rhizome.org Joanne McNeil historicized the New Aesthetic within the context of other art and media history, calling attention to how media reframe other media. Her presentation begins with the familiar claim from McLuhan—"Advancing technology always brings a new way of seeing"—and she curates images from map-making, Abstract Expressionism, and Italian Futurism, among others, in order to situate the New Aesthetic in a kind of pixelated mosaic of noisy media:

> Television also created a new way of seeing. Robert Rauschenberg's collage-like pieces were inspired by the snow and flicker of a TV set. John Cage said Rauschenberg's work looked like 'many television sets working simultaneously all tuned in differently.' These concepts were further

> expressed in the work of video artists like Nam June Paik and Dara Birnbaum. Digital art — net.art or work with new media — further explores the glitches and failures of technology…[150]

The citation of Cage's remediation of Rauschenberg is especially compelling here as he reframes painting in terms of the newer medium of television; as music critic and historian Alex Ross discusses at length in *The Rest is Noise*, Cage himself was invested in making connections between sounds, sonic artifacts, and notations of these artifacts in such works as *Imaginary Landscape No. 1, 4'33"*, the *Variations* pieces, and many others.[151] McNeil's survey resembles the many other lists by the poet Pope, the DJ Toop, Ross, McLuhan, and other critics who use lists to make an argument about the value of heaps, juxtapositions, mosaics, and the kinds of unpredictable media that emerge from those accretive methods. Even my phrase "survey" is glitched recursively in that previous sentence because I am discussing a descriptive list of media about the distortions of surveying methods in the New Aesthetic.

Writing about glitches recursively is a feature of critical engagement with the phenomenon, even when it's skeptical. Still reveling in his own figurative language, Sterling charges Bridle and the New Aesthetic's fans to articulate a clearer idea about where it will go next:

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[150] Joanne McNeil, [SXSW panel presentation about the New Aesthetic], March 14, 2012 http://joannemcneil.com/index.php?/talks-and-such/new-aesthetic-at-sxsw-2012/ As with Cloninger's essay, there is a slippage between the presentation and the preserved form it takes on McNeil's blog, as she includes her slides and the interstitial claims she made, but the post may resemble a mosaic more in its preserved state than in its performed state—an artifact of remediation.

[151] See Ross, 364-69. See also Kyle Gann, *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's* 4'33" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) and Nick Briz, "Glitch Art Historie[s] / contextualizing glitch art—a perpetual beta," in GLI.TC/H/ READER[ROR], 53-58. "Cage developed a systematized approach to composing music through chance experiments, using coins or the I-Ching. This approach of intentionally marring chance to systems is not unlike approaches developed by glitch artists. Cage was also very interested in the role 'noise' played in music and art. Often disregarded as unwanted interference by popular music, noise was embraced by Cage as the key part of his aural pallet [sic]. In thisway [sic] John Cage was a glitch artist" (58).

> [T]he New Aesthetic is a gaudy, network-assembled heap. It's made of digitized jackstraws that were swept up by a generational sensibility. The products of a 'collective intelligence' rarely make much coherent sense. … The New Aesthetic is moving out of its original discovery phase, and into an evangelical, podium-pounding phase. If a pioneer village of visionary creatives is founded, and they start exporting some startling, newfangled imagery, like a Marcel Duchamp-style explosion-in-a-shingle-factory… Well, we'll once again be living in heroic times![152]

The panel presentation at SXSW that prompted Sterling's excitement and skepticism was such an evangelizing event. It was an event designed to generate as many connections between programmers, marketers, bloggers, musicians, filmmakers—media-makers, all of them—and promote their work, sometimes in the crassest ways. Sterling's peppery phrases are a reminder of Siskin's point about the ways in which emergent behavior comes from aggregating individual productions (in anthologies, collections of authors' works, magazines), leads to new kinds of social behaviors and organizations, and in turn generates more material and larger organizing concepts of Literature, "cultures," and nationalism. In the digital media that contain and comprise glitches and their genres of collection, curation, and criticism, "more is different" once again. Sterling calls for social behaviors that will generate pioneer villages and cultural movements: though he wants to criticize the New Aesthetic for not having a clear vision of itself, he in fact makes the case for its emergent qualities that do not need such a single organizing principle beyond self-replication and aggregation.[153] What he thinks is a bug is really a feature.

Glitched Experiments, Glitched Reflections

[152] Ibid.

[153] Indeed, Bridle ended the experiment and moved on to new projects after a little more than a year, but the tumblr's followers reactivated it and continue to collect artifacts there. In this way, even the editor/curator's organizing role became decentralized as the crowd of tumblr users took a different kind of control over the project. Because the tumblr aggregated images, snippets of articles, and other stuff from many different sources, the New Aesthetic spread more than it cohered.

Let's say the GLI.TC/H/BOTS is a clunky, difficult, too-clever-by-half love letter to glitch aesthetics that's both over-theorized in its parade of theorists and under-theorized in what insights are actually gained from those citations. Let's say the New Aesthetic is a jerry-built, jury-rigged concept that is under-theorized and prone to producing metaphors and pathetic fallacies when it is discussed and criticized. *For those reasons*, reflecting on those diverse, alienating, error-prone products of critique is a valuable project that might make way for theories of arbitrary and contingent proliferation. This is why the New Aesthetic is useful for problematizing how surveillance and drone visions are sources of power that we are only beginning to conceptualize as we try to understand how those tools work. The world has become "more visual" since the eighteenth century; the glitches captured or created in these pixelated New Aesthetic images call attention to the possibility of surges that represent alternatives to that power. Bridle responded to criticisms of the New Aesthetic's flimsiness by noting that it's a critique of the network that reproduces the vernacular of the network as a mode of recursive critique: "Every satellite image posted is a meditation on the nature of mapping, that raises issues of perspective and power relationships, the privilege of the overhead view and the monopoly on technological agency which produces it."[154] We already have some of those strategies from studying the proliferations of satire's ephemera—or indeed any number of media maelstroms.

Working with the idea that more material engenders new kinds of writing, social behaviors, and mediations, Siskin and his colleague William B. Warner articulate four

[154] James Bridle, "The New Aesthetic and Its Politics." http://booktwo.org/notebook/new-aesthetic-politics/, June 12, 2013

"cardinal mediations" of changes in "infrastructure, genres and formats, associational practices, and protocols [which] establish the conditions for the possibility of Enlightenment."[155] In order to theorize the Enlightenment as "an event in the history of mediation," they form a self-reflexive mosaic of Francis Bacon's *Great Instauration* (which took many forms in Bacon's refashionings and revisions), Immanuel Kant's 1784 essay "What is Enlightenment?" and Foucault's use of Kant's essay as a "touchstone for defining his own project" in the many genealogies of knowledge he produced over the course of his career. Each of those texts presents an organizing call to reflection and then practices that reflection as critique of existing infrastructures, genres, associational practices, and protocols. What's more, they each reflect on how to assess change over time in critical writing:

> Foucault, too, did not hesitate to treat Kant's 'us' and his arguments as preludes to the present. Our modern habit of self-reflexivity, he declared, dates from Kant's strategy of 'deporting the question of the Aufklärung [Enlightenment] into critique': the 'critical project whose intent was to allow knowledge to acquire an adequate idea of itself.'[156]

Siskin and Warner's title for their essay underscores their own self-reflexive goals of generic critique: "An invitation in the form of an argument." Their mosaic of Bacon, Kant, and Foucault is self-reflexive, too, because it is also a site of participating in the conversation about how one produces knowledge and proposing plans for reorganization.

Some kind of engine is needed to generate this self-theorizing: that engine is remediation. Remediation works through protocols of translation, quotation, distillation,

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[155] Clifford Siskin and William B. Warner, "This is Enlightenment: An Invitation in the Form of an Argument," in *This Is Enlightenment*, 1-33, 12. See also note 17 above. The essays in *This Is Enlightenment* come from a conference, thus modeling and generating the very associational practice and forms of writing that they are studying in the Enlightenment period.

[156] Siskin and Warner, 1, 3. They are quoting Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvere Lotringer, trans. Lysa Hochroth and Catherine Porter (Los Angeles: Semiotext[e], 2007), 67.

juxtaposition, and other critical writing strategies; as I have noticed these protocols in scholarly writing in this chapter, they tend to reproduce elements of what they're criticizing. Remediation instantiates itself in self-reflexive genres like the magazine article, the call for wide-scale critique of organizations of knowledge, the synthetic think-piece, the conceptual art/writing project, the idea for a Tumblr—and, to return to the first part of this chapter, the Temple poem. The Temple poem is less polemical than "an invitation in the form of an argument" in that it stages indeterminacy and repetition with unpredictable results. What are new versions of the Temple? The Tumblr is a Temple; the panel presentation at a glitch studies conference or a media technology festival is a pageant of motley figures passing through a Temple. In these final pages of the chapter, I want to work recursively and use the material I have synthesized from Pope and the glitch aesthetics to examine seventeenth-century material, in the hopes that such an experiment will refract light on many different kinds of objects.

As I have theorized it thus far, the Temple poem is not just a representation; rather, it is a model of an institution that engenders a fractious, proliferating critical debate about the relationships among media and mediators. In Foucauldian terms, it also provokes debate about the ways in which the knowledge produced in that institution reifies and distributes power, as seen in Fame's arbitrary judgments. The trope served as a structural metaphor for Thomas Sprat in his 1667 *History of the Royal Society*: "It [London] is the head of a mighty Empire, the greatest that ever commanded the Ocean: It is compos'd of Gentlemen, as well as Traders: It has a large intercourse with all the Earth: It is, as the Poets describe their House of Fame, a City, where all the noises and business

of the World do meet."[157] The Royal Society was a network of scientists, statesmen, and other correspondents who experimented, recorded the results, circulated those results, and responded to one another in correspondence that was collected into volumes for the organization. These volumes were full of curiosities, rumors, descriptions of virtuosos' collections, personal accounts, tales that may have been embellished, and arguments among members. Sprat calls the Royal Society a House of Fame in a general sense of its being a cardinal mediator of social, institutionalized interactions, but the volumes, too, are full of the chaotic lies, rumors, disputes, and fragments that emerge in the poem itself. The print mediations are small-scale versions of the Society's mediations. In the several versions of the *Great Instauration* and *New Organon*, as well as in *New Atlantis*, Bacon remediated his ideas for such an institution into different genres over the course of his career. In some of these remediations, he returned to the image of a temple and the liminal space of the horizon as a visual representation of his speculative perspective.[158]

By zooming backwards in the chronological logic of the chapter, looking backwards from Pope's Temple to Bacon's pillars of the *New Atlantis*, I want to glitch this image. Or, rather, first, I want to notice Bacon's attention to glitches in the image and what those glitches may produce. In *New Atlantis*, Bacon writes a speculative travel narrative about a visit to the far-off land of Bensalem, where the visitor encounters a

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[157] Cited in David Wheeler, "'So Easy to Be Lost': Poet and Self in T*emple of Fame*." *Papers on Language and Literature* 29.1 (1993), 3-28, 5.

[158] See Sarah Hutton, "Persuasions to Science: Baconian Rhetoric and the *New Atlantis*," in *Bacon's* New Atlantis: *New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Bronwen Price (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 48-59. "The motif of a new world of learning beyond the seas waiting to be discovered is figured in the title page of the volume in which the story was first printed, *Sylva Sylvarum*. Here the Atlantic is signified by the imposing frame of the Pillars of Hercules—the markers of the limits of the old world. … [I]t deftly recapitulates the title page of *The Advancement of Learning* which uses the same image of the Pillars of Hercules, but has an outward-bound ship in place of the seaborne globe… The Pillars of Hercules are signifiers of intellect, denoting the limits of knowledge. By implication, the Atlantic beyond is the pathway to new learning" (52-3). Siskin remediated the image for a 2009 seminar on media at New York University.

series of scholars, governors, and other authorities who relate extraordinary advancements of learning. It is a kind of pageant of figures whose stories are often interrupted by various errands, only to be reframed with another tale within a tale. The visitor hears of many different laboratories at Salomon's House; near the end of the tale, he hears of all of the technologies of vision they have invented and what new objects they can see in the "perspective-houses,"

> …where we make demonstrations of all lights and radiations and of all colours… all multiplications of light, which we carry to great distance, and make so sharp as to discern small points and lines. Also all colorations of light: all delusions and deceits of the sight, in figures, magnitudes, motions, colours; all demonstrations of shadows. We find also divers means, yet unknown to you, of producing of light, originally from divers bodies. We make artificial rainbows, halos, and circles about light. We represent also all manner of reflections, refractions, and multiplications of visual beams of objects.[159]

They produce knowledge by repeatedly looking for new objects to examine and new ways to examine them. They look for errors—"delusions and deceits of the sight"—and theorize how those errors might appear to be visual phenomena and produce artifacts of visualization.[160] In *New Atlantis* and Bacon's other proposals, these experiments in the transmission of visual phenomena engender new forms of mediation such as theories, diagrams, and speculative tales so that they may be transmitted in print.

New Atlantis uses the *mise en abyme* technique in its interpolated tales, which in turn reflects the image of the Pillars of Hercules that so intrigued Bacon to keep

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[159] Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis* in *Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 2002), 485. There are also other sensory experiment laboratories: sound-houses, perfume-houses, "houses of deceits of the senses; where we represent all manner of feats of juggling, false apparitions, impostures, and illusions; and their fallacies" (486).

[160] Bacon conceptualized sources of error as Idols, or *images* of the mind produced by faulty reasoning, bad learning, and other sources. For a discussion of artifacts produced by visualizing technologies, see Michael Lynch, *Art and Artifact in Laboratory Science: A Study of Shop Work and Shop Talk in a Research Laboratory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).

remediating it: on and on, the replications in multiple mediums proliferate toward the horizon. Amy Boesky links the proliferation to the tale's emphasis on novelty:

> More for Bacon becomes the absent presence, the father who must be (and can never be) shown something new. Novelty in the New Atlantis thus becomes a quality which is used as a defense as well as an instrument for constructing and interpreting Nature. This fetishizing of the new partly explains the aura of urgency in *New Atlantis*. Interviews are no sooner granted than they are broken off, officials called away in haste. Something is always on the brink of happening…[161]

More is different is new. Inside and outside the story, studying "all manner of reflections, refractions, and multiplications of visual beams of objects" produces theories of self-reflexivity and attention to how stories are refracted through specific techniques of perspective, how they're fragmented or interpolated. As it replicates in visual and textual form, the image of the temple's pillars becomes a figure for Bacon's interest in what lay beyond the horizons of producing knowledge in settled forms, as he continually revised, recombined, and remediated various announcements and plans for *The Advancement of Learning, The Great Instauration, The New Organon*. Sometimes these plans were fragmentary, or they played with genres of aphorisms, lists, or the essay form that Bacon called "knowledge broken" in *The Advancement of Learning.*

Knowledge broken, knowledge glitched. Knowledge is glitched as the tools for rendering with it (the technologies, the genres) become insufficient for the task at hand. In the glitch aesthetic, the genres of the panel presentation and the Tumblr are performative, contingent, fragmentary, superficial, clunky—glitchy in and of themselves, dramatizing their own insufficiency in order to engender more contingent theories. In Bacon's writing, instauration is an emergent phenomenon of iterations, fragments, and

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[161] Amy Boesky, "Bacon's New Atlantis and the Laboratory of Prose," in *The Project of Prose in Early Modern Europe and the New World*, eds. Elizabeth Fowler and Roland Ireene (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 138-153, 151.

reorganizations in new genres—including the genre of speculative travel narrative in the *New Atlantis* that would inspire Borges and many of the filmmakers, video game designers, and virtual reality innovators who help Bolter and Grusin form their mosaic of remediation. The desire to theorize is enacted through remediation. Siskin and Warner explain how Bacon's *Philosophical Works* were remediated in the middle of the eighteenth century by Peter Shaw, who translated and reorganized the plans with an index and a glossary:

> The purpose of this retooling was not to preserve Bacon's oeuvre as it had originally appeared but to allow the texts to become different—and thus participate in the kind of 'renewal' that was now understood to be possible. The glossary therefore, does not 'give exact Definitions' but ones that 'facilitate'…And the translation is not 'direct' but 'a kind of open Version…' [162]

With Shaw's refashioning of Bacon and its instauration of the concept of Enlightenment in mind, I will close this chapter with a multimedia experiment to remediate Pope's, Bacon's, and Swift's work into the glitch aesthetic.

Following Manovich's prefatory "dataset" of reflexive images from *The Language of New Media*,[163] with this remediation I want to generate reflexive, refractive questions about this and subsequent chapters. I've selected three images to glitch: the frontispiece to *Pope Alexander*, a 1729 satirical pamphlet that attacked Pope's

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[162] Siskin and Warner, 18. They point out that as Shaw's remediation of Bacon was being published, "the Royal Society was remediating itself: new members now had to be proposed in writing and the written certificates signed by those who supported them. New associational practices thus underwrote the sense that something different was happening." They are quoting Francis Bacon and Peter Shaw. *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon.* 3 volumes. (London, 1773). Shaw performed a similar refashioning project with Robert Boyle's many different works.

[163] As a reversal to the convention of placing explanatory images in the center or end of a book, Manovich interfaces The Language of New Media with a "visual prologue" or "dataset" of still frames from Dziga Vernov's 1929 avant-garde film, *Man with a Movie Camera* (iv-xxxv).

Catholicism;[164] an engraving of William Hogarth's oil painting *The Distrest Poet*, which imagines Pope's dunce Lewis Theobald composing in his garret[165]; and Bacon's Pillars of Hercules from the frontispiece to *Advancement of Learning*. I "edit" these texts (two of which are in part satires on editing, the third which has been edited from its partial state) by making them jump among digital formats and introducing errors via their code editor. As digital objects that have been scanned and reproduced widely on the Internet, they have already been remediated multiple times already. I also remediate Swift's satire *The Battel of the Books* into sound waves by running its text through an audio editing interface as a further play with how editing artifactualizes sensory experience. Peter Krapp notes the irony of the widespread availability of these kinds of glitching programs on code-sharing and -experimenting sites like github: "…in a recursive system where

[164] [anonymous artist], frontispiece to *Pope Alexander* (London, 1729). See Guerinot and Ileanna Baird, "Visual Paratexts: *The Dunciad* Illustrations and the Thistles of Satire," in *Book Illustration in the Long Eighteenth Century: Reconfiguring the Visual Periphery of the Text,* ed. Christina Ionescu (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010). Baird and I both spoke on the "Publicity and the Public Sphere" panel at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in April 2013. She presented her work on methods of visualizing and mapping Pope's dunces, and I presented this material about Pope and glitch art in a different form. Although we were both interested in visualizing Pope (literally) from new perspectives enabled by digital media, she was concerned with presenting her methods in order to clarify the specific insights to be gained from such coding work, and I was more interested in the speculative, theoretical possibilities of these distortions. We talked past each other, but even this phenomenon of a glitched conversation was interesting to me as an artifact of panel presentation social behavior.

[165] William Hogarth, *The Distrest Poet*, painted in 1736, remediated into an etching in 1741 and reproduced widely. The engraving has an epigraph in copperplate handwriting to name the subject of the satire:
"Lewis Theobald,
Studious he sate, with all his books around,
Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound:
Plunged for his sense, but found no bottom there;
Then wrote and flounder'd on, in mere despair."
Pope revised those passages for the four-book *Dunciad*, replacing them with even more vivid language of the hack poet's distress, and Theobald was replaced by Cibber. Peter Seary discusses more revisions to the illustration: "As early as 1737 William Hogarth, who was a subscriber to the edition [of Theobald's 1733 edition of Shakespeare's works] published 'The Distrest Poet', which in the first issue (3 March 1737) presented the poet writing a copy of verses with a title alluding to Theobald's early poem, 'The Cave of Poverty' and with Pope's verse portraits in *The Dunciad* as a motto. Hogarth was evidently persuaded to alter his print, and the second issue (15 December 1740) erased the verses and substituted 'Riches a Poem' for 'Poverty a Poem' However, the identification of Theobald with poverty and dullness had been renewed by publication of Hogarth's print." See *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 203.

differentiations between data and programs and obsolete, it comes as no surprise that here should be a Glitch plug-in for audio software that chops up audio files and applies a variety of effects, depending on how much you tweak the controls." Krapp is pointing out that at least some of the contingencies of glitching are still mediated by humans, and it's wish fulfillment to say one has totally given over one's creative processes to machines. This objection does not seem devastating; rather, it shows another chapter in the complex history of editing, to which we may now add glitch-editing to the new tools for advancements in learning. Krapp continues: "With unremarked irony, the Web site for that Visual Studio Technology software plug-in warns: 'This version of Glitch is still just a prototype and contains a few bugs—obviously I am working towards fixing everything as soon as possible.'"[166] What might these kinds of editors have to say back to print editors who are less open about the contingent nature of their book, worried as they are about institutional needs to produce new editions, new knowledge in the academy—with dwindling resources?

I explain my glitching methods in brief reflections next to the images; in a further turn of the remediating spiral, some of the images quote and refashion Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore's classic 1967 work of media theory and graphic design, *The Medium is the Massage.* A design-minded remediation of *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, *The Medium is the Massage* contains brief essays, snippets of quotations, gnomic pronouncements, aphorisms, repeated phrases, and sometimes-illegible text overlaid against images from advertising, contemporary art, stock photography, cartoons, and other media. The book opens with a statement of a grand analog glitch aesthetic, as it were: philosopher A.N. Whitehead's proclamation "The major advances in civilization are processes that all but

[166] Krapp, 68. He is quoting http://illformed.org/blog/glitch

wreck the societies in which they occur," in stark white sans-serif font against a black background, with an even larger sans-serif proclamation above the text: "and how!"[167]

The title, *The Medium is the Massage,* is a typo that has taken on a life of its own:

> Actually, the title was a mistake. When the book came back from the typesetter's, it had on the cover 'Massage' as it still does. The title was supposed to have read *The Medium is the Message* but the typesetter had made an error. When McLuhan saw the typo he exclaimed, 'Leave it alone! It's great, and right on target!' Thus, there are now four possible readings for the last word of the title, all of them accurate: *Message* and *Mess Age*, *Massage* and *Mass Age*.[168]

The title is an artifactualized error; like visions, sounds, touches (and presumably the tastes and smells one can find in the houses of Bacon's *New Atlantis*), errors must be noticed and mediated in order to exist. They always present a kind of ontological challenge as they are created by detection and given substance by mediation through language. In Borges's evocative language, they are the rope of sand to be woven or the coins to be minted from the wind. They lack substance, but they also attract other media

[167] Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Touchstone, Simon & Schuster, 1967), 6-7. McLuhan and Fiore include a citation page for each of the images they use in *The Medium is the Massage*, but they do not cite the sources of the quotations other than to tie them to authors, but not the texts in which the phrases appear. It is provocative to consider this practice in the context of the promiscuously circulating utterances and scraps of half-sayings in *The Temple of Fame,* as well in the context of fair use of scanned images from eighteenth-century texts that are circulated widely on the Internet and can be appropriated (and transformed) by anyone. Such miscellaneity deliberately frustrates academic institutional guidelines for citation! Compare to Jonathan Lethem's strategy of citing his plagiarisms with discreet superscript and endnotes in "The Ecstasy of Influence" *Ecstasy of Influence*, (New York, 2012), or David Shields' piecemeal, somewhat arbitrary approach to citing his deliberate plagiarisms as a matter of argumentative method in *Reality Hunger* (New York, 2012).

[168] Eric McLuhan, "Commonly Asked Questions (And Answers)" http://marshallmcluhan.com/common-questions/. Curiously enough—and fittingly so for this discussion of the inability to distinguish between truths and untruths in the Temple of Fame—the Wikipedia entry for the book cites a competing version of the story, as told by McLuhan's biographer: "According to McLuhan biographer W. Terrence Gordon, 'by the time it appeared in 1967, McLuhan no doubt recognized that his original saying had become a cliché and welcomed the opportunity to throw it back on the compost heap of language to recycle and revitalize it. But the new title is more than McLuhan indulging his insatiable taste for puns, more than a clever fusion of self-mockery and self-rescue — the subtitle is "An Inventory of Effects," underscoring the lesson compressed into the original saying.'" "The Medium is the Massage." Wikipedia Commons Organization, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Medium_Is_the_Massage As Deanne Williams and Ruth Evans have noted, Wikipedia itself is a kind of digital, real-life Temple of Fame, with a constant stream of contestations about what's true and what's false, whose account should stay and go in the raucous editing pages.

in the form of animadversion, theory, metaphors, and other mediating language: they are sticky like the rumors at the Temple of Fame. The glitch resists some of that mediation in verbal language, only to surge through in other forms of coded language. Thus McLuhan's charge to his readers resonates not only with the New Aesthetic and its critics, but also with those visitors to the Temple of Fame who see their work preserved or frittered away in the processes of remediation: "Students of media are persistently attacked as evaders, idly concentrating on means or process rather than on 'substance.' The dramatic and rapid changes of 'substance' elude these accusers. Survival is not possible if one approaches his environment, the social drama, with a fixed, unchangeable point of view—the witless repetitive response to the unperceived."[169]

[169],McLuhan and Fiore, 10.

Interstitial Note: What Did My Remediation Design Experiment Teach Me About Textual Editing?

The printing of pictures, however, unlike the printing of words from movable types, brought a completely new thing into existence—it made possible for the first time pictorial statements of a kind that could be exactly repeated during the effective life of the printing surface. This exact repetition of pictorial statements has had incalculable effects upon knowledge and thought… This means that, far from being merely minor works of art, prints are among the most important and powerful tools of modern life and thought. Certain we cannot hope to realize their actual role unless we get away from the modern snobbery of modern print collecting notions and definitions and begin to think of them as exactly repeatable pictorial statements or communications, without regard to the accident of rarity or what for the moment we may regard as aesthetic merit. We must look at them from the point of view of general ideas and particular functions, and especially, we must think about: the limitations which their techniques have imposed on them as conveyors of information and on us as receivers of that information."
--William Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (1953)[170]

"Expression within glitch art is often self-referential, with the substance and story being that of the generative processes and serendipitous encounters that give error its form."
--Lital Khaiken, "The Radical Capacity of Glitch Art," (2014)[171]

I ended the previous chapter with a thought experiment in rendering Francis Bacon's perspectival instaurations and the distorting satires of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift as glitch art. Satire is already a distorting procedure of exaggerating features; the glitches are artifacts of another kind of mediating procedure that further garble and disfigure what one sees. The procedure starts with an image, translates it into code, then randomly interpolates gibberish into the code and attempts to translate that new code into a now-distorted image (if it doesn't totally break it first). The glitches were not procedurally complicated, but the interpolated errors had unpredictable visual manifestations which made the images blocky, possibly ugly, and impossible for the

[170] William Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communications* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1953), quoted in McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy,* 76-77.
[171] Lital Khaiken, "The Radical Capacity of Glitch Art: Expression through an Aesthetic Rooted in Error" *REDEFINE* February 4, 2014 http://www.redefinemag.com/2014/glitch-art-expression-through-an-aesthetic-rooted-in-error

computer to "read" (or render) in some places. The Temple of Fame, ruled by the thousand dissembling tongues of Fame and sometimes by her attendant goddess Error, is an allegory for this glitchy transmission over time, a generic interface of the poetic dream vision with which to understand the abstractions that iterative, recursive remediations of a text can engender. In playing creatively destructive visual editor of Hogarth, the anonymous engravers of Bacon's frontispieces, Pope, and Swift, I proposed a practice of reading with/despite these pixelated distortions. Inspired by McLuhan's language and design innovations, I think of those images as an interstitial experiment in remediating moments in the past through movable mosaic pieces, possible transmission errors, half-formed theories, and other distortions of mediation. As Manovich puts it in his reflexive text for his own paratextual experiment: "Borders between different world do not have to be erased; different spaces do not have to be matched in perspective, scale, and lighting; individual layers can retain their separate identities rather than being merged into a single space; different worlds can clash semantically rather than from their own universe."[172] Manovich's critics have argued that it is difficult to tell whether he believes he is recontexualizing or decontextualizing these images: I have the same questions about my own experiment here, and I want to keep reflecting on what the implications of oscillating between those two modes of remediation.

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[172] Manovich, xix. See Manovich's chapter on Interfaces in *The Language of New Media*, in which he traces coneptions of interface through "cultural interfaces," print, and cinema (63-115). Yet that move was also controversial, as the editors film journal *October* resisted Manovich's enthusiastic, slippery connections between cinema and digital media. *October* had used Vernov's images, too: "…it is with some doubt that we listen to these same theoreticians of the new digital media proclaim that cinema and photography—with their indexical, archival properties—were merely steps on the path to their merging with the computer in the *uber*-archive of the database. Much of was most important to cinema and photography is wiped away by such a teleology. And much of what seems most critical in contemporary artistic practice reacts to just such an erasure" (quoted in Galloway, 6.). See "Introduction," *October* 1000 (2002) 2-5, 3-4.

This experiment is a sort of obverse of Janine Barchas's method of reading visual evidence in *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, in which, following Gerard Genette's theorizing of paratexts, she reads texts in the context of their design on the page. Like McLaverty, who reads Pope's work through his authorial control of his pages, Barchas is interested in how the multiple agencies of printers, editors, and authors interact in novels—and in how authors incorporate these conflicts and collaborations into the literary stuff of novels. The monograph opens with a reproduction of the title page to the first edition of Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742), which has a satirical correction of an imaginary error: "Among other Errors, the Reader is desired to excuse this: That in the Second Volume, Mr. Adams, is, by Mistake, mentioned to have sat up two subsequent Nights; when in reality, a Night of Rest intervened." She goes on to read Swift's *Description of a City Shower*, already an overflowing with stuff: "a triplet that tops with a graphic flourish and the rhythmical excess of an alexandrine a poem comically devoted to the piquancy of observed detail and to notions of material excess and overflowings" with the advertisements that surrounded it in its publication in the *Tatler* in 1710. In its material context, "the juxtaposition of poem and advertisement on the printed page enhances and extends a reading of the Shower, irrespective of authorial control—or even intent."[173] I was inspired by Barchas's work, yet in some ways I wonder if it confirms what we already know and believe about agencies in print: it is tied to claims about the facticity of

[173] Janine Barchas, *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), [i], 1-4. She sees her work as "plotting a return course to the author in order to validate the interpretive implications of a graphic design with reference to authorial control, self-consciousness, or intention. While this study treads softly on the notion of an 'authoritative' edition in its discussion of generic forms, it registers graphic design as 'literary' only if the author was involved in or cognizant of its, production. … In this sense, this study aligns itself with Genette's 'more or less' philosophy towards consideration of authorial intention." (11).

historical context, that agencies can be recovered by reading the right kind of evidence. *Joseph Andrews*' imaginary error and the city's glut of stuff pose compelling questions of ontology that could inspire other kinds of readings like the ones in my theoretical reading of abstractions, materiality and immateriality, and emergence in the *Temple of Fame.* So I've glitched the materiality of the contexts that Barchas is recovering not to find the past, but to show the errors that are present and perhaps unrecoverable as context.

Following Genette's theoretical work and Grafton'[174], we look to footnotes, errata sheets, printer's notes, and other practical paratexts to solidify a sense of context, to give texture and depth to a reading. Those haptic metaphors are commonplace, and, like the visual metaphors we use to describe examination, focus, and perspective in critical work, they have a way of proliferating in order to define the methods of study. In *No Medium*, Craig Dworkin considers contemporary art and poetic media objects that resist being read as obvious objects of study; his re-spatializing of the field with these apparently illegible objects calls attention to these metaphors of space and context: "the functioning of the paratextual indices … requires a spatial and physical context. For the writer, that context is what relates the footnote to the spatial and material logic of collage; the footnote, as Hugh Kenner suggests, 'is a step in the direction of discontinuity; of organizing blocks of discourse simultaneously in space rather than consecutively in time.'"[175] Kenner's interest is in modernist poetics and Dworkin's is in postmodern and contemporary poetry—those forms of attention to the discontinuities of paratext are thus part of specific historical contexts themselves. What does it mean to veer precipitously, even

[174] See Grafton, *Defenders of the Text*; *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999; *Bring Out Your Dead: Past as Revelation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).
[175] Craig Dworkin, *No Medium*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2013) 77, quoting Hugh Kenner, *Flaubert, Joyce, and Beckett*, 39.

anachronistically between eighteenth century printed materials and their digital forms, and what can glitches reveal about the possibility of errancy in both positive and negative senses of the word? Dworkin argues that paratext is always unstable: “In the acts of reading invoked by the paratextual index, not only are the spatial coordinates of the page and the volume of the volume evoked, but the reader’s body is put into motion.” There is no foundation to be unearthed—as scholars, we are caught between the foundations of historicity and the immateriality of that which we are examining and creating. What Dworkin does with illegible text, Manovich argues for the value of thinking about avant garde cinema to study new media objects. His preliminary “dataset” paratext of film stills take him out of the film’s immediate context and into a reflective space of remediation: “Borders between different worlds do not have to be erased; different spaces do not have to be matched in perspective, scale, and lighting; individual layers can retain their separate identities rather than being merged into a single space; different worlds can clash semantically rather than form their own universe.”[176] The glitch artifact is the limit case of this generative problem.

In this way, I’m inspired by George W.S. Trow’s satire “In the Context of No Context,” where he claims that the purpose of television (and one could add any form of new media) is “to establish false context and to chronicle the unraveling of existing contexts; finally to establish the context of no-context and to chronicle it.”[177] Originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1980, Trow’s essay is a critique of media proliferation that uses the same visionary language of McLuhan, yet it’s flipped into its mirror image as a critique of the mosaics that media proliferation engender. McLuhan’s mosaics make

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[176] Manovich, xix.
[177] George W.S. Trow, *Within the Context of No Context* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1981), 82.

new contexts out of rearranging so much stuff; Trow calls this flexibility the context of no context. Like Alexander Pope, Trow registers his satire (and fascination) with media proliferation by calling attention to problems of scale:

> That movement, from wonder to the wonder that a country should be so big, to the wonder that a building could be so big, to the last, small wonder, that a marketplace could be so big—that was the movement of history. Then there was a change. The direction of the movement paused, sat silent for a moment, and reversed. From that moment, vastness was the start, not the finish. The movement now began with the fact of two hundred million, and the movement was toward a unit of one, alone. Groups of more than one were now united not by a common history but by common characteristics. History became the history of demographics, the history of no-history (44).

Trow's evocation of the way that media reduce scale and produce gossip as news is evocative of the *House* and *Temple* of Fame; his essay is a cool, epigrammatic dream vision satire, the obverse of Pope's *Dunciad.* I think of how errors operate in the context of no context: the errata sheet is tied to a particular edition and its evidence is supposed to be erased in subsequent editions, yet there are more errata that come through corrections. Their status as media objects is interstitial.

These glitched images are also operating in the context of no context—grabbed from the Internet, where they had been circulating already with haphazard citations or none at all, and abstracted into data before being re-made as new images, then grabbed again and put into a sequential order on PowerPoint. The interstitial quality of the images is a means of "glitching" the progress of the dissertation so far: what does the blocky, visually strange and estranging, experimental, "plagiarized" (in the sense of remediating McLuhan), undigestable material do to glitch my writerly attempts at synthesis, clarity, conformation to the generic expectations and conventions of academic discourse, and textured explication elsewhere?

Digital humanities projects may be praised for beauty, clarity, and usability—that is, if they can maintain funding and other forms of institutional support over a long span of time past the initial interest phase. That is, digital humanities projects do not often get to record their own failures in a self-reflexive way; one does not usually have the luxury of experimenting with deliberately frustrating those ideals of clarity and simplicity so as to see other forms of producing knowledge. In her defense of close-reading and keeping sight on the literary in digital humanities scholarship, Laura Mandell cites John Unsworth's reassurance to humanities scholars at a 1997 conference that digital humanities work models ideas in new ways:

> 'Imagining what you already know' is a good description of modeling in many humanities contexts: for example, in building a model of Salisbury Cathedral, or the Crystal Palace, as we did at the Institute in Virginia, you could say that we were imagining what you already know about those structures. However, interestingly, the act of modeling almost always brings to the surface of awareness things you didn't know you knew, and often shows you significant gaps in your knowledge that—of course—you didn't know were there. Of course, in some cases—maybe even in all cases that I've mentioned—one could (in principle) do this kind of modeling and even the quantitative analysis without computers: you could model the crystal palace with toothpicks and plastic wrap; you could do the painstaking word-counting and frequency comparison by hand. But you wouldn't, because there are other interesting things you could do in far less time.[178]

When, in 1997, Unsworth reassured his audience of literary scholars that the digital humanities shows them what they already know, he was attempting to assuage fears of obsolescence. But when I read that reassurance, I have a completely different worry: that this framing undercuts the possibility of seeing what we didn't *already* know. Modeling

[178] John Unsworth, "New Research Methods for the Humanities" (Lyman Award Lecture, National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, NC, November 11, 2005), http://www3.isrl.uiuc.edu/~unsworth/lyman.htm, cited in the epigraph to Mandell, 755.

is one mode of scholarship, but there must be other forms of mediation that don't keep us secure in what we've already learned, just in prettier ways.

This experiment and the subsequent chapters work recursively to try out such a model of reading for distortion by producing it, often by juggling textual objects that resist close reading or synthesis, just like these images. They are about discourses on error and the social interactions that such mediations produce—but the errors themselves seem to be lurking behind this work as less visible as not resolvable in the analysis, always undigestible. They produce a hybrid realm for a critic: part of it mediable through writing, and yet there are objects that challenge the ontology of the criticism—do errors exist in and of themselves, or do they need to be perceived in a medium. What happens to a corrected error—does it exist in its corrected state? What happens to a correction that generates more errors—what kinds of agencies are procedural and what are the products of concatenation? Following McLuhan, I noted how the obsession with the content or the *what* of media—and error—might limit the kinds of investigations that I can perform, choosing instead to zoom out and consider *how* those errors and corrections are mediated. Building on the previous chapter's interest in emergent phenomena, I advocate for editorial and critical methods that emphasize *more, different* contingencies, variations, and experimental gestures instead of those that prioritize fixing the final, consolidated word on an author and a text.

Instead of being remediated in critical discourse, they could also be forms of demediation, "*the process by which a transmissible text or image is blocked by the obtruded fact of its own neutralized medium*," as Garrett Stewart describes it in his

arguments about the objecthood of books when they serve as art objects.[179] They could challenge the conventions of tracing the steps of "textual transmission" that is key to book history, rendering

> their interiors off limits, locked down in illegible dry dock like decommisioned vessels of textual transport. Whether withdrawing under the lengthening digital shadow or not, verbal mediation is at once beneath and beyond all use in such [demediated] forms—except for its contemplated absence, throwing the viewer back on an entirely associational sense of reading the nonsequential sign function of a disused cultural instrument now become, under negation, its own epitome and icon.

Stewart's description aspires to theorizing these objects as different from books as containers for content and literary form, yet he reproduces the very literary language that demediation gestures toward: colorful extended metaphors and generative abstractions.

But most importantly, I want to advocate for remediation (and perhaps demediation) as a practice as much as a theory, one that becomes more useful when its recursive properties are taken advantage of rather than treated like flaws or superficialities in the idea. Those flaws reveal themselves in remediations, and they are all the more compelling for that exposure in an unfamiliar context, a context of no context that glitches what we consider what that term even means.

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[179] Garrett Stewart, "Bookwork as Demediation," *Critical Inquiry* 36 (2010), 410-426, 413 (italics original), 417.

Chapter 2: Richard Bentley's Hazy Horizons of Editing: Theories of Mind, Mediation, and Emendation

"Every text has variants of itself screaming to get out, or antithetical texts waiting to make themselves known."
--Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (1991)[180]

"This middleman, the editorial man of straw, was literally a mediator between Milton and the Bentleian wrath of damnation, which is already too offensive, even as applied to a shadow."
--Thomas De Quincey, on the subject of Richard Bentley's 1732 edition of *Paradise Lost*[181]

Introduction: Bentley's Whispering Variants, as Viewed from Atop Mt. Horeb

The generative confusion of sight and sound that was so compelling to Alexander Pope casts a new light on Jerome McGann's invocation of variants "screaming to get out" of a text. Where would they go if they "got out"? How can the visual medium of the page—whether it is cluttered with hypermediating footnotes or pretending to a pristinely "unmediated" experience with an author's intended text—register the aural disruption of "screaming"? McGann uses that epigrammatic synesthesia as a gambit for his project in *The Textual Condition*: to argue for the inherent instability of meaning that the production of texts always engenders. He is being rhetorical, metaphorical, even melodramatic, to stage an entrée for his interest in digital hyperlinks as an alternative interface with which to experiment in textual editing.

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[180] Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 11. He extends this playfulness by titling this section about the multiplicity of textual productions "The Garden of Forking Paths," in a nod to Borges. This chapter takes its structural format from that metaphor.
[181] Thomas De Quincey, *Collected Works* (1871) 5:83, cited in Steve McCaffery, *Prior to Meaning: The Protosemantic and Poetics* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 62.

I shall return to McGann in a moment, but I want to add seventeenth-century textual critic Richard Bentley to this constellation of editors who introduce the error of sensory confusion as a means of generating new theories of mediation. Where McGann's variants scream, Bentley's variants whisper in voices that are only detectable by that most perspicacious editor: Richard Bentley himself. Bentley gained his fame as an editor of classical texts who could examine ancient texts minutely and produce voluminous textual notes about sources, interpolations, and plagiarisms. His method of parallel criticism combined the goals of classical criticism—philological investigation of textual history—with those of Biblical criticism as it was practiced at the end of the seventeenth century, where glossing passages was seen as a generative exercise to converse with religious texts. He had gained considerable fame from his work in both forms of textual commentary: in his famed critical editions of Horace and Manilius, and in his work translating natural philosophy for religious interpretations in the Boyle lectures that popularized Isaac Newton's theories of motion. His methods combined close scrutiny of texts with virtuosic displays of knowledge to detect interpolations, plagiarisms, and alternate translations to synthesize what he believed to be the best possible versions. With this generative method of conjectural criticism, he took the humanist practice of close textual study and transformed it into a kind of activist scholarship of ridiculing the Ancients and promoting the Moderns. That debate turned on the question of what readers, editors, and printers should do with classical texts: admire them as faultless exemplars of Ancient virtue or scrutinize them as intricately textual, material documents that could be examined minutely—even infinitely—as a Modern project of knowledge production.

When Bentley turned his "conjectural" method of mediating texts to a modern text in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, he produced artifacts of that procedure that earned him the enmity and ridicule not only of familiar Ancient partisans like Alexander Pope, but also of other sensitive readers of Milton. In their justifiable critiques, they saw Bentley's bulky annotations to the first two lines of Milton's *Paradise Lost* as editorial hubris. He takes up nearly half of the first page of his 1732 edition of *Paradise Lost* defending his conjectural emendation of the line, "That on the secret top of Horeb": "Our poet dictated it thus, *That on the* SACRED *top Of* Horeb." In order to justify his conjectural emendation from "secret" to "sacred," Bentley accumulates multiple Biblical examples, homophonic logic, hazy natural history (literally so: the natural history of haze), and pleas to logic. The entire long note is worth quoting for its audacity, the prodigious virtuosity of a textual editor who had higher ambitions for his work:

> Some perhaps may prefer the present Reading, *Secret top*; because in most Countries the high Mountains have against rainy Weather their Heads surrounded with Mists. True, but yet it's questionable, whether in the wide and dry Desert of *Arabia*, Mount *Horeb* has such a cloudy Cap. I have in my Youth read several Itineraries, whether the Travellers went up to the Top of *Horeb*; and I remember not, that they take notice of its Cloudiness. And a just Presumption lies against it from Holy Writ, *Exod*. viii, whether the *Israelites*, encamp'd at the foot of *Horeb*, could find no Water; which was provided miraculously [sic], when *Moses* smote the Rock with his sacred Rod; for all Natural History informs us, and Reason vouches it, That a Mountain, whose Head is cloudy, has always running Springs at its Foot. But allowing all, and granting that *Horeb* was like the *European* Hills; yet no Poet hitherto has on that account said *The Secret*; but the *Cloudy, Misty, Hazy, Grey Top.* Nay, allow further, That *Secret Top* is a passable Epithet; yet it is common to all Mountains whatever; but *Horeb*, whose *Ground was holy*, Horeb *the Mountain of God*, Exod.iii 1; 1 Kings xix, 8, deserved a Peculiar Epithet. If therefore (which the best Poets have adjudg'd) a Proper Epithet is always preferable to a General one; and if Secret and Sacred are of a near Sound in Pronunciation; I have such an Esteem for our Poet; that which of the two Word is the better, That, I say, was dictated by Milton.[182]

[182] *Milton's Paradise Lost: A New Edition, by Richard Bentley, D.D.* (London, 1732), [6].

Bentley's marginal note appears on the first page of the poem as an attempt to mediate the visual perspective from the secret (that is, indefinite) top of Horeb through a sonic artifact of procedure. In this way, Bentley's digressions about ways of mishearing are not just evidence of his wrongheadedness and the prodigality of his errors; rather, they evince the problems that the act of rendering sound creates for a mediator who works in print and usually describes his work as a visual practice of comparing what he can see. McGann's overstatement of variants that scream to be heard is a manifestation of this strangeness in mediating mixed senses. The peculiarities of sound as a remediated, error-prone phenomena can reveal new opportunities for considering the history of textual editing: what can sound editors teach their textual cousins?[183]

The editorially contrived "secret" top of Horeb is the site of this experiment in reconsidering auditory perspective, even as it must come in the form of an imagined, erroneous mediator. "Sacred" tops is *not* an accepted reading of the text in any edition other than Bentley's; of all of the conjectural emendations he made to the text, only two or three are still accepted, and even those had already been put forth by Bentley's predecessors Patrick Hume and Zachary Pearce. Both Pearce and Hume cited substantial

[183] I was inspired to think of Bentley as a sound editor and a theorist of sound by reading about famed film and sound editor Walter Murch's wide-ranging theories of how humans perceive visual and aural phenomena together. Murch the editor thinks of his work in terms of a practice—how he will fit sounds to visual cues—but he is also an autodidact philosopher who is always reflecting on his practice. He was required to reconsider his previous work when he worked as sound editor on the 2005 film *Jarhead*, which contains a scene of Marines watching the famous "Flight of the Valkyries" scene from the 1979 film *Apocalypse Now*, for which Murch won an Academy Award for Best Sound. In recursively re-recording the sound from a previous film in a new context, Murch had much to say about the theories he has generated from practice. Lawrence Weschler captures some of Murch's synthetic and synesthetic expansiveness as he draws connections "[f]rom visual projection to the perception of sound. Unsurprisingly, Murch has developed elaborate theories regarding the perception of sound…. [he] is convinced that we perceive sound along a spectrum from encoded to embodied—language existing on the extreme end of the encoded side of spectrum and music at the extreme end of the embodied—and that these types of sounds get processed on different sides of the brain…." See Lawrence Weschler, "Valkyries Over Iraq: Walter Murch, *Apocalypse Now*, *Jarhead*, and the Trouble with War Movies," *Uncanny Valley and Other Adventures in Narrative* (Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2011) 181-218, 191-92.

Biblical sources for "secret" as a non-controversial modifier that needed no suggestion of a variant; their method of methodically cataloguing Biblical references, tracing similar language in Milton's other works, and finding contemporary literary examples is a far more straightforward practice than what spills over in Bentley's burgeoning, presumptuous editorial asides. In assessing Bentley's tendency to suggest changes rather than explain what was present on the page, editor Marcus Walsh notes, "Pearce is generally prepared to work harder to account for the idiosyncratic in Milton, offering interpretation rather than conjecture."[184] Walsh's considerable experience in producing scholarly editions of eighteenth-century texts is always at the center of his historical studies of editorial method, so his approval of Pearce's descriptive annotation of *Paradise Lost* is a (positively inflected) judgment of functionality. Walsh does not reject conjecture out of hand, for he argues that the practice is "a necessary part of any editorial process that aspires to do more than transmit the errors of a single inadequate witness."[185] Walsh situates these conjectures in his heuristics of editorial practice, to see how editors developed interpretative procedures in the eighteenth century; conjectural flights of fancy like Bentley's fail the heuristic test of functionality.

But what if there were a way to bracket functionality, in favor of theorizing the errors produced by problems in remediation of texts through new technologies of transmission?[186] As I noted in the previous chapter (and experimented with myself), these

[184] Marcus Walsh, "Bentley, Our Contemporary." *The Theory and Practice of Text-Editing: Essays in Honour of James. T. Boulton*, ed. Ian Small and Marcus Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 171.
[185] Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing,* 120.
[186] Indeed, I can trace a crystallization of the sonic remediation argument in this chapter to a moment on the Vancouver subway at the ASECS meeting in 2011 when I read a sign about dictation training to be a court reporter. I was thinking about the paper I was about to deliver about Richard Bentley's charges of mishearing and mistranscription, and so I was attuned to thinking about protocols of dictation and transcription. I recalled a friend who worked as a programmer for a hedge fund but who could not type due

forays are writing technologies that produce half-formed ideas, too-eager proselytizing of new methods, interpretative errors, misprisions of historical evidence, anachronisms, and other dysfunctions. They are, as poet and frequent translator of ancient Greek Anne Carson puts it in her essay about the nuances of translation: "the willful creation of error / the deliberate break and complication of mistakes / out of which may arise / unexpectedness."[187] Exacting, pedantic Bentley and experimental, gnomic Carson are so far apart in their treatment of ancient Greek poetry that they nearly meet each other in their polarity.

And yet, these moments of unexpectedness were the Ancients' fears, too: that consolidated, admired knowledge of the past would be eclipsed by newfangled hyper-mediations that called too much attention to themselves. In the *Dunciad* and *The Battel of the Books*, Pope and Swift turned the conjectural method against itself into a tool of satire and distortion to show recursive thoughts that had taken on lives of their own and eclipsed what they were supposed to be thinking about; it is conventional to notice that Pope and Swift delight in what they profess to despise. I see the Ancients-Moderns debate as a series of escalations in recursion: in their countless satires and animadversions on each other's works, Ancients and Moderns alike generated many (sometimes too many) frames of mediating commentary. In so doing, they initiated self-

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to a disability; he had two typists who take dictation of the code he created, and the three of them developed a collaborative language of ordinary English and dictated programming languages in order to mediate his ideas into actionable work. Their mediating practice was legible only to them, and the results of their daily work were algorithms that are doubly non-transparent to traders who saw only the results.

[187] Anne Carson, "Essay on What I Think About Most" in *Men in the Off Hours* (New York: Knopf, 2009), 50-56. Carson's translations resemble, at a high level of sophistication and strangeness, McGann's theory and practice of "deformance" as a strategy of interpretation, which he developed with Lisa Samuels as a way of thinking about editorial work and performance as creative endeavors, not just corrections. See McGann and Lisa Samuels, "Deformance and Interpretation" *New Literary History* 30:1 (1999) 25.56.

reflexive critical practices of engaging with the past that became the foundation of debates that would engage future critics, editors, authors, and readers.

At the end of the last chapter, I translated and interpolated code into images of satire as experiments in recursive distortion. These pixelations resemble Bentley's blocky marginalia explaining his own editorial interpolations and intrusions. They also resemble the cascading windows of variants that McGann's hyperlinks can produce. For Bentley, McGann, and me, seizing the role of the editor-as-thought-experimenter produces *more, different* mediation: hypermediation that allows for theorizing the illusory quality of an unmediated experience with a text. The bibliographer Randall McLeod, writing as Random Cloud, hypermediates his editorial work with images, textual and typographical play, and puns; he draws these mediative provocations from the objects of study themselves, such as George Herbert's shape-poem, "Easter Wings." Cloud describes this problem of recursion: "As the printed shape-poem is inherently an object of both reading and gazing, it cannot exist wholly in a single spatiality and temporality. In our performative processing of this poem-that-is-a-picture, we cannot be in all modalities at once."[188] Bentley is not so self-conscious or playful a mediator as Cloud, but it is striking that they both turn to the interstitial, the indeterminate to perform their interventions; the critical indeterminacy is not just postmodern (a sometime charge against Cloud's work) but rather inherent to the mediation itself, and it surfaces in combinations with different forms, media, and genre at distinct historical moments. As Bolter and Grusin describe this the interstices of media space in *Remediation*: "Where immediacy suggests a unified visual space, contemporary hypermediacy offers a heterogeneous space, in which

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[188] Cloud, "FIAT fLUX," 72.

representation is conceived of not as a window on to the world, but rather as 'windowed' itself—with windows that open onto other representations of other media."[189]

Bentley's questionable charges of misheard lines and lack of oversight on the text are fundamentally issues of mediation. This problem stems from mediation in its multiple forms: what comes between an author and a text, how is a text mediated in print, what are the implications of a text's medium and how it may be studied and disseminated in other forms? Bentley's editorial artifacts serve as objects of study that present new ways of thinking about mediation, agency, technology, and the social practice of editing. His connection to McGann is their preoccupation with a visual metaphor for situating their wide-ranging perspective: with a nod to Hans-Robert Jauss's theory of a "horizon of expectations" within a genre, McGann theorizes an "editorial horizon" which "forces one to reimagine the theory of texts—and ultimately, the theory of literature—as a specific set of social operations."[190] With the note about Mt. Horeb, Bentley creates an editorial horizon of sorts, composed of conjectures that socialize promiscuously with the text of the poem, as they remain on the margins but also dominate the physical space of the reader's page. He poses the impractical but generative possibility of prioritizing contingent conjecture—and error—over settled, authorized text.

Conjecture is the flashpoint of Bentley's legacy as an editor of Milton. His entire project is flawed beyond these prodigious readings because of a larger problem with his method of turning to fiction to mediate his conjectures. Milton was blind when he composed *Paradise Lost* and dictated it to his daughters and another secretary; after an

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[189] Bolter and Grusin, 34.
[190] McGann, 21. See Hans-Robert Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," trans. Elizabeth Benzinger. *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*, ed. Dennis Walder. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.) 67-75.

initial publication of the poem in 1667*,* he revised the poem from a ten-book structure to a 12-book structure and made significant changes in this structural revamping in 1674. The poem went through multiple editions under the auspices of editor Jacob Tonson, but typographical errors were manifold in these editions.[191] Bentley found more than typos: he argued that he had found pernicious evidence of editorial tampering, evidence that the amanuensis sought to "vilely execute that Trust, that *Paradise* under his Ignorance and audaciousness may be said to be twice lost." He explained that "any Errors in Spelling, Pointing, nay even in whole Words of a like or near Sound in Pronunciation, are not to be charg'd upon the Poet, but on the Amanuensis… [who] thought he had a fit Opportunity to foist into the Book several of his own Verses."[192] In Bentley's explanation, Milton would not have been able to see these interpolations because he was blind. Yet this amanuensis was a sort of fictional figure or projection that was not based on any biographical information or textual history that could be ascertained from the printed editions or from the record of anecdotes and word of mouth. Bentley's correction of "secret tops" to "sacred tops" is but one example of the overdetermined correction of an imaginary mistake by an invented corrector: it crafts out of whole cloth a scene in which

[191] R.G. Moyles outlines the early bibliographical history of the poem in *The Text of Paradise Lost: A Study in Editorial Procedure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985). Moyles explains Tonson's printing practice: "The fourth edition of *Paradise Lost* (1688), then, becomes typical of all Tonson's editions; it exhibits a manifest contradiction. While care (increasing with each subsequent editing) has been taken with the printing and some minor improvements have been achieved, no attempt has been made to clear the text of corruptions or to collate the copy-text with the authoritative originals. Side by side with the few new improvements are the errors of the copy-text and the new errors introduced unknowingly" (37). See also Stephen Dobranski, *Milton, Authorship and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and *The New Milton Criticism*, eds. Peter Herman and Elizabeth Sauer (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[192] Bentley, Preface, [3].

Milton mumbled the term and the amanuensis misheard him, perpetuating a mistake until one sagacious editor could fix the author's real intention.[193]

Bentley's contemporaries pointed out that the editor could not really believe such a justification for exercising a heavy hand in rewriting passages that were not to his taste, as he was inconsistent in his own account of the history of Milton's revisions and the history of the text's transmission. Samuel Johnson called the blameworthy amanuensis "a supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is said, he privately allowed it to be false."[194] Thus it is not just the content of Bentley's conjectures that has relegated him to being a cautionary tale of an editor encroaching on a text: it is the very act of conjecture itself and the diffuse, unpredictable consequences of its mediation. His reputation, at least among Miltonians, never recovered.

Bentley is always "notorious." Jonathan Brody Kramnick traces Bentley's fall from historicist grace, as his conjectures involved less citation of precise historical information about the classical past and more speculation: "In the notorious edition, the process of 'emendation' extended until it seemingly capsized under its own weight, correcting to a point where the claims no longer appeared to be historical, but rather, from the eyes of Pope no less than Bentley's disciple Theobald, to be anachronistic and capricious."[195] In his reception history of *Paradise Lost*, John Leonard echoes the Bentley

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[193] From a contemporary perspective of disability studies, Bentley's appropriation of the fact of Milton's blindness for his own purposes is an error of larger consequence and deserves further study. See Georgina Kleege's "Introduction: Blindness and Literature": "It is safe to say that blindness has held a particular fascination in every culture since the beginning of time. Since sight is understood to be the predominant sense in humans, the loss of sight is assumed to be tantamount to a loss of life, or a loss of a fundamental quality that makes someone human." *Journal of Literary and Critical Disability Studies* 3:2 (2009), 113-114. I would like to thank Helene Deutsch for suggesting this angle on Bentley's overstepping his editorial bounds.
[194] Samuel Johnson, "Life of Milton," *Lives of the English Poets*, vol. III, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)**.**
[195] Jonathan Brody Kramnick, *Making the English Canon: Print Capitalism and the Cultural Past 1700-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 2008), 91.

ridicule in a bald statement: he is “the most notorious of Milton’s editors,” “a laughing-stock,” and “a crank … his emendations [are] laughable, but he exposes genuine tensions in the poem.”[196] Bentley’s most recent biographer, Kristine Louise Haugen, opens her rehabilitative project by describing how his name “evokes both loathing and fascination” as “a cautionary example.”[197] Haugen repeats the charge in her chapter on his “notorious” *Paradise Lost*, which she calls “the most redoubtable of all his editions”—such protestations guarantee that she will seek to rehabilitate him, to remediate him in the genre of the critical reassessment biography. Walsh calls him “a necessary antagonist”[198] while David Scott Kastan tags him with an epithet—“even… the often maligned Richard Bentley”—in including him in the “community of engagement with the poem, which more than most seems to need their labors.”[199] These are conventional situating moves for any biographer or editorial assessor, but Bentley’s own interest in situating himself as an editor is highly unconventional. Bentley’s note is substantially focused on locating a space for conjecture atop Mt. Horeb, where secrecy is an error and the sacred is what is discovered by its correction. Bentley’s hypermediation is theoretical as a *raison d’être* for the endeavor, and its prominent placement on the page underscores its value as a

[196] John Leonard, *Faithful Laborers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 1667-1970*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), II:400, I:22. Leonard repeats crank four times on the same page.
[197] Kristine Louise Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 1, 211.
[198] Walsh, 162.
[199] David Scott Kastan, Preface, *Paradise Lost* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005), viii. Kastan, for example, devotes several pages to outlining his decision to emend the accidentals in the text and use modern punctuation: “We come to a text anticipating that the punctuation we encounter signals logical relations. If this is an error, it is not one that Milton expects us to make. … Nonspecialist readers need signposts to negotiate the syntax, and it hardly seems in their interests to insist on a system of punctuation that at best can be shown to approximate Milton’s intentions and that, because of the changed function of punctuation in modern English, will inevitably make the meaning of the poem less rather than more clear to a modern reader” (lxxiii-iv). In this and other careful explanations of his and other editors’ practical considerations, he explains his rationale of maximizing clarity.

disquisition on mediation: what are the agencies that come between an author and a reader, and how could one record those interventions on a page?

One can put the blame on Tonson for shoddy oversight, but other sources of error inside the mechanism of the printer's shop were anonymous and diffuse. Haugen points out that Bentley had plenty of precedent for blaming these multiple sources of error, from classical interpolators to "the unscrupulous friends and printers whom it was customary for seventeenth-century poets to blame for hurrying unauthorized verse collections through the presses."[200] Such gestures were generic, then—conventional: "Both in the task of defending others' texts and in the task of defending one's own, that is, contemporaries were notably ready to conjure up editorial demons as the necessary prelude to their exorcism." Bentley embodies all these dispersed sources of errors in textual transmission into a device that could explain any type of error, be it accidental, willful, or something less assignable. To be sure, it is a flawed theory of mediation that collapses contingencies and interpretations alike into a single explanatory device.

But that error is meaningful in and of itself. Johnson's anger at Bentley's "vile and pernicious" invention is telling: it is anger at a theory, anger at the exposure of how a mediating heuristic device can be artificial and mechanical rather than transparent. With obfuscatory emendations like the one that commences the poem, Bentley mediates an alternate perceptual edition of Milton's poem, in which the transmission of sound, haptic misprisions, and visual carelessness are theorized as sources of obscure, distributed agency. Treating Bentley as a theorist of error—and not just its practitioner—is a way to resituate him as a theorist of editing rather than just a cautionary tale. The stakes of this reconsideration are not to rehabilitate Bentley from his notoriety; rather, the haziness of

[200] Haugen, 217.

his theory figures a means of theorizing the interstitial agencies of errors and the ways that critics reproduce them recursively.

Critical Lenses on Bentley's Theory and Practice

Bentley tends to serve critics as lens: he mediates a mirror view for some critics who share his interests (and I include myself here) or he mediates a warping lens for those who would use him as an object lesson. Classicists remember Bentley far more fondly than Miltonians do, for they can cite his brilliant, expansive practice of conjectural emendation when it yielded correctness, not just perverse, tangential approaches to theorizing error by generating it. After his work editing Horace and Manilius, he joined William Wotton and other members of the Modern cohort to expose the Epistles of Phalaris, a text that William Temple and his Ancient compatriots had declared an exemplar of virtue that should be studied so it could be imitated. He found so many interpolations, anachronisms, stylistic lapses, and historical errors that he filled more than one hundred pages with devastating, sometimes sarcastic corrections. It was almost too easy for Bentley to correct these errors by escalating a pamphlet war with the Ancients about tangential charges of more plagiarism, satirical misinterpretation, and charges of moral misconduct. In *The Battle of the Books*, the great chronicler of the Ancients-Moderns debate Joseph M. Levine details the stages of the internecine quarrel about theories and practices of scholarship, where Bentley's corrections yielded knowledge about the past. "The end of Bentley's works, then, was historical knowledge, not perhaps entirely for its own sake, though very much released from its dependence upon

literature," writes Levine in assessing Bentley's salvos in the Battle. "He saw the classics as individual and variable pieces written in specific and differing circumstances and in need of historical explication. But he was as interested in their information as in their literary merit and he was eager to use them, along with nonliterary evidence of coins, inscriptions, and monuments, to restore the whole life of the ancient world."[201] He claimed his method of conjecturing interpolations and textual variations in fragmented, oft-revised classical texts could be applied to a Modern text such as Milton's, but the nature of changes were fundamentally different with texts that had been transmitted by modern editors, typesetters, and printers.

When Bentley's practice produces knowledge, he is heroic; when it produces pedantic artifacts of his theories that are literally not grounded but instead situated on a hazy mountain, he is satirized in the *Battel of the Books* and the *Dunciad*. Where Levine had confidently described Bentley's productive marriage of editorial theory and prodigious practice in classical editing, he struggles to describe the ignominy of his later work:

> Bentley's *Paradise Lost* remains a puzzle. Just why the great man should think of editing a modern poem, in obvious haste and against all advice, and risk his reputation as the most celebrated scholar of his time is not at all apparent. … [h]e had no obvious credentials for his new task, and in fact he blundered badly. The world of letters was scandalized, and despite an occasional attempt at exoneration, has continued to find the episode amusing. There is probably not much that can be done now to salvage Bentley's reputation in this matter, but it is undoubtedly worthwhile to look again at what he was attempting…[202]

What do you *do* with Bentley? Levine's story is engaging when he can assess the editor as a producer, a consolidator of editorial practices, a generator of knowledge in a

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[201] Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 75.
[202] Levine, 245.

rollicking back-and-forth. But when Bentley produces not knowledge but some artifact of procedure, he is wandering in the liminal space of errancy, thought, theory, attempts, non-practice ("there is probably not much that can be done now"). As David W. Bates argues in his conceptual study of error, *Enlightenment Aberrations: Error & Revolution in France*, these are the spaces to reconsider the radical implications of how Enlightenment thinkers consistently grounded concepts of knowledge in error: "And if knowledge itself was always a potential error, then the deviation that was error might very well point the way to new truths. The search for truth … was in essence an attempt to disentangle (without any sure guide) the merely accidental deviation from the more productive aberration that held out the promise of some future discovery."[203] Bates reads the discursive, frequently recursive writings of British empiricists and French *philosophes* as productive spaces that did not always have a clear purposive orientation, where they could indulge in errancy as a means of discovery.

Classicists' perspectives on the interstices of Bentley's theory and practice of conjecture are more than just celebrations of the content of his corrections; everyone seems to approve of the digressive expansiveness, the accumulative nature of corrections that are larger than the sum of their parts. Classicist C.O. Brink assesses the virtuosity of Bentley's *Epistle to Mill* from 1691, in which he annotated other scholars' work to reveal insufficiencies, assumptions, and errors: "Each of the discussions corrects not only the single mistake it starts from, but somehow manages to open beyond itself to a wide tract of ancient literature on which it sheds new light unexpected by even the most learned and

[203] David W. Bates, *Enlightenment Aberrations: Error and Revolution in France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), x-xi.

critical among his contemporaries."[204] Bentley could expand on any error with both scholarship and sharp judgment; G.P. Gould calls his notes "not so much a commentary on the old chronicles as a set of dazzling dissertations pegged upon a random set of appalling howlers."[205] Brink and Gould, in praising Bentley, highlight what Bates notices about the generative nature of theorizing error: it is not just the content of his corrections that makes his conjectures interesting, it is also the unintended effects of the associative thinking. David Konstan and Frances Muecke assess Bentley worship among classicists as a kind of awe at his procedure: "His vigorous partisans … speak even of his errors in the spirits in which an admirer once acknowledged that Arthur Rubinstein now and then hit a wrong note: mistakes, yes—but what mistakes!"[206]

It is not just classicists who see Bentley in themselves. Iconoclastic critic William Empson saw Bentley as someone like himself, an interpreter, when he gestures confidently but vaguely: "it was not that his methods were wrong but that the mind of Milton was very puzzling."[207] Empson praises Bentley for replicating—retrospectively—his own critical idiosyncrasies. Likewise, his biographer Haugen wants to consolidate Bentley's legacy by claiming him as a consolidator of Milton's legacy: "Bentley's active interventions were socially necessary in their own right so that Milton could receive the protracted textual ministrations that confirmed his prestige, while Bentley in turn received credit both for his virtuosic work and for his association with the poet."[208] It is

[204] C.O. Brink, *English Classical Scholarship : Historical Reflections on Bentley, Porson and Housman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 43.
[205] G.P. Gould, Introduction to Richard Bentley, *Epistola ad Joannem Milium* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 9.
[206] David Konstan and Frances Muecke, "Richard Bentley as a Reader of Horace," *The Classical Journal* 88:2 (1992-93), 179-86, 180.
[207] William Empson, "Milton and Bentley," *Some Versions of the Pastoral* (New York: New Directions Press, 1960), 152.
[208] Haugen, 228.

not surprising that a critical biography such as Haugen's would seek to situate him in a more conservative, author-centric tradition. Such a move to re-center the author is a recursive one in the generic priorities of biography: like Empson, Haugen replicates her own priorities in recognizing and projecting those qualities in Bentley the critic, Bentley the authorizer. Critic Christopher Ricks assesses the editor as oddball: "provocative though Bentley is, it is misleading to give a central position to one who is incorrigibly eccentric" and "Bentley, like the anti-Miltonists, has a great gift of getting hold of the right thing—by the wrong end."[209] For my part, I am partial to seeing Recursive Bentley, the theorist of error who himself is errant. I take Ricks's assessments of Bentley's wrongheadedness as features rather than bugs of his criticism; the sly adjective "incorrigible" is a note about how Bentley is obsessed with correcting through his own idiosyncrasies, how he perpetuates the errors he is trying to theorize.

In *The Myth of Print Culture*, Joseph Dane argues that Bentley's fortunes are bound up in the myth-making of bibliography as a theoretical field rather than a professional practice: he is always instrumentalized in this myth-making as either "editor-hero" to the classicists or "editor-villain" as a Miltonist.[210] He is an instrument because he must be situated as someone who either made or broke the rules, but those rules are always abstractions or generalizations that Dane worries get in the way of examining particular examples in the texts. As Dane sees it, it's an unexamined fallacy that "Bentley was working within the strictures of a presumed ideal of textual criticism often articulated but never demonstrated (the desirability of fullest possible collation) and that

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[209] Christopher Ricks, *Milton's Grand Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 10, 14.
[210] Joseph Dane, *The Myth of Print Culture: Essays on Evidence, Textuality, and Bibliographical Method* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 148-54.

Bentley practiced such textual criticism in his classical works, which he did not."[211] That is, Dane argues that Bentley's methods in classical and modern texts were too various to be consolidated as a coherent practice. But Dane, too, is instrumentalizing Bentley for his *own* critique by claiming this methodological variety as a reason to reject theorizing about bibliographic practice. I suspect he would be concerned with my argument about Bentley as a theorist of error in this chapter, for he is skeptical of any attempts to move Bentley from the discrete to the abstract: "Rather, the book has been absorbed into [the idea of] 'Bentley'—the Bentley of the *Dunicad*, the Bentley of Cambridge, and now, more amusingly, the romanticized 'Great Editor' and Conjecturer Bentley, whose towering achievements were somehow belittled by his work on Milton." Dane worries that Bentley in these epithet forms is no longer an agent in his own right but rather an agent of whatever frame a critic needs him to be. But when he serves as a historical example in a polemic such as Dane's attack on print culture as an abstraction, he has been artifactualized in a different form—criticism here is self-reflexive even when it's making the case against such a theoretical orientation.

On the other side of the looking glass, there are the proliferations of theoretical perspectives that cause more commotion and confusion. Most bombastically, contemporary avant-garde poet Steve McCaffery posits Bentley as "the first poststructuralist?"—the question mark is intentionally ahistorical and provocative—who "embraces instability, understood, however, not in its current deconstructive sense of free-play, pansemiosis, undecidability, and festive aporia, but as strictly symptomatic of

[211] Dane, 154.

historical corruption—a sickness conceived in textual genesis and transmission."[212] McCaffery's list of critical terms that Bentley supposedly embraces is exuberantly over-full and recklessly projective, yet I want to lean on the apparent obfuscation to see what it yields. I am less interested in the content of the list than in the list itself as an artifact of mediating Bentley through the vocabulary of contemporary poststructuralist theory. The question mark in calling Bentley "the first postructuralist?" signals the critical chapter as a thought experiment, a generic form that marks its own contingency, provisionality, and possibility of usurpation as positive characteristics of academic discourse. Indeed, much of McCaffery's prolific career as a poet and critic is devoted to testing the seams of critical vocabulary and mediation.[213] McCaffery intersected with McLuhan in the Toronto arts and communications scene in the 1970s, a disparate group who interpreted the studies of orality to produce "a generation of poets who were to make their name in concrete poetry—poetry that appeared to move the opposite direction from orality, sculpting language into icons of typography, even when 'sound' poetry was the poets' avowed aim."[214] For his own work on "Easter Wings," McLeod/Cloud may be said to

[212] Steve McCaffery, *Prior to Meaning: The Protosemantic and Poetics.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 59.
[213] His poem *Carnival* is a concrete poem that plays with typewriter alignment, photocopying, and other "hacks" of the machine to produce deliberate information noise, composed between 1965-67. See Marjorie Perloff, "'Inner Tension/In Attention': Steve McCaffery's Book Art," in *Poetry On and Off the Page: Essay for Emergent Occasions* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998). Perloff quotes McCaffery's description of *Carnival*: "*Carnival* was essentially a cartographic project; a repudiation of linearity in writing and the search for an alternative syntax in 'mapping'.... The panels grew directly through the agency of the typewriter and through the agency of marginal link-ups... What results are deliberately induced fragments, parts of inscription whose terminations and commencements are not determined by a writing subject or a logical intention but by a material, random intervention." (quoted in Perloff, 267-68). Given that McCaffery has spent his poetics career experimenting with critical mediations, it makes sense that he might see Bentley's practice in terms of his own poetic experimentation.
[214] Cavell, 136. For more on McCaffery's connection to McLuhan, see Emerson, chapter 3, "Typewriter Concrete Poetry as Activist Media Poetics," of *Reading Writing Interface.* For more on the constellation of Toronto media theorists and practitioners, see Rita Watson and Menahem Blondheim (eds.), *The Toronto School of Communications Theory: Interpretations, Extensions, Applications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). McCaffery and McLeod are not mentioned, but their connection is an extension or probe worth investigating.

join fellow Torontonians McCaffery and McLuhan another concretist who applies his interests to bibliography as a study of communications. Like McLeod/Cloud and McLuhan, McCaffery is acting like his subject in embracing out-there conjecture for the speculative possibilities of playing on the margins and reveling in punny linguistic haziness.

McCaffery's dense stack of references and difficult allusions looks like Bentley's own gloss on Mt. Horeb; in this way, he resembles Empson and Haugen in his habit of treating Bentley's work as a textual object to be processed recursively through his own method. If Dane, Walsh, Kastan, and Haugen have institutional reasons for embracing pragmatic theorizing of Bentley, McCaffery the poet can distort him in provocative ways. As a committed practitioner of pataphysics, he is of the party of "projectors, quacks, and lawyers not a few" who come to the Temple of Fame, and whose incoherent productions produce a cloud of competing meanings:

> So from a spark, that kindled first by chance,
> With gathering force the quickening flames advance;
> Till to the clouds their curling heads aspire
> And towers and temples sink in floods of fire.[215]

McCaffery revels in this position as a radical poet who is interested in the fact of non-transparent language, an always already problematic mediator of meaning. He practices a version of Viktor Shklovsky's oft-cited formulation: "The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged."[216] Here, there's a provocative possibility that editorial practice can serve to

[215] Pope, *Temple of Fame*, ll. 463, 475-78.
[216] Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (1917), *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reiss. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), cited in Dworkin, 66.

defamiliarize rather than familiarize readers with authors: Bentley and Milton are significantly made part of the background of McCaffery's chapter, and the theoretical insights are foregrounded, to the point of productive distortion. Eighteenth-century editors are engaged in ongoing, often contentious debates about whether the evidence of their labor should be silently erased from a text, in favor of a supposedly unmediated readerly experience of Milton, Shakespeare, or other authors. They debate how editors mediate an author's legacy and whether their paratextual objects such as prefaces, footnotes, queries, and bickering are forms of critical assistance, hyper-mediation, or both. Bentley's conjectures defamiliarize Milton's language by introducing doubt about hearing, transcription, and interpolation—and in so doing suggest possible extrapolations into theories of textual transmission and distortion over time.

Writing of Barthes and aporias in 2001, McCaffery is also practicing a form of critical belatedness that fits in well with Milton's own sense of writing an epic after Homer and Virgil. Craig Dworkin argues that mediums are "caught between impossible chronologies,"[217] in their specific form and their abstract qualities of being identified in genres or disciplines. He asks "whether media look forward or backward for their definition. That is, does their determining factor reside in their prior inscription or in their inscriptibility?" *Paradise Lost* is a poignant text to test this idea of the inscriptibility of impossible chronologies. It is composed of multiply framed looks backward to past Biblical and classical texts, then framed again by Bentley's scholarly endeavors to situate it as Modern text he could use for his future fame—and then framed again by later editors' concerns about Bentley's notoriety. Dworkin's provocations for how these

[217] Dworkin, 29. Elsewhere, he cites poet Kenneth Grahame, better known for *The Wind and the Willows*: "When shall that true poet arise who, disdaining the trivialities of text, shall give the world a book of verse consisting entirely of margin?" (36). Bentley nearly achieves the opposite of this endeavor.

textual objects may act as thought experiments that extend our understanding of mediation compelled me to think about my initial desire to keep McCaffery as silent as possible in this analysis. At first I wanted to reject his work as a remnant of bygone historical moment for complicated poststructuralist poetic theory or resign it to the footnotes. Yet to do so would be repeating what Bentley's more practical assessors have done with his idiosyncratic work: to prioritize consolidation over speculative possibilities. Dworkin and McCaffery present difficult, unyielding language as a medium for critical exploration, an experiment in recursive difficulty. Indeed, McCaffery's criticism is generated through idiosyncratic composition protocols that actually do have something to say to Bentley. His frequent collaborator bpNichol describes their composition process:

> We've always typed. We type with maybe one of us typing what's in our mind and then we kick an idea around. And then maybe I dictate to Steve while he types. And maybe I'm typing, and he's dictating to me. And I'm adding something as I think of it. And then we go over it. So it happens at the time of writing. And part of it is just getting that moment together. …Partially, it's also a tension between Steve's type of language and my type of language. He likes the technical, academic—I don't mean that in a bad way—scholarly language. … And we try to leave room for that, as opposed to me superimposing my voice or Steve's. I find it obfuscates things for me. I often have to say, 'Well, what does that word mean?" So he explains it. I'm increasing my vocabulary like crazy. He'll say it means such=and-such, and I'll say, well why not use that word instead? He'll say, well this is a perfectly good word—it's in the dictionary.[218]

With this description of McCaffery & Nichol's collaborative poetic practice, one gets a clearer perspective, so to speak, on what McCaffery sees in Bentley and his amanuensis. It's a historical projection of a compositional ethos backward in time—an anachronistic, self-reflexive glance backward. But what if that kind of error-mediated vision is

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[218] bpNichol quoted in Steve McCaffery, "Introduction" to *Rational Geomancy: The Kids in the Book Machine* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1992), 10.

productive: not of historical fact, but of some kind of poetic creation? It's a stretch to say it's in the vein of Milton's own sense of productive belatedness in Paradise Lost, but not too much of one. I see McCaffery's dense list, too, in the coded list of procedures that the glitch theorists produced in GLI.T/CH READER[ROR]: appropriative, confusing and thus error-provoking, and thus finally exciting to dip into to see the value of distortion and creative destruction.[219]

The Usefulness of Overdetermined Metaphors for Editorial Perspectives

After this situating work, however, I must make a crucial move to reorient Bentley as a theorist of error: I must bracket his correctness, underscore his wrongness, and reorient the perspective toward editorial practice's processes of iteration, proliferation, and dispersal—as if in a cloud. McCaffery quotes to Roland Barthes's metaphor of a cloud of meaning as a starting place for enquiry:

> …if we grant ourselves the right to start from a certain *condensation* of meaning … it is because the movement of analysis, in its endless process, is precisely to explode the text, the first cloud of meanings, the first image of content. The stake of structural analysis is not the text's truth but its plural; the task, therefore, cannot consist in starting from form in order to perceive, illumine, or formulate content (there would then be no need of a structural method), but quite the contrary, in dissipating, deferring, reducing, dissolving the first content under the action of a formal science. Analysis will find its profit in this movement, which gives it both the means of starting an analysis from several familiar codes and the right to drop these codes (to transform them) by advancing, not into the text

[219] That said, when Walsh titles his critique "Bentley, Our Contemporary" as an object lesson for those who would neglect the role of the author in favor of propping up one's own opinions, he is probably speaking to people like McCaffery.

> (which is always simultaneous, voluminous, stereographic), but into its own labor.[220]

Barthes' description of a starting point that circles around itself as a means of generating structure resembles Bentley's own picture of an editor atop Mt. Horeb who assembles his structure of footnotes as the scaffolding of the poem. It is a description of recursion as an intellectual practice: "starting an analysis from several familiar codes … and advancing … into its own labor." The work it generates is stereographic, with multiple points of view that contend but do not necessarily resolve into a particular perspective of what one should focus on; the eye can travel and change its focus. It provides a three-dimensional view of a scene of the text and the labor that has remediated it.

Such a stereoscopic perspective on labor is not limited to post-structuralism; it is also a means of understanding editorial work as multi-focal and processual rather than as successive or consolidated into a single best practice. In his sociological study of procedures for producing knowledge, *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Practice*, Andrew Pickering distinguishes between "representational and performative idioms for thinking about science" as a kind of practice for producing knowledge. The representational idiom "is more or less obligatory" for practitioners who want a heuristic of assessment: "what else can one ask of knowledge other than whether it corresponds to its object?"[221] The performance idiom allows for multiple agents—actors, say, who play different roles—to participate in the practice of producing knowledge. Pickering's vocabulary of performance opens up the possibility of reframing Bentley's conjectural criticism as a method of performing thinking on the printed page—a method that

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[220] Roland Barthes, "Where to Begin?" (1970) *New Critical Essays* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 89. Cited in McCaffery, 89, original italics.
[221] Andrew Pickering, *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Science.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 5-7.

produces the genre of the thought experiment. “Reframing” is a critical commonplace that Bolter and Grusin adopt from performative media like cinema and video games to describe hyper-mediation as a series of overlapping frames that call attention to themselves as frames, just as Bentley does when he frames the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* off the page with his own discursive conjectures. Structurally, the work of “reframing” creates that conceptual three-dimensional space of multi-focal practice. Pairing Pickering’s analysis of practice with Bolter and Grusin’s theories of remediation also clarifies “remediation” as an ongoing practice, rather than a state.[222] Conjectural emendation is a performative method that always exists within itself, about itself because it generates material by reflection about its work as a practice of mediation.

Conjectural emendation is discursive because it is recursive, and for that reason it is maddening to those whose own editorial practice is oriented toward creating a finished product. must make decisions and substantiate them with explanation of his practice—their job is to assess. The editor and editorial historian Marcus Walsh thus assesses Bentley’s work as an example of misguided editorial practice that does not generate knowledge which corresponds to its object but rather draws attention to itself as a performance. For Walsh, Bentley’s work “offers the lesson that to ignore the difference of the past, to privilege the critic’s quest for significance to himself over the interpreter’s

[222] As Marianne van den Boomen puts it in a wide-ranging blog post about the critical possibilities of remediation as a description of a state or a process, it is most useful to work with the broadest definition of the terms: “The broad definition of remediation offers better prospects. This conception of remediation is not based on allegedly pre-existing delineated media, neither does it restrict the scope or scale of the after-effects of its own processes. It just states that processes of remediation, re-appropriation and re-use are going on, working with whatever stuff at hand. And then something transformative may happen with the (re)mediated things. Or not. Or only partial, limited, on a very small scale. This open range of scales and possibilities is a strong point of the broad conception. The scalability enables an analysis of both very tiny and very large phenomena, and it may even be able to connect small scale events with large scale transformations.” See Marianne van den Boomen, “The Mirror Hall of Remediation,” Metamapping.net November 9, 2010. This open-endedness is perhaps especially important as a critical method when one is working with an eighteenth-century allegory and not visual media.

quest for author's meaning, is to run some risk of comparison of author's achievement with critic's achievement…"[223] Those who emulate Bentley run "some risk of becoming endlessly the subject of essays like this one," as their performance takes the focus away from the text itself. This is a warning about the dangers of recursion, of the folly of becoming the subjective performer of analysis rather than its agent.

That reflection is enabled by the editor's performance at working with the limitations of how one can transmit thought over time, over multiple mediators and mediations in print. Thus I agree with Dane's characterization of Bentley's work—"What [he] produces is a questioning, self-reflexive text, with his own nagging voice in the margin and in the notes"[224]—but for very different, abstract reasons rather than the insistent particularities that Dane advocates for. Leah Marcus experiments with such a practice in her monograph *Unediting the Renaissance*, which is a kind of thought experiment in working with Renaissance editions of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Milton so as to study how those texts—and critical concepts of authority, textual stability, intention, and revision—have been shaped by editors' assumptions over time. Marcus calls her work "an activity that all editors should engage in as part of their own revisionary efforts, that all readers should practice mentally even as they make use of edited texts."[225] Her work is a thought experiment in noticing frames of mediation as a kind of practice. The phrase "unediting" is provocative in that it appears to be claiming

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[223] Walsh, "Bentley Our Contemporary," (182).
[224] Dane, 158.
[225] Leah Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton.* (London: Routledge, 1996), ix. Marcus notes in her introduction that her work owes much to "recent critiques of scientific method that demonstrate the rhetorical and socio-political nature of scientific explanation," (4) thus putting her into conversation with scholars like Pickering. In true recursive fashion, Marcus reassesses her previous work by noting that literary critics and editors were talking much more across boundaries in the years following the publication of her book. See "Confessions of a Reformed Uneditor" *The Renaissance Text: Theory, Editing, Textuality*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 211-16.

an immersion into the texts—yet the reflective, reflexive genre of the thought experiment occasioned by that performative provocation actually allows her to remediate the texts into three-dimensional spaces of critical reflection.

In this vein, Pickering argues that it is important to find ways of observing, studying, and theorizing interstitial places where the production of knowledge becomes vexed and an act of judgment can flatten a contest of agencies. He articulates a theory of multiple agents who produce knowledge: "Scientists, as human agents, maneuver in a field of material agency, constructing machines that … variously capture, seduce, download, recruit, enroll, or materialize that agency, taming and domesticating it, putting it at our services…"[226] McGann has found a way of mediating between the two demands of practicality and abstract visionary work by situating his work on a horizon, as an experiment in form and practice. Marcus, too, evokes a horizon in her description of how a thought experiment changes the shape of objects under study:

> In the new textual studies—the 'new philology'—and in historically oriented modes of poststructuralist criticism, the text loses its privileged separateness and is conceptualized as part of a much wider vectoring of forces and objects. This reconceptualization is understandably difficult for scholars trained in the earlier modes to accept. It requires an imaginative leap rather like the giving up of the isolate majesty of the traditional image of Gibraltar, which can no longer be perceived as distinct from the shifting seas around it. As one of my Iberian students has kindly pointed out, Gibraltar has beaches on its far side where sea and sand intermingle: for us, it is not quite the majestic and clear-cut monolith…[227]

Thus Bentley's hazy horizon has a future as a space of thought experiment. Here is an attempt to map that description onto Bentley's space of conjectural criticism as he practiced it specifically on Milton: The phantom amanuensis is way of theorizing the interactions between multiple human agents (both identifiable and anonymous, individual

[226] Ibid.
[227] Marcus, 23.

and collective), printing presses, emending readers, and other, less identifiable forms of mediation. The errors that appear in these spaces of failed attempts are sometimes clearly Bentley's bad ideas, but they are also artifacts of conflicted agencies in print production.

The editors Kastan and Walsh have every reason to diminish Bentley in an account of *Paradise Lost*'s editorial fortunes, for they are editorial practitioners invested in clarity, functionality, and practicality.[228] As Walsh puts it, "the notorious edition of *Paradise Lost* represents an early case of non-objective editing."[229] Bentley's practice is highly impractical and idiosyncratic. It is dysfunctional because Bentley applied it with such a heavy hand, his theory obscuring—and altering—the object it was supposed to illuminate. To recast Bentley as a theorist of sensation and agency is to luxuriate in this dysfunctional space and observe the more ambiguous effects of his performance. His over-reaching illuminates how errors accumulate in interstitial spaces between theory and practice. The practice of correction is not about erasing or silencing these errors, but in reflecting on what they teach us about critical perspective as mediation.

Bentley's Mt. Horeb, then, is both a place to localize the Muse and emphasize the obscurity that surrounds that location.[230] Bentley makes a world of his own out of noticing—inventing—errors in Milton and correcting them with hyper-mediation. These

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[228] Marcus acknowledges that a reflection of practice may mean that she does not satisfy those readers who have expectations of representational idioms rather than performative ones: "Like any book that attempts to mediate between disciplines, it has required a delicate balance between them and runs the risk of being condemned by both. I have, I am sure, included far too few textual details to satisfy most bibliographers, far too many to be palatable to other readers still laboring under the misconception that such matters are of no consequence. …Throughout the book, I have been quite speculative, more interested in suggesting direction for further inquiry than in offering definitive statements" (ix). That "attempt to mediate" is striking for how it calls attention to a double practice of mediation, of working between and of working with media.

[229] Walsh, 162.

[230] Walsh does not pursue his idea that "Bentley's impulse to re-create is analogous to that which led Dryden to write a 'dramatic transversion' of *Paradise Lost* in *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man*" (167) because a comparison of the two remediations would not be germane to his consideration of Bentley's textual criticism, but that line of thought about Bentley's work as an adaptation is well worth considering.

corrections can be structural in both senses of the word, as reception historian John Leonard notes that Bentley "does not want to breach any walls. He sees himself as a respecter of limits and boundaries (despite being the most eccentric comet in the history of Milton criticism)." With that epithet, Leonard indulges in some wordplay that appropriates Bentley's perspectival and structural errors and makes them criticisms:

> Navigating Milton's universe, he often collides with walls he fails to see. Encountering Uriel's line 'The rest in circuit walles this Universe' (III, 721), he refers 'The rest' not (as he should) to the 'Ethereal quintessence (III, 716) that remained after the creation of the stars, but to the stars themselves. Since 'Starrs' (III, 718) are plural, this reading imports a grammatical error that he at once leaps to correct: 'Walls: Rather, The rest in circuit WALL' (203). Bentley effectively replaces the shell of the universe with a figurative wall of stars.[231]

His misty mountain gambit is nearly conventional among philosophers of sensation, for David Bates observes: "it is striking how many Enlightenment figures address the most crucial epistemological questions by using topographical metaphors and imagery."[232] Milton himself plays with this topological space of error in his description of apostasy ("of erring, from the path remote").[233] As the editor's first foray into editorial work, the annotation points to the possibility of confusion prior to any illumination of the secret.

This foregrounding of error—and then doubling it in a cloud of secrecy—is not just Bentley's idiosyncratic reading of a line; it is a statement of an Enlightenment ethos. Prior to any conception of truth comes the identification of what must be corrected: the error precedes the correction, and the correction is generative for future endeavors of identification, classification, rectification. Bates describes how Enlightenment conceptions of truth were "endlessly deferred in this intellectual context, given both the

[231] Leonard II:719, quoting Bentley 203.
[232] Bates, 19.
[233] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VI, 172.

extreme limitation of the operations of the human mind and the admitted uncertainties of all sensible observations."[234] Thus Bentley's hubris in situating his idiosyncratic editorial work at the secret top of Mt. Horeb is, more provocatively, a form of philosophy about exposing the need for generative, experimental space to explore the process of theorizing the spread of errors rather than just the right answers. Though he had championed Bentley's aggression in promoting historical knowledge in the Epistles of Phalaris controversy, Levine allows of the *Paradise Lost* blunder: "Bentley's hypothetical editor seems thus a desperate device to free him from the constraints of the received text so that he could emend its 'faults' with impunity. … Bentley may even have believed, with some of his modern admirers, that it was less the rightness or wrongness of his conclusions that really mattered than provoking critical thought."[235]

This can be fertile territory for theorists. McGann finds this "editorial horizon" to be exhilarating, "the very emblem of what is meant by the praxis of literature and the imperative to praxis."[236] Like Jay David Bolter, McGann is committed to recursion as a method, as indicated by the repetition in the title of his 1983 book, *The Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, which he reissued with a new reflections and a foreword by David Greetham in 1992. *The Textual Condition* is a reflection on how his practice changed over a twenty-year period from 1971 to 1991 and a look to the future, which he imagines being mediated in part by innovations in hypertext; 2004's *Radiant Textuality* is another iteration of that meta-reflection on theory and practice in the work of editorial

[234] Bates, x.
[235] Levine, 254-55.
[236] McGann, 22.

mediation.[237] He turns to three "case histories" to test his theories in practice, and it is striking that one of those tests is a "hypothetical case" of generating as many possibilities of editing Dante Gabriel Rossetti as possible. McGann is a working textual editor whose habits of self-reflection come from examining the institutional constraints on these editions—a university press, say, may be more interested in a teaching text or an authoritative edition, and less interested in a recursive thought experiment—and using those constraints to enable theoretical reflections.

But that horizon also appears blurry and frustrating to other practitioners who see a higher value in pragmatism than heady philosophizing. In an introduction to a collection of essays about editorial methods, Walsh and his co-editor Ian Small call textual editing "an inevitably pragmatic activity" that they contrast to a "surfeit of theorizing" that has made their work more difficult to navigate as their objects of study are illuminated differently—and, similar to Bentley's theoretical application, altered—by deconstruction, poststructuralism, theories of mediation, and the sociology of scientific knowledge. Walsh and Small stake their position in no uncertain terms: "Generally speaking, the relationship between theory and practice in the whole field of literary studies has become increasingly strained. …In the general impetus to institute the study of theory as an end in itself, to create what some have called a 'theory industry,' the relationship of theory to practice has been lost sight of." They quote Jauss's term "the challenge of a practice to theory" and posit a pragmatic prism through which to redefine theory as an instrument of clarification, consolidation, and pragmatism, or "theory arising

[237] McGann describes his inauspicious beginnings: "When I began editing Byron in 1971 I had no special editorial expertise. I had not sought the job, was surprised when I was asked, and I accepted without knowing what would be involved in such a task" (*Radiant Textuality*, 19). (In this modesty he departs from Bentley.)

out of attempts to characterize and defend conflicting editorial practices."[238] (It is striking that McGann and Walsh and Small appropriate terminology from Jauss, but this coincidence speaks to the ways that, even in producing criticism of literary theory for its abstractions, Walsh and Small find the gestures to be useful.)

This is a narrow definition of theory that is limited to a representational idiom for practice. I can appreciate this practicality—this is a theory defined by its functionality and applicability—at the same time that I am skeptical of this desire for consolidation that obscures the conflicts among agencies. I am pushing on a non-standard reading of Bentley as a test case for theorizing the errors that arise in interstitial spaces of agency, as opened up by my theorizing of the Fama model of media maelstrom. Such a project means taking apart what is consolidated and making a different kind of causal claim. It is a claim for a theory of agency as an emergent process that is larger than the sum of its practical procedures and, indeed, cannot be predicted by the particular properties of a heuristic device.

Walsh and Small's language is remarkable for how, in assigning agency to a "surfeit of theory" for mangling the true objects of textual study, the syntax mirrors the same perceptual and agentive confusions that Bentley generates as he is dwelling on vexed mediation atop Mt. Horeb. The viewer "loses sight" of the object, only to find an obscurity "arising" out of disparate phenomena. "Arising" is the tipoff to a set of agencies far more complex than a consolidation of opinions about editing practices; it has a vague source and chain of effects. It is the composition of granular pieces of disparate information into a perspective with an unclear fixed source. This coincidence is in part a

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[238] Marcus Walsh and Ian Small "Introduction…" *The Theory and Practice of Text-Editing: Essays in Honour of James. T. Boulton*, eds. Small and Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1-2, 10.

function of the manifold visual metaphors of criticism: point of view, perspective, examination, lens of analysis, and so on. The coincidence is doubled by the fact of the textual editor's object—variants, marks on a page—that is more specific than a literary critic's larger toolbox. The coincidence is tripled by the historical fact of Milton's blindness, so that these metaphors are all the more pointed and easy to appropriate, whether opportunistically and clumsily—as Bentley did in creating a fictional secretary—or opportunistically and grandiosely, as editor Helen Darbishire remarked of her 1952 edition of *Milton's Poetical Works*: "My aim has been to offer a text as near as possible to that which Milton himself would have given us, if he had had his sight."[239] The claim to textual editing as a means of recovering authorial intention is a heuristic device[240]—not a settled norm as Darbishire was able to claim—in which interstitial definitions of agency are subsumed under an author as an organizing principle.

If one wants to press harder on theory than immediate practicality, *any* textual critic is in some sense a theoretician of the interstices of mediation and perception because they are composing visual information into a set of interpretations. Ironically,

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[239] Helen Darbishire, *Milton's Poetical Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), I:v. Darbishire was among a generation of editors who valued the facsimile as an important editorial tool for rendering the text as it was published in the past. From facsimile to hypertext, there's an interest in using technologies of reproduction to account for the problems of reproducing multiple editions of print media. I shall discuss this phenomenon further in chapter 3 as I discuss trends in Shakespeare editing from "New Bibliography" to the present.

[240] In *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Editing,* Walsh uses this vocabulary to ground his preliminary theoretical approaches as they were informed by his practical training: "If the specific character of eighteenth-century editing is to be understood, it will certainly be necessary to consider which modern conceptualizations of textual criticism and editing might possibly provide us with useful and appropriate *optics* for its examination, and which cannot. I would like to begin that process of discrimination … by an appeal to what seems to me the clearest and most useful taxonomy of textual editing, that presented by Peter Shillingsburg in his *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice* (1986). I shall use Shillingsburg's taxonomy throughout this book as a heuristic tool. …. Shillingsburg argues that there are four possible formal orientations of textual editing, the historical (or documentary), the aesthetic, the authorial, and the sociological, depending on where the editor choose to locate authority for the text" (5). Walsh's use of the term "optics" only underscores my point about the overdetermination of visual metaphors: they are too useful, and they proliferate. What do they do when they proliferate? They generate errors.

Walsh's survey of practitioners bears out this observation about the way that visual metaphors of criticism tend to aggregate and produce effects beyond their individual perspectives. Walsh positions Bentley as a kind of cautionary tale who helped strengthen the practical usefulness of authorial intention in the eighteenth century. Bentley, he argues, is our contemporary because he is "a limit-case of a critical subjectivism that blankly refuses to interpret the code, to know the context of a literary work."[241] As a contrast with Bentley's obscurantism, Walsh quotes practitioners of New Bibliography who seize on the word "intention" to situate their practice in a functional setting. When Walsh puts pressure on "intention" as a concept, he (perhaps unintentionally) breaks down the term as one created by sensory composition metaphors: James Thorpe, Fredson Bowers, E.D. Hirsch, and Thomas Tanselle all compose meaning and intentionality out of the manifold possibilities in that they "posit the most probable *horizon* for the text" and "*reproduce* in himself the author's 'logic,' his attitudes, his cultural givens, in short, his world."[242] Walsh reads Hirsch's and Tanselle's defenses of editorial interpretation as an example of how "the *reconstruction* of the author's text is inevitably and intimately connected with an act of objective interpretation of the author's intended meaning; and that interpretation must be validated against the cultural and linguistic contexts of the text's original moment of production."[243] To posit the most probable horizon, to reconstruct a scene of original composition, to reproduce a scene of logic, to recreate context: all of these are descriptions of world-building that resemble Bentley's creation of a world for interpretation atop Mt. Horeb on the first page of his edition of *Paradise Lost*.

[241] Walsh, 180.
[242] E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), quoted in Walsh, 159 (emphasis added).
[243] Walsh, 158.

With these turns to Bowers, Hirsch, Tanselle, and other bibliographers, Walsh is laying out a varied field of disputes in the field, but this critical convention, too, is a form of world-building and construction of a perspective. It is a survey to create a fixed point from which to argue. Bibliographers must create it to have a foundation for practice—or, crucially, they may also claim to be reconstructing it and give it a pointed perspective of intentionality, variability or subjectivity or the multiple lenses of historicist enquiry. In *Surprised by Sin*, critic Stanley Fish argued for the value of a reader's interpretative "swerve," an embrace of confusion or error that could produce thematic insights about *Paradise Lost.*[244] Blending bibliography and textual interpretation, McGann echoes Barthes' invocation of stereographic space when he theorizes texts as ways of seeing, not objects just to be seen: "a 'text' is not a 'material thing' but a material event or set of events, a point in time (or a moment in space) where certain communicative interchanges are being practiced. This view of the matter, this *theoria* or way of seeing—holds true as much for the texts we inherit and study as it does for the texts we will execute ourselves."[245]

Walsh's survey and McGann's "ways of seeing" each illuminate the way that bibliographers overdetermine their visual sense as a way of describing practice in consolidating theoretical terms. The metaphors of composed vision that each bibliographer uses to explain practice are remarkably similar to those that Bates finds among his *encyclopedistes*: "Let us stop here a moment and glance over the territory we have just covered," writes d'Alembert in his *Discours preliminaire de l'Encyclopédie*,

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[244] Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1967). Fish calls it the "interpretative choice" and finds in *Paradise Lost* a "pattern, in which the reader is presented with a series of interpretative puzzles whose solution either contributes to or undermines his understanding of the poem's great issues…" (236) as seen most vividly in the line, "firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve" (IX:359).
[245] McGann, 21.

making the surveying move familiar to any essayist who is situating his argument. But like Bentley, d'Alembert must account for errors before he can generate knowledge, and this space is almost more real to him than the theory he is expostulating. Between certain knowledge and the limitations of human knowledge lie "innumerable clouds …spread there as by some flashes of light that seem to burst out at intervals to attract us. One might compare the universe to certain works of a sublime obscurity whose authors occasionally bend down within reach of those who read them, seeking to persuade them that they understand nearly all…"[246] D'Alembert's description resembles Bentley's theory of haze at the same time that it warns against overreaching to articulate it. Bishop George Berkeley uses similar language in his *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, which claims in its subtitle to detail the "Chief Causes of *Error* and Difficulty in the Sciences" (1710, rev. 1734): "the largest views are not always the Clearest, and … he who is Short-sighted will be obliged to draw the Object nearer, and may, perhaps, by a close and narrow Survey discern that which had escaped far better Eyes."[247] D'Alembert joins Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Berkeley, and other Enlightenment philosophers of sense and sensation in sharing what is perhaps the key concern of the period—classifying how sensation produces knowledge—while at the same time worrying about how one would mediate that sensory knowledge within the limitations of language and classificatory structures.

Detailing sources of error that have the potential to impede the study of knowledge becomes like the rhetorical figure of *occupatio*, of filling space with

[246] D'Alembert, *Discours preliminaire de l'Encyclopedie*, quoted in Bates, 28.
[247] Bishop George Berkeley, *A Treatise concerning the principles of human knowledge. Wherein the chief causes of error and difficulty in the sciences, with the grounds of scepticism, atheism, and irreligion, are inquired into* (London: printed for Jacob Tonson, 1710, 1734), 5.

objections to what writing cannot capture in the linguistic mediation of sensation—thus creating a theory out of errors. In *The Rhetoric of Error from Locke to Kleist*, Zachary Sng traces conceptions of error from the eighteenth century to contemporary deconstructive theory, analyzing Paul de Man's "Semiology and Rhetoric" for its self-reflexive consideration of how one forms knowledge through reading. He engages with the possibility, indeed, the productivity of misinterpretation: "What de Man describes is one could say, *knowledge about error* turning out to be *itself in error*, but only if one remembers that error never names just one thing in such a description."[248] That is, being wrong could engender a concatenation of future bad behavior: "…this supposed knowledge stands in relation to 'real' knowledge as error stands in relation to knowledge (once again, a deviation from the right path), but also, that this knowledge is set into perpetual errance, consigned to a ceaseless and aimless wandering that takes the form of suspension and infinite repetition or recursion." But Sng and de Man are also excited by this possibility of wandering, of making strange loops to investigate what's enabled by self-reflexive critical discourse, as they've indicated by their willingness to adumbrate such possibilities in their close readings of Locke and deconstructionist alike. The cloud of objections expands to fill whatever space it inhabits, as Bentley's first page of *Paradise Lost* illustrates memorably. In this way, Bentley is well situated to join Locke and Berkeley as a philosopher of sensation—specifically sensory errors—but visual perception is not the only determining source of error for Bentley's embodiment of vexed

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[248] Zachary Sng, *The Rhetoric of Error from Locke to Kleist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 9. This is the passage that Sng engages with from de Man's essay about reading Proust literally or figuratively: "The former ended in indetermination, in a suspended uncertainty that was unable to choose between two modes of reading, whereas the latter seems to reach a truth, albeit by the negative road of exposing an error, a false pretense. After the rhetorical reading of the Proust passage, we can no longer believe the assertion made in this passage about the intrinsic metaphysical superiority of metaphor over metonymy. We seem to end up in a mood of negative assurance that is highly productive of critical discourse" (quoted in Sng, 8).

agency. Indeed, the ways that sound creates visual artifacts by means of metaphor are the source of many of his most egregious ideas.

Hearing Things: Beyond the Visual Metaphors of Obscurity

From secret to sacred: Bentley's first editorial digression is not in fact an interpretation of a visual marker but rather the creation of a sonic crux of interpretation. Bentley pontificates on the nature of Milton's achievement in his Preface: "the Author could so abstract his Thoughts from his own Troubles, as to be able to make it that confin'd in a narrow space, to Him a dark Chamber, surrounded with Cares and Fears, he could spatiate at large through the Compass of the whole Universe…"[249] In Bentley's imaginative account of Milton's composition, the visual sense is at once obstructed and magnified by how his other senses compensate for it. "Of the five senses, vision is the most 'distancing' one. In vision, subject and object 'appear' as transparent," explain Michael Bull and Les Back as they consider the challenges that capturing sound in print can generate.[250] Bentley's bulky editorial apparatus, then, underscores the non-transparency—that is, its hypermediacy—of the subject and object of author and editor. Bull and Back continue, "Yet if, as Bishop Berkeley notes, 'sounds are as close to us as our thoughts' then by listening we may be able to perceive the relationship between subject and object, inside and outside, and the public and private altogether differently. In

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[249] Bentley, Preface [5].

[250] Michael Bull and Les Back, "Introduction," *The Auditory Culture Reader* (Oxford: Berg Press, 2003), 4-5. Leigh Eric Schmidt devotes considerable space in *Hearing Things: Religious Illusion and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000) to dismantling the idea, popularlized by McLuhan, that the print revolution of the Enlightenment was a battle between ear and ear, with vision triumphing over all other senses.

its engulfing multi-directionality sound blurs the above distinctions and enables us to rethink our relationship to them." The sound technology designer Gilbert A. Briggs was faced with this very problem of remediated sound as he tried to popularize audiophile technology in the 1950s by hosting comparison tests between concert hall recordings and live performances. As described by Greg Milner in his history of audio recording technology, Briggs took a hard line on idealized media technology as accessing a higher plane of sensory experience. In popularizing "hi-fi" or "high fidelity" technology, Briggs was mimicking the sonic version of Darbishire's and other New Bibliographers' claims about perfecting mediation: "As a concept, 'high-fidelity' suggest a quality with an added component of 'truth.' … A high-fidelity sound is one that sounds like your idea of what the world truly sounds like" but it is "aspirational" in that recording is always mediating sound through speaker technology as it immerses a listener.[251] High-fidelity sound is an invention like "authorial intention" that's used to collect ideas (and ideals) about mediation. Fittingly, Briggs used allusions to the din of the *Dunciad* and *Paradise Lost* in order to call forth this aspiration to mediating sound.

In fact, the charge provoked even Bentley's detractors and enemies to reconsider the sources of error, and though they certainly did not come to the same conclusions, they did begin to generate a theory of how errors may be transmitted through *multiple* sense mediations. The printer Jacob Tonson defended his previous editions:

> From this manner of writing them from his mouth, it is certain, that many errors in spelling, and printing, must needs have creeped into the first copy; and highly probable, that even in whole words of a like or near sound, one word was sometimes written down for another. These errors, being followed and augmented by those of the Printer in the first impression, received still an additional increase in the succeeding editions.

[251] Greg Milner, *Perfecting Sound Forever: An Aural History of Recorded Music* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2009), 139-140.

> The like has happened to many other English books, in prose, as well as in verse, which have borne several editions, the last of which are generally the most incorrect; insomuch that in some of them it is necessary to have recourse to the first, as to a manuscript, to discover the true original meaning of the Author. …Which incorrectness is, I believe, chiefly owing to the inadvertency, and sometimes ignorance of Printers, who frequently undertake the correction of English books themselves.[252]

Bentley's thought experiment about all of the errors introduced by the senses, particularly the conflation of sight and sound, has high stakes for considering the way we use critical tools of mediation. Tonson treats the problem of correction as a practical one: errors are inadvertent and fixable through closer attention by authors and printers alike. Bentley's corrections make reference to strangeness and the unknown—he treats errors as an epistemological problem. The very next note after the secret/sacred dissertation is a further test of the auditory hallucination: "Some Acquaintance of our Poet's, entrusted with his Copy, took strange Liberties with it, unknown to the blind Author, as will farther appear hereafter."[253] Here are some of Bentley's annotations on errors he believed to have been inserted by the amanuensis:

- "I wish, for the poet and the Poem's sake, that the Reader would be of my Opinion, that all this long Description of the outside World, the Limbo of Vanity, was not Milton's own, but an insertion by his Editor. There's nothing either of his Spirit or Judgment seen in it; in its several Parts it abounds with Impertinencies" (III.444)
- "without criticizing it, I'll propose in my thought, what, or what like, he would have given, could he have revised his Poem" (VII.239)
- "I do not disapprove…but if the Author had thought of it, I believe he would have preferr'd this before it" (VII.299)

In these commentaries, Bentley resembled nothing so much as a medium who speaks with the dead and interprets hazy messages. He noted this extra-sensory power of

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[252] J.T. [Jacob Tonson]. *The Grub-Street Journal* January 27, 1731/32 (no. 103) reproduced in facsimile (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2002). See also Stuart Bennett, "Jacob Tonson: An Early Editor of *Paradise Lost*?" *The Library* 10:3 (1988), 247-52.
[253] Bentley, *Paradise Lost* [ll. I.12, 6].

mediation in his Preface, where he warned that some readers would "fancy this Persona of an Editor to be a mere Fantom, a Fiction, an Artifice to screen Milton himself."[254] Other correspondents to the *Grub-Street Journal*, where many of the disputes about Bentley's work took place, took the notion of a sinister, ghostly, or sub-human resonance in the text even further, calling the previous Tonson edition "full of horrid hallucinations."[255] Celeste Langan has argued that the specification of "blank verse" in the ballad genre (distinct from tragic verse or epic verse like that of *Paradise Lost*) at the beginning of the nineteenth century signals a problem of mediation from voice to print, a problem that provokes "a variety of audiovisual hallucination. Read silently, the poetic figure becomes that much more a sculptural or pictorial form; and, no longer subject to the *immediate* sensory input of verbal melody, the silent reader gains access to the *mediated* (i.e. narratively evoked) musical scene of the poem."[256] Langan's argument could be both intensified and challenged by Bentley's Fantom editor. She argues that "it is impossible to attribute this variety of audiovisual hallucinations to the poetic form as such; rather, they are intimately linked to the printed page." Bentley's Fantom is not just mediated by the page—he is a strange middleman who interferes in the musicality with his own suggestions, elisions, hypermediations. If Langan calls blank verse an audiovisual hallucination, then what's a hyper-mediated hallucination? Is it an editor? Is it an editor's stated rationale of theory and practice? *In Hearing Things*, Leigh Eric Schmidt devotes a chapter to how ventriloquism,

[254] Bentley, Preface to *Paradise Lost*, [4]
[255] [Anonymous] correspondence to *The Grub-Street Journal* (March 26, 1730).
[256] Celeste Langan, "Understanding Media in 1805: Audiovisual Hallucination in 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,'" *Studies in Romanticism* 40:1 (2001) 49-70, 53. Langan also uses the metaphor of the horizon familiar from Bentley, McGann, and Marcus, among others: "'Prose' then becomes itself less a *generic* term than *medium*, and is virtually indistinguishable, in an imaginary horizon by which we are still framed, from print" (53).

> loosed from the confines of theological debate and biblical exegesis, had become a salient category in Enlightenment discussions of religion and had taken center stage as a form of rational entertainment. The expanded construction of ventriloquy provided a tangible way of thinking about oracular religion as rooted in illusion—that, indeed, various wonders of the devout ear had their origins in vocal deceptions that philosophers could pinpoint and magicians could demonstrate. In performative practice, the ventriloquists' art also shifted focus of learned attention from the divide struggle over the soul to the protean malleability of personal identity, the fears and attractions of imposture, and the sheer pleasures of amusement.[257]

Bentley's *Paradise Lost* emendations seem to be a cousin to ventriloquism, yet they are performed in print and depend less on an illusion than a thought experiment. But what happens when editorial practice is theorized as an adjacent practice to ventriloquism or its other performative arts, to shift the center of its priorities from erudition to provocation. Bentley could not see his own work as anything other than erudition, yet there is something to be said for how the Ancients and Moderns combatants indulged in animadversions, footnotes that stole others' textual voices for satirical purposes, and elaborate textual feats of showing each other up. It may be that Swift and Pope are more like the ventriloquists for their satirical performances, yet Bentley is somewhat of their party in his own ability to detect dialects and interpolations, like an audience member who is so familiar with the techniques that he may shout out rudely to ruin the immersive fun.

This thought experiment about performance could generate other possibilities, as well. Bentley is historically, intellectually, spiritually far from a nineteenth-century medium who conducted séances and practiced automatic writing. Indeed, the phrase "matter and motion cannot think," part of his confutation of atheism in the Boyle Lectures on Isaac Newton's natural philosophy, would seem to disqualify him from any

[257] Schmidt, 136.

weirder forays into spirituality.[258] Bolter and Grusin have a recursive, McLuhan-esque way of reframing the agentive powers of the medium: "a medium is that which remediates."[259] But Bentley used those lectures to argue for how values could be transmitted through erroneous readings of texts—in these religious lectures delivered to the public, as in his classical scholarship and in his Milton scholarship, he insists on the way that interpretative tools mediate meaning. "Matter and motion cannot think" is a literary abstraction that is supposed to serve as a warning against the very practice of abstracting intentionality. With that warning about how abstraction can generate errors, it becomes possible to think of Bentley's amanuensis as an abstraction of thought, not a real figure. Bentley uses this figure to make claims about right and wrong versions of the text, but the figure may serve a different purpose as a tool for considering the problem of mediating thought through abstractions rather than bodies—a problem that would occupy Locke, Berkeley, and other eighteenth-century theorists of mind. As John Durham Peters puts it in his genealogy of forms of communicable media, *Speaking into the Air*, seventeenth-century figures such as Locke, Hobbes, and Descartes were obsessed with vessels of mediation and the errors they transmit because they had such high spiritual stakes:

> The spiritualist view of communication oscillates between the dream of shared interiorities and the hassle of imperfect media. … Media, like bodies, become pipes that are interesting only in their tendency to become clogged. But media are not mere 'channels.' Media matter to practices of communication because embodiment matters. The body is our existence,

[258] Richard Bentley, "*Matter and Motion Cannot Think or, A confutation of atheism from the faculties of the soul: a sermon preached at St. Mary-le-Bow, April 4, 1692 : being the second of the lecture founded by the Honourable Robert Boyle* (London: printed for Thomas Parkhurst and Henry Morlock, 1692). McCaffery has an extended reading of Bentley's editorial practice as inspired by his refutation of Lucretian atomism in the Boyle Lectures: "It is the Lucretian theory of motion, translated to the realm of the textual condition, that underlies Bentley's fiction of the phantom editor and careless amanuensis, both of him contribute a clinamen [a swerve] away from the laminar 'intention' of the nominal producer" (70).
[259] Bolter and Grusin, 65.

> not our container… the body is not a vehicle to be cast off, it is in part the homeland to which we are traveling.[260]

Bentley's initial foray into conjectural criticism concerns the position of a body—at the top of a "sacred" mountain that can be embodied in textual examples and reconstructed in sound, rather than a "secret" mountain that remains (for Bentley) only an error—and in this way dramatizes the poet's perspectival mediation of a scene. He must contest the position, the definition of the scene in order to test its status as a means of communicating the 12-book spiritual revelation in *Paradise Lost*.

Editorial projects are an extraordinary testing site for questions about the gap between words and understanding, for the editor must make conjectures and presumptions about language, mediation, and transmission. If one can interface with ghosts that scream antithetically—as Bentley and McGann would have it—one can see the practice as producing not just a clear vision of a scene but a lush sensory experience of riotous thought. They must make these conjectures in an elaborate performance of simultaneous transparency and hypermediacy—they are transmitting the text through what Barthes rendered as the "code" of author's intention, but they are also making the case for their privileged vantagepoint. In this way, they are both practicing and theorizing remediation of knowledge in the form of contested language. Locke writes that he had not considered the unit of the word when he began his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, "but having passed over the Original and Composition of our Ideas, I began to examine the Extent and Certainty of our Knowledge, I found it had so near a connexion with Words, that unless their force and manner of Signification were first well observed, there could be very little said clearly and pertinently concerning

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[260] John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 65.

Knowledge."[261] Locke's *Essay* is more concerned with those linguistic impediments to understanding than articulating a theory of transparency.[262] His metaphors of obscurity and mediation have a striking correspondence in Bentley's own boast about the poet's perspective on the sacred top of Horeb. Locke describes the problems of explaining understanding can tend toward recursion and generate errors: "At least they [words] interpose themselves so much between our Understanding, and the Truth, which it would contemplate and apprehend, that like the Medium through which visible Objects pass, their Obscurity and disorder does not seldom cast a mist before our Eyes, and impose upon our Understanding."[263]

Under this lens, Bentley's gestures toward notions of cloudy, misty, hazy mountaintops look less like mere textual evidence and more like a kind of meta-commentary on the obscurities inherent in interpretation, the secrets of conjecture. Locke then joins the critique of visual mediation with an auditory metaphor to further complicate the processes of transmission: "Were the imperfections of Language as the Instrument of Knowledge, more thoroughly weighed, a great many of the Controversies that make such a noise in the World, would of themselves cease; and the way to Knowledge, and perhaps, Peace, too, lie a great deal opener than it does."[264] But this statement is ironic—or at least only wishful—for the bulk of Locke's *Essay* is devoted to exploring the ways that these "Controversies" radiate into new fields of study as

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[261] John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* [1690] ed. P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 489.
[262] Bishop Berkeley responded to Locke's work in his Treatise: "For so long as Men thought abstract Ideas were annexed to their Words, it does not seem strange that they shou'd use Words for Ideas: It being found an impracticable thing to lay aside the Word, and retain the abstract Idea in the Mind, which in itself was perfectly inconceivable. This seems to me the principal Cause, why those Men who have so emphatically recommended to others, the laying aside all use of Words in the Meditations, and contemplating their bare Ideas, have yet fail'd to perform it themselves" (79).
[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid.

emergent phenomena.[265] Bentley's own taste for controversy is not just a contest of personalities or even of discrete arguments about Ancient and Modern texts; rather, these "Imperfections of Language" are generative of new knowledge.

Theories of Mediation Are Made of Mistakes

Imprecision, imperfection, and controversial correction aggregate into more than just a folly or a subject of notoriety. Errant corrections may enable new fields of knowledge—say, the philosophy of mind—wherein the subject and object of study may adapt by the means of controversy and debate. This change in object is Bentley's unwitting accomplishment (and many may judge it to be a dubious one): *conflict* becomes the object of study and thus proliferates from the attempts to control the debates. The status of the mediator becomes vexed—no longer transparent, but hyper-mediated.

In his essay about the scholarly origins of the term "mediation," John Guillory describes the irony of Locke's emphasis on error—and not clarity or pure understanding—in the *Essay*: "the wish fathers an interesting thought: the means also *lie in the way*, the medium makes communication possible and makes it fail…. The difference between language as medium (of thought) and writing as medium (of speech) produces a certain philosophical confusion, which turns around the conceptualization of

[265] Levine notes that Locke followed the Ancients-Moderns debate but did not cast his lot with a particular side, other than to address the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* to the cause of advancing knowledge in an obliquely Modern way. Citing Locke's correspondence with various parties in the dispute, Levine claims that "Locke did not, as he says, 'love controversies,' and he certainly remained aloof from the quarrel, particularly after Bentley joined the fray and the battle heated up, although he was undoubtedly drawn to the modern side" (86).

the medium in relation to a physical instrument."[266] Sng makes a similar point, calling attention to the problem of situating the source or agent of error: "The *Essay*'s multiple narratives of origin and its repeated emphasis on the need to clarify the medium turn out to constitute a coherent strategy to shield the integrity of its epistemology against the potential errors of language."[267] Bentley's imaginary amanuensis is a conceptual embodiment of these conflicts: as a gambit, the blunderer makes intervention by others possible, and even necessary. His imaginary position vexes his status all the more so because he becomes an abstraction of error. In his genealogy of the term, Guillory turns to the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of mediation as an abstract process (2a): "Agency or action as an intermediary; the state or fact of serving as an intermediate agent, a means of action, or a medium of transmission; instrumentality." Guillory parses the definition: "The basis for abstraction in this definition is the shift of focus from 'agent' to 'agency', that is, to an impersonal process. This allows for any number of objects or actions to occupy the 'third' position of mediation."[268] Just as Bull and Back explain how the distinction between subject and object becomes blurry when sound is invoked (indeed, the mixed, synesthetic metaphor is necessary to highlight this strangeness), abstraction is the means by which agency can be obscured from authorial intention to something that accounts for errors without clear causality.

Bentley's repeated invocation of mishearing emphasizes this radical reconsideration of editorial mediation as consisting of multiple agents and forms of agency: even as he makes overstated claims about the imaginary source of the errors, the

[266] John Guillory, "Enlightening Mediation." *This Is Enlightenment*, Clifford Siskin and William Warner, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 49-50.
[267] Sng, 23.
[268] Guillory, 52-53.

very act of calcifying causality in such an audacious way calls attention to its own fact of begging the question about identifying the source. McCaffery describes Bentley's audacity in heavily studded theoretical language that is too dense and too much like a vortex of critical terms:

> Contemporary twenty-first century readers can appreciate Bentley's conjectural intervention as doubling the virtuality of certain signifiers, thereby critically destabilizing univocity, making the reader aware that the graphic seme partakes less of a trace structure than a phantom echo of another sense. It's important, then, that Bentley isn't addressed judgmentally, and that his suggestions be aligned with the received text dialectically in order to induce a third stage in critical assessment, treating the emendations as indications toward the poem's own suppressed sign economy. Bentley's principle of the approximate homonym rather than debating *Paradise Lost* actually enriches it with plural possibilities. Instead of disambiguating the textual cruxes, it invites us to receive them as semantic chords, proclivities in polysemeity that decenter the poem from any overriding univocal gravity.[269]

Again, the most compelling thing about McCaffery's reading is how distorted it gets in throwing so much at the wall to see what sticks—from their joint interviews it's clear that his collaborator bpNichol could be both inspired and frustrated by that discursiveness. It is a model of criticism that we are not used to privileging in our turn away from post-structuralism, in which we are instructed to march toward a vaunted but profoundly vague notion of clarity.[270] It is a thought experiment in and of itself: a test of concepts that bump up against one another and form a jumble of too many ideas at once, allowing for the possibility of recombination and novel conflict. I want to argue for the value in keeping McCaffery's work somewhat difficult to understand, for I believe that it approximates the same kind of critical acumen that Bentley is provoking with his own digressions and dense notes. This ambition to practice and theorize at the same time

[269] McCaffery, 73-4.
[270] See Jonathan Culler and Kevin Lamb, *Just Being Difficult: Academic Writing in the Public Sphere,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

resembles Swift's swirling vortex of Modern learning and the spider's entrails from the *Battel of the Books*:

> *Erect your Schemes with as much Method and Skill as you please; yet, if the materials be nothing but Dirt, spun out of your own Entrails (the Guts of* Modern *Brains) the Edifice will conclude at last in a* Cobweb: *The Duration of which, like that of other* Spiders *Webs, may be imputed to their being forgotten, or neglected, or hid in a Corner. For any Thing else of Genuine, that the* Moderns *may pretend to, I cannot recollect; unless it be a large Vein of Wrangling and Satyr, much of a Nature and Substance with the* Spider's *Poison; which, however, they pretend to spit wholly out of themselves, is improved by the same Arts, by feeding upon the* Insects *and* Vermin *of the Age. As for* Us, *the* Antients, *We are content with the* Bee, *to pretend to Nothing of our own, beyond our* Wings *and our* Voice: *that is to say, our* Flights *and our* Language; *For the rest, whatever we have got, has been by infinite Labor, and search, and ranging thro' every Corner of Nature: The Difference is, that instead of* Dirt *and* Poison, *we have rather chose to till our Hives with* Honey *and* Wax, *thus furnishing Mankind with the two Noblest of Things, which are* Sweetness *and* Light.[271]

McCaffery may even delight in doing the spider's work in the corner, and as a concrete poet who revels in cobwebs of print, he might delight in thinking of that corner as a marginal space like the space of the page.

In his essay "Ambiguous Traces, Mishearing, and Auditory Space," Paul Carter analyzes what can be generated out of the act of mishearing. His argument turns on the differentiation between hearing and listening that is occasioned when one must make sense of mishearing: "Listening becomes cultural work where the ground rules are not established. There, vocalizations may or may not signify. They produce ambiguous auditory traces. Listening, unlike hearing, values ambiguity, recognizing it as a

[271] Jonathan Swift, "The Battel of the Books" *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, ed. Marcus Walsh, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 152, Walsh notes that Swift has adopted the allegory from Bacon's *Novum Organum*: "The empirics, in the manner of the ant, only store up and use things; the rationalists, in the manner of spiders, spin webs from their own entrails; but the bee takes the middle path: it collects its material from the flowers of field and garden, but its special gift is to convert and digest it" see Walsh, 480n.68.

communicational mechanism for creating new symbols and word senses that might eventually become widely adopted."[272] Carter's description is close to Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation, for the switch from hearing to listening is occasioned by the realization of one's status as a mediator. Crucially, the realization of error causes this reconsideration. For Bentley, conjecture is a tool (which may produce errors), conjecture as abstraction rather than answer. But abstraction as a tool for mediating thought guarantees reformulations of that tool by future readers, whether in satire or in animadversions.

Error is minute and multifarious, but it is also an abstraction: the typo-ridden fortunes of Milton's *Paradise Lost* were certainly due much more to anonymous typesetters and inattentive printers than to a single, blameable figure, but the nature of conflict is to identify causality as a way to try to control it. Any reader's oscillation between reading and hearing words is an errant path. Milton himself played with the idea of mediating sound and sense, notes Peter J. Manning, as he remediates Langan's media theory, so to speak, by considering her work on ballads with the blank verse of *Paradise Lost* (he calls this exercise in critical recursion "applied Langan", "plac[ing] a frame around" her work on ballads). He quotes the visual metaphors of light and revelation from Book I and then pauses to reflect on the effect of that quotation as a form of remediation: "I quoted at length from Book I of *Paradise Lost* in part to stage an experiment, trusting that my readers would subvocalize the passage as they advanced down the page. Subvocalizing seems to me an important mode midway between oral

[272] Paul Carter, "Ambiguous Traces, Mishearing, and Auditory Space," *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity,* Velt Erlmann, ed. (Oxford: Berg Press, 2004), 43-64, 44. Compare to Peter Holland, "The Age of Garrick" in *Shakespeare: An Illustrated Stage History*, eds. Jonathan Bate and Russell Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 69-91.

delivery and silent reading."[273] Manning's thought experiment is a means of teasing out the slippages between multiple meanings of a word—just as Bentley did. Manning describes our critical slippages in referring to Milton's poetic "voice":

> Milton speaks in his prefatory note of 'the sense various drawn out from one verse into another,' but though 'sense' here points to meaning, it subtends also, as teachers who for generations have advised student baffled by Milton's elaborate syntax to read the poem aloud have known, sense, the material source of sound. The ease and frequency with which we speak of Milton's organ tones or Milton's poetic voice points likewise to the continuing effect of his sound on our response to his verse.[274]

Milton himself anticipates the diffusion of the term in sound, print, and spirit: "Apostate, still thou err's, nor end wilt find/ Of erring from the path of truth remote…"[275]As Guillory glossed Locke's *Essay*, that which facilitates understanding also gets in the way. The "Fantom" amanuensis who mishears embodies all of those overdetermined causalities.

In fact, Bentley's contemporaries, in trying to fathom his reasons for such a bizarre Fantom, position him as a kind of theorist of mind who lacks the right tools. The eighteenth-century satirist David Mallet described Bentley's method as replacing writing with alien objects devoid of sense—in multiple meanings of the word:

Holds high the scourge o'er each fam'd Author's head,

[273] Peter J. Manning, "'The Birthday of Typography: Response to Celeste Langan," *Studies in Romanticism* 40:1 (2001) 71-83, 71, 75. Manning is reading *Paradise Lost* as an earlier form of an argument about mediation of voice into print and wants to make an argument about the sound of poetry as an immersive sensory experience: "the poetry of the period, freed from the oral poetic situation of bard and audience, and thus from the devices of communication the situation entails—repetitions, alliteration, ring composition, formulae, and so forth—was freed to develop the sound quality of the verse itself. It is not that the readers gain access to the *mediated*, narratively evoked scene of the poem so much as they gain access to the *immediate* music of the text itself. Freed from the exigency of communication, sound patterns become ever more intricate and various. The medium does not become invisible, but ever more prominent" (77). This argument seems to valorize immediacy in a less radical way than it could, and Bentley's hypermediation of *Paradise Lost* (and the charges of his unmusical ear) poses a challenge to that valorization—what happens when a particular reader, an editor who can mediate the text further in print, hears or constructs a hearing of very different sound in the text as mediated through language?
[274] Ibid.
[275] Milton, *Paradise Lost* (ll. VI.172-3).

> Nor are their graves a refuge for the Dead.
> To Milton lending sense, to Horace wit,
> He makes 'em write what never Poet writ:
> The Roman Muse arraigns his mangling pen,
> And Paradise, by him, is lost agen.
> Such was his doom impos'd by heaven's decree
> With ears that hear not, eyes that shall not see.[276]

Mallet's accumulation of negative formulations—what was never writ, doubled by his linking Bentley's "ears that hear not" as an unmusical editor of poetry with Milton's eyes that see not. Compare Mallet's barbs with Pope's critique of Bentley's protégé Theobald who pedantically cites "all such reading as was never read" in the *Dunciad*; these critical riffs on editorial errors hinge on the unlikely paradox of prodigious accumulation through sensory deprivation.[277] That attention to sensory reading calls to mind Leah Price's critical questions about what contemporary practitioners of book history identify as their objects of study, and what kind of tools we use to identify and study them:

> One way to describe "the way we read now" is to say that we don't read at all. … Where the humanistic social sciences once borrowed literary-critical tricks to interpret nontextual objects, literary critics today mine other disciplines—bibliography, history of science, even archaeology—for a vocabulary in which to describe the nontextual aspects of a particular category of material object; books. Instead of 'reading' sewer systems, critics now smell leather bindings. Far from 'reading' the stock market, we tabulate paper prices. As the metaphor lost its export value, critics began to abandon the thing itself.[278]

So the sensual nature of reading has trumped the content in Price's account—the content of thought has become something based in the senses rather than the brain. Or perhaps

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[276] David Mallet, *Of Verbal Criticism: An Epistle to Mr. Pope, Occasion'd by Theobald's Shakespear and Bentley's Milton* (London, Edinburgh, 1733). Mallet explains the joke in a footnote: "This sagacious Scholiast is pleased to create an imaginary Editor of Paradise Lost, who, he says, by his blunders, interpolations, and vile alterations, lost Paradise a second time. This is a *postulatum* which surely none of his readers can have the heart to grant him; because otherwise he would have wanted a fair opportunity of calling Milton himself in the person of this phantom, fool, ignorant, ideot [sic], and the like critical competence which he plentifully bestows on him" (10).

[277] Pope, *The Dunciad.* [1743] (I.166)

[278] Leah Price, "From The History of a Book to 'History of the Book'" *Representations* 108 (2009), 120-38, 120-1. Price addresses similar questions in "Introduction: Reading Matters" *PMLA* 121.1 (2006), 9-16.

these are linked in the way that Bentley argued they were, albeit in a wrongheaded way. The editor's application of conjecture occurs through sensory recovery, but those senses differ between individuals. They represent a paradox of practice: it is both a consensus of procedures that is discussed among individuals, but it is reliant upon individual senses that may be especially discerning, idiosyncratic, or wrong.

Thus one problem with identifying a Fantom amanuensis, even as a thought experiment about applying conjecture to vexed mediation, is that other readers do not read editorial projects as thought experiments. One of Bentley's antagonists imagined the end result of conjectural criticism as it produced only literary artifacts:

> Imagine a Head laboriously skilled in Prefaces, stuff'd with common places, and muddled with Index-hunting; add of Authors, and a pleasure arising more from such blemishes found out, than any beauties and graces in writing. Who will admire at such imaginations, thus possessed with the defects of other writings, if whatever is disagreeable should necessarily flow into them. … We see no true criticism but a mean appearance of it, when false editions are consulted, and blunders of transcribers stuff'd into volumes to fill their size, shall we admire such Authors diligence or ridicule their judgment?[279]

The critic makes a satirical plan to best Bentley at his own game: "I seek for the worst editions, because my notes will hereby be more numerous, and my triumphs over some harmless mistakes more frequent." This is a theory of mind composed entirely of artifacts of procedure, an overstuffed brain composed of errors. It is a model of a less useful critic or editor, but it may be an exciting idea to play with the problem that remediation is not always joined with remedy.

Swift's satire on Bentley's conjectural follies in the Ancients-Moderns debate is a dramatization of this phenomenon: he remediates the story as a literal Battle of the Books, but the outcome is obscured by "missing" sections of the manuscript as it has

[279] [S.] *The Grub-Street Journal* (1 Jul 29, 1731)

been "restored" incompletely, and thus generatively. "Hic pauca desunt," "Desut nun-nulla," "Alter hiatus in Ms" all appear in the margins of Swift's account of how Ancient books swarmed to battle their Modern counterparts: tellingly, the missing sections occur at moments where there could be resolution in the debate, but in their absence there is only more material to annotate. Swift's satire of these kinds of annotations has a literal referent in the debates between Bentley and his Ancient interlocutors, who charged him with pedantic use of his interpolative skills in assessing the Epistles of Phalaris.[280] These features are distorted by their remediation into a new genre, as Swift theorizes at the beginning of the Account: "Satyr is a sort of Glass, wherein Beholders do generally discover every body's Face but their Own; which is the chief Reason for that kind of Reception it meets in the World…"[281] The proliferating apparatus to *A Tale of a Tub* is another form of this theory made material. It is a satire of useless heuristic devices that accumulate artifacts of their generic conventions of introducing, dedicating, and so on, but the Satyr's Glass also magnifies the double logic of remediation by increasing the artifacts of hypermediacy. The *Tale* accumulates wordplay on visual and aural distortions and matches them with "a digression in praise of digressions," matching satire's theory of distortion with its practice.

Swift's satire on Bentley's accumulative folly in ascribing textual variants (visual phenomena) to aural hallucinations puts me in mind of Douglas Hofstadter's *Le Ton Beau de Marot*, a gigantic experiment in translating one fifteenth-century French poem more than a hundred times through different means: professional translators, amateurs, Oulipo-style constraint-based attempts, machine translations, and other odd imaginative

[280] Jonathan Swift, "The Battel of the Books" 154-158.
[281] Swift, 137.

projects.[282] And, like Bentley's discursive, homonym-enabled emendations[283], the joke of the title is based on an aural pun: *Le Ton Beau de Marot* is a pun on Le Tombeau of Marot, wherein *tombeau* would mean tomb and, more generally, a work of art to honor someone. Hofstadter joins McLuhan and Cloud as an inveterate punster who uses the visual wordplay as a probe, for "the pun is a perfect example of a visual form that has a suppressed acoustic resonance in its multilayered and simultaneous meanings, likewise achieved through the discontinuous spacetime of the [print] mosaic."[284] Most of the translations in Hofstadter's work are not very good; certainly that poem is nothing like *Paradise Lost* in its complexity, so the thought experiment is a more apt fit with a simpler object to begin with. The artifacts can shine because we do not expect entirely great interpretations. Instead, the act of translation is revealed to always be a mediation, and the radically different effects of different tools is underscored. Hofstadter is a cognitive philosopher, not a professional translator, and the book is an extraordinary, wide-ranging, collaborative attempt to play with contemporary work on artificial intelligence, theories of mind, linguistic and generic translation, and other digressions. It is a literary experiment in the neural net theory of minds working in concert, creating errors, correcting them, changing through these processes.

***Sapere aude!:* The Genre of the Thought Experiment**

[282] Douglas Hofstadter, *Le Ton Beau de Marot: In Praise of the Music of Language* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).
[283] *Paradise Lost* reception historian Leonard notes that Bentley is often oblivious to wordplay: "He has a strange ability to latch on to something suggestive and yet remain oblivious… to what it is he has latched on to" (Leonard, I:332).
[284] Cavell, 140-2.

Here I want to argue for reframing Bentley's work a thought experiment based on the premise that readers could hold multiple *possibilities* in their heads at the same time. The specific, systematizing term "thought experiment" can be traced back to its German coining *Gedankenexperiment* by Ernst Mach in 1897, but historians of science and historians of rhetoric have found it plenty of other sources: ancient Greek mathematical proofs and dialogues, Baconian induction, the Cartesian theater of the mind, and so on.[285] It's historically appropriate to situate Bentley's work among these Ancient and Modern thought experiments; when these historians in different fields are engaging in cross-disciplinary debates about how their expertise qualifies them to situate the genre in a specific time and functionality, they are rehearsing many of the same arguments in the Battle of the Books and engaging in much of the same scrutiny of disparate texts and argumentative stakes. Even the very work of historicizing the thought experiment fits well with Bentley's special talent of detecting anachronisms in the Epistles of Phalaris.

Bentley was proud of his conjectural criticism, appropriating a line from his translation of Horace, *sapere aude* (dare to know!), to justify his controversial claim that the older texts were not to be consulted so much as the editor's own mind. Bentley uses the phrase dare to know to champion his own tool of using his knowledge to mediate texts:

[285] See, for example: *Thought Experiments in Science, Philosophy, and the Arts*, eds. Melanie Frappier, Laura Meynall, and James Robert Brown (New York: Routledge, 2012) and James Robert Brown, *The Laboratory of the Mind: Thought Experiments in the Natural Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 1991). Brown's description in *The Laboratory of the Mind* is appropriately allusive and indeterminate: "Thought experiments are performed in the laboratory of the mind. Beyond that bit of metaphor it is a bit difficult to say just what they are. We know them when we see them" (1). In a literature review section of an essay such as "Tracing the Development of the Thought Experiment in the Natural Sciences," for example, it is conventional to build a developmental model of the genre and to assess moments of disagreement about what Mayr draws from his German Romantic predecessors or the correlative roles of counterfactuals, error, and even the very term "concept" in these models of historical development, refinement, and debate. See: Aspasia Moue, Kyriakos A. Masavetas, Haido Karayianni, "Tracing the Development of the Thought Experiment in the Natural Sciences," *Journal for the General Philosophy of Science* 37 (2006) 61-75.

> In these our Labours upon Horace, a good deal more is owing Conjecture, than to the Assistance of Books, and if I mistake not, what arise from Conjecture is much more certain than what is founded upon the Authority of Books, for in various Reasons the very Authority often imposes upon, and flatters the depraved Itch of your pitiful Emendation. …I would not have you pay a blind Veneration to dealers in Books alone, but dare you to think for yourself.[286]

The invitation to produce knowledge by experimenting with mediating one's self was generic in these thought experiments. Clifford Siskin and William B. Warner cite the eighteenth-century uses of *sapere aude!* from the Society of Friends' motto to Kant's famous 1784 essay "What is Enlightenment?"[287] They do not cite Bentley's remediation of Horace in the form of his defense of conjectural criticism, but to read Bentley's account of conjectural criticism with Bacon's opening lines of the *New Organon,* though, is to see the method as a tool:

> The human intellect is the source of its own problems, and makes no sensible and appropriate use of the very real aids which are within man's power; the consequence is a deeply layered ignorance of nature, and as a result of this ignorance, innumerable deprivations. He therefore judged that he must make every effort to find a way by which the relation between the mind and nature could be wholly restored or at least considerably improved. But there was simply no hope that errors which have grown powerful with age and which are likely to remain powerful for ever would (if the mind were left to itself) correct themselves of their own accord one by one, either from the native force of the understanding or with the help and assistance of logic. The reason is that the first notions of things which the mind accepts, keeps and accumulates (and which are the source of everything else), are faulty and confused and abstracted from things without care; and in its secondary and other notions there is no less passion and inconsistency.[288]

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[286] Richard Bentley*, The Life and Conversation of Richard Bentley, Deliver'd in His Own Words. In Latin and English* (London, 1712), 11.
[287] See Siskin and Warner, 1-33.
[288] Francis Bacon*, The New Organon* [1620], ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18. These sources of error may then be compounded by other mediators in the print (and now digital) afterlife of a text. There is a kind of fractal effect generated by trying to account for Bacon's theories of mediation, as rendered in his fragmented, multiply revised *Essays,* including that work that was revised in *The New Organon*. Print historian David McKitterick points to nineteenth-century experiments in error detection on Bacon's *Essays* (1625): in 1862 William Aldis Wright collated ten copies of Bacon's Essays (1625): 'Of these ten copies no two are exactly alike. The difference

Bacon's celebration of tools could be the celebration of Bentley's conjectural criticism—or the critique of it. Bacon and Bentley are both responding to similar problems of how to mediate knowledge from a single mind to a larger audience so as to advance knowledge. Editorial work and theories of mind may be considered as part of the same problem of mediation—a problem that Bentley's self-proclaimed heir A.E. Housman half-articulated in his famous essay on classical editing, "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism." Housman explicitly modeled his emendatory practice on Bentley's practice and frequently held him up as the exemplar of what the practice could generate. Yet in this essay, his explanations of this generativity sound positively Lockean. Housman insisted that whereas he could not define thought except through abstractions and mediating metaphors, he could approach it through explanation of tools:

> The things which the textual critic has to talk about are not things which present themselves clearly and sharply to the mind; and it is easy to say, and to fancy that you think, when you really do not think, and even what, if you seriously tried to think it, you would find to be unthinkable. Mistakes are therefore made which could not be made if the matter under discussion were any corporeal object, having qualities perceptible to the senses. The human senses have had a much longer history than the human intellect, and have been brought nearer to perfection: they are far more acute, far less easy to deceive. The difference between an icicle and a red-hot poker is really much slighter than the difference between truth and falsehood or sense and nonsense; yet it is much more immediately noticeable and much more universally noticed, because the body is more sensitive than the mind. I find therefore that a good way exposing the falsehood of a statement or the absurdity of an argument in textual criticism is to transpose it into sensuous terms and see what it looks like then. If the nouns which we use are the names of things which can be handled or tasted, differing from one another in being hot or cold, sweet or

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are numerous, though, except in one case, not important; but, as they throw light upon the manner in which books passed through the press in Bacon's time, I have subjoined a list of all that I have noticed. The cause of these differences is not difficult to conjecture. Corrections were made while the sheets were being printed off, and the corrected and uncorrected sheets were afterwards bound up indiscriminately. In this way the number of different copies might be multiplied to any extent,'" quoted in McKitterick 121-22. Francis Bacon, *Essays*, ed. William Aldis Wright (Cambridge, 1862), 420.

> sour, then we realize what we are saying and take care of what we say. But the terms of textual criticism are deplorably intellectual and probably in no other field do men tell so many falsehoods in the idle hope that they are telling the truth, or talk so much nonsense in the vague belief that they are talking sense.[289]

This passage is self-consciously convoluted at the very same time that it's making claims to absolute clarity: it is a model of the double logic of editorial remediation in its simultaneous aspiration to transparency and hyperattention to mediation through metaphor and other comparative language. Housman's essay is very much a product of the early 20th-century fascination with editing as an objective science, but even that orientation points the way toward reconsidering Bentley as a precursor to cognitive philosophers interested in thinking about the mind as mediated by tools. The ghostly figure of the erroneous mediator is a manifestation of the anxieties about the incompleteness of these mediations, the noise that is created in trying to explain a concept as complex as thought.

Though they worked in different fields, it's tempting to speculate about what Thomas Kuhn would have made of Housman's "Application of Thought to Textual Criticism"! For historians of science, Kuhn's "paradigms" are a touchstone for assessing the history and functionality of the thought experiment. Kuhn argues that error is a constitutive feature of the thought experiment—or at the very least an important outcome, for errors expose anomalies in previous paradigms and conceptual frameworks: "The concepts 'corrected' in the aftermath of thought-experiments displayed no intrinsic confusion. If their use raised problems for the scientist, those problems, were like the

[289] A.E. Housman, "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism," *Proceedings of the Classical Association* 18 (1921), 70.

ones to which the use of any experimentally based law or theory would expose them."[290] Kuhn's scientist may correct errors based on theories that resemble Housman's editorial methods, but he then relishes not just the completion of correction, the fixing of an error, but rather the ways that fixing engenders difficulties. Simon Jarvis has advocated for an emphasis on editorial labor in discussing eighteenth-century editorial projects, for surely to judge them on the specific instances of correctness or incorrectness would return only a list of blunders. Jarvis argues, "Historicist philology…needs to understand itself as a historical project, rather than as the inevitable victory of sound method; but it can only do this by understanding the division of intellectual labour in which it originated and by which it continues to be mediated."[291] Jarvis's call is a call for historicism, a disciplinary paradigm that allows scholars to move beyond judgments of good correction/bad correction toward creating a larger social context for understanding how past editors devised those judgments, as well as the limitations of those judgments as paradigms shifted.

But what of Jarvis's own paradigm, wherein historicism is the priority above speculation or theoretical flight of fancy? By the time he edits *Paradise Lost*, Bentley is an editor outside of a paradigm, even as he believed he was establishing one in his championing of the Modern cause. Kuhn continues: "[The scientist's errors] arose, that is, not from his mental equipment alone but from difficulties discovered in the attempt to fit that equipment to previously unassimilated experience. Nature rather than logic alone

[290] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (second edition) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962/70), 261.
[291] Simon Jarvis, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Shakespearean Textual Criticism and Representations of Scholarly Labour, 1725-1765* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 274.

was responsible for the apparent confusion."[292] Bentley and Housman match considerable knowledge to intuition in their claim of *sapere aude!*, yet they run into difficulties when they extend beyond "unassimilated experience." Kuhn's "paradigm shifts" have been debated and refined considerably since they defined a field of intellectual history in the 1960s, but I pause on his work to show a crucial divergence between book historians and intellectual historians: the role of distinct content in an error to be fixed. Bentley and any editorial practitioner after him seize on specific errors to be corrected as their practical work; they run into some explanatory problems when they must speculate beyond an accumulation of particular, discrete corrections.

Textual Editing in the Society of the Mind

Conjectural criticism is recursive—rather than solely purposive or consolidative—because the very nature of remediating thought is recursive. Or as Douglas Hofstadter's colleague Marvin Minsky puts it in his seminal set of thought experiments, *Society of Mind,* "thinking changes thoughts." I see Minsky, Hofstadter, and McLuhan as theorists who relish writing speculative books of tools, with interests in the emergent possibilities of using and misusing those tools. In the chapter entitled titled "Head in the Clouds," he argues:

> An idea with a single sense can lead you along only one track. Then, if anything goes wrong, it just gets stuck—a thought that sits there in your mind with nowhere to go. … Rich meaning-networks, however, give you many different ways to go: if you can't solve a problem one way, you can try another. True, too many indiscriminate connections will turn a mind to mush. But well-connected meaning structures let you turn ideas around in your mind, to consider alternatives and envision things from many

[292] Ibid.

> perspectives until you find one that works. And that's what we mean by thinking![293]

As Paul Carter puts it in his argument for generative mishearing that exposes the listener's position as a mediator: "The aim is not to end the communication but to keep it going. Whereas hearing remains monological, listening is always dialogical. Ideally, conversation evolving out of ambiguity and mishearing retains these signs of what cannot be fully communicated."[294] There is Bentley's head in the hazy, misty, clouds of his conjectural emendation of a single, erroneously claimed homonym in Milton: the rich meaning-network of sight, sound, and spirit engendered by conjectural criticism facilitates new ways of thinking and mediating those thoughts.

Yet thought experiments have a strange way of existing both inside and outside their time: I have had to labor, sometimes with a stretch of historicist practice toward speculation and anachronism, to situate Bentley in the thought experiment. Such labor has been interesting and provocative for me in this writing task. Randall McLeod/Random Cloud's's margin-busting, punny bibliographic textual experiments playfully interpolate the anachronism of concrete poetry into early modern textual studies, and many have found his provocations to be mind- and discipline-expanding. His detractors try to play versions of his own game, so that even in their critiques, they are indulging in thought experiments and speculation. Joseph Dane, for one, frames his

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[293] Marvin Minsky, *The Society of Mind*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 64. Though he turns to theories from information science, Guillory does not cite cognitive or artificial intelligence theories of mediation in his discussion of agency. These theories may be outside the scope of his genealogy, but it's interesting to compare Guillory's work with Minsky's description of the "Society of Mind" as "a scheme in which each mind is made of many smaller processes. These we'll call agents. Each mental agent by itself can only do some simple thing that needs no mind or thought at all. Yet when we join these agents in societies—in certain very special ways—this leads to true intelligence" (17). Peters discusses artificial intelligence and communication in later chapters of *Speaking into the Air*, although he does not address Minsky's or Hofstadter's more popular works.
[294] Carter, 44-45.

objections as a thought experiment in an "interlude" that does not fit inside the chapter form of the monograph—one in which he (unintentionally) sounds much like Richard Bentley imagining the evil Fantom amanuensis: "How, I imagine Prof. McLeod thinking, would these same textual critics deal with the tradition of the visual image? Not just images generally (which are transmitted I assume by the same imagined processes and missteps that apply to textual transmission), but those images that are transformations (or representations) of originary typographical constructions?"[295] He repeats the discursive marker of the thought experiment so frequently that he points to the indulgent amount of speculation he believes is present in McLeod's analysis: "If Prof. McLeod was ever thinking what (for my own convenience) I imagine him to have been thinking… Let us look at what McLeod does here, as well as what he might or would have done, circumstances having been other than what they were…" When McLeod responds at the end of the interlude in a playful email, he suggests incorporating his response to the materialist critique in the impossible, immaterial form of *cloud*, which situates him somewhere near Bentley in the provocative headspace of manic glossing.

There are institutional resistances to these conjectural, speculative forms of knowledge production, resistances that are understandable in our contemporary age of diminishing resources for humanist study. As McGann and other textual scholars explore ways that digital humanists might claim different kinds of resources to make new editions

[295] Joseph Dane, *Out of Sorts: On Typography and Print Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 93-94. Dane's more polemical critique is that McLeod's work is performative but not actually invested in passing knowledge on in forms that other bibliographers might use in their own studies, so that he is self-reflexive without participating in the discipline's own forms of knowledge production: "Instead of exposing a particular problem in textual-critical theory, these poems and their histories presented him with a morass of error, murky affinities, and of course many examples of readerly interventions of the kind that enjoyed an especial currency at the moment of his writing of these essays. In other words, by following invalid codes set up by the editor of a literary text, we come to a truth that is transcendent of the half-truths held by those who naively follow valid codes of that editor." (94)

and new forms of media scholarship, they are often placed in the position of joining practical bibliographic skills into the speculative realm. Leah Marcus imagines the possibilities for auditory-enhanced scholarship in her essay, "The Silence of the Archive and the Noise of Cyberspace," which ends with a series of briefly considered proposals for recordings of recitations, examples of historical pronunciation, and other critical ventriloquisms enabled by digitally recorded sound. Her attention to provisionality and contingency is striking: she seems to want to hold back any radical ideas for fear of underestimating the technicalities of scale of labor and institutional support that such auditory enhancements might require—reasonable fears, to be sure. She mentions but basically rejects voice synthesis as "impractical" and is careful to note that shorter works could be performed and recorded by voice actors who would encounter interesting problems of historical accents, early modern pronunciation and diction, and other questions of interpretation. "Or, failing that," she continues, hedging her bets again, "if the technology proves to be too expensive for long texts, such editions could build in audio elements to give users the feel, if not the actual capacity for assimilation via the ear as well as the eye."[296] It's a speculative essay, so Marcus's insistence on practicality and technical details seems somewhat misplaced, but instead of merely asking why she didn't dream in more radical ways, I might take her sense of contingency as a feature, not a bug, of writing about experiments in scholarly work. She imagines an interlocutor correcting her and telling her what's practical and impractical; Bentley gives a clue as to why that might be a protective position to take.

[296] Leah S. Marcus, "The Silence of the Archive and the Noise of Cyberspace," *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print*, ed. Jonathan Sawday and Neil Rhodes New York: Routledge, 2000, 17-27, 27.

Such a recontextualization is perhaps a rehabilitation of Housman, too, though I am not advocating a return to nineteenth-century ideals of so-called editorial practices. Rather, what happens when we zoom the opposite direction from discrete corrections to large-scale practices? Instead of assessing the content of errors and corrections, we consider them in aggregate, and we study the discourse that's produced to account for the aggregation. We zoom out to observe the iterative, recursive process of correction as mediating thought over and over again, by multiple agents at different moments in time. In Bentley and Housman, we see not just their idiosyncratic (erroroneus) commentary, but also their more expansive and strange interests in thought experiments about the relationship between a desire for immersion and a pleasure in hyper-mediation.

But Bentley's editorial phantom is also a kind of extended counterfactual experiment in alternative forms of mediation, wherein his conjectural emendations and explanations resemble speculative fiction about ongoing battles among amanuenses, printers, readers, and authors—battles he had already fought and mostly won. Catherine Gallagher traces the European Enlightenment origins of that genre, from Gottfried Leibniz's *Theodicy*—satirized in Voltaire's *Candide* as "the best of all possible worlds"—to the proliferation of counterfactual military histories about what might have been after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. "What stimulates this desire to tell it like it wasn't?" Gallagher asks, drawing the eighteenth-century interest in the genre forward to assess the contemporary explosion of the genre. "My most general answer to the question is that we undertake counterfactual investigations when we want to apply various kinds of judgments to history—often moral judgments, but not exclusively—rather than, for example, just to know about the past or even understand

it."[297] Gallagher's explanation of why counterfactuals and speculative accounts flourish at particular moments illuminates one reason why Bentley's *Paradise Lost* is so notorious: it exposes the unsettled aftermath of the Ancients Moderns debates and the desire to judge a final victor in the quarrel.

The Ancients-Moderns debate is a military battle fought with books and pamphlets, as Swift's Battel of the Books so memorably illustrates; Bentley's *Paradise Lost* is an after-the-fact alternate history of a conflict among so many mediators of Milton's text, waged in the fog of war atop Mt. Horeb. Joan DeJean makes a similar argument as to why we repeat versions of the Ancients-Moderns debates in contemporary "Culture Wars." She reads the French *querelles* in the context of contemporary debates about canonicity, diversity, taste, and culture, in a kind of productive anachronistic comparison of the two *fins de siècle*. Her warning is to remember the lessons of the past: "the history of the seventeenth century's involvement with Culture Wars can serve as a cautionary tale for all those with a stake in the outcome of today's intellectual crisis, by indicating some of the problems we will encounter before we reach the end of this line, and also where we will almost certainly end up, unless we are able to avoid the pitfalls created for each other by our precursors."[298] I agree with many of DeJean's readings of the correspondences between anti-intellectualism past and present, and yet I wonder if her historicist priorities somewhat limit her to a hoary pronouncement about remembering history.

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[297] Catherine Gallagher, "Telling It Like It Wasn't" [Plenary Address to the 2009 Meeting of the Pacific Ancients and Modern Language Association annual meeting] *Pacific Coast Philology* 45 (2010), 12-25, 13.
[298] Joan DeJean, *Ancients and Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of* a Fin de Siècle. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, x.

How does Bentley's notoriety fit into a counterfactual genre of thought experiment—and how might his counterfactual experiment show us alternative possibilities for addressing a battle of books and digital humanities as we engage with ever-growing questions about mediation, editorial gatekeepers, and institutional support? Gallagher lists multiple features of the counterfactual genre:

> 1) They need a stable substratum of uncontroversial facts, but the counteracts described in the narrative exceed the facts; 2) they tend to privilege the role of individuals in history, but they also de-realize those individuals by fracturing them onto multiple versions; and 3) they are oriented toward future action, but they repeatedly slide sideways across a menu of simultaneous options. Therefore, on the levels of plot, character, and temporality, counterfactual history produces narrative features that we sometimes call 'post-modern': indeterminacy, multiplicity, and non-linearity.[299]

Bentley's conjectural criticism enables him to extend "uncontroversial facts" of the poem's language into the realm of the speculative in such a way that "exceed[s] the facts" of what is on the page, what had been transmitted through various editions (even when printers unwittingly introduced errors into the editions). His amanuensis "privilege[s] the role of the individual" to a risible degree, "de-realiz[ing]" him into a "Fantom" form that can be distributed and fractured in the act of mishearing, mistranscribing, interpolating his own passages, and committing other errors. Gallagher's third criterion of counterfactuals' multiplying effects helps explain why Bentley can be called "the first post-structuralist?" by postmodern poet McCaffery and "our contemporary" cautionary tale by editor Walsh. Again, he is a warning sign of a paradigm that is about to shift, in which the counterfactual is an important genre for making sense of new forms of knowledge.

[299] Gallagher, 15.

Conclusion: 'Unediting' the Social, Reassembling the Social

One of Bentley's most infamous changes to *Paradise Lost* was in its final couplet, where he changed: "They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow, / Through Eden took their solitary way" to "Then hand in hand with SOCIAL steps their way / Through Eden took, with HEAV'NLY COMFORT CHEER'D."[300] He argued:

> It contradicts the Poet's own Scheme, nor is the Diction unexceptionable…. And how can the Expression be justified, with *wand'ring Steps and slow*? Why *wand'ring*? Erratic steps? Very improper, in the Line before, they were *guided by Providence*. And why *slow*…? And why *their solitary Way*? All Words to represent a sorrowful Parting…? Shall I therefore, after so many prior Presumptions; presume at last to offer a Distich, as close as any be to the Author's Words, and entirely agreeable to his Scheme?

As with his first digression on the first lines of the poem, this is not an accepted reading of the poem—yet there is something recursive in the way that he makes Adam and Eve's steps social, just as his own editing is a kind of social thought experiment in debate and digression. Calling Bentley a theorist of mind and comparing him to Minsky is a somewhat ahistoricist comparison, but perhaps that ahistorical tool can generate a different kind of network with which to consider his work beyond notoriety. The ahistoricity is a glitch, but a revelatory one: As Kramnick has discussed in his account of historicism as a method of investigation, Bentley's own methods made claims to hyper-historicity at the same time that they veered toward hyper-mediation of his own time period's obsession with escalating the Ancients and Moderns historical controversy. Kramnick writes: ""A self-consciously modern ideal of print changed the criteria of textual validity in such a way that previous texts were seen to be obscure, unreliable, and

[300] Bentley, 399.

in need of scholarly administration. The vocation of the textual critic turned to providing a regular and error free version of the past."[301]

Yet elsewhere Kramnick has also speculated about how cognitive theories might illuminate aspects of literary study that are less situated in historicist methods: "criticism is as a rule skeptical of framing older texts with present-day models. The risk is one of anachronism or universalism"—that is, *errors*—"either shoehorning recalcitrant descriptions of the mind into our current language of cognition or locating both within a timeless and unchanging account of the psyche."[302] Those errors may be anathema to historicism, but they may also be generative. When Kramnick begins to limn the contours of such an experimental investigation into theories of cognition, he does so in terms that resonate with Bentley's own work from the Boyle Lectures in "Matter and Motion Cannot Think." Kramnick's distinction shows the ways that heuristics frame these abstractions into theories: "What the mind *does* is process information; what the mind *is*, ultimately, is an abstraction from matter." Kramnick does not account for Bentley or his mediating Fantom in his work because the conjectural method is a swerve away from the empirical tradition that's the focus of his enquiries in that article and *Actions and Objects*, his study of how actions are mediated in literary writing in the seventeenth and

[301] Kramnick, 87. See also Kevin Pask, "Ancients and Moderns: The Origins of Literary History," *Modern Language Quarterly* 73:4 (2012), 505-26. "In effect, our scholarly [contemporary] infrastructure, including historical periods and the concept of national literatures, which animated the early modern debates about literary historicity, has quiely migrated over to the side of the hoary Ancients—as a protocol of literary criticism that is simultaneously scorned and tacitly observed" (525-26).
[302] Kramnick, "Empiricism, Cognitive Science, and the Novel," *The Eighteenth Century* 48:3 (2007) 263-285, 263-5. Kramnick indicates the ways in which cognitive theories are addressed prolifically in the period: "Mental content (one's own and others') was an intense concern for the period that developed both the representational theory of mind and the literary genre in which the theory is most fully explored. Theory of mind, as I've described it so far, works as well as it does with the architecture of mental representation, in other words, in part because each is an eighteenth-century preoccupation" (274).

eighteenth-century philosophy and novels.[303] Bentley's Fantom editor is such a challenge to that mediation of action—what kinds of action does a thought experiment engender? what are its limitations?—and it's an avenue that's worth pursuing as a test beyond the work of the novel, into other genres that mediate thought and conflicts of thought over time, through the variorum process.

[303] Kramnick, *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

Chapter 3: Prospects of Error: Textual Editing as an Unlikely Form of Menippean Discourse

"SHAKESPEARE's Words have always appear'd to me like what he make his Hamlet compare to, an *unweeded Garden grown to Seed*: And I am sorry there is still reason to complain, the *Weeds* in him are so sparingly thin'd, that, not to speak out of compass, a thousand *rank* and *unsightly* ones are left to stare us in the Face, and clog the Delight of the expected Prospect."
--Lewis Theobald, *Shakespeare Restored* (1726)[304]

"He feels the foundations of that discipline trembling…."
--Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973)[305]

Introduction: Genres of Remediation

Where Alexander Pope's supplicants to Fama were suspended somewhere between earth, sea, and sky, and where Richard Bentley's editorial mediator was high atop Mt. Horeb in a fog of pseudo-productive confusion, Lewis Theobald has his feet planted firmly on the ground. The ground, the page, as he sees it in *Shakespeare Restored*, is strewn with errors: typographical errors, misprisions, mishearings, bad mediations produced by previous editors, namely Pope. Theobald frames *Shakespeare Restored* as a book-length correction of Pope's errors in editing a single play, *Hamlet*, and extends that work in a larger editorial project in 1733. As he notes grandly, Theobald appropriates his metaphor of the text as an unweeded garden from *Hamlet* and recursively generates his own extended metaphor of editing as creating a vantagepoint and a prospect. He believes the foundations of the history of theater are about to tremble.

[304] Lewis Theobald, *Shakespeare Restored: A specimen of many errors, as well committed, and unamended, by Mr. Pope in his late edition of this poet* (London: 1726), ii.
[305] Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*. (New York: Penguin Press, 1973, 1995), 85.

In the previous two chapters, I have discussed Pope's and Bentley's compositions of cluttered, foggy prospects and the ways that those prospects are hyper-mediated on the page. I have argued that they are compelled to situate texts in the unstable, yet generative double logic of print remediation, wherein they claim an immersion in the sensory experience of the text but also delight in the hyper-media such immersion produces in footnotes, satires, proliferating or misleading thought experiments, and sensory spectacles of overload. Their critical perspectives are literally made of errors—even, especially when they claim to be unfiltered. These genres of prospect-composing are genres of remediation in both senses of the word: they render a visual perspective into the medium of print, and they seek to remedy the errors generated in that mediation through satirical and/or editorial work that is often framed as a moral intervention into the text.

"I have discharg'd the dull duty of an editor to my best judgment,"[306] Pope writes dismissively in the Preface to his 1725 edition of Shakespeare's *Works*, asserting his moral duty to canonize the playwright rather than attend to the materiality of collating prior editions. Although he enumerates "the many disadvantages under which [the plays] have been transmitted to us," he sees this explanation as a means of dispatching more detailed explanation of specific collations. He favors a general claim of editorial judgment about displaying the author's "beauties" and smoothing over his "faults." Such an "aesthetic orientation was wholly reasonable within his historical context," argues Walsh, for "he conceived his business as the mediation of Shakespeare, the author of a past and less cultivated age, to readers in his own."[307] Pope just happened to be at the

[306] Alexander Pope, Preface to *The Works of Shakespear*, 6 vols. (London, 1725). xxi.
[307] Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing*, 131.

edge of a paradigm shift toward documentary collation and hypermediation in the printed editions.

"Dull duty" was a complaint he had repeated from his work editing the *Iliad* (1720)—a jab at Bentley's Modern methods and an argument about how editors should remediate texts through a neoclassical lens of polishing for taste.[308] Plays are always remediated, as David Scott Kastan explains in *Shakespeare and the Book*, about the early transmission history of the quarto and folio editions:

> The printed play is neither a pre-theatrical text nor a post-theatrical one; it is a non-theatrical text, even when it claim to offer a version of the play 'as it was played.' As it was played it existed in the theater, in the ephemeral sounds and gestures of dramatic action. … It is always, necessarily if tautologically, the play as printed; and as printed it ties its readers to the words on the page.[309]

Here Kastan is tracing a materialist, historicist explanation of the distinctions between the media states of performance and print. He can be said to be tracing an idea of Shakespeare's plays as existing in a state of recursive remediation: "*Hamlet* is not a pre-existent entity that the text and performance each *contain*, but the name that each calls what it brings into being. Neither is more or less authentic than the other, for there is no external reality, apart from the texts and the performances themselves, that can provide a standard against which that authenticity might be measured." In *Scholars and Gentlemen* and *Making the English Canon*, respectively, Simon Jarvis and Jonathan Kramnick set up a historicist rubric for assessing these different orientations toward editorial labor among Bentley, Theobald, Pope, and others, but in this chapter I am interested in considering

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[308] "The grand Ambition of one sort of Scholars is to encrease the Number of Various Lections, which they have done to such a degree of obscure Diligence, that we now begin to value the first Editions of Books as more correct, because they have been least corrected. The prevailing Passion of others is to discover New Meanings in an Author whom they will cause to appear mysterious purely for the Vanity of thought to unravel him." Alexander Pope, *The Iliad of Homer. Translated by Mr. Pope.* (London: 1718), I:3.
[309] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 8-9.

this recursive editorial work of print remediations and editorial apparatuses with some less immediately obvious juxtapositions with other eighteenth-century remediating genres like Menippean satire.[310]

What genre of remediation does Pope believe he is working in? His is not an analysis of remedies to Shakespeare's plays, but rather a progress narrative of remediating and consolidating the authorial legacy of a national poet. In his list of errors, he conflates mistakes and those who commit them into a generalized threat to posterity, as he names "arbitrary Additions, Expunctions, Transposition of scenes and lines, confusion of Characters and Persons, wrong application of Speeches, corruptions *of* innumerable Passages *by* the Ignorance, and wrong Corrections *of* 'em again *by* the Impertinence *of* his first Editors."[311] I italicized each "of" and "by" in the last part of that list as a way to show how convoluted and diffuse Pope's claims about errant agency can be. He appears to give more weight to an abstraction ("Ignorance") than the agent who would perpetrate the bad corrections. I have already noted in the first chapter how these abstractions populate his theories of remediation in the *Temple of Fame*, in which he allegorized how texts can change through multiple interventions over time and delighted in describing those throngs. What is a "wrong Correction," anyway? It is an oxymoron that is also a warning about bad recursion, for it signals how an editorial intervention can set off a chain reaction of more errors, much to the delight of both Ancient and Modern partisans. For fortifying a national poet—and making his own name as editor of that

[310] See Jarvis, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Shakespearean Textual Criticism and Representations of Scholarly Labour 1725-1765*; Kramnick, *Making the English Canon: Print Capitalism and the Cultural Past*; Margreta de Grazia, *The Reproduction of Authenticity and the Apparatus of 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Colin Franklin, *Shakespeare Domesticated: The Eighteenth-Century Editions* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1991).
[311] Pope, Preface, x (emphasis added).

project—it was best for Pope not to indulge the creative possibilities of such a concatenation. (He could save those impulses for the *Dunciad*.)

Where Pope could dismiss those "faults" with a sweep of his "judgment," Theobald sees them as distinct sources, agents, and opportunities to enlarge the study of textual transmission of dramatic texts. Theobald had translated and written editorial notes for classical plays, including Aristophanes' *The Clouds* and *Plutus* (both 1715) and Sophocles' *Electra* (1714) and *Oedipus* (1715); in 1726, he turned his hand to editing—composing, really—a "lost" Shakespeare play in *The Double Falshood*.[312] He worked for the theatrical promoters John Stede and John Reade, where he picked up a considerable amount of knowledge about theatrical protocols among actors, prompters, directors, and other dramatists.[313] As Bentley's student, he saw his chance to apply that historical knowledge of theatrical mediation. The lofty, prolonged subtitle of *Shakespeare Restored*

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[312] See *The Double Falsehood*, ed. Brean Hammond (New York: Arden, 2010). For this contemporary edition, the eighteenth-century spelling has been corrected from Falshood to Falsehood. Hammond has written a considerable amount of prolegomena to explain the choice for publishing what he and others have studied as a collaboration between Shakespeare and John Fletcher, as a means to study Shakespeare as a collaborative playwright, beyond the obvious collaborations of any theatrical work. Others have called the play a forgery or an overreaching mistake by Theobald to burnish his own reputation as the leading Shakespeare scholar of his day—namely, Pope, who satirized Theobald's efforts in the *Dunciad* and *Peri Bathous. The Double Falsehood* has several layers of mediation: a heavily edited version (for even Theobald notes that he cleaned it up considerably) of a 1613 play called 'Cardenno' or 'Cardenna,' which is based on an interpolated tale from Thomas Shelton's 1612 translation of Cervantes' *Don Quixote.* Hammond notes ironically, "…of this long, rich and elaborately self-conscious piece of fiction, described by Cervantes as a 'carded, spun, and selftwined threde', Shakespeare and Fletcher seem to have made an almost insouciantly straightforward piece of drama, to judge by the fourteen short scenes of *Double Falsehood* as it stands" (42). (Theobald also wrote notes to an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, so he was familiar with the material.) *The Double Falshood* is out of the purview of this chapter, but it is a kind of sequel in many ways to his feud with Pope, for he must find a way to mediate his own editorial agency in a complex web of agencies.

[313] Walsh argues that Theobald's considerable documentary and theatrical practical knowledge are boons to his conjectural method: "A pervasive and persuasive feature of Theobald's editorial judgment is its constant reference to what reading, and what meaning, is the most probably in the light of Shakespeare's *usus scribendi*: his figurative habits, his tendency to anachronism, his idiolect, his metrics. The implications of Theobald's correcting Shakespeare 'from himself' go further than particular readings" (Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing*, 145). For Theobald's professional biography, see Peter Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) and Richard Foster Jones, *Lewis Theobald, His Contribution to English Scholarship* (issued as dissertation at Columbia University, 1919, republished at New York: AMS Press, 1965).

illustrates how correction is a form of proliferation: “a Specimen of the Many Errors as well *Committed*, as *Unamended*, by Mr. Pope in his Late Edition of this Poet. Designed Not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the True Reading of *Shakespeare* in all the *Editions* ever yet publish’d.”

Thus even as they both gesture toward a stable goal of “restoration,” Pope and Theobald are working in two different genres of remediation that are more likely to go out of control (in terms of digression and ambition alike) than they are to consolidate editorial authority. The problem is the proliferating frames of mediation. Theobald seeks to remedy Shakespeare by remediating Pope in the form of an animadversion: he selects and italicizes specific errors he identifies in Pope’s work, corrects and dilates on those mistakes, and accumulates a text of these commentaries, out of which emerge his editorial theory of theatrical mediation and remediation. But these notes were also opportunities for satire and further chains of remediation by Pope’s allies, skeptics of the conjectural method, and future editors. Even as they practiced parallel criticism, Theobald’s colleagues were wary of the rhetorical exaggerations and escalating rivalries among editors. In marshaling their criticisms of Theobald’s discursiveness, they imitate him and thus add their own literary mediations to his already figurative language. Figures of speech proliferate in this field:

> [I]n a Science more fallible of all others, depending in a great Measure on the tottering Bottom of mere *Conjecture*, almost every Critic assumes the Air of *Certainty*, *Positiveness* and *Infallibility*; he seems sure never to miss his Way, tho’ in a Wilderness of Confusion, never to stumble in a Path always gloomy, and sometimes as dark as Midnight. Hence he *dogmatizes*, when he should only *propose*, and dictates his *Guesses* in the *Despotic Stile*. The Reader, and every Rival Editor, catches the same Spirit, all his Faults become unpardonable, and the Demerit of a few Mistakes shall o’erwhelm the Merit of all his just Emendations: He deems himself perfect, and Perfection is demanded at his Hands; and this being no where

> else found but by each Writer in his own Works, every *Putter-forth* of two or three Emendations swells as big, and flings his Spittle as liberally on a *Warburton*, a *Hanmer*, or a *Theobald*, as if he were the *Giant* and they the *Dwarfs* of Criticism…[314]

"A Wilderness of Confusion" is as evocative as "unweeded garden" for its sensory disorder, for its rendering of a theoretical landscape of error, amplified by so much snarling and sniping by critics on the hyper-mediated margins.

Samuel Johnson dismissed Theobald as "a man of narrow comprehension and small acquisitions, with no native or intrinsick splendor of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy and not negligent in pursuing it. … A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right."[315] Peter Seary takes umbrage at the snub, noting that Johnson maintained many of Theobald's specific emendations that he had praised backhandedly: "Lewis Theobald is, without question, the scholar whose methods and discoveries were most plundered by his successors as they sought to magnify their own achievements."[316] Yet Seary's defensive language of magnification is a reminder of the lens of satire and how Theobald's many footnotes were themselves expanded and distorted in Pope's *Dunciad*.

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[314] Preface, *The Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont, and Mr. John Fletcher* (10 vols.) (London, printed for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper 1750), lx.

[315] Samuel Johnson, Preface to *The Plays of William Shakespeare in Eight Volumes: With the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators; to which are Added Notes* (printed for Jacob Tonson, 1765), reprinted as "Preface 1765" in *Johnson on Shakespeare,* ed. Arthur Sherbo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), VII: 95-96.

[316] Seary, "Lewis Theobald, Edmond Malone, and Others," *Reading Readings*, ed. Joanna Gondris (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998), 103-122, 103. Seary quotes Pat Rogers: "William Empson once put in a word for Bentley's Milton, but not many voices have been raised in support of Lewis Theobald. Better to be one of the slashing Bentleys than one of the piddling Tibbalds, to employ Pope's cruel distinction. But Shakespearean scholars have always realized that Theobald was far superior to his adversary in the skills of an editor" (106). Seary devotes much of *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare* to moving his subject out of the "Johnsonian shadow," as he goes into considerable detail about the internecine dispute between Theobald and editors such as William Warburton, who piled on where Pope left off.

'Wilderness of Confusion': Menippean Satire as a Genre of Remediation

What genre of remediation does Theobald believe he is working in, beyond a theatrical application of Bentley's criticism? As practiced by Bentley, Theobald, and many other combatants in the Battle of the Books, animadversion is a cousin to the seventeenth-century genre of the anatomy. That genre's most virtuosic example is Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), subtitled *What it is: With all the Kinds, Causes, Symptomes, Prognostickes, and Several Cures of it.* Burton's work is a very long collection of quotations from many medical and natural philosophy texts, joined together with digressive and synthetic commentary. It is another recursive work of remediation: a mosaic of many texts about remedies for natural ailments that are remediated by means of juxtaposition, translation, dilation, and annotation. It is also aware of itself—its bulk—in evincing the paradox that to remedy a body, a text, may also be to distend it. Burton is nearly glib about the possibility that he has introduced errors into these multifarious discourses.[317] (Famously, it would be remediated again in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* [1760-65], where Sterne "plagiarizes" and animadverts on many sections of

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[317] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York: New York Review of Books Classics, 2001). For example: "If we do wrangle, what shall we get by it? Trouble and wrong ourselves, make sport to others. If I be convict of an error, I will yield, I will amend. *Si quid bonis moribus, si quid veritati dissentaneum, in sacris vel humanis literis a me dictum sit, id nec dictum esto.* In the mean time I require a favourable censure of all faults omitted, harsh compositions, pleonasms of words, tautological repetitions (though Seneca bear me out, *nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam satis dicitur*) perturbations of tenses, numbers, printers' faults, &c. My translations are sometimes rather paraphrases than interpretations, *non ad verbum*, but as an author, I use more liberty, and that's only taken which was to my purpose. Quotations are often inserted in the text, which makes the style more harsh, or in the margin, as it happened. Greek authors, Plato, Plutarch, Athenaeus, &c., I have cited out of their interpreters, because the original was not so ready. I have mingled *sacra prophanis*, but I hope not profaned, and in repetition of authors' names, ranked them per accidens, not according to chronology; sometimes neoterics before ancients, as my memory suggested. Some things are here altered, expunged in this sixth edition, others amended, much added, because many good authors in all kinds are come to my hands since, and 'tis no prejudice, no such indecorum, or oversight" (33).

Burton's work as a kind of comment about the remediating possibilities of that nascent genre.)[318]

Theobald the anatomist, Theobald the curer is less inclined to irony in working through his figurative metaphors for errors. As one who believes in the "Science of Criticism" as a kind of anatomy, Theobald relishes classifying, naming, and defining errors. He calls *Hamlet* "a Specimen… of the epidemical Corruption, if I may be allowed to use that Phrase, which runs thro' all the Work."[319] These "specimens" are reanimated in textual transmission, as when Theobald refers to errors as "the train of Blemishes, that deform those Pieces which stole singly into the World in our Author's Life-time." He charges that Pope "has frequently inflicted a wound where he intended a cure" and, in increasingly grisly language, nearly charges Pope with violence against Shakespeare in "attack[ing] him like an unhandy slaughterman; and not lopped off the errors but the poet."[320] The formulation of errors as "blemishes" comes from Bentley's work; Bishop Hare praises Bentley's healing of the text in his introduction to the *Epistles of Phalaris*: "Phaedrus sick and ulcerous up to now, would at last be restored to his pristine integrity by his powers, as though he were another Aesculapus."[321] Future editors of Shakespeare,

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[318] That remediation produced one of my favorite idiosyncratic works of textual scholarship: *On the Shoulders of Giants*, Robert K. Merton's attempts to trace the origin of the phrase "if I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" in its many citations and remediations in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts, via Isaac Newton, Burton, and Sterne. The reissue of that book gets many more genres of admiration and imitation attached to it: "a Shandean Postscript," "the Post-Italianate Edition," with a Foreword by Umberto Eco (translated by William Weaver), an Afterword by Denis Donohue, and a new Preface and Postface by Merton (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965, 1985, 1993). Fittingly, Elizabeth Eisenstein says that she was inspired to write *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* after reading Merton's book and wondering about the role of print in the transmission of this image. Ever interested in the genres of provisional paratext, Merton encouraged her to do so and frame it as a "preliminary report." See Eisenstein's interview in *Agent of Change*, 409.

[319] Theobald, *Shakespeare Restored*, vii. Kastan notes the editors of Oxford Shakespeare have extended the phrase to New Bibliography: "Corruption somewhere is certain… the text is diseased." (cited in Kastan, 32).

[320] Theobald 1733, 68-69.

[321] Hare, *Epistola Critica*, vol. I: 5, quoted in Jones, 48.

including Johnson, Edward Capell, and George Steevens, employ the medical metaphor of blemishes and cures, although none were so explicitly gleeful as Theobald: "…The Assistance of Manuscripts is wanting to set an Author's Meaning right, and rescue him from those Errors which have been transmitted down thro' a Series of incorrect Editions, and a long Intervention of time, many Passages must be desperate, and past a Cure, and their true Sense irretrievable either to Care or the Sagacity of Conjecture."[322] Theobald is curing texts and Burton is curing bodies, but they are both expanding more than they're trimming away.

In pairing Burton and Theobald as mosaic-making remediators, I want to make a somewhat unlikely claim: Theobald's work is a kind of Menippean discourse. Unlike "playful" Horatian and "scathing" Juvenalian satire, which are both easy to pin down with familiar epithets, Menippean satire is characterized by the *variety* of forms, tones, and subjects it incorporates—that is, remediates—into what is usually a satire of false or overbearing learning: "Menippean satire is of crucial importance precisely because it is formally disruptive and intrusive, a satiric solvent that acts as a catalyst for generic mixture and mutation…. The Menippean mode of writing permits movement up and down the literary scales (high and low, oral and literary, verse and prose) and between genres and forms of speech."[323] Of course, pedantic Theobald is more conventionally seen as the *subject* of a Menippean satire in the *Dunciad*, where Pope appropriates Theobald's extended metaphor of curing texts with emendation and turns it into something ludicrous: "These few lines exactly describe the right verbal Critic: He is to

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[322] Theobald (ed.) *Works of Shakespeare in seven volumes: collated with the oldest copies, and corrected; with notes, explanatory, and critical* (London: 1733), xli.
[323] R. Bracht Branham and Daniel Kinney, eds. and trans. *Petronius: Satyrica* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), xix.

his author as a Quack is to his Patients; the more they suffer and complain, the better he is pleased, like the famous Doctor of that sort, who put up his bills, He delighted in matters of difficulty. Some one well said of these men, that their heads were Libraries out of order."[324] Yet I don't need to remove Theobald from his position as satirized dunce (Pope remediated the role of chief dunce with dramatist Colley Cibber in the 1743 revision of the poem), for the *Dunciad*'s status as a gem of Menippean satire is secure. Pope's Menippean satire is virtuosic; his remediations of Theobald's discourse, performed for the stated purpose of exposing the moral faults of such pedantry, are imaginative and scathing and as he mixes them with critiques of other media such as opera, puffery and hack journalism, sniping satires, and theatrical spectacle.

Rather, I want to reconsider some of the specific remediating functions of Menippean discourse by mapping it onto the genre of textual criticism. As in the *Dunciad*, textual criticism is often the subject of "a kind of intellectual prose satire [which] parodies prevailing forms of learned discourse,"[325] but it shares with satire the double function of adapting media (say, plays) into other media (a printed edition with apparatus) and in remedying discrete errors. Burton, for his part, theorized how perception of each of the five senses is transmitted through a medium of some kind; in this way, he shares something with Bentley and Housman in being torn between theory and practice, with the conflict manifesting itself through accumulation of more examples.[326] Howard D. Weinbrot studies the Ancients-Moderns debate as Menippean

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[324] Pope, *The Dunciad*. III:189-90n.
[325] Garry Sherbert, *Menippean Satire and the Poetics of Wit: Ideologies of Self-Consciousness in Dunton, D'Urfey, and Sterne* (New York: Peter Lange, 1996), 4.
[326] Burton on sight and sound: "To the sight three things are required; the object, the organ, and the medium. … The medium is the illumination of the air, which comes from light, commonly called diaphanum; for in dark we cannot see. The organ is the eye, and chiefly the apple of it, which by those optic nerves, concurring both in one, conveys the sight to the common sense. …. To the sound, which is a

satire[327]; those debates take on a recursive quality as partisans remediate one another's arguments through satirized textual editing, animadversion, and anatomy. Like animadversion, Menippean discourse expands through belaboring an argument; its replicability makes it hyper-generative "as an exiguous structure of opposition and combination, in which different kinds of writing have been juxtaposed to make a tenuous whole."[328] An editor like Theobald frames his work in terms of moral correction, making him a mirror of his satirist, Pope. Pairing the two genres reveals the extent to which textual criticism is a self-reflexive critique of its own protocols of learning and disseminating knowledge. In variorum editions and other forms of paratext, textual editors remediate one another by commenting on emendations, diagnosed or perceived errors, provocative or overreaching insights, invectives, and questions. They also formulate theories and histories of media and mediation as they account for the many ways that, say, plays and ballads become printed material, or how previous editors performed their interventions and inscriptions in texts. Fittingly, Arthur Sherbo begins *The Birth of Shakespeare Studies* with a kind of Menippean invention: he ventriloquizes and conflates two letters by Samuel Johnson and Thomas Warton about their labors as a means of showing that editing has always been conceived of as a collaborative, contingent endeavor. "The compleat explanation of an author not systematick and

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collision of the air, three things are required; a body to strike, as the hand of a musician; the body struck, which must be solid and able to resist; … the medium, the air; which is inward, or outward; the outward being struck or collided by a solid body, still strikes the next air, until it come to that inward natural air, which as an exquisite organ is contained in a little skin formed like a drum-head, and struck upon by certain small instruments like drum-sticks, conveys the sound by a pair of nerves, appropriated to that use, to the common sense, as to a judge of sounds. There is great variety and much delight in them; for the knowledge of which, consult with Boethius and other musicians. … Many delightsome questions are moved by philosophers about these five senses; their organs, objects, mediums, which for brevity I omit" (157-59). cf. Goodman, 17 for her history of how the term "medium" gained currency in the eighteenth century.

[327] Howard D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

[328] Edward J. Milowicki and R. Rawdon Wilson, "A Measure for Menippean Discourse: the Example of Shakespeare" *Poetics Today* 23:2 (2002), 291-326, 298-99.

consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast, [for] a commentary must arise from the fortuitous discoveries of many men, in devious walks of literature."[329]

Indeed, the genre of Menippean satire is constituted by multiply framed editorial remediations from the classical tradition: there are no surviving Greek texts of Menippus as there are of Horace or Juvenal, and instead we have mentions and discussions of his satires in Latin Varro, who was championed in Dryden's *Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* (1693),[330] and in Lucian, whose translated and popularized *Dialogues of the Dead* enabled a popular seventeenth- and eighteenth-century mode of satire.[331] Burton, for his part, names this genealogy of his work in the midst of his dense thicket of references: "I did sometimes laugh and scoff with Lucian, and satirically tax with Menippus."[332] In these ways, describing and practicing Menippean discourse involves textual editing of translations or quotations of prior texts, engendering studies of the material history of the texts that comprise its members. Thus Menippean discourse is a genre that can be scaled *down* through the protocols of textual

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[329] Arthur Sherbo, *The Birth of Shakespeare Studies: Commentators from Rowe (1709) to Boswell-Malone (1821)* (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1986), ix.

[330] Dryden's *Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*: "…[T]hat which we call the Varronian Satire, but which Varro himself calls the Menippean; because *Varro*, the most Learn'd of the *Romans*, was the first Author of it, who imitated, in his Works, the Manners of *Menippus* the *Gadarenian*, who profess'd the Philosophy of the *Cyniques*. This sort of Satire was not only compos'd of several sorts of Verse, like those of *Ennius*, but was also mix'd with Prose; and Greek was sprinkl'd amongst the Latin." *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W.P. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), 65. Even Dryden's discourse is marked by its many remediations. As Weinbrot notes, "Dryden's 'Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire' liberally borrows from Cicero, Quintilian, Casaubon, and André Dacier's important 'Preface sur les satire d'Horace' in his *Oeuvres d'Horace*. Dryden quotes Casaubon quoting Varro… So many notes would have been required to make Varro intelligible that Dryden almost certainly did not read his fragments before writing about them. In the 'Discourse' Dryden translates Dacier translating Casaubon. … Dryden neither mentions titles nor describes works, and he implicitly undercuts Bakhtin's later assumption of 'the *unity* and uninterrupted *continuity'* of the influential Menippean-Varronian tradition" (Weinbrot, 33). See also: Joel Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

[331] See for example David Mazzella, "Diogenes the Cynic in the Dialogues of the Dead of Thomas Browne, Lord Lyttleton, and William Blake," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 48:2 (2006).

[332] Burton, 19.

editing to study the remediated composition of individual texts out of their translated, animadverted materials; it can also be scaled *up* to consider how those texts perform satirical functions of commenting on the same kinds of learning that may be used to study it.

Not for nothing is it called "the most elusive genre," for it exists only as a remediation and thus requires and/or inspires subsequent contemporary critics to add to those layers of translation, summary, expansion by means of further distinction, adaptation, and self-reflexive imitation.[333] Weinbrot names Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) as a member of the Menippean genre for the ways that it remixes, so to speak, many texts to make up its definitions, and many of those definitions have satirical barbs about the very folly of trying to fix a definition in language that is always changing:

> Definitions have been no less difficult or uncertain in criticism than in law. Imagination, a licentious and vagrant faculty, unsusceptible of limitations, and impatient of restraint, has always endeavoured to baffle the logician, to perplex the confines of distinction, and burst the inclosures of regularity. There is therefore scarcely any species of writing, of which we can tell what is its essence, and what are its constituents; every new genius produces some innovation which, when invented and approved, subverts the rules which the practice of foregoing authors had established.[334]

For Weinbrot, Johnson's *Dictionary* is a kind of *mise en abyme* of Menippea: an example of a form but also an ironic warning about the recursive folly in attempting to codify discourse in discourse. As he accounts for this self-reflexive, adaptable quality of the

[333] W. Scott Blanchard, *Scholar's Bedlam: Menippean Satire in the Renaissance* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1995), 11.
[334] Samuel Johnson, *Rambler* no. 125 (1751), quoted in Weinbrot, 3.

generic designation, he grants that it "often attaches itself to other kinds of works within other dominant genres, and peers in as occasion requires."[335]

Menippean satire received more popularization through Northrop Frye in *The Anatomy of Criticism*, another recursive work of anatomy that frames itself as a Menippean discourse at the same time that it defines the genre.[336] It was also theorized with many more specific conventions by Russian formalist Mikhail Bakhtin, whom Weinbrot relies on extensively to outline the genre. As Dryden works with his texts in translation, so too does Weinbrot with Bakhtin, and the frames of remediation of the term proliferate as extensively as do Bakhtin's many "rules" of the genre.[337] To return to

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[335] Weinbrot, 4. He begins his study with a list of works that could belong to that genre, which includes Burton's and Sterne's works: "*Alice in Wonderland, Anatomy of Melancholy, At Swim Two-Birds, Bouvard and Pecuchet, Brave New World, Candide, Canterbury Tales, The Compleat Angler, Consolation of Philosophy, Crime and Punishment,* [Samuel Johnson's] *A Dictionary of the English Language, The Divine Comedy, Erewhon, An Essay Towards the Theory of the Intelligible World, Gargantua and Pantagruel, Gulliver's Travels, Hamlet, Holy Smoke, Ignatius his Conclave, The Life and Opinions of John Buncle, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, The Metamorphosis of Ajax, Moby-Dick,* [Francis Bacon's] *The New Atalantis, Portnoy's Complaint, Praise of Folly, Rasselas, Romance of the Rose, Sartor Resartus, Tristram Shandy, Troilus and Criseyde, Ulysses, Utopia, A Voyage Round the World in a Pocket Library, The Waste-Land.*" Weinbrot calls this list "less baggy than bulbous" and claims to want to put the genre definition "on a diet," yet this claim is somewhat disingenuous given the apparent excitement he has at compiling this list. He seems to be practicing—in inflated metaphorical language—the very expansiveness that he wants to tamp down, making his own work an example of that which he is criticizing (2, 6).

[336] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, 1969). Frye writes of the anatomy genre, of which his own work belongs: "A clearer understanding of the form and traditions of the anatomy would make a good many elements in the history of literature come into focus. Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, with its dialogue form, its verse interludes, and its pervading tone of contemplative irony, is a pure anatomy, a fact of considerable importance for the understanding of its vast influence. *The Compleat Angler* is an anatomy because of its mixture of prose and verse, its rural *cena* setting, its dialogue form, its deipnosophisictical interest in food, and its gentle Menippean raillery of a society which considers everything more important than fishing and yet has discovered very few better things to do. In nearly every period of literature there are many romances, confessions, and anatomies that are neglected only because the categories to which they belong are unrecognized " (312). See also Jonathan Hart, *Northrup Frye: The Theoretical Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1994). Hart observes that Frye "treats anatomy, and his own *Anatomy of Criticism*, as Menippean satire, and his early published fiction is Menippean in thematic content as well as form" (280).

[337] Weinbrot identifies fourteen, which range from "experimental fantasticality" and freedom from reliance on the real to scenes of madness and scandalous behavior (12). He is condensing and summarizing from Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). As I noted in previous chapters, remediating Bakhtin was highly productive and fashionable for scholars of a certain generation; what surprises me most is that the issues of translation and the unwieldiness of applying the theory seem to be enabling for James McLaverty, Curt Cloninger, and,

Kastan's distinction between performances and printed editions of plays, Menippean discourse is "the name that each calls what it brings into being." It is based on an abstraction of its many material forms, both in the bits of texts that are cobbled together in the satire and in the scholarly or critical reflection on those particular forms, which always seems to be done through several layers of translation and hyper-mediation.

Marshall McLuhan claimed that his highly recursive, self-reflexive, self-cannibalizing work could be considered Menippean satire, as it "present[s] the actual surface of the world we live in as a ludicrous image."[338] Under that distorting lens, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*'s mosaic approach of quoting and animadverting on passages from various works is a form of Menippean discourse about media history.[339] Eugene P. Kirk argues for a lesser focus on the satire part of the genre, in favor of expansiveness for what it juxtaposes and invents out of those connections:

> The chief mark of Menippean style was unconventional diction. Neologisms, portmanteau words, macaronics, preciosity, coarse vulgarity, catalogues, bombast, mixed languages, and protracted sentences were typical of the genre, sometimes appearing all together in the same work. In outward structure, Menippean satire was a medley—usually a medley of alternating prose and verse, sometimes a jumble of flagrantly digressive narrative, or again a potpourri of tales, songs, dialogues, orations, letters, lists, and other brief forms, mixed together. … In them, Menippean satire was essentially concerned with right learning or right belief. That theme often called for ridicule or caricature of some sham intellectual or

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here, Howard Weinbrot. It's not easy to fit so many works into those very specific fourteen rules, yet Bakhtin is Weinbrot's main touchstone early in his book.

[338] Marshall McLuhan, *Letters of Marshall McLuhan*. eds. Matie Molinaro, Corinne McLuhan, and William Toye (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 517. For a nuanced account of the sometime disputatious relationship between McLuhan and Frye, sometimes carried out in satirical forms, see B.W. Powe, *Marshall McLuhan and Northrup Frye: Apocalypse and Alchemy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014). McLuhan shared this double interest in medical anatomy and rhetoric, and he yoked them together under the term "ablation" in *Understanding Media.*. Like "remediation," ablation/ablative has multiple meanings in different contexts that enable productive wordplay and slippages. See Cavell, 79-81.

[339] It is also a work of Shakespeare criticism, as McLuhan begins the book with a theory of perspective derived from close reading of *King Lear*: "The stripping of the very human senses themselves will be one of the themes of this play. The separation of sight form the other senses has already been stressed in Lear's expression of his 'darker purpose' and his resort to the mere visual map" (13).

> theological fraud. *Yet sometimes the theme demanded exhortation to learning, when books and studies had fallen into disuse and neglect.*[340]

Kirk's inventory of neologisms, preciosity, bombast, and obliqueness is familiar in its resemblance to critiques of McLuhan's works for their slogans, technodeterminism, superficiality, and aptness for breathless misappropriation and misapprehension. But McLuhan's work was also inspiring as an "exhortation to learning." Menippean discourse may also articulate a program for remaking a field of study—a kind of reinstauration out of fragments, in a Baconian sense. Weinbrot names Johnson's *Dictionary* and Bacon's *New Atlantis* as Menippean satires, so the discourse may be a useful descriptor of media histories like McLuhan's work; Friedrich Kittler's *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* and *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*; Bolter and Grusin's *Remediation*; and Galloway's *The Interface Effect*, among others. They are Menippean discourse in that they theorize their own production through incorporating and animadverting on a diverse array of texts. Historically, variorum editions are also a genre of Menippean media history that frame meta-insights and debates about remediation from performance to print as ongoing epistemological reflections about authority, paratextual technologies, and historicity.

Trembling Foundations: Menippean Discourse About Disciplinarity

"He feels the foundation of that discipline trembling…" In Pynchon's terms from the 1973 Menippean satire *Gravity's Rainbow*, the foundations of the disciplines mentioned so far—of editorial theory, media history, and literary studies—are beginning to tremble under the weight of so many texts, conventions, citations, and juxtapositions.

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[340] Eugene P. Kirk, *Menippean Satire: An Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1980), xi, my italics.

In *The Textual Condition*, Jerome McGann evoked a specter of screaming variants along the editorial horizon of a changing discipline, a phrase that calls to mind the famous first line of Pynchon's novel: "A screaming came across the sky."[341] The ground trembles, bombs parabolate overhead; the rowdy soldiers, dissolute movie directors, and confused spies of the novel are all engaged in some kind of vexed mediation. *Gravity's Rainbow* pairs well with *The Gutenberg Galaxy* as a reflection on proliferating visual technologies and media. It is a mosaic rendered in fiction, as Pynchon crams his novel full of different media discourses: map-making, crude and scatological verse, vivid descriptions of cinema, military and espionage communiqués, aphorisms, and more. In the epigraph to this chapter, now buried beneath so many other references, we see Tyrone Slothrop wondering about the ends of the military intelligence mapping project he is assigned to: is there a meaning to the design in the map of projectiles he has been compiling? Is it a sign or an artifact of mediation?[342]

McLuhan theorized the connection between these seemingly disparate technologies of weaponry and interpretative media in *Understanding Media*: "So runs this argument that links gunfire itself with the rise of perspective, and with the extension of the visual power in literacy."[343] He follows Francis Bacon's claim in his 1620 *Instauration Magna* that printing, gunpowder, and the nautical compass are the three tools have made possible the Great Instauration of human knowledge as a project of

[341] Pynchon, 1.
[342] And in terms of Tibbaldian Menippean discourse, it's worth noting that Pynchon's 1966 novel, *The Crying of Lot 49,* is a Menippean satire on learning in fields as diverse as information theory, calculus, and the material history of an imaginary Renaissance revenge tragedy, *The Courier's Tragedy*, which the characters read for clues in the variants among the versions of the text they attempt to collate in their search that has no apparent end.
[343] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964, 1994), 341.

mediating knowledge through new use of tools rather than sole human reason.[344] In a historical convergence that belongs in a Pynchon novel, military and bibliographical technology intersected during World War II when an intrepid bibliographer tried to mechanize the dull duty of collating textual variants. Charlton Hinman was a Shakespeare scholar who compared variations among editions of *Othello* while studying at the University of Virginia in the late 1930s. He joined the navy as a cartographer and cryptographer, and he became interested in how military scientists had tried to devise a way to identify bomb damage by comparing before and after photographs taken from airplanes.[345] The aerial survey plan did not work because it was impossible to take aerial photographs of the same exact location for comparison, but the idea worked better for still photographs of taken from a fixed prospect, where a mirror mounted on the roof of the device could produce a stereographic image of, say, a page from different printing runs of a text where small variants might exist. As journalist Paul Collins describes it, "any change between the two would be interpreted by the brain as movement, with bombed gun emplacements rather appropriately appearing to shake violently." the initial prototype was jury-rigged out of "[a colleague's] son's Erector set, two slide projectors, and sundry electric motors, mirrors, etc."[346] That provisional invention became an

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[344] See Siskin and Warner, 5. Indeed, in one of his many swipes at Theobald, Pope involved his rival in a bizarre Scriblerian hoax in *The Menoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, in which he made Scriblerus claim that he had discovered a means of measuring longitude via projectile-bombing. The satire was dense and complicated enough that it was remediated as fact in some histories of longitude. See the very strange story in Pat Rogers, "Longitude Forged." *Times Literary Supplement* (Nov. 12, 2008).

[345] For an extraordinary queer history of military technology and New Bibliography, see Jeffrey Masten, "Pressing Subjects: On the Secret Lives of Shakespeare's Compositors," in *Language Machines: Technologies of Literary and Cultural Production,* eds. Masten, Peter Stallybrass, and Nancy Vickers (New York: Routledge, 1997), 75-107. Masten combines compositor theory that was practiced among bibliographers like Hinman during the 1960s with queer theory to show both the limitations of compositor theory for explaining complicated aspects of mediation by multiple agents, but also a kind of social history of who would served as a compositor in early modern printing.

[346] Quoted in Andrew Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print: A History and Chronology of Shakespeare Publishing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 48. Murphy is quoting Peter Blayney, 'The Publication of

institutional bulwark as academic libraries and the CIA alike adopted the technology, but it was bulky and balky, and it soon became a dinosaur. When Collins visited the Folger Library in 2005 to try out the technology long after its vogue for use, he was at first unsure how to read with such a visual technology, hyper-aware of how his reading experience was being technologically mediated: "Mechanical collation can be curiously disorientating. Experienced users, viewing pages as a whole image rather than reading the words on them, run their eyes in an S-pattern down the page in a matter of seconds, much faster than they could read the actual text."[347]

Menippean satire is the solvent of pedantic learning, but it is also the glue for transhistorical media theory. *Gravity's Rainbow* doesn't have a direct target (so to speak!); its diffuseness is what allows the Menippean qualities to attach to such diverse media. In his study of Menippean Pynchon, Theodore Kharpertian argues for the generic label to be "a rhetorical trope that implies similarity in difference, synthesis in antithesis, and unity in diversity."[348] That is, it problematizes its own definition as a means to producing more speculation and self-reflexive questioning about the ends of that speculation: the discourse is always engendering an excess of epistemological questions about what it's remediating.

Playbooks," in *A New History of Early English Drama*, eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 383-422. Randall McLeod has designed his own Portable Collator, which he describes using to examine variants of "Easter Wings" in "FIAT fLUX." "Random Cloud" carries the joke forward by thanking McLeod in his notes for loaning the device (155n.17).

[347] Paul Collins, "As Shakespeare Liked It." *New Scientist* 187:2511 (6 August 2005), 48-49, 49. See also: Steven Escar Smith, "'Eternal Verities Verified': Charlton Hinman and the Roots of Mechanical Collation," *Studies in Bibliography* 53 (2000), 129-61.

[348] Theodore Kharpertian, *A Hand to Turn the Time: The Menippean Satires of Thomas Pynchon* (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1990), 40. He argues: "If there has been an egregious error or blindness historically in the definition of satire, it is this: many definitions (Dryden's, for example) limit satire to some form of attack while downplaying or ignoring the genre's etymologically signified and historically practiced convention of carnivalesque variety." (33).

That quality may explain why there is so much fractiousness in media history and theory—between, say, Theobald and Pope; McLuhan, Bolter and Grusin, and Galloway; or Elizabeth Eisenstein and Adrian Johns as they debate forms of agency and objects of knowledge in the history of print. In *The Nature of the Book*, Johns seeks to remediate Eisenstein's "error" of sweeping technodeterminism in *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* by exploring histories of the particular human agents: authors, printers, correctors, type compositors, engravers, readers of many classes, and so on. (I shall return to Johns and Eisenstein at length in the next chapter.) Reviewing Johns's work, Eisenstein accuses him of misapprehending her argument and denying her credit for re-spatializing the discipline of book history.[349] They go back and forth in printed rejoinders, in some sense arguing over the best perspectives for assessing change over time and what mediations are most important for marshaling that evidence of change. Johns accuses Eisenstein of misrepresenting his work by animadverting on particular errors to show a false pattern and "she even applies the same technique to her own work, repeatedly quoting individual dicta from *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* in synecdochic fashion as though such isolated statements were straightforwardly representative of the whole."[350] He worries about the recursive nature of her argument and its piecemeal evidence: "A reading practice that is applied to its own practitioners' words as much as to others' is one that may reasonably be regarded as entrenched."

What Johns perceives as flaws are also literary devices: synecdoche, animadversion, encyclopedic synthesis of sources, composing a prospect. Is Eisenstein's

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[349] Elizabeth Eisenstein, "An Unacknowledged Revolution Revisited," *The American Historical Review* 107:1 (2002), 87-105 and *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979/1982).
[350] Adrian Johns, "How to Acknowledge a Revolution," *The American Historical Review* 107:1 (2002) 13-14 and *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

prospect thus composed of errors, or are her errors in some sense enabling for a different perspective on media change? Eisenstein defends her long zoom approach in perspectival language that sounds familiar from Bentley, Pope, and Theobald's own media prospects of their editorial work: "To say that a landscape viewed from the air looks differently from one seen from the ground is not to invalidate either perspective, let alone accuse either of 'backsliding.'"[351] In each of these cases, we have a kind of disagreement about the status of evidence and the kinds of claims that can be articulated and defended. Writing in terms of Pynchon's Menippea, in which there are ongoing debates about how characters know what they know—and whether to assess this confusion as a subject or a product of the encyclopedic satires—Kharpertian calls attention to the problem of "generically indispensible antithesis of text and experience [which] precedes the effective performance of interpretation," and which serves "to correct inadequate or erroneous conceptions of experience" in the act of interpretation. That is, in a Menippean satire, the experience of self-reflexive questioning may be at odds with the desire for settled interpretations, and we are caught in a disciplinary quandary: what is in the foreground of a study, and what is background? Is the goal discrete insights or large-scale theory—how does one zoom between the two realms?[352]

This kind of correction to generic definitions, a re-situating of self-reflexive experience in the mediation of the text, was part of Theobald's goal in goading Pope with *Shakespeare Restored*. He sought to remake the goals, protocols—disciplines (to evoke

[351] Elizabeth Eisenstein, "[How to Acknowledge a Revolution] Reply" *The American Historical Review* 107:1 (2002) 126-128, 126.
[352] Alexander Galloway makes a similar critique of Lev Manovich's work: "If one is willing to assent to a synecdoche model for media systems, then it follows that sources (or partial sources) will play a more important role, since the system/subsystem or whole/part arrangement necessitates that one think about the innards of things as one scales from outside to inside" (9).

both Pynchon and Foucault)[353]—of editorial work by adding more mediation of what one could call the "editorial function" of mediating an author's work. Theobald's subtitle indicates that he looks forward to others producing more media with his conjectural method; he anticipates McLuhan in claiming the future value of a method for theorizing media production. As McLuhan knew well, Menippean discourse diffuses agency in a carnivalesque way that can account for the many remediators of texts over time. Likewise, the editorial apparatus allows for multiple agents to interact with goals that may compete in small differences of readings but have a larger theory of framing and reframing the accumulation of discourse over time.

D.F. McKenzie consolidates these diverse interactions into a descriptive theory of "the sociology of texts," a phrase that generates abstract intellectual space for generalizations to be collected into a discipline while it also carves out room for enumeration of historical particularities and differences. McKenzie writes: "While the processes of composition, correction, and printing were universal, the relationship between them on any one day were constantly changing."[354] He describes the history of

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[353] Foucault describes the process of systematization as one of setting up a hierarchy of goals: "Discursive practices are characterized by the delimitation of a field of objects, definition of legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories. Thus, each discursive practice implies a play of prescriptions that designate its exclusions and choices." He argues that truth is not so easily extracted from a text; it does not "become pure speculation subject to the demands of reason…" Rather the search for truth is "a progressive enslavement to its instinctive violence." This "will to truth" is progressive because it endlessly inscribes the need for its perpetuation. The possibility—indeed the need—for future reconsideration of an editor's emendations is the basis of the discipline of conjectural criticism. The "instinctive violence" of a discipline's will to truth is the contradiction between its stated goal of achieving a final formulation of truth and its procedure of self-proliferation, producing alternate readings, and insisting on reproduction as the means of attaining that goal. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." *Hommage á Jean Hyppolite* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), reprinted in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977, 163.

[354] D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3-4. For an account of McKenzie's career, see his collected essays and responses in *Making Meaning: 'Printers of the Mind and Other Essays*, eds. Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez, S.J. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), especially the Introduction, 3-10.

bibliographic theory and practice as working between these general ideas and detailed study of material history. When bibliographers began to take note of these social behaviors and conflicts in protocols, they developed complexity in their higher-order concepts about the nature of truth, accuracy, authorial intention, and editorial intervention: "… Paradoxically, this extension of knowledge about the context of book production, while it induced a scepticism about the kinds of truth some forms of bibliography might yield, also opened up the discipline … it released the subject from the straitjacket of induction"—which Housman had championed—"giving it a new imaginative life in the speculative range it now demanded." As Joanna Gondris puts it in her recursively titled collection of essays about eighteenth-century editors of Shakespeare, *Reading Readings*: "The capacious variorum form engineers a conversion of interpretive differences into increments of critical response. The experience of reading the variorum commentary is of a growing sense of the extraordinary recalcitrance of apparently refuted versions of the text."[355] Her description of the apparatus resembles McLuhan's mosaic or Bolter and Grusin's frames upon frames of remediation: "Each reading, in each note, sets up a verbal impression or an image which simply will not fade away on the emergence of a new reading."

Gondris's title of her essay in that volume, "All This Farrago," refers to a criticism made by a reviewer of a 1784 variorum edition, who complained that the apparatus had grown too bulky—it is felicitous that Frye chooses "encyclopedic farrago" to describe the way that Menippean satire proliferates in its form and larger genre.[356]

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[355] Joanna Gondris "'All This Farrago': The Eighteenth-Century Shakespeare Variorum Page as a Critical Structure" *Reading Readings*, ed. Gondris (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998), 123-39, 132.
[356] Frye, 311.

Gondris's essay proceeds by staging four different textual cruxes in the eighteenth-century variorum editions; although *Reading Readings* gestures to a recursive interpretative practice, she prioritizes the content of particular *Readings* over articulating a larger theory of *Reading*. Elsewhere in that volume, however, there is actually a Menippean satire of bibliography by Randall McCleod/Random Cloud, who is surely unique in favoring that genre for his bibliographical research in "a panoply of essays, written under a panoply of near-homophonic names"[357] that would not be out of place in a Pynchon novel. In his recursive fashion, Cloud's contribution to *Reading Readings* is "complicatedly polemic" for its dismissal of eighteenth-century editions as merely interesting, in favor of stressing the other remediations of Shakespeare's plays in unconventional forms, different languages, and misprintings. "The acuity of Cloud's own reading, his extraordinary responsiveness to the graphic medium of Shakespeare's printed text, serves to qualify his decrial of eighteenth-century editions," writes Gondris. She encourages a recursive reading of his work, a concerted attention to what kinds of readings his Menippean satire of bibliography might occasion through its deliberate, barbed but playful obscurity:

> For he is not so irreparably divided from the eighteenth-century editors (who authorize emendation-filled conflated texts rather than quarto or folio) that he does not also resemble them in his focus on the semantic difference of the minutest variants in a text. … Its inclusion within the volume also makes possible a questioning of Cloud's emphatic devaluation of eighteenth-century editions, for the essays which his ushers forth assert—as Cloud's writing itself does in the very energy of his reaction—the power of eighteenth-century editions to engage and inform [contemporary readers]…[358]

[357] Gondris, "Introduction," *Reading Readings*, ed. Gondris, xii. He also designed a smaller, portable version of the Hinman collator for facilitating comparison of textual variants, called the McCleod collator.
[358] Ibid.

And yet, when I read the essay, I found myself more interested in the accumulations of estranging effects than in particular quotable moments from the text.[359] It is difficult to describe or quote; it loses significant meaning in the translation/mediation on someone else's page. This is an intentionally difficult effect and argument on Cloud's part, a provocation of the very disciplinary procedures that he is studying. Indeed, Cloud's argument is significantly stronger than Gondris's about what we might learn from variorum commentary; where Gondris prizes conversation and maintenance of the structure, Cloud aims for conflict. In "FIAT fLUX" he argues: "Editing can scarcely be expected to divulge its own structures, until it is juxtaposed critically to the evidence it claims to report. In the contradictions that become vivid in such a juxtaposition, we can measure precisely the difficulties of [a text that has been remediated so many times in so many forms by different editors]."[360] Where Bakhtin's theories were easily transportable, applicable, and adaptable to Weinbrot's and McLaverty's texts, Cloud's stay unassimilable, unable to be animadverted on. They also make me think of the blockiness of my own digital experiments—stubborn reactions to desires for consolidation, clarity, and transparency.

With Cloud's Menippean bibliography in mind, I must make one more note here about the difference between *satire* and *discourse*, especially as it concerns Theobald, who is the object of Pope's satire but also, I am arguing, a practitioner of Menippean discourse. Edward J. Milowicki and R. Rawdon Wilson are interested, as I am, in

[359] For example: "All this variety! I bet you're starving? You think I've been talking nonsense all this while, but look—today I'm the sane one. It's those editors ware crazy. Haven't done their homework. But I'd be choughed to buttocks to do it for them just this once, because—because, ever since I was a kid, I had this Towering Ambition to edit. Collating? Don't you talk to me about collating. Why I ate and slept collation for years…" Cloud, "Shakespeare Babel" in *Reading Readings*, ed. Gondris 1-70, 19.
[360] Cloud, "FIAT fLUX," 150.

bracketing the “satire” part of the genre and focusing instead on the generative nature of the remediating qualities of the form. They describe their argument as “giving generic shape to an indeterminate term, if that were possible… Menippean elements follow different paths, nomadic and elusive, to become integral parts of very diverse ways of writing. …. Menippean accurately refers to more than a type of satire. It names a way of writing that can best be considered as transgeneric…”[361] Because I can recognize it in my own writing (and see it the anxiety in Johnson’s definition of definitions), I am fascinated by the recursive qualities of Milowicki and Wilson’s description of Menippean discourse, as they fold back on themselves, repeat themselves, and generally follow what could look like Shandean loops or Pynchonian parabolic data plots around the term:

> Undermining traditional literary structures, Menippean discourse… inevitably explores, then expands conventional generic boundaries, sometimes even approaching subversion. … Menippean discourse [is] a self-conscious, encyclopedic array of discursive techniques, both motifs and conventions, any subset of which can be employed for exploratory or subversive purposes in virtually any text. Menippean discourse constitutes a supple, if abrasive literary method with excessive parts but only exiguous structures and with an almost baffling range of uses.

Their definition is unwieldy, unstable, and *generative* because they see Menippean satire as a device that’s supposed to topple by its very expansion and recursion: it is remediation for the purpose of distortion, subversion, and abrasion. In these terms, Johnson’s description of Theobald’s myopic, exacting, small-gains performance as an editor starts to resemble something like Tibbaldian Menippean discourse: he is distorting Pope’s polished texts, subverting it with his own niggling concerns, abrading it by adding more text. It is a “Wilderness of Confusion,” as Theobald’s anonymous critic put it. I prefer this generic account to McKenzie’s “sociology of texts” because it helps me see

[361]Milowicki and Wilson, 292-93.

the ways that genres of remediation can engender conflicting agencies that are subsumed under a disciplinary importation of "sociological" discourse.

McKenzie's Riffing on Errors: Thought Experiments in Menippean Discourse

McKenzie adumbrates "the sociology of texts" with a virtuosic close reading of how an apparent transcription error committed by famed New Bibliographers W.K. Wimsatt, Jr. and M.C. Beardsley forms the (perhaps now unstable!) foundation of a key New Critical text, "The Intentional Fallacy." In subverting this foundational text, McKenzie is performing a kind of textual-editing-as-Menippean-satire. He is playing with the editorial irony that correcting errors is a means of proliferating them, that any critical prospect has flaws in its mediation of a textual scene. These flaws—whether obvious or invented by a rival—allow for future critics and editors to peek through and situate themselves as remediators of that vision. First printed in *The Sewanee Review* in 1946 and anthologized widely as the source for theories of treating poems as objects outside of authorial context, "The Intentional Fallacy" identifies a kind of perspectival error in approaching poetic objects, which Wimsatt and Beardsley argue should be examined solely for their visible features without digressions to history, biography, or theories that would add a veil of mediation. It is "hard to name another essay which has so influenced critical theory and the teaching of literature," notes McKenzie, yet "it has not, I think, been observed before that, if we include its epigraph, this famous essay on the interpretation of literature opens with a misquotation in its very first line…"[362]

[362] McKenzie, 20.

McKenzie analyzes Wimsatt and Beardsley's invisible revisions of words, punctuation, and capitalization to show how their rendering of William Congreve's prologue to *The Way of the World* (1700)—ironically, about his authorial control of his texts—proliferates errors even as they are espousing a strong, influential theory of de-authored interpretation.[363] Yet McKenzie is determined to be recursive in his criticism and reflect on what that moment of editorial intervention means—that is, to go beyond espying an error and animadverting with Tibbaldian glee. He uses his bibliographer's tools of scrutiny to zoom in on the printed variants and zoom out to generate epistemological questions about the implications of the misprints and misprisions. It is a feat of both specific material history and wide-ranging, transhistorical speculation—it is in some ways like Cloud's work in its gestures to scrutinizing typefaces and creative dilation, but it is less self-consciously weird. He mixes prose and verse (by quoting Congreve) and plays with perspectives from multiple kinds of texts, thus enacting a kind of editorial Menippean discourse. He turns Kastan's warning about distinguishing between the technologies of theater and print into a kind of carefully proliferating thought experiment about mediation and remediation:

> But as a dramatic text, it was originally written to be spoken, and so other questions arise. Can we hear the voice of the actor Thomas Betterton conveying orally the ironies we now read visually? Congreve's autograph

[363] Here is how Congreve's authorized edition from 1710 (London: printed for Jacob Tonson) reads:
He owns, with Toil, he wrought the following Scenes,
But if they're naught ne'er spare him for his Pains:
Damn him the more; have no Commiseration
For Dulness on mature Deliberation."
Copying out the poem in *The Sewanee Review*, Winsatt and Beardsley silently correct the capitalized nouns and remove the commas from the first line. Most notably the abstraction "Dulness," the familiar abstraction from Pope and others, is just "dullness," losing its satirical sting:
"He owns with toil he wrote the following scenes;
But if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains:
Damn him the more; have no commiseration
For dullness on mature deliberation."

> letters show no concern for the niceties I suggested in the form of the epigraph. Am I therefore reading an interpretation of Congreve's meaning by his printer, John Watts? Is Watts merely following a general set of conventions imposed at this time, with or without Congreve's assent, by Congreve's publisher, Jacob Tonson? Who, in short, 'authored' Congreve? Whose concept of the reader do these new forms of the text imply: the author's, the actor's, the printer's, or the publisher's? And what of the reader? Is a knowledge of Jonson, Betterton, Congreve, Watts, and Tonson a necessary condition of a 'true' reading? Does my own reading betray a personal need to prove that a technical interest in books and in the teaching of texts is now radically disjunctive, that bibliographical criticisms are in fact one? Visited by such questions, an author disperses into his collaborators, those who produced his texts and their meanings.[364]

But if we acknowledge that this text was first delivered as a lecture in 1985 and then remediated as a scholarly text in 1999, can we hear the voice of the bibliographer Donald F. McKenzie conveying orally the ironies we now read visually? That is, the social occasion of the Panizzi lectures produces its own generative errors of interpretation—artifacts of performance, the way a magician practices misdirection of his audience—and we are stunned by his virtuosic dilation on misprints.[365] The quotability of the term "the sociology of texts" has ensured its adoption, its proliferation, its extension—indeed, its normalization into disciplinary practices. In this lecture and then textual performance, McKenzie is errant in the best possible way: by digressing, pointing out his possible assumptions and historicist projections, keeping our attention on remediation even as he is practicing it himself. McKenzie treats his intervention as reflexive, noting that the transcription error nonetheless constitutes "a record of the taste, thought and values of a

[364] McKenzie, 26-27.

[365] As she reads eighteenth-century editors and critics enumerate one another's errors, Gondris notes the incantatory quality of animadversion: "the mockingly repetitive rhythm and the relentless numbering of the notes suggesting not only an absurd voluminousness but a meaningless sequentiality in the commentary. However, running counter to this suggestion of an insanely disparate succession of notes, the contents of the clauses describe notes that are complexly interactive. New notes test themselves against old ones; each reading breeds the next. This hint of a compensating dynamism in the variorum commentary is borne out in the reviewer's confession of his own compulsive succumbing to the all too potent allure of the notes" (Gondris, 127-8).

critical school which significantly shaped our own choice of books, the way we read them" and the way they have been institutionalized. "Any history of the book—subject as books are to typographic and material change—must be a history of misreadings," he argues. "This is not so strange as it might sound. Every society rewrites its past, every reader rewrites its texts, and if they have any continuing life at all, at some point every printer redesigns them."[366]

Following my work with Bentley, I want to think about how textual editors negotiate between practical concerns and theories of knowledge and error, specifically how they negotiate by self-reflexive, farrago-prone errancy rather than consolidating knowledge into agreed-upon interpretations. Writing about the multiplicity of interpretations, adaptations, and other remediations produced at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, Michael Dobson carves out the beneficial "experiences" with a text from the errant ones. He describes how "…individual readers either misappropriate Shakespeare's text (if they are bad readers), or both appropriate them and are appropriated by them (if they are good readers)."[367] Such reading might be said to be participating in Menippean discourse, "Menippean inclusiveness, its encyclopedic nature, promotes extremely intellectual texts. The mere act of including one text within another … constitutes an intellectual exercise; Menippean discourse, since it permits the inclusion of radically disparate texts within an antagonistic matrix, makes the act even more intellectual and a matter of playfulness and wit."[368] Menippists could resemble both "good" and "bad" readers and critics who examine a

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[366] Ibid.
[367] Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1769* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 11.
[368] Milowicki and Wilson, 307.

specimen , distending it with a kind of false cure of commentary, and then perhaps self-reflexively commenting on the implications of such a mediation. Cloud appropriates and is appropriated by his objects of study, but he challenges what good, accessible, clear writing about these readings could look like. McKenzie has already demonstrated another set of possibilities in considering so-called errors as artifacts of historical taste, idiosyncratic editorial choices, and I have proposed that we can study them as calcifications of figurative language that take on lives of their own.

"*Reading Readings* focuses on the phenomenon of the emergence and development in the eighteenth century of a critical genre that changes the possibilities of appropriation," argues Gondris. "This genre—the Shakespeare edition—complicates Dobson's model because the formal procedures, constraints and purpose of an edition themselves reposition reader and text."[369] The remediating structure of the apparatus is both limiting for what it can render on a single printed page, and also enabling of discourses that can produce new kinds of self-reflexivity and conversation—and thus new kinds of knowledge. Likewise, the genre of Menippean satire dramatizes epistemological questions about how we know what we know, as it "is based on the feeling there is probably no abstract certainty outside of us that we can know, merely the infinitely elating possibility that there might be, if only we could get by the claptrap of our own concoctions."[370] Theobald the textual editor knows something about that claptrap. He is sometimes wrong, never in doubt; he is both liberated and confined by his conjectures, his stinging performances, and the hyper-media they create.

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[369] Gondris, "Introduction," ix, xxvii.
[370] Anne Payne, *Chaucer and Menippean Satire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 5.

Lewis Theobald: Gardener and Menippean Satirist of Perspective

Theobald's language of an unweeded garden is remediated from *Hamlet*, but it is also a familiar image in writing about any perceived glut or proliferation of stuff. His faith in rational systems was perhaps too great for him to appreciate fully the ironies in his choice of metaphors: Hamlet's existential difficulty is that life is always full of troubles. Sorting them out and then finding new ones is a demonstration of futility. What would Hamlet do with *The Anatomy of Melancholy*? Burton realizes the paradox, as he describes how readers will find his text a fertile ground full of beauties and faults alike: "I am but a smatterer, I confess, a stranger, here and there I pull a flower."[371] He warned that animadverting on his faults was likely to obscure any felicities in the text, for corrections have a way of proliferating: "I do easily grant, if a rigid censurer should criticise on this which I have writ, he should not find three sole faults, as Scaliger in Terence, but three hundred." Swift's proliferating apparatus to *A Tale of a Tub*, an embodiment of Menippean satire in its distortion of scholarly productions, also engages in weedy discourse:

> Besides, most of our late Satyrists seem to lye under a sort of Mistake; that because Nettles have the Prerogative to Sting, therefore all *other weeds* must do so too. I make not this Comparison out of the least Design to detract from these worthy Writers; for it is well known among *Mythologists*, that *Weeds* have the pre-eminence over all other Vegetables.[372]

Further, Pope's friend William Broome, who had assisted in annotating the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, criticized Theobald's restoration project with a pointed reference to the

[371] Burton, 33.
[372] Swift, Preface to *A Tale of a Tub* (1710) in *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, ed. Marcus Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 30. Weinbrot calls his chapter on Swift's Menippean satires "The Preeminence of Weeds" (115).

unweeded garden by turning his own metaphor against him: "These learned triflers are more weeders of an author, they collect the weeds for their own use, and permit others to gather the herbs and flowers."[373] Such recitations, appropriations, recursion, over-reaching metaphors, and pathetic fallacies are devices familiar from the previous chapters: they are themselves errors that generate new poetic critical perspectives on how to know and mediate the world through sensory experience.

Theobald makes bold flourishes with his sensory metaphors to show his anatomical method's power of perspective: "Or, perhaps, the very Frame of our Nature is concern'd; and the Dissecters of an Eye and Ear can tell us what Membranes, or Organs, we owe the Communication of Pleasures, in which the rational Soul has no Share."[374] McLuhan used Pope as an example of Typographic Man in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, but Theobald's dedication poses a related theory of editorial remediation as a form of restoring the communication of the senses of a text, both its significations and its perspectives (both *senses* of the word). Describing those pleasures of the soul requires language to transmit those sensory experiences; Theobald the editor controls, explicates, mediates these metaphors into a coherent system. He sounds something like McLuhan and Fiore in *The Medium is the Massage*, who intone: "Until writing was invented, man lived in acoustic space: boundless, directionless, in the dark of the mind, in the world of emotion, by primordial intuition, by terror."[375] *The Medium is the Massage* is a kind of multimedia Menippean satire that transforms its discourse through estranging graphic design. McLuhan and Fiore continue to describe writing as a social technology that organizes the world: "Speech is a social chart of this bog. The goose quill put an end to

[373] William Broome, "An Essay on Criticism," *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1727), 5.
[374] Theobald, Dedication to *Shakespeare Restored*.
[375] McLuhan and Fiore, 48.

talk. It abolished mystery; it gave architecture and towns; it brought roads and armies, bureaucracy. It was the basic metaphor with which the cycle of civilization began, the step from the dark into the light of the mind." Fittingly for Theobald's prospect as illuminated by conjecture, the illustrated headnote to his Dedication to *Shakespeare Restored* shows a man holding a torch to light the way (see figure 4).

As the final flourish to that progressive history of writing technologies, McLuhan and Fiore quote a quatrain that echoes Housman's abstractions and metaphors in "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism": "Whence did the wondr'ous mystic art arise, / Of painting SPEECH, and speaking to the eyes? / That we by tracing magic lines are taught, / How to embody, and to colour THOUGHT?"[376] The synesthetic metaphors are scattered over accounts of media history as media reframe other media, but they are also endemic to descriptions of textual criticism, where they signal the uneasiness about the conjectural, imaginative, mediating role of the editor. Housman has over-determined empiricism; Theobald and Bentley have over-zealous metaphors and figurative language to embellish their conjectures that are generated by their immersive, recursive inscriptions on their texts. In his 1765 editorial preface, Johnson registers his skepticism and protest about the method by making recourse to non-media: "Whatever could be done by adjusting points is therefore silently performed, in some plays with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth."[377] Yet even this mark of "silence" on "evanescent" media is registered in editorial apparatus of prefatory material: even in protest, Johnson is still practicing and theorizing mediation.

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[376] Ibid. McLuhan and Fiore do not cite their source for the poem, but it was popular in nineteenth-century miscellanies and essay collections on art and cognition, where it circulated anonymously.
[377] Johnson, 1765 Preface, 107.

The conjectural method's inscriptions are always theoretical interventions. Seary jokes that "although Theobald made his chief life's work an attempt to recover the 'authentic' text of Shakespeare and then to impose stability and order upon it, his views on quarto and folio textuality and the sociology of textual production perhaps exceed the wildest dreams of Barthes, Foucault, and McKenzie" as he theorizes multiple mediating agents and competing forms of agency.[378] Kastan, Orgel, and other historians of theatrical remediation may quibble with some of Theobald's claims about his editorial practice:

> Many Pieces were taken down in Short-hand, and imperfectly copied by Ear, from a *Representation*: Others were printed from piece-meal Parts surreptitiously obtain'd from the Theatres, uncorrect, and with out the Poet's Knowledge. To some of these Causes we owe the train of Blemishes, that deform those Pieces which stole singly into the World in our Author's Life-time. There are still other Reasons, which may be suppos'd to have affected the whole Set. When the *Players* took upon them to publish his Works intire every Theatre was ransack'd to supply the Copy; and the *Parts* collected which had gone thro' as many changes as Performers, either from Mutilations or Additions made to them. Hence we derive many Chasms and Incoherences in the Sense and Matter. Scenes were frequently transposed, and shuffled out of their true Actor. Hence much Confusion and Impropriety has attended, and embarras'd, the Business and Fable. For there ever have been, and ever will be in Play-houses, a Set of assuming Directors, who know better than the Poet himself the Connexion and Dependance of his Scenes; where Matter is defective, or Superfluities to be retrench'd; Persons, that have the Fountain of *Inspiration* as peremptorily in them, as King have That of *Honour*. To these obvious causes of Corruption it must be added, that our Author has lain under the Disadvantage of having his Errors propagated and multiplied by Time: because, for near a Century, his Works were republish'd from the faulty Copies without the assistance of any intelligent Editor: which has been the Case likewise of many a *Classic* Writer.[379]

Theobald can render the abstract prospect of conjecture and self-promotion in lofty language, yet he can also populate a scene of vivid characters and action. He mixes high and low discourses here, plays with metaphor, moves from details to conjectural theories

[378] Seary, "Lewis Theobald, Edmond Malone, and Others," 114
[379] Theobald, 1733 Preface xxxvii-xxxix.

of remediation. He accounts for both agents and forms of agency. Perhaps he is not an entirely correct theatrical historian, but here he shows his talent as a Menippean satirist of remediation. His account is like McKenzie's not only in its subject (how errors are perpetuated) but in its self-conscious attempt to narrate errancy by zooming in and zooming out, delighting in the swoop.

In assessing this scene of meddling and negligent mediators with nods toward future disciplinary protocols from structuralism, post-structuralism, and cultural studies-inflected book history, Seary gestures toward a thought experiment about theory as a form of mediation, even when it exists in the meta-theoretical realm of ahistorical speculation or anachronism in comparing Theobald to Barthes, Foucault, and McKenzie. The anachronism indicates the ways that historical conceptions of mediation and agency account for contingencies and disruptions before there is recognizable vocabulary for those phenomena. They are part of Theobald's, Pope's, and Johnson's *donnée*. But Seary also makes a crucial mediation slippage in his idealizing of his biographical subject. In Seary's description, Theobald's theatrical training allows him "to strip away the veil of print and imagine the nature of the manuscript before a compositor, as well as the kind of misreadings such a manuscript might induce."[380] Describing Theobald's immersion in the conventions of theatrical manuscript transmission, Seary falls into the double logic of remediation: he wishes for Theobald to have a pure, unmediated sense for theatrical protocols, but he frames that argument in terms of Theobald's proficiency in sorting through the ephemeral hyper-mediations of theatrical stuff. "The veil of print" is figurative language that feels, literally, like a means of covering up the gaps of Theobald's knowledge as well as the variety and strangeness of his description of

[380] Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare*, 19

multiple mediations.[381] Thus the next names on that list after Barthes, Foucault, and McKenzie could be Bolter and Grusin, who can help Seary assess how adaptation is a form of remediation, how editors frame other editors, and so on.

Theobald delights in the role as conjectural editor who not only remediates his extensive knowledge of theatrical ephemera and protocols as he offers conjectures for emendations but also remedies the text as a moral corrector. He wants his mediations to remain "restored"—a kind of inverse of Pope's "wrong Corrections," in that the text cannot be de-mediated to a prior pure state, as it is always remediated through editorial work. He becomes a theorist of Depravity as he records emendations, gives reason for the corrections, and conjectures at other possible readings. In his explanation of the "pointing gestures," or footnotes he uses, he explains that "without such Notes, these Passages in subsequent Editions would be liable, thro' the Ignorance of Printers and Correctors, to fall into the old Confusion. Whereas, a Note on every one hinders all possible Return to Depravity, and for ever secures them in a State of Purity and Integrity not to be lost or forfeited."[382] He sees possibilities for correction on nearly every page: "As there are very few Pages in Shakespeare, upon which some Suspicions of Depravity do not reasonably arise; I have thought it my Duty, in the first place by a diligent and laborious Collation to take in the Assistances of all the older Copies."[383] "Depravity" is reiterated multiple times in order to signal Theobald's prowess at managing both meanings of error and moral

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[381] Seary repeats the phrase later in the book, again signaling that he is idealizing his subject's theory of mediation by describing it in such a fanciful way: "As a playwright himself, Theobald was familiar with the possible kinds of manuscript associated with the evolution of a play. … Theobald's own experience would encourage him to speculate on the kinds of copy potentially available to the printers of Shakespeare's plays and would help him to recognize in the texts of the quartos and folio some of the general characteristics of the different kinds of manuscripts, despite the veil of print" (Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare*,145-46).
[382] Theobald, 1733 Preface, xliv-xlv
[383] Theobald, 1733 Preface, xlii.

decrepitude—the editor's *raison d'être* is in its correction of both meanings of the word. To frame these editorial interactions in terms of a negative argument of "hinder[ing] any Possible Return to Depravity" is for Theobald a way to elevate himself and his method, but it also creates the possibility of seeing this interaction as a mediating *tool.* He describes his goal to set a rational, moral order to the editing process: "Emendations are so far from being arbitrary or capricious that They are establish'd with a very high Degree of moral Certainty." With this overstated claim, he projects conjecture forward as a kind of progress narrative from text to civilization.

Conjecture is an expansive, abstract practice, so it's no wonder that it's mediated in such flowery, moralized language. In his 1765 Preface to Shakespeare's *Works*, Johnson assesses the history and future of conjectural criticism as he mediates his own guesses in the apparatus to that edition—for he knew those guesses would be remediated in even more expansive footnotes in future editions. He is hard on Theobald for preening about his metaphorical, moralized cures for depravity, calling them relatively minor interventions that took up large amounts of inscription. He also seizes on Pope's disdain for collating multiple transmissions in favor of exercising a single judgment:

> This was a work which Pope seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of the *dull duty of an editor.* He understood but half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is indeed dull, yet, like other tedious tasks is very necessary. … *In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language.* Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his authour's particular cast of thought, and turn of expression.[384]

[384] Johnson, 1765 Preface, 94-95, italics added.

Johnson was skeptical of the practice for the leaps it engendered, the gaps in knowledge that were exposed to future readers. Yet twenty years later, he, too, is tagged with the criticism for the hyper-mediation for his additions to new variorum editions:

> Dr. Johnson, from an excess of candour, and perhaps from a diffidence of the industry he had employed upon the subject, adopted a multiplicity of notes from various writers into his edition. Mr. Stevens [sic] has carefully preserved all this farrago, and beside it, we are now treated with the annotations of himself, Dr, Farmer, Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Malone, &c.&c.&c.&c. So that, in the state in which the author now lies before us, Tacitus *cum notis variorum* is nothing to him….[385]

Johnson shows the way that the remediating functions of textual criticism as Menippean discourse are both self-critical and generative: the distorting glass is turned at oneself and one's peers/rivals, but it is also used as a tool for producing knowledge. Even, indeed especially as he engaged in the practice, he was wary of the recursive method of running back on oneself to produce more insights and wondered when or if that loop could close. That doubt is a necessary component of such an epistemological endeavor, for the expression of limitations is enabling of more reflection. From his perspective in 1765, before there was quite so much farrago, he expresses a hope and a warning at the same time: "Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duties of an editor."[386]

Errors as Moments of Change—or Moments *To* Change

[385] quoted in Gondris, 123.
[386] Ibid.

Why are dullness and glut paired together so often in assessing disciplinary trends? The very pattern in their co-appearances, from the *Dunciad* onward, might be an indication that the critique is reflexive without being incisive (that is, there is a dull glut of critiques about dull gluts). The charge produces passionate responses, nevertheless. Assessing the diverse field of book history/histories in 2002, Robert Darnton returns to the proliferating metaphor of the unweeded garden—now grown into a forest as the metaphor expands yet further— to describe this "interdisciplinarity run riot":

> [The history of books] now looks less like a field than a tropical rain forest. The explorer can hardly make his way across it. At every step he becomes entangled in a luxuriant undergrowth of journal articles and disoriented by the crisscrossing of disciplines—analytical bibliography pointing in this direction, the sociology of knowledge in that while history, English, and comparative literature stake out overlapping territories.[387]

Is the foundation beneath Darnton's disciplines trembling, or is there some other tectonic metaphor to invoke? For their parts, Eisenstein and Johns have strong opinions about how to cultivate those gardens; their debates provoke further commentary and different means of synthesizing or seizing distinctions from their work.[388] One can tell by his detailed list of possible avenues of investigation that Darnton is not entirely condemning the hyper-fertile state of the many overlapping interests, methods, objects of study, and social practices. Rather, he is describing a discipline that can't help but be self-reflexive as it

[387] Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" *The Book History Reader*, eds. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, (London: Routledge, 2002) 9-26, 10. He goes on: "He is beset by claims to newness—'*la nouvelle bibliographie matérielle*', 'the new literary history'—and bewildered by competing methodologies, which would have him collating editions, compiling statistics, decoding copyright law, wading through reams of manuscript, heaving at the bar of a reconstructed common press, and psychoanalyzing the mental processes of readers. ... How can the book historians neglect the history of libraries, of publishing, of paper, type, and reading? But how can he master their technologies, especially when they appear in imposing foreign formulations, like *Geschichte der Appellstruktur* and *Bibliométrie bibliologique*? It is enough to make one want to retire to a rare book room and count watermarks." Darnton revised this essay from a 1982 essay in *Daedalus*; much had changed in scholarly attention, knowledge, and technologies of mediation in those twenty years.

[388] Selections from Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, Johns's *The Nature of the Book*, and McKenzie's *The Sociology of Texts* are anthologized in *The Book History Reader* alongside Darnton's essay.

studies how previous scholars have produced knowledge and how they approached changing technologies and institutional priorities. Book history as a discipline is recursive—just like Menippean satire. (There are even more perspectives to take into consideration: for example, he does not even mention media histories outside of the study of the book or statistical textual study.)

In a special 2009 issue of *Representations* about the future of reading, Leah Price notes a similar proliferation in the fields of book history, but she uses it to call for more, different kinds of work. She recalls Pope's and Theobald's rhetorical fancies when she notes that

> …the bibliographical turn begins to look less like a flight from reading than a war on metaphor. For a hermeneutics of suspicion, substitute a poetics of deflation: the shift from text to book implies a slide from the literary to the literal, from the abstract to the concrete … A dogged (or mulish) taste for the mundane, the contingent, and the simple-minded finds its only outlet in puns. In a discipline that prides itself on discerning hidden depths, superficiality shocks like a purloined letter.[389]

Price's language here is self-reflexively critical: she sighs at metaphor and puns, yet she also engages in her own figurative, allusive language of stubborn animals and purloined letters. The proliferation has self-reflexive, emergent qualities: I believe this is the Menippean discourse bubbling up and allowing other literary discourses more familiar from poetry and fiction to attach themselves to critical insights about textual production. This ability to join genres of criticism and fiction is what makes McLuhan's,

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[389] Price goes on: "Writing from the 'margins' gave way to writing in the margin (adversaria provide much of the richest book-historical evidence). The old refrain 'it is no accident that' was shunted aside by the new interest in paratextual accidentals… Isabel Hofmeyr reinvested postcolonial catchwords like 'stereotype' and 'cliché' with their typographical weight. And Peter McDonald retranslated the slogan 'il n'y a pas de hors-text' into a claim about tipped-in pages. In foregrounding the technical sense of Derrida's term, McDonald defines the text by contradistinction to the book, and not the world." See Price, "From The History of a Book to a 'History of the Book,'" 123. She cites Hofmeyr and Sarah Nuttall, "The Book in Africa," *Current Writing* 13:2 (2001), 1-8 and Peter McDonald, "Ideas of the Book and Histories of Literature: After Theory?" *PMLA* 121 (2006): 222-223.

McKenzie's, Cloud's, and Theobald's stories of history and errancy into imaginative writing; it is what makes Pynchon's encyclopedic novels able to incorporate so much media theory into their carnivals and satires.

That generic function of mixing discourses and frames of remediation reveals itself most *visibly* at moments of change, when there is a desire to assess how and where disciplines got to be where they are. In assessing Theobald's historicist impulses and shortcomings, Kramnick cites Theobald's appropriation of many aesthetic discourses in his attempt to situate his editorial method: he "draws on metaphors taken whole cloth from the discourse of aesthetics to authorize his own project and elevate Shakespeare. White the trajectory of Theobaldian method is to disengage the aesthetic from criticism, and the latter from editing, these binaries are not as much realized in Theobald's project as retroactively discovered by his followers."[390] Satirizing Theobald's unweeded garden in 1756, the playwright Arthur Murray proclaims the trend in editorial prospects through the figurative language from Shakespeare's plays, through not just *Hamlet* but also *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, finally, recursively, incorporating other editors and authors into the prospect crowded with allusions:

> The great *Shakespear* sat upon a Cliff, looking abroad through all Creation. His possessions were very near as extensive as *Homer*'s; but in some places, had not received sufficient culture. But even there spontaneous Flowers shot up, and in the *unweeded Garden* which grows to seed, you might cull Lavender, Myrtle, and Wild Thyme. Craggy rock hills, and dales, the woodland and open country, struck the eye with wild variety, and o'er our heads roll'd Thunder, deep and awful, and the Lightning's flash darted athwart the solemn scene; while on the blasted Heath, Witches, Elves, and Fairies, with their own Queen Mab, play'd in frolic gambols. Mean time the immortal Bard sat with his eyes in a fine frenzy rolling, and writers both in the Tragic and Comic stile were gathered round him. Aristotle seemed to lament that Shakespeare had not studied his art of Poetry, and Longinus admired him to a degree of

[390] Kramnick, 93-94.

> enthusiasm. Otway, Rowe, and Congreve had him constantly in their eye, and even Milton was looking for Flowers to transplant into his own Paradise.[391]

Gray's flowery language is a satire of Theobald's own recursive metaphor, but it is also a reminder of how Menippean discourse grafts itself onto other discourses by means of imitating figurative language. It exposes the structures and artifices of others' writings by showing them to be formulaic and composed of other texts—this exposure is not a positive or negative function on its own, for all learning is in some sense a kind of artifice made out of manufactured insights and theories. There is no knowledge already "out there" to be perceived as an object; our prospects are composed of generative errors in remediating past media into new forms.

Assessing the scene of clotted variorum editions in 1781, philosopher and aesthetic theorist James Harris praises conjectural criticism but warns editors of growing too sure of their ability to conjecture. Harris reanimates the over-used anatomical metaphors as a means of raising a concern about their limitations, self-consciously showing the conflict between the scientific language and the artistry involved in filling in the gaps of conjecture. Like Price, he mixes critical and literary metaphors of artificial structures: "Authors have been taken in hand like anatomical subjects, only to display the skill and abilities of the Artist," he writes.[392] There is a kind of confusion of editor and author function in this hyper-mediation: "the end of many an Edition seems often to have been no more than to exhibit the great sagacity and erudition of an Editor. The Joy of the Task was the Honour of mending, while Corruptions were sought with a more than common attention, as each of them afforded a testimony to the Editor and his Art."

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[391] Arthur Murphy, *Gray's Inn Journal* (London: 1756), 24.
[392] James Harris, *Philological Inquiries* (London: 1781), I:32.

The generic function of mixing discourses and frames of remediation reveals itself most *valuably* at moments of change, when the self-reflection becomes too inward-looking and the discipline feels too immersed in itself. There is a kind of disciplinary double logic of critical remediation, of being immersed in one's own procedures but also feeling wary of too much critical mediation in the fields of study. Darnton self-protectively, ironically longs for immersion in watermarks, say, and so he is keen to notice what he perceives to be errors or too-heavy mediations. He wonders if the overfull prospect could produce errors in overreaching scholarship that extends beyond its means: "The history of books has become so crowded with ancillary disciplines that one can no longer see its general contours."[393] But Theobald, Pope, and Johnson made similar critiques in that very figurative language as they assessed hyper-mediation: to notice a problem of perspective is to become aware of one's situation in the double logic of remediation.

With McKenzie's and Cloud's thought experiments/Menippean editorial satire/remediations in mind, I want to end this chapter with a thought experiment in overcrowding perspectives. I will juxtapose Bentley's and Theobald's hyper-mediated, conjectural prospect made of dilations on others' errors with William Hogarth's *Satire on False Perspective* (1754), which served as the humorous frontispiece to his friend John Joshua Kirby's *Method of Perspective.*[394] Kirby's pamphlet was a remediation of Brook Taylor's treatise on linear perspective from 1715, which was revised in 1719 and then adapted by mathematicians and perspectival painters alike throughout the eighteenth

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[393] Ibid.
[394] John Joshua Kirby, *Dr. Brook Taylor's Method of Perspective Made Easy, Both in Theory and Practice ... Being an attempt to make the art of perspective easy and familiar; to adapt it intirely to the arts of design; and to make it an entertaining study to any gentleman who shall chuse so polite an amusement*, (London: 1761).

century. Kirby and Taylor both must find a way to mediate precise directions for visual mediation of a perspective in clear language. That remediation problem is a kind of thought experiment: how do you direct someone in language how to mediate a visual perspective? In addition to step-by-step instructions of perspectival procedures, they used diagrams to instruct readers how to draw their own projections and structures. In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan assesses the cultural implications of perspectival drawing and how that tool designates a position for situating one's self and one's knowledge: "The arbitrary selection of a single static position creates a pictorial space with a vanishing point. This space can be filled in bit by bit, and is quite different from non-pictorial space in which each thing simply resonates or modulates its own space visually in two-dimensional form."[395]

The artist Hogarth does not have to worry about that text-to-language remediation thought experiment, so he. He makes his own remediation thought experiment in rendering as many errors in perspective as he can in his *Satire*:

> It is both a summary and parody of the artistic obsession with laws and systems of perspective, In this world it is as if the student of Alberti's *Della Pittura* got just about everything wrong. The gentlemen in the right foreground casts a line into the river, but it drops behind the rod of another fisherman sitting on the bank in the middle ground of the composition. A woman leans out of an upper-story window to light a torch that man is carrying on a hill far beyond her, and a tavern sign swings form a wooden bracket whose arms are attached to parts of buildings that are spatially removed form one another. These visual puzzles and perspective mishaps were perhaps intended as a wake-up call to those artists who did not trouble to educate themselves in the laws of perspective, or perhaps they covertly cautioned artists against adhering to rules on paper rather than relying on their eyes to replicate reality.[396]

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[395] McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy,* 16. For more on McLuhan's evocation of Alberti, see Cavell's on "The Invention of Euclid" in *McLuhan in Space,* 54-57.

[396] Lois Fichner-Rathus, *Foundations of Art and Design: An Enhanced Media Edition* (Web: Cengage Learning, 2011), 154. David Hockney remediated the engraving one more time in *Kerby (After Hogarth) Useful Knowledge* (1975), in color and contemporary drawing techniques (it is also six feet tall and five

I like to think of Hogarth's image as a visual Menippean satire that calls up not only the generative thought experiments in perspectival confusion that have bedeviled and enabled Pope, Bentley, and Theobald, but also as a kind of visual representation of many of the eighteenth century's Menippean satires that Weinbrot mentioned in his long list. I can see—or perceive through my juxtapositional critical tools—Walton's *Compleat Angler,* the urban confusion of the *Dunciad*, Swift's satires of religion in the flattened church and his Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians in *Gulliver's Travels*, and others. I put it in a genealogy of visual Menippean satires with McLuhan and Fiore, McCleod/Cloud, and my own work in remediating Hogarth in glitch art.

Writing on *The Poetics of Perspective*, James Elkins argues for perspectival treatises like Taylor's and Kirby's as a moments in the history of epistemology and not just art history. Perspectives are tools: "The point of this excursion is to demonstrate not only the obvious fact that there is always error but that the amount of error is often large and even small discrepancies can block the retrieval of ideal geometry in part or in whole."[397] He continues with a statement that is as applicable to textual editing as it is to art history, as Theobald would have recognized well:

> Some discrepancies between paintings and their ideal geometries are unresolvable in the sense that refining the analyses will not help, and we must wait until new information comes to life if we hope to make any

feet wide, considerably larger than Hogarth's work). Fichner-Rathus calls it a "parody of a parody." Hockney chose to parody the parody "because of its rather whimsical feeling. You could see what it was about, how Hogarth meant it; if you did not know the rules of perspective, ghastly errors like this would occur. But I was attracted to what Hogarth thought were the ghastly errors and I thought I also saw that they created space just as well, if not better, than the correct perspective he was praising." In this way, Hockney saw the satire as generative of his own remediation and the errors that were being satirized as generative in their own way. The art history textbook from which this compare/contrast exercise was taken is another form of remediation, in that Fichner-Rathus has to describe Hogarth's scene in language (the image is also reproduced on the page) and quote Hockney's explanation—multiple forms of mediation are present on the digital page.

[397] James Elkins, *The Poetics of Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 224-26.

> progress on them. Even when most a painting is accurate to near the limits of the medium, it can happen that the absence of a single piece of informant will vitiate an entire reconstruction. An instance is the interior in Velazquez's *Las Meninas*: because there is no foreshortened square in the fictive space, the length and proportions of the room cannot be discovered from the painting itself.

Elkins' argument is a reminder that my experiments here have plenty of antecedents, most notably in Foucault's (literal) reflection on *Las Meninas* at the beginning of *The Order of Things*, in which he notes the recursive effects of the play on perspective that engenders new disciplinary organizational structures. That painting is a marvel of *mise en abyme*, of the way that noticing oneself in the act of perception is a means of engendering new ways of organizing knowledge: "We are looking at a picture in which the painter is in turn looking out at us. A mere confrontation, eyes catching one another's glance, direct looks superimposing themselves upon one another as they cross."[398] Where do Theobald and Pope see Shakespeare: do they see themselves in him as they mediate their prospects of error? Foucault asks a provocative question for readers, editors, and remediators alike: "And yet this slender line of reciprocal visibility embraces a whole complex network of uncertainties, exchanges, and feints. The painter is turning his eyes towards us only in so far as we happen to occupy the same position as his subject."

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[398] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books 1966, 1970, 1994), 4-5.

Chapter 4: Culture is an Error: Mediating Conjectures in Thomas Percy's Editorial Theories

"A theory of cultural change is impossible without knowledge of the changing sense ratios effected by various externalizatons of our senses. It is very much worth dwelling on this matter, since we shall see that from the invention of the alphabet there has been a continuous drive in the Western world toward the separation of the senses… The paradox … is that the two-dimensional mosaic is, in fact, a multidimensional world of interstructural resonance. It is the three-dimensional world of pictorial space that is, indeed, an abstract illusion built on the intense separation of the visual from the other senses."
--Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962)[399]

"But to suggest that each of these editors is merely a stupid scoundrel is really to miss the broader point: **their culpability is *institutional.*** It lies in the tradition of editing and editorial commentary itself, which exists in the creation of culturally palatable displacements of the evidence. Thus, the editors' derivations one from another essentially manifest their cultural loyalty—*loyalty to the substitute*, which their actions over the generations render incrementally more and more familiar and credible, as the evidence becomes excrementally more and more quaint and disregarded. The consequence is that the evidence, and the culture that produced it, appear alien in the culture of editing, even as it claims to bridge it to us."
--Randall McLeod, FIAT fLUX, (1994)[400]

Introduction: Thomas Percy's Editorial Projects Are Part of the Gutenberg Galaxy

The mosaic qualities and functions of McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy* allow it to be a member of multiple genres: as I have noted so far, those remediating and remediated genres include theories of sensory perception and confusion, grand editorial statement of purpose in remediating the past, and Menippean satire. McLuhan's work also fits into the genre of the conjectural history that was popular in the Scottish Enlightenment of the

[399] McLuhan, 42-43.
[400] McLeod, "FIAT fLUX," 127-28, italics and bold original.

1760s and 1770s. Paula McDowell links McLuhan's work to this historical genre in her genealogy of the terms "print culture" and "oral tradition": "in the late eighteenth century we begin to see the idea of communications technologies as part of an inevitable, unfolding sequence of human history."[401] McLuhan's project is recursive: it is conjectural history from a zoomed-out perspective about the history of perspectives and what kinds of historical consciousnesses (conjectures) arise from those prospects. Thus he can abstract theories about the nature of abstraction, as seen above. He can also theorize about how manuscript technology is diffuse and doesn't lend itself to theory the way a fixed perspective of print does: "Manuscripts were altogether too slow and uneven a matter to provide either a fixed point of view or the habit of gliding steadily on single planes of thought and information. … [D]etached habits of observation are quite uncongenial to manuscript cultures, whether ancient Egyptian, Greek, or Chinese or medieval."[402] McLuhan's work can be considered as another version of Thomas Percy's conjectural history of oral traditions, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Percy the editor explains his synthetic method of piecing together "independent chain[s] of poems" in thematic "series" (like mosaics): "Such specimens of ancient poetry have been selected, as either show the gradation of our language, exhibit the progress of

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[401] McDowell, "Mediating Media Past and Present: Toward a Genealogy of 'Print Culture' and 'Oral Tradition,'" 244. Before she arrives at these conjectural histories, her genealogy of "the eighteenth-century emergence of confrontational models of print and oral tradition" (243) moves from the seventeenth-century oratory tradition to Pope's *Dunciad* and Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, touching on theological debates about fixing Scriptural interpretations in sermons and in printed materials, to debates about the oral origins of Homer's epics as they were debated in the Battle of the Books, into the elocution movement, and toward the ballad revival and its ensuing scholarly debates about authority, authenticity, and national origins of culture. Among the conjectural histories, she names Adam Smith's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1762-63), Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), William Robertson's *A View of the Progress of Society* (1769) and *History of the Discovery and Settlement of America* (1777) and Henry Home, Lord Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man* (1778).

[402] McLuhan, 28.

popular opinions, display the peculiar manners and customs of former ages, or throw light on our earliest classical poets."[403]

Percy styled himself as an editor not just of the English oral tradition but as a theorist of a worldwide manuscript culture who would disseminate these studies in print for wider study. Sounding something like McLuhan, Percy described this work: "the first attempts at composition among all barbarous nations are ever found to be poetry and song. The praises of their gods, and the achievements of their heroes, are usually changed at their festival meetings. These are the first rudiments of history."[404] During the 1760s, he devoted himself to and engaged his colleagues in various projects to remediate manuscripts and other cultural artifacts into print with significant editorial interventions to explicate those "peculiar manners and customs" of many nations. Like the other editors I have discussed so far, he sees remediation in both senses of the word: to polish faults through editorial remedy and to re-mediate them into the cultural histories of "manners and customs of former ages" and "the progress of popular opinions" like those conjectural histories that were also being published. McDowell calls the *Reliques* an "idealized narrative of 'oral itinerant poets,'" stressing how Percy, his editorial collaborators, and other balladeers "forged a sharp *conceptual* (not actual) separation between 'oral' and 'print' ballads. In so doing, they contributed to the later binary of 'orality and literacy' that many ballad scholars are still working to undo today."[405]

"*Conceptual* (not actual)": that phrase is important beyond McDowell's work of distinction-making. Conjectural criticism shifts between these two states, generating corrections, satires, theories of knowledge and media—and sometimes errors that mistake

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[403] Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (London, 1765), I:i-ii.
[404] Percy, *Reliques,* III:ii.
[405] McDowell, 243, quoting Percy's *Reliques*, xlix.

a notion for a fact, and vice versa. The conjectural history does similar generic work of abstracting "the human mind," as Mary Poovey quotes from William Robertson's *History of Scotland* (1759), into a concept that can perceive itself and its agencies progressing over time. In *The History of the Modern Fact*, Poovey argues that the problem of induction (which is associated with Bacon and bedeviled Housman in the nineteenth century) "challenged the assumption that particulars one had yet to observe would resemble the particular one has already seen; to address the problem of induction, the philosopher had to explain how one could assume that systematic knowledge could be generated from what was inevitably an incomplete survey."[406] In conjectural histories, these abstractions generated notions of facticity and systematic knowledge. As conjectural criticism moves away from Bentley's scholarly editing toward treating texts as cultural objects, the method's abstractions also created slippages and conflations like that print/orality conceptualization that concerns McDowell in both Percy's *Reliques* and McLuhan's.visionary media theory.

McDowell situates McLuhan and Percy in the genre of conjectural history so she can account for those kinds of sweeping generalizations across time and space as a convention rather than a problem or a fatal flaw in the projects, but she is still skeptical of the ways McLuhan's works have been taken as historical studies rather than works of visionary literature. She is especially perplexed by the enduring popularity of McLuhan's term "print culture" as it has made itself adaptable in so many discourses, noting that its proliferation owes something to its slipperiness and indistinctions: "McLuhan employed the term 'print culture' as one among many similar terms ('typographic era,' 'Gutenberg

[406] Mary Poovey, *The History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 215.

era,' 'mechanical era,' 'electric age,' and so forth)."[407] The phrase is associated with Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, where it takes on a life and agency of its own although Eisenstein only mentions it in passing, as well. McDowell notes that "it seems remarkable that Eisentstein's explanation of her use of this specific term in her eight-hundred-page work consists of a brief remark in the preface and two footnotes in the opening chapter" and yet it has traveled widely and hyper-productively: "despite three decades of critique and refinement of the term and concept of print culture, the proliferation of projects and institutions under the rubric of 'print culture' studies seems if anything to have intensified." For her part, Eisenstein notes that "the term print culture has been employed in so many diverse contexts that it is in danger of becoming a cliché."[408] (It's fitting, perhaps, that "cliché" is a French onomatopoeia of the sound that a printing press makes when it delivers the impression of a printing plate!)

McDowell is writing in the genre of genealogy, in which the work of distinction and the study of conflation are attendant processes by which she may study how orality and print became conceptualized and defined against each other. Foucault's description of the gray process of minute documentary study—tracing conflicts, erasures and decaying, disputed documents—sounds much like Pope's "dull duty of an editor" or Theobald's weeds. There is farrago everywhere. Genealogies are textual studies of knowledge that has been crossed out, attenuated, or under-cited. Genealogy rejects the sweep of the conjectural history and explores how "the world of speech and desires has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, ploys,"[409] but it is also interested in the

[407] McDowell, 230-33.
[408] Eisenstein, "An Unacknowledged Revolution Revisited," 88.
[409] Ibid.

conjectural history's constitutive conventions of zoomed-out perspectives and recursive arguments about how to assess change over time (and imagine futurity).

What is the role of error in this kind of genealogy, and what does one do when one sees it? It is understandable to want to correct these errors or slippages to gain clarity and greater explanatory power for one's critical terminology. Yet the histories of errant readings from Pope, Bentley, and Theobald indicate the recursive nature of these corrections and reframings: errors accumulate through the very means that one uses to correct them. Taking a harder line than McDowell, Eisenstein's recent critics such as Adrian Johns and Joseph Dane have identified these conflations and under-historicized references—errors, they call them—in histories of print technology, and they are concerned about the knowledge that is produced from that kind of abstraction. Arguing against Eisenstein for "the discreet charm of the discrete," Dane writes how the very definition of evidence in these studies of print culture is already an artifact of our scholarly methods to conceptualize it: "the myth of print culture, and the identities of its objects—these things are now as entrenched in popular culture as they are embedded in scholarly culture."[410]

Yet in evoking the discrete, Dane has also repeated another abstraction—"culture"—that emerged from eighteenth-century conjectural histories like Percy's. Raymond Williams famously said in *Keywords* that "culture" is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language"; he traced its moment of conceptual proliferation to the early nineteenth century, where "literature" also becomes an emergent

[410] Dane, 14

phenomenon.[411] Jenny Davidson has traced how the term "culture" proliferates into multiple discourses of parentage, education, literary taste, scientific study, and ethnography, among others, during the eighteenth century. She sorts through the related uses of biology, breeding, and human nature and "[lays] them out *in a sort of mosaic* that shows unexpected and revealing facets, not just of eighteenth-century discussion, but also of the ways in which we continue to explore and explain human nature."[412] The term is proliferated through its very slipperiness—and debates about how slippery it is.

In critiques of this proliferation, there is a pattern of reiteration turning to saturation turning to error. In *Reassembling the Social*, Bruno Latour traces the proliferation of "social" as a concept that became too useful and then not useful at all. The widespread citation of D.F. McKenzie's term "sociology of texts" is one indicator of that concept's popularity, as it served first as a multiplicity-encouraging corrective of New Bibliography's claims to isolating texts outside of production and attempting to perfect a text through an invocation of recovering authorial intention. It becomes a given rather than an argument when it is invoked later. "Sociology of texts" becomes part of a foundation for criticizing Eisenstein's large-scale "print culture" as Johns details the many agents who interact with print. Following Latour, Siskin and Warner have argued that "as with the concept of social in sociology, our emancipatory deployment of culture

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[411] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 87. Williams explains that he had begun to notice multiple uses of the term "culture": "first, the study of literature, a use of the record to indicate, powerfully but not explicitly, some central formation of values (and *literature* itself had the same kind emphasis); secondly, in more general discussion, but with what seemed to me very different implications, a use which made it almost equivalent to *society*: a particular way of life. …I looked up culture, almost casually in one of the thirteen volumes of what we now usually call the OED: the *Oxford New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. It was like a shock of recognition. The changes of sense I had been trying to understand had begun in English, it seemed, in the early nineteenth century" (12-13).
[412] Jenny Davidson, *Breeding: A Partial History of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 2 (italics added).

may empty and simplify the objects it examines."[413] There is a recursive nature to these critiques of the diminishing returns of recursive scholarship, as they assess errors large and small in order to reframe investigations and objects of study.

I am interested in this phenomenon as it generates from the problem of examining texts and concepts together in eighteenth-century conjectural genres like Percy's. His blending of conjectural criticism and history lets us see how these two terms—print (as distinct from orality) and culture—became grafted onto one another through corrections that reified the abstractions. They are both vague on their own, both historicized in contentious ways, yet their combination is seemingly proliferable in many academic and popular discourses through corrective reframings and remediations. "A synthetic concept of print culture can do little to accommodate a multiplicity of readings," argues Johns in his defense of Eisenstein's critique of *The Nature of the Book*.[414] Yet in many ways a synthetic—or synthesized—concept of print culture *has* generated a multiplicity of readings, and the errors remain embedded in tricky ways because they are both foundational and obvious as errors, so where does correction start and stop? To quote Siskin and Warner, is the "strategic vagueness" of the term "an inviting flexibility" or a "dirty secret"?[415] What does it mean to attempt to correct that vagueness—what other unpredictable, non-purposive corrections have stemmed from that attempt at reassessing changes over time?

Percy's projects were successful in some sense at reinvigorating ballad collection and other antiquarian miscellanies in the middle of the eighteenth century. At the same

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[413] William B. Warner and Clifford Siskin, "Stopping Cultural Studies" *Profession* 2008 (New York: Modern Language Association), 94-107, 101.
[414] Johns, "How to Acknowledge a Revolution," 116.
[415] Warner and Siskin, 95, 102

time, their reach almost always exceeded their grasp and most of the projects actually present a more interesting case for the problems of rendering print and culture together. It was not just that the tasks of collection, collation, translation, annotation, and discussion were complicated interactions; further, the agencies generated by these materials stymy or glitch the practices of close-reading, contextualization, historicity, and cultural theory that have been cited as the foundational disciplinary practices of the *Reliques*.

'A Huge Farrago of Learned Lumber': Variorum Culture and Cultures

The Ancients-Moderns debate about editing the past for moral exemplarity or for knowledge production—mediating one's taste or one's learning—continued to have currency after Bentley, Pope, Swift, and others stopped reiterating and expanding their opprobria. Percy and his colleagues worked on editions of classical texts before they turned to English and Scottish ballads, and their debates about the design and editorial paratexts for those editions are familiar from previous versions of contests over mediation.[416] In *Always Already New*, Lisa Gitelman assesses the documentary status of records and other texts in terms of arguments about technological and cultural change over time. Changes in media synecdochize larger concerns about changes in mediation:

> Records and documents are kernels of humanistic thought, of the specifically modern hermeneutical project that has been associated since the nineteenth century with university departments of history and literature

[416] Leah Dennis reads Percy's editorial work through the lens of the Ancients-Moderns debate. See "Thomas Percy: Antiquarian vs. Man of Taste." *PMLA* 57:1 (March 1942), 140-154. "It might be possible to trace the echoes of this conflict throughout the century, but it would not be easy and it would not advance our story very far. The trouble was that there was little to add to the arguments on either side," writes Levine in *The Battle of the Books* (414).

> as well as many broader, less academic institutions of public memory, like libraries and museums, and other resonant forms of authoritative cultural self-identification, such as anthologies, reference books, bibliographies, and similar compendiums. What these structures all variously entail is the cultural impulse to preserve and interpret, or better, yet, interpret and preserve, since taking their analysis down to the unit level of records and documents helps to reveal the interpretative structures that are always already in play within any urge or act to preserve.[417]

Gitelman calls these documents and their protocols of preservation and analysis "the data of culture." Her self-correction—"the cultural impulse to preserve and interpret" gets reversed to "better yet, to interpret and preserve"—is an echo of the contentious Ancients-Moderns debate about how those two protocols should be carried out.[418] Correcting the order of operations from preserve/interpret to interpret/preserve is a way of solidifying the protocols' status as cultural data. The proliferation of arguments about that status becomes, reflexively, the evidence that's used to recover those moments of contested mediation, but they never exist "outside" of that evidentiary status.

Percy and his friend James Grainger rehearsed a version of the Ancients-Moderns debates about editorial mediation when they worked together on a translation of Tibullus in 1759, yet their concerns hinged on the practical rather than the theoretical dimensions of textual transmission. Grainger attempts to mediate between appealing to scholarship and taste in the design and paratext of the book—and ends up overcrowding it with notes

[417] Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2006), xi-xii.
[418] It is also a reminder of how that phrase will take on political meanings later in the century in Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to That Event,* (1790) ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien. (New York: Penguin Classics, 1986): "At once to preserve and to reform is quite another thing. When the useful parts of an old establishment are kept, and what is superadded is to be fitted to what is retained, a vigorous mind, steady, persevering attention, various powers of comparison and combination, and the resources of an understanding fruitful in expedients, are to be exercised; they are to be exercised in a continued conflict with the combined force of opposite vices, with the obstinacy that rejects all improvement and the levity that is fatigued and disgusted with everything of which it is in possession. But you may object—'A process of this kind is slow. It is not fit for an assembly which glories in performing in a few months the work of ages. Such a mode of reforming, possibly, might take up many years.' Without question it might; and it ought" (164).

and appreciations alike. "The design of the translator is very *different*," Grainger writes, for "he has commented on his author as a Roman poet, and as a Roman lover: and although he owns himself enamoured of his beauties, (as who can draw a pleasing resemblance of a face which disgusts him?) he hopes he has not been blind to his imperfections."[419] He preserves the notes from previous translators and adds conjectures from himself and Percy, though those are separated as endnotes rather than footnotes. Grainger uses familiar metaphors to describe this work, which was somewhere between preservation of the social translation history and interpretation about which readings to retain and which could be edited out: "Tibullus required much of this weeding."[420] Furthermore, the editorial work was designed "to dispel those Mists of Obscurity thro' which one People has hitherto beheld another, which was to extend and elevate the Understanding; and to unite the more rational Part of our Fellow Creatures in one Social Family."[421]

Grainger's "Social Family" is a more positive term for interactions with other editors than the Ancients or Moderns partisans would have used, a middle-ground-seeking desire to preserve others' interpretations as the highest priority of mediation of texts. It anticipates McKenzie's statement of purpose for "the sociology of texts" to study variants as cultural data that provide "access…to social motives: by dealing with the facts

[419] Ibid, emphasis added.
[420] James Grainger. Advertisement to *Poetical Translation of the Works of Tibullus*, (London, 1758), 12. Scaliger (1577), the Dutch Brockhusius (1708), the English John Dart (1720), and the Italian Vulpius (1749). In the first edition of the translation, Percy insisted on leaving the Latin text on the page as a record of its cultural import, which Grainger worried would overwhelm the text but agreed to do: "as it is according to the Laws of Typography, …your version is to occupy the upper part of every page, and your friend's [Tibullus's] text is to be degraded to the bottom." See Grainger to Percy, August 1, 1758. *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century,* ed. John Nichols 8 vols (London, 1817-58), VII:261-2.
[421] James Grainger, *Letter to Tobias Smollett, MD, Occasioned by Critical Remarks Upon a Late Translation of Tibullus* (London, 1759), 25.

of transmission and the material evidence of reception, it can make discoveries as distinct from inventing meanings." ("Inventing meanings" is a provocative statement about how McKenzie sees contemporary forms of conjecture!) He continues: "[Social] bibliography, simply by its own comprehensive logic, its indiscriminate inclusiveness, testifies to the fact that new readers of course make new texts, and that their new meanings are a function of their new forms."[422] Gitelman and McKenzie do not study the same kinds of media documents—they would consider themselves as tilling different fields in book history—yet McKenzie's repetition of "new" calls up *Always Already New*. Gitelman appropriates that much appropriated critical formulation (framed variously by Kant, Marx, Heidegger, and others) to describe how the "novelty years, transitional states, and identity crises of different media" (in McKenzie's case, in bibliographers' mediating approaches to textual study) "stand to tell us much, about the course of media history and about the broad conditions by which media and communication have been shaped."[423] Historically, McKenzie's proposal of "the sociology of texts" occurs at the intersection of Eisenstein's work being popularized and the widespread translation and American and British institutionalization of poststructuralist and semiotic approaches to literary study. That intersection is also important to situate in technological terms: before the Internet had changed notions of social media interactions but after the heyday of the facsimile edition as a means of enabling access to historical documents in academic libraries that could not afford to buy the limited number of material copies of older texts.

Yet the success of the term in book history also occurred in part because of what, following Siskin and Warner, might be called its "strategic vagueness," coupled with the

[422] McKenzie, 59.
[423] Gitelman, 1.

already valorized critical protocol of obsessively correcting and negotiating among multiple bibliographic interventions. It's a term that congratulates its users for their own scrutinizing and negotiating habits—they may preserve their detailed practices while also interpreting anew and recording others' interpretations. Bibliographers could add to their tasks the collation of previous bibliographic work. "Sociology of texts" has it both ways, for as Latour puts it: "when social scientists add the adjective 'social' to some phenomenon, they designate a stabilized state of affairs, a bundle of ties that, later, may be mobilized to account for some other phenomenon."[424] The newness of so many readings generated by the sociology of texts was a signal of its success, but it was also self-confirming success: "In situations where innovations proliferate, where group boundaries are uncertain, when the range of entities to be taken into account fluctuates, the sociology of the social is no longer able to trace actors' new associations."

Indeed, the value of social editing and what it means to be social has always been under intense debate, even outside of the context of Ancient and Modern debates about approaches to mediating the past. Tobias Smollett criticized Grainger's edition of Tibullus for its busyness and unnecessary preservation of so many past translators' notes, insisting that Grainger use his editorial taste to choose among previous interpretations. Grainger defended his practice: "Pray Mr. Hypercritical Dr., is not this [variorum commentary] one of the approved Ways of commenting on a Poet?" In Grainger's view, variorum commentary was a form of displaying taste, a way of congratulating readers on their own discerning abilities: "Altho' the Sources of Imitation are not near so copious as Annotators had long imagined, and sameness does, by no Means, in many cases, imply Plagiarism; yet I have commonly heard Men of Taste allow, that they felt Pleasure, in

[424] Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, 1, 11.

reading the correspondent Thoughts of different Poets on the same subject."[425] In Latour's terms, these defenses of variorum editorial technology show uncertain boundaries of readerly interactions with texts, unsettled (recursive) debates about associational practices of engaging with past editions, and even questions about who was part of the social family, if they didn't want to join such a hyper-mediated group.

The bundle of ties from the variorum technology records sociality, but it is also bulky. Grainger's critics noticed something like this ouroboros effect that congratulated editors for their hypermediations: social interactions leave significant material traces in print, as cluttered pages and stacks of paper. Smollett criticized "the vast congeries of notes grammatical, critical, and explanatory" as "a huge farrago of learned lumber, jumbled together to very little purpose, seemingly calculated to display the translator's reading, rather than to illustrate the sense and beauty of the original."[426] Grainger's response to Smollett's review takes that recursive critique of over-saturation to still another level. In the margins of his printed response, he excerpts quotations from the Plan of Smollett's *Critical Review* as a means of showing that Smollett had failed at his duties of fairly assessing another author's work. He accuses Smollett of misquoting his work in drawing attention to particular bad translations and then affixes a footnote: "We will not misquote the Words of any Author, who may fall under our Inspection. vid. Plan of *C. Review. … And therefore you promised not to exhibit a partial and unfair Assemblage of Blemishes of any Production!*"[427]

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[425] Grainger, *Letter to Tobias Smollett*, 20.
[426] [Tobias Smollett], "Review of *Poetical Translation of the Works of Tibullus.*" *Critical Review* VI (1759), 276.
[427] Grainger, *Letter to Tobias Smollett*, 20.

Smollett delights in identifying particular passages where Grainger used neologisms, Scotticisms, and other language that would have been out of place in classical poetry. Smollett's identification of various errors in Grainger's translation is a synecdochal method of identifying the error of the entire procedure: a single error stands in for the progress of depravity in the whole endeavor. To defend himself, Grainger reanimates the figure of Zoilus from the Ancients-Moderns debate as "an ingenious attempt to forestall criticism by illustrating its dangers in advance."[428] Adding to those increasingly convoluted defenses, he recursively appropriates Pope's critique of excessive annotation in the *Essay on Criticism* as a criticism of Smollett's work: "so innumerable are the Instances [of hyper-criticism] to be culled out of your part in the *Critical Review* that *To tell them would a Hundred Tongues require, / Or one Vain Wit's that would a Hundred tire*."[429] That Pope's critique of immoderate footnotes can be cited defensively by someone who had been criticized for such a practice shows how mobile that line was to recursive re-contextualization in eighteenth-century criticism!

An errata list is another example of a feature that serves different social functions for the translator and reviewer: one sees them as a vehicle for transparency, the other for the hypermediacy of embarrassing error. The translator treats that paratext as a means of making corrections social and public; the reviewer has a different concept of "social" in animadverting on those errors. The media historian has other uses for such a document—in this case, I am interested in its recursive features and tendency to be incorporated into

[428] Levine, 220. Zoilus was resurrected in the eighteenth century in Pope's and Thomas Parnell's collaborative translation, *Homer's Battle of the Frogs and the Mice. With the Remarks of Zoilus, to Which Is Prefix'd, the Life of Said Zoilus* (London, 1717). Predictably, the *Critical Review* fired back at Grainger by reappropriating Grainger's references: "nothing can be more just than to charge Dr. Smollett with the malevolent spirit of Zoilus, considering that he is supposed to have censured the works of that second Homer, Dr. James Grainger." See "Grainger's Letter to Dr. Smollett." *Critical Review* VII (London, 1759), 141-158, 143.
[429] Grainger, *Letter to Tobias Smollett*, 3.

criticism rather than remaining as solely utilitarian documents for printers and correctors to assess. Authors, editors, reviewers, and translators had non-practical uses for those sheets that contradicted—or extended into the realm of interpretation—the contingent status of these pages that were meant to serve as directions to proof correctors and printers for material to be fixed, not to be preserved as another form of animadvertable document. Smollett draws gleeful attention to typographical errata in Grainger's text. In amassing so many notes, he indicates, Grainger had not paid enough attention to minutiae. To one such note, Grainger fired back that Smollett knows the ways that a text leaves an editor's hands in the print shop:

> Suppose now, you had imputed this double Solecism, as you term it, to an Error of the Press? You, Sir, who have so much to do with that Engine of Literature, must know, from many Years Experience, that no Accuracy can secure a Writer from its Mistakes. But as this was an Indulgence I could never expect from you, I rather chuse to refer you to the Errata, where, p. 46, you will find your *double Solecism* corrected.[430]

Gitelman argues for the value of these kinds of documents and records of contentious preservation: they are "media as socially realized structures of communication, where structures include both technological forms and their associated protocols, and where communication is a cultural practice, a ritualized collection of different people on the same mental map, sharing or engaged with popular ontologies of representation."[431] In these back-and-forths, we see Grainger and Smollett engaging in ritualized rehearsals of past debates, but the errata note signals a kind of document that is less easy to access. Grainger and Smollett are quick to incorporate charges of all kinds of error into their rhetorical escalations but don't treat it as a practical consideration, per se—it is always already "evidence" for them, never a document in and of itself.

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[430] *Letter to Tobias Smollett*, 6.
[431] Gitelman, 7.

In terms of glitch aesthetics, the errata sheet is a kind of ontological puzzle that doesn't assimilate as well as it ought into our theories of agency. The ontological status of an error is always vexed: who made it? Who was responsible for correcting it? Who noticed it? What happened to it after it was corrected? Grainger's and Smollett's eagerness to subsume errors into rhetoric in their commentary shows their desire to both elide and exaggerate them in more mediation, but the errors remain stuck in the texts as artifacts of unresolved, indeterminate agencies, no matter how one generalizes them as records of social practices or smiles at their rhetorical flourishes.

In early versions of this project, I had an idea to follow Johns' work in *The Nature of the Book* and study these particular social interactions of correction on errata sheets. When I explained the project to historians, they saw it in terms of Marxist scholarship in social history (who are doing the corrections, what are the conditions of their labor, what is their social practice?[432]) or Latour's work on the sociology of scientific knowledge.[433] They asked: are you going to go into texts and correct those uncorrected errors? Read errata sheets to see evidence of their social practices? In some ways, the history of these kinds of mediations is less recoverable because practices of interpretation have favored the readings of editorial apparatus as sociological evidence. What have been preserved are interpretations of content, which have been reflexively studied as social practices. "Social" and "cultural" are both terms that are reified by the evidence of how people have debated how to define them. Their recursive uses have recursive pasts.

[432] See T.N. Shane, *Passed for Press: A Centenary History of the Association of Correctors of the Press* (Association of Correctors of the Press, 1954).

[433] See Steven Shapin and Simon Schaeffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) and Shapin, *A Social History of the Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

‘Placeless, Timeless’: The Life of an Abstraction *in media res*

Gitelman knows her term “cultural data” is more complicated than it appears to be because documents and records have multiple histories of use and definition—that very complicatedness and how to account for it is the subject of her work. Like Dane, Johns worries that the “culture” part of “print culture” takes the history of the book into an abstract realm: “In [Eisenstein’s] work, printing itself stands outside history. The press is something ‘*sui generis*,’ we are told, lying beyond the reach of conventional historical analysis. Its culture is correspondingly placeless and timeless.”[434] Johns is concerned with the abstractions Eisenstein attaches to print agency: her large concepts of standardization, dissemination, and fixity. He challenges each of those concepts with attention to particular social practices and agents involved in print production in early modern London—test cases in a material history of book production, including authors, printers, correctors, typesetters, readers, collectors, and censors. Johns argues for a narrowing of perspective so that one may see social distinctions among agents and agencies, social practices and disputes, political concerns about licensing and censorship—a textured account to challenge what he worries Eisenstein erases with her forceful argument and conceptual reading. I want to pause at the “placeless, timeless” critique and ask how this generic feature may be *constitutive* of these discussions about mediation. Indeed, I can trace one strand of the “placeless, timeless” version of media

[434] Johns. *The Nature of the Book*, 19, 10. I would be fascinated to see *The Nature of the Book* remediated through Latour’s Actor-Network theory, as an experiment in exploring the limitations of “social” in Johns’ work: what are the artifacts of this overused term, and what remain as useful accounts of these multiple printing and copying protocols?

history back to Percy's project, wherein such a desire for comprehensiveness was a priority for defining the conventions of a cultural history.

Percy was a witness to and participant in culture's proliferation as a term that could conflate meanings and contexts. Remediating Williams' *Keywords* method, Robert Young begins his essay "Culture and the History of Difference" by tracing the genealogy of the term "culture."[435] He notes that the first figurative use of "cultured" to mean refined—in distinction to the literal sense as in "of the soil of plants"—is registered in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as dating from 1764. The citation for the literal meaning is gardener-poet William Shenstone's lines from his *Elegies*: "our cultur'd vales." The citation to the figurative meaning is Oliver Goldsmith's *The Traveller*: "The gentler morals, such as play / Thro' life's more cultur'd walks." Given that their work of compilation and editing the *Oxford English Dictionary* has occurred over more than a century, the many editors who looked at this entry probably did not realize that their illustrative authors knew each other. Shenstone's "cultur'd vales" in his expansive gardens at Leasowes were the site of many "cultur'd walks" of discussion among Goldsmith, the poet-doctor-editor Grainger, the printer James Dodsley, and the antiquarian Percy.

Percy's scope in compiling the *Reliques* was as broad as McLuhan's, and he engaged all of his companions, including Shenstone and Goldsmith, in his projects. He wrote to his Welsh friend Evan Evans in 1761 to ask for materials: "…I have procured a MS. translation of the celebrated *Tograi Carmen* from the Arabic: and have set a friend to translate *Solomon's Song* afresh from the Hebrew chiefly with a view to the poetry….

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[435] Robert J.C. Young. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 29.

Then I have myself gleaned up specimens of *East Indian Poetry*, *Peruvian Poetry*; *Lapland Poetry*; *Greenland Poetry*…"[436] In addition to these projects, he published a translation of a Chinese novel in 1761; a collection of Chinese poetry, apothegms, religious history, gardening, and theater in 1762; a collection of Icelandic poetry in 1763; and the *Reliques* in 1765. Shenstone consulted as an unofficial editor of Percy's work, where he frequently made recommendations about design and paratextual materials.

Percy consulted with Jacob Tonson to publish newly annotated editions of those eighteenth-century arbiters of taste, the *Spectator*, the *Tatler*, and the *Guardian,* and asked his many correspondents if they would contribute anecdotes for that project. "The *Reliques* was conceived and executed amid Percy's fabulous bibliolatry," writes Nick Groom, "and [it was] published *in medias res*: in the middle of the 1760s, central to Percy's whole motivation and methodology of conceptualizing the value of literary sources, and pivotal in his work."[437] McDowell notes how Percy committed and then methodized the slippage between oral and print mediations: "Percy drew heavily on broadsides as well as manuscript materials, but he represented his 'reliques' as the written traces of originally oral compositions dating back to a sophisticated courtly society long

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[436] Percy to Evan Evans, July 21, 1761, *Percy Letters,* ed. Cleanth Brooks and David Nichol Smitth 9 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944-88), VI:10-13. See E.K.A. Mackenzie, "Thomas Percy's Great Schemes," *The Modern Language Review*, 43:1 (1948), 34-38 for a timeline of all these projects.

[437] Nick Groom, *The Making of Percy's Reliques* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5. See also David Matthews, *The Making of Middle English 1765-1910* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). In tracing how medieval literature was mediated by translators, typesetters, editors, publishers, and other artifact-obsessed mediators in the eighteenth century, Matthews describes the bifurcation in the eighteenth-century antiquarians' approach to situating their artifacts in a progressive historical narrative: the ancient texts are considered highly important and interesting, but they are lacking in literary value because they are not considered objects of *taste*. "The 'ancient' literature, then, was distanced several times over." Ancient literature is "not literary in the accepted sense, linguistically barbarous, its main interest lay in the strange and quaint. The paradox of the study of medieval literature was that the 'ancient' texts were always hypostatized in a distant, irretrievably other, historical past, from which the editor and reader had to pluck the familiar, that which would speak to their own age" (15).

before commercial print…. Percy's preface elides over temporal, contextual, and historical differences in order to classify the ballads as 'reliques.'"[438]

Percy's conceiving of himself *in media res*, as a mediator first and foremost, is one indication that "print" and "culture" in the *Reliques* are abstractions which construct and reify each other in their conjectural qualities. Eliding over temporal, contextual, and historical differences is how the interface obscures its own presence in favor of subsuming all disparate textual objects, no matter their material history, into a "project." Groom argues that Percy's orality-made-from-print was a strategy designed to valorize the act of mediation both by printing these oral ephemera and in mediating the ballads with a theory of orality: "the defining characteristic of Percy's brand of literary antiquarianism [is] that the cultural value and significance of a source is defined by its medium of transmission. Percy sought his songs in archives and libraries, not in fields or streets, arguing that the oral tradition had visible literary traces."[439] The interface becomes generic, as Percy conceptualized his work to be situating knowledge in a material form of a conjectural history. The particular contents of the *Reliques* mattered less than their collection and mediation through valorizing apparatus that would signal their progress through arrangement and commentary (a value familiar to Pope, even if the work with collation was not to his taste). "Cultures save themselves," writes Gitelman of these records and their remediations in forms like dictionaries and critical surveys. She argues for the problem of preservation as a lens onto our habits of interpreting our present

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[438] McDowell, "'The Manufacture and Lingua-facture of Ballad-Making': Broadside Ballads in Long Eighteenth-Century Ballad Discourse." *The Eighteenth Century.* 47:2/3 (Summer 2006), 151-178, 164.
[439] Groom, 5.

moment: "And they save themselves according to a host of little-noticed assumptions that are particularly important to stop and think about in the present moment."[440]

"Of all the ways in which one could evaluate the significance of the literary appropriation of oral forms" writes Susan Stewart of "distressed genres" like the ballad or relic in the eighteenth century, "*the most mistaken* would be to assume that literature thereby records the lost world of preindustrial culture."[441] I am interested in Stewart's hyperbole about the biggest error one could make: that error is critically engaging with idealized distressed texts as though there is some way to observe unmediated orality in the past, for to conceptualize media as evidence is to artifactualize it. The error in that critical engagement is that any knowledge produced by the study would be self-confirming of its cultural status. Evidence is already mediated by its designation as such, and so these constituents of distressed genres "acquire all the characteristics of fragmentation, symbolic meaning, and literariness that are most valued by the literary culture." In Stewart's analysis, the elisions McDowell points out are endemic to their mediation—they never existed as something to be elided in the first place until they were artifactualized. The grave error Stewart identifies here is a signal of the double logic of oral/print remediation. One wishes for immersion in one's artifacts, but the conditions of producing knowledge mean referring to frames of that artifactualization in the form of the other abstractions it produces: provenance, authority, historicity.

Percy evokes his method through correcting errors—and insisting he can continue to correct more errors in future editions, thus opening a field of debate and study. "Wedded to no hypothesis, the Author hath readily corrected any mistakes which have

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[440] Gitelman, xii.
[441] Stewart, 68 (my italics).

been proved to be in this Essay; and considering the novelty of the subject, and the time, and place, when and where he first took it up, many such had been excusable."[442] His terminology is placeless, timeless on purpose, to generate more writing: "That the term Minstrel was not confined, as some contend, to a mere Musician, in this country, any more than on the Continent, will be considered more fully in the last Note at the end of this Essay." The introductory essays, headnotes to the ballads, and the many notes that appear in the *Reliques*—glosses, brief notes on historical events, among other commentary—serve as what Siskin calls a "mediating layer of representation"[443] that frames the artifacts and their explanatory annotation as "data for the construction of new histories—one in which the linking of that past to the present would demonstrate what Percy called 'the increase of knowledge.'"

Maureen McLane notes that though we may think of these elaborate paratexts as "labored, rebarbative, *recherché*," they were "not extraneous to, but rather constitutive of the emergent genre of the ballad collection, a genre clearly recognized as such by its practitioners."[444] In Poovey's terms, there had to be methods delineated for systematizing this knowledge through genre and abstract concept. Gestures toward the historicity of the materials in the collection had a forward-looking orientation, as well—always part of a progress narrative that could tell tales of an artifactualized past. The collaborative aspect of the projects meant a great deal to Percy, such that the social process of mediation (including editing and correcting the manuscripts by different members of the coterie) became more important than distinguishing his sources and their particular agencies.

[442] Percy, *Reliques,* I:xli.
[443] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain 1700-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 137.
[444] Maureen McLane, *Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45, 54.

Sources remained anonymous, whereas "transmitters [were] polite and learned," writes McLane of the relationships among Percy, Shenstone, Goldsmith, Grainger, and others.[445] She continues: "In the course of remediation and artifactualization into printed books, the multiple collaborations that made balladeering possible thus entered specific discursive spaces and submitted to specific protocols for representing and differentiating (and as one often discovers, suppressing or finessing) the kinds and degrees of mediation involved."[446]

McLane's description of protocols for historicizing is useful for reflecting on other mediating protocols in dealing with historical evidence, as displayed in Johns's and Eisenstein's arguments about perspectives on print agency and historical narrative. Like Grainger and Smollett, they, too, have sharply worded critical protocols of representing, differentiating, suppressing, and finessing their diagnoses of each others' misreadings and critical errors. Tellingly, like Grainger and Smollett, they each accuse each other of a recursive method of dealing with sources. Johns argues that Eisenstein's own reading practices evince the very problems in mediation she argues do not exist. He cites what he

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[445] McLane, 47. In *The Making of Percy's* Reliques, Groom has more to say about the social dynamics of these collaborations, casting doubt onto the use of letters among the group as unproblematic evidence of intentions, conversations, and protocols: "Percy's letter-writing provides a commentary on his editorial practices in the *Reliques*, and these letters can be read as a domestic version of later eighteenth-century antiquarian theories of bibliography and the treatment of literary sources. Percy carefully revised his style for publication, and feared that untouched manuscript letters might be published. Again this demonstrates an acute awareness of the nature of the written source, the medium of the message, and the total transformation of the content that the form entails." Groom examines the letters in depth to discover "deliberate manipulation of acquaintances, and his frequent precautions to conceal his own motives or projects. Percy cultivated a different voice for each of his correspondents, and the self-portrait that is adumbrated from reading his letters is in perpetual flux—doubtless one reason why Yale chose to edit his exchanges of correspondence rather than the complete or selected letters. This mutating persona operated solely within the chirographic environment of correspondence, and was therefore an expression of the relationship between the written manuscript (private letter) and the anticipated printed text (*Reliques*)" (149). I will continue to cite letters in this chapter because I think this instability of meaning—that statements of intention may be corrected with an eye toward their use as evidence for those intentions—is the most interesting thing about them.
[446] Ibid.

sees as her idiosyncratic readings of *The Nature of the Book* as evidence that meaning is not fixed in print, and then he zooms out to reveal his ingenious method of collecting so many misprisions:

> By now we have built up a simple but sufficient taxonomy of one reader's responses to a printed book. The reading practices they reveal incorporate remarkable interpretative flexibility (in assessing errors). They add up to a sustained exemplification of the freedom of readers to make new meanings out of even quite closely argued texts. To the original author, these may seem tortuous construals, bizarre wrenchings out of context, and elementary confusions between actors' categories and modern opinions.[447]

As he did in charging her with animadversion, he situates what he sees as her error-prone reading practices in the very century she is turning to for her own historical evidence of his errors: he calls her a commonplacer. It could be noted that collecting someone's misprisions and showing them as a "taxonomy" is also a form of critical commonplacing, so Johns may be having some fun with self-reflexive criticism here, though in his argument his own commonplaces *must be* a different form of artifactualized critique than Eisenstein's. This satirical error collection and correction is clever close-reading on Johns' part:

> But even when properly pursued, commonplace methods tended to be poor tools for systematic criticism. They were good for identifying piecemeal omissions but less good for confronting arguments, which they tended to be reduced to fragments. They often gave rise chiefly to new forms of old truths. What is striking is how uncannily Eisenstein's procedures mirror all these traits. Her readings display the stand-alone character of commonplaces, and like commonplaces they seem to be immune from elimination on grounds of inconsistency. Her claims themselves consequently inherit the strengths and weakness of the commonplacing method, not least its inefficacy as a tool for critically examining received views.[448]

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[447] Johns, "How to Acknowledge a Revolution," 113.
[448] Johns, "How to Acknowledge a Revolution," 114.

Johns criticizes Eisenstein for not acknowledging the disciplinary protocols that have been emerging in various forms of book history prior to her 1979 realization of print's "*sui generis*" agential status.

These are Zoilian outrages. Eisenstein, for her part, twice frames the difference between her technology-based argument and Johns' focus on human agency in terms of the National Rifle Association's slogan "guns don't shoot people, people do," and takes issue with Johns' retroactive framing of the revolution: "while I argue that the establishment of printing shops in fifteenth-century Europe as instigating the communications revolution, Johns believes the 'so-called' printing revolution as a retrospective discursive construct that emerged only in the eighteenth or maybe the nineteenth century."[449] She accuses him of anachronisms and a recursive argument about the need for specificity in a historical argument: "His version of a printing revolution' is not an eighteenth-century construct but a late twentieth-century one. It is inflected by a (postmodern?) sensibility that seems to be tone-deaf to the music of time."[450] I am rehearsing Johns' and Eisenstein's critiques at length not solely for their content but for the fact of their recursive strategies of identifying error. To identify error is to expound on it for the purpose of seizing the upper hand, but these seizures have a meta quality of flipping back on to themselves, or on to some abstraction like "context" or "postmodernism." In irreverently placing Eisenstein's methods in the eighteenth century—and in Eisenstein's charging back "here, as elsewhere, Johnson is precise about

[449] Eisenstein, "An Unacknowledged Revolution Revisited," 90.
[450] Eisenstein "Reply," 128.

place but imprecise about date"[451]—they each find the "timeless, placeless" mode of argumentation to be too pleasurable.

Siskin and Warner argue for "mediation" as a term that can evoke specificity of time and place and "helps us to avoid as well the debate that derails so many efforts to engage the power of print: since 'mediation' embraces both the technological and the human—it does not discriminate, that is, against, any particular form of agency—discussing print in its history points us past the increasingly unproductive binary of technodeterminism."[452] "Mediation" is not just a term of compromise, here: it is an argument for the discursive space that critical terminology opens up. I have found that term and its recursive counterpart, "remediation" to be useful for both their flexibility and their own "dirty secret" proliferating, under-theorized meanings. My other reason for rehearsing the debates and creating congeries and farragoes of text and footnotes on these pages is performative, experimental. Johns' and Eisenstein's arguments are glitches on the chapter's pages: they are tiles in the mosaic that remain stubbornly blocky as they halt the flow of argument in favor of recording anti-social behavior, refusals to assimilate into negotiating interpretation, and sabotages to understanding in favor of flourish. Grainger was familiar with such a technique: "If therefore I have erred in this I have willingly erred; and shall hardly alter my method for all your redoubtable Ridicule."[453]

Artifacts of Spatial History

[451] Eisenstein, "An Unacknwoledged Revolution," 90.
[452] Siskin and Warner, "An Invitation in the Form of an Argument," 10.
[453] Grainger, *Letter to Tobias Smollett*, 22.

The *Reliques* thus makes both specific claims about place and time, but it also erases traces of how those documents were situated in those contexts in favor of showing them as cultural artifacts. “The *Reliques* is clearly presented … as a Great British imperial endeavor, covering England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and the West Indies, significantly extending the borders of [Thomas] Warton’s 1753 collection, *The Union: or Select Scots and English Poems*,” writes Groom.[454] “Percy was effectively generating a community of writers and scholars who would help him to create his vision of the past.” In order to situate Percy’s project, Groom invokes Benedict Anderson’s concept of an “imagined community”—“*imagined* rather than *fabricated*, more creative than a simple falsification.” Anderson argues that a sense of timelessness is key to constructing such a national consciousness, for “the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) in history.”[455] Although Anderson names the novel and the newspaper as the genres where this sense of timelessness flourished in the early eighteenth century, Percy’s cultural histories share these priorities of abstraction and mystification. Percy’s *Reliques* were already artifacts of mediation before they were evidence of the cultural differences that they served to

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[454] Nick Groom, “‘The Purest English’: Ballads and the English Literary Dialect” *The Eighteenth Century* 47:2/3 (Summer 2006), 179-201, 180-181.
[455] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1983, 1991), 26. Anderson can be said to remediate Eisenstein’s vocabulary through the lens of nationalism: Anderson names “exchange and communication” (Eisenstein’s *dissemination*); “fixity to language,” and “languages-of-power” (these processes look something like Eisenstein’s *standardization*, except the agents are colonial administrators, not printers). He problematizes these terms by noting a critique of Eisenstein’s work similar to Johns’: “Eisenstein [comes] close to theomorphizing ‘print’ *qua* print as the genius of modern history. [Lucien] Febvre and [Henri-Jean] Martin never forget that behind print stand printers and publishing firms…” (44). McLane notes that although Anderson’s work, like Eisenstein’s, has undergone a number of reassessments and reframings since 1983, the eighteenth century’s proliferation of novels and newspapers, and their framings of colonial empires, remains a rich source for testing the concept of “imagined communities” (*Balladeering*, 89).

delineate. Their status as pre-print culture exists in an uneasy recursion: they are made by mediation, but they are also the subjects of that study of mediation.

This is not a bug—it's a feature of such a cultural intervention through inscription. We see it in Percy's temporally and geographically wide sweep, as well as in McLuhan's mosaic that turns disparate texts into artifacts of *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Paul Carter, whose work on the ambiguities of mishearing I have already discussed, takes up McLuhan's project of the history of mosaic-making. He argues that in a "spatial history" like McLuhan's—and Percy's, I believe—"the subject is not a physical object, but a cultural one. It is not the geographer's space, although that comes into it. What is evoked here are the spatial forms and fantasies through which a culture declares its presence. It is spatiality as a form of non-linear writing; as a form of history."[456] Carter's work of theoretical geography is especially compelling to consider with Percy's globe-spanning spatial history, for Carter situates these theories in a history of colonial impositions in Australia (the continent Percy could not reach).

Carter begins his thought experiment in writing "spatial history" of how Australia has been mediated in the colonial imagination with a story of a textual artifact that declares its own history of mediation. Sailing along the coast in 1805, British sailors "discovered a pewter plate 'of about six inches in diameter on which was roughly engraven two Dutch inscriptions' and named the place Cape Inscription."[457] In this moment of discovery (told in recognizable generic conventions of an exploration narrative), the sailors mediate themselves on the landscape by noting others' prior mediations—they make an artifact by placing it in their own context of discovery and

[456] Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xxiv.
[457] Ibid.

intervention. It becomes a meta-commentary on the act of inscription and cultural mediation. They translate and artifactualize the plate, thus remediating their presence multiple times over: “Rewritten and repeated [the name] serves as point of departure. But Cape Inscription, the name, is also the result of erasure: it also symbolizes the imperial project of permanent possession through dispossession. In short the name oscillates between two extreme interpretations.”

I am interested in “oscillation” as a term because it may refer to a physical swinging back and forth of, say, a pendulum, but we also describe the oscillation of sound waves that are too small to be observed without mediating instruments. Thus “oscillation” is a critical term that calls attention to its own mediating and mediated qualities as a metaphor, as McLuhan knew well in his riffing on sensory perceptions and extensions. Using a version of the oscillation argument, McLane describes these practices of mediation as *intentionally* wide-ranging across space and time: “Eighteenth-century antiquarian balladeering toggles between the concept of culture and the historicity of media, between orders of knowledge and piles of data.”[458] They saw their work as mosaic-making: “Mediating between practice and theory, sifting through manuscripts, private letters, broadsides, books, and eventually oral recitations, English and Scottish balladeers (working circa 1760-1830) conjoined concepts and histories, emergent objects and modes of inquiry.” McLane has named ballads as an “emergent” genre several times; McDowell, too, talks about the “emergence” of the print/oral distinction during the eighteenth century. Earlier, I have discussed remediation as the engine of emergence; to this engine we can add the recursive relationship between close-reading and generalizing

[458] Maureen McLane, “Mediating Antiquarians in Britain, 1760-1830: the Invention of Oral Tradition; or, Close Reading before Coleridge” in *This is Enlightenment*, eds. Siskin and Warner, 247-264, 247.

about documentary evidence. Oscillation and toggling produce the kind of emergence that Foucault says that genealogies as record and enable: “Emergence designates a place of confrontation but not as a closed field offering the spectacle of struggle among equals”—as the rehearsal of social interactions among disputing editors might engender as an artifact of detailing the minute contents of their animadversions— “…it is a ‘non-place,’ a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space. Consequently no one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory it in it, since it always occurs in the interstice.”[459] Latour cites quotes nineteenth-century legal theorist Gabriel Tarde as “an alternative precursor for an alternative social theory”:

> In a multitude of forms, though on a smaller scale, the same error always comes to light, namely, the error of believing that, in order to see a gradual dawn of regularity, order, and logic in social phenomena, we must go outside of the details, which are essentially irregular, and rise high enough to obtain a panoramic view of the general effect; that the source and foundation of every social coordination is some general fact from which it descends gradually to particular facts, though always diminishing in strength; in short, that man acts but a law of evolution guides him. I hold the contrary, in a certain sense.[460]

A mosaic configures spatial history, but its very contingency and tendency to reconfiguration make it a non-place for figuring other forms of agency, including alternative forms of sociality, as well.

Carter, too, is interested in how metaphors mediate understanding by conflating ideas and also making them distinctive as evocative literary language of meta-cognition, meta-mediation:

> Cape Inscription is also a striking figure of speech, an oxymoron yoking writing and landscape in a surprising, even grotesque way. A geographical feature is made no bigger than a page of writing. It also indicates concisely

[459] Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 150.
[460] Gabriel Tarde, *Social Laws: An Outline of Sociology*, trans. Howard C. Warren (Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 2000), quoted in Latour, 14.

> and poetically, the 'cultural place' where spatial history begins: not in a particular year, not in a particular place, but in the act of naming. For by the act of place-naming, space is transformed symbolically into a place, that is, a space with history. And by the same token, the namer inscribes his passage permanently on the world making a metaphorical word-place which others may one day inhabit and by which, in the meantime, he asserts his own place in history.[461]

In his own inscription of his work's purpose, Carter cites Samuel Johnson: "'There is something in names one cannot help feeling.' But he meant much more than he intended."[462] That incantation, embellished with a gnomic statement of Johnson's intentions and their haziness and/or futurity seems at first to me to be a rhetorical excess, an error that stands out from an evocative story and theory. He is reiterating the act of mediating the past through quotation: first by telling the story of the inscription, then riffing on it, and now quoting again with the gravitas of a Johnsonian anecdote, taken out of its historical context (as anecdotes are meant to be transported) and put into the free-wheeling context of a spatial history. This flexibility of moving between bits of other texts to make a mosaic is engendered by print; the spatial history lets us perceive the ways that print and culture gain both reification and flexibility when they are conceptualized together.

Chinese Artifacts of Conjecture and Examination

Percy's plans for the future of the *Reliques*, wherein readings would be corrected with more data and more theorizing, indicate how the study of culture is an artifact of

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[461] Ibid.
[462] Carter, xxv.

toggling and oscillating. McLane argues for the *Reliques* as a hybrid genre that produces a spectacle of its wide array of objects and possibilities for interpretation:

> The novel has long been discussed in terms of heteroglossia for its theoretically open form; its ungainly cousin, the eighteenth-century ballad collection, is equally notable for its mustering, display, and attempted disciplining of heterogeneous materials and its formidable textual apparatus: introductions, headnotes, footnotes, appendices, dissertations, commentaries. Such apparatus, offering historical, topographical, linguistic, political, and customary information, has the peculiar effect of distancing us (as it did perhaps its first readers) from the often sensational contents of the ballads.[463]\

As much as it describes the *Reliques'* variety, her argument is also useful for considering the bagginess and incoherence of Percy's other projects. The mosaic form of the spatial history reveals a recursive relationship between close-reading evidence and generalizing about it—then reading more evidence through that generalized lens. Oscillating and toggling produce culture, for "culture must paradoxically always take part in an antithetical pair or itself be divided in two."[464] Some of the pairs cultural historian Young names in *Colonial Desire* to enact this dialectic are: culture versus nature; culture versus civilization; a "rough" hierarchical sequence of -culture modifiers such as folk, working-class, mass, and popular; and the recent discussions of high culture versus anthropological culture, or "culture as material production and symbolic systems." This genealogy of culture indicates that though the term pretends to the progress narrative of a conjectural history, it is also stubbornly attached to toggling for that is its means of expanding its purview and presence. As Young puts it, culture "constantly reform[s] itself around conflictual divisions, participating in, and always a part of a complex, hybridized economy that is never at ease with itself…" That work of distinction-making is

[463] McLane, *Balladeering*, 45.
[464] Young, 29-30.

conjectural in multiple senses, for those distinctions are artifacts of juxtapositions that are enlarged by theorization in generic conventions of the conjectural history.

Goldsmith, who coined the term "cultur'd vales" that Young cites in his historical definitions of "culture," demonstrates such slipperiness in his conjectural history of taste and education in *Essay on the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759), where he explains that taste is a process of distinction. Goldsmith's work is to inscribe sets of distinctions that "lay the line between the enlightened philosopher, and the half-taught citizen; between the civil citizen and the illiterate peasant; between the law-obeying peasant, and the wandering savage of Africa…."[465] Drawing lines in a spatial history is a way of organizing the materials for a historical project about the progress of refinement, of artifactualizing the cultural data. "In taste," Goldsmith argues, "we have standing evidence, we can, with precision, compare the literary performances of our fathers with our own, and from their excellences, or defects, determine the moral, as well as the literary merits of either."

Goldsmith remediated this work in *Citizen of the World* (1760), a series of periodical essays supposedly written by a Chinese traveler to observe English manners, to document and close-read cultural differences. *Citizen of the World* begins in the genre of the dream vision, and the capaciousness of that genre allows for conjecture and satire of the artifacts of an imagination run rampant. The insights of distinction and cultural difference in Goldsmith's work always reflect back on one another in distorted ways: they are objects of study and satire at the same time. "The medium of ventriloquism," generically remediated here from Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (1721), serves Goldsmith's oscillating purposes: "the metropolitan notion of a fixed or essential cultural

[465] Oliver Goldsmith, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (London, 1759), 199.

otherness is here parodied to the extent that any such quality is revealed to be as fungible as clothing. 'Chinese-ness,' at least as it is seen through European eyes, is a construction, a kitschy tissue of sartorial and decorative signifiers bereft of a definitive source or application."[466] These cultural differences are artifacts of imaginative, transformative remediations, embellished by generic conventions from dream visions, conjectural histories, and drama.[467]

Percy looked to *Citizen of the World* as a kind of reference work that would help him conceptualize difference in his editing of a four-volume Chinese novel, *Hau Kiou Choaan* (1762), which went through multiple remediations and translations on its errant path toward becoming heteroglossic documents about Chinese customs and literary productions.[468] Where Goldsmith could mediate his work through imaginative

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[466] Michael Griffin, *Enlightenment in Ruins: The Geographies of Oliver Goldsmith* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 103.

[467] It is fitting, also, that Goldsmith's decline narrative and pastoral elegy *The Deserted Village* (1770) gains its power from small descriptive details of the village but is also vague in its location and time. Readers and critics went looking for Goldsmith's village and illustrated scenes that were both inspired by the poem in a general sense and supposed to locate its specific place. See *The poetical works of Oliver Goldsmith : with remarks, attempting to ascertain, chiefly from local observation, the actual scene of the Deserted village, and illustrative engravings by Mr. Alkin* (London: Suttaby, Evance, and Co., 1820).

[468] In 1758, Percy had obtained three translated volumes of *Hau Kiou Choaan* from an East India merchant named John Wilkinson, who had translated them (or had someone else translate them) from Portuguese. There was a fourth volume in another translator's Portuguese that Percy had to translate himself, learning the language just for that project. For the complicated bibliographic history of the book, in which it's difficult to determine the quality and source of Wilkinson's manuscripts, see L.F. Powell "Hau Kiou Choaan" *The Review of English Studies* 2:8 (1926), 446-55; Vincent H. Ogborn. "The Wilkinson MSS, and Percy's Chinese Books" *The Review of English Studies*, 9:33 (1933), 30-36; Alda Milner-Barry, "A Note on the Early Literary Relations of Oliver Goldsmith and Thomas Percy," *The Review of English Studies* 2:5 (1926) 51-61; T.C. Fan "Percy's *Hau Kiou Choaan*" *The Review of English Studies*, 22:86 (1946), 117-25. Fan explains that "limited knowledge of Chinese" among English bibliographers in the nineteenth or first half of the twentieth century (those dates could be extended to contemporary studies) made it difficult for anyone to compare the original Chinese text to see what Percy, Wilkinson (if he had any hand in the translation), or any unnamed translators had done. For example, Fan notes, only in the twentieth century did the Chinese begin to use diacritical marks, so the translator(s) had to make broad guesses: "Paragraphs run together; sentences run together; and dialogues become statements and statements become dialogues…" (Fan, 119).
These essays of descriptive bibliography from the early half of the twentieth century fascinate me because they become, recursively, the materials for contemporary study of the history of bibliographic work of cultural description. What other kinds of work did Fan and Milner-Barry do besides mediating the history of badly translated Chinese novels through minute documentary study?

conventions of conjectural histories, satires, and dream visions, Percy was committed to the material stuff of collation and editorial apparatus. Those remediations and translations of *Hau Kiou Choaan* transmogrify a various, multiply mediated assemblage of different documents: a bulky document of Percy's self-inscription as an editor and conjectural historian of the progress of Chinese manners. Yet they are not coherently theorized as the *Reliques* would be; instead, the editorial apparatus of each volume is full of reprinted essays by other collaborators, conjectural histories, half-finished essays about the need for more study. Predictably, the errata sheets grow longer and longer with every volume.[469]

Percy was sensitive about its fragmented state. In the preface, he explains that the novel serves "not as a piece to be admired for the beauties of composition but as a curious specimen of Chinese literature" and as a "faithful picture of Chinese manners" and customs.[470] In his research to augment *Hau Kiou Choaan* with historical and cultural essays, Percy remediates much of the specific satirical and imaginative language of *Citizen of the World* and *Enquiry into the Present State of Learning*, thus making documentary evidence out of fashion and refashioning. That outcome of remediation is hardly surprising, given how many media (textual, sartorial, generic) are involved in the study. What it reveals is not a scandal particular to Percy or Goldsmith, but rather the

[469] For example, he reprinted John Turberville Needham's essay on Chinese language from the *Critical Review* and William Chambers' "On the Art of Laying Out Gardens Among the Chinese," and Richard Hurd's "On the Chinese Drama" without permission. To the novel Percy affixed Richard Brooke's translation of Chinese proverbs, apothegms, and poems from Pierre Du Halde's *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'empire de la Chine* (1735). Percy took care to vouch all his sources and explain his work with the minutia of translating the text, for these critical procedures fascinated him. Outside of this textual criticism, Percy made proto-ethnographic descriptions of cultural artifacts and customs. He made notes on all sorts of manners: on porcelain and pottery, pagodas, religion, morality, ginseng, tea, wines, shrubs, herbs, Confucius, the role of women in Chinese society.[469] Grainger, unsurprisingly, told his friend that the notes to the *Hau Kiou Choan* "constitute the most valuable part of your book" (Grainger to Percy, July 25, 1762, *Illustrations of the Eighteenth Century*, VII:281).
[470] Thomas Percy. Preface to *Hau Kiou Choaan*, (London, 1761), I:xiv-xv.

more general problem of proliferation. The act of distinction-making is mediated in generalizing language, so much so that it can be remediated from cultural object to cultural object, across geographical and historical space. In The *Chinese Taste in Eighteenth-Century England*, David Porter describes how Percy was both inspired by his artifacts and troubled by the work of cultural comparison: "… Percy finds in Chinese productions a model that is at once inspiring and unsettling, leading him simultaneously to repudiate Chinese claims to cultural greatness and to appropriate them for his own purposes." Percy's Chinese projects are like partial, under-theorized spatial histories for their remediations of so many different kinds of artifacts, yet they lack a conceptualizing vision. He cannot resolve between conjecture and creation: "he draws upon Chinese examples to expand his aesthetic imagination, only to disown them when faced with the implications of this debt within a cultural sphere increasingly constrained by considerations of nationalist exclusivity."[471]

From Percy and Goldsmith, as well as from Percy's attempts to collect from so many other national traditions, we can see how the critical language to describe difference in these trans-cultural comparisons *tends to look the same.* The objects have been remediated as cultural data, but the too-proliferable error of these distinctions is that they are so linguistically and conceptually flexible as to be attachable to any analysis of difference. In Percy's and Goldsmith's mutually referenced (and sometimes plagiarized)

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[471] David Porter, *The Chinese Taste in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 159. "Percy's reconstruction of an English poetic tradition in the prefaces and commentaries that accompany the ballads of the *Reliques* can be read as a response to the Chinese challenge he had so thoroughly internalized. As in his earlier writings, China evokes reactions that are complex and equivocal, enabling it to serve at once as a model and a foil. Percy's solution to the problem of English barbarousness is to rewrite the brutish physicality of the ballads through the transformative discourses of aesthetics, history, and teleology. In each instance, paradigms of Chineseness from the previous work guide his rhetorical strategies, resulting in a history of English literature that, for all its nativist pretensions, closely follows the contours of an earlier sinological encounter" (177).

work, the explanatory notes about particular manners or customs in Icelandic, or Chinese, or even Peruvian poetry would be different, but many of the explanations of cultural difference through the specific phrases about barbarism, progress, and curiosity of artifacts would be similar. (Percy never made it to the Peruvians.) In criticizing the "myth of print culture," Dane argues that bibliographers tend to make *a priori* assumptions about the evidentiary nature of their objects of examination:

> Scholarship has as its goal the discovery of continuities in the irritating singularities of the evidence: bits of evidence here, packets of evidence there, partial evidence here. These things do not exist 'out there' in history, of course. It is scholarship that defines 'what is evidence,' examining the *'out there'* to define again, in more discrete packets bits of evidence.[472]

The allusions to placeless, timeless culture that Johns criticized are a defining feature of the commentary in these eighteenth-century cultural histories because they are thought to be a means of telling a larger story about humanity. Dane invokes the problem of "out there" to damn such a contemporary concept of culture. He insists on observation and recording small variations in discrete copies (not just editions) of books to recover material history, but where is that concept as a discipline but also "out there" at a slightly different scale? Anderson describes how these documents led to further forms of conjectural history that solidified into disciplines because they were very good at getting scholars to imagine the futurity of their labor: "Out of these discoveries came philology, with its studies of comparative grammar, classification of languages into families, and

[472] Dane, 11 (italics added). One might counter Dane's insistence on distinction-making as the work of bibliography by looking at its limit case in John Duncan Marshall, *The Tyranny of the Discrete: A Discussion of the Problems of Local History* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997). Marshall is nearly Zoilian as he criticizes contemporary "local history" in England—to which one could add the genealogy craze that's been facilitated by the Internet. He worries that these studies, because they are source-based and reject larger questions of historiography, can produce documents that reproduce the same procedure of looking at single objects without zooming out to assess the value of the evidence or how it fits into a larger pattern.

reconstructions by scientific reasoning of 'proto-language' out of oblivion."[473] These methods create disciplines out of imagined communities.

Hence the irony of Grainger's note about the status of Percy's translation of *Hau Kiou Choaan*: "[Printer Ralph] Griffiths has sent me back the Chinese lady, and I assure you I like her in her new English garb."[474] As a cultural object, she oscillates between embellished, incomplete, plagiarized renderings of Chinese customs and her English remediation. She resists assimilation into a cultural conjecture because she is too glitchy to be consumed fully.

The Possibilities of the Georgic: Remediation and Remediation

Ever interested in making more projects, Percy re-extended his search for stuff to remediate to Grainger, who was by 1762 performing medical duties on the island of St. Christopher. He asked if Grainger if he would send him any extracts of Caribbean poetry or any information about Spanish romances that he intended to use to make an account of all of Cervantes' sources for *Don Quixote*—the social history of *Don Quixote*, of sorts, and the kind of project that many scholars have produced in the years since then. Grainger speculated about how he might situate the islands on a conjectural timeline: "How far the North Americans are greater proficients in literature than the West Indians I cannot determine: sure I am they are men of less probity, from the specimens I have had of that country, and I can safely add not better scholars." He wrote later: "nobody can tell me any thing of Charibbean [sic] poetry; indeed, from what I have seen of these savages,

[473] Anderson, 70-1.
[474] Grainger to Percy, July 20, 1758. *Illustrations of the Eighteenth Century*, VII:261.

I have no curiosity to know ought of their compositions." Thus, he says, he cannot begin "rendering those works, which I conceive must add to your literary reputation, more perfect in their kind."[475] Believing he has no obvious materials at hand, Grainger can conceive of the project only in terms of abstractions: reputation and perfection as made by editorial mediation. (Grainger did send Percy a modern interpretation of the Caribbean tale of "Bryan and Pereene" for the *Reliques*.)[476] Despite his skepticism, Grainger took up Percy's enthusiasm for time- and space-bending remediation and translated, in language, place, and concept, Virgil's *Georgics* through the lens of the Atlantic slave trade in *The Sugar-Cane* (1764).

The georgic genre is devoted to remediation of material in multiple senses of the word: it is about the physical remediation of the earth and it is a remediated, translated classical genre. As Kevis Goodman notes, "the glorious laboriousness of reading the *Georgics* results from a complex, non-metric practice of reference; *verba* in the poem point in two directions at once—ostensibly, but not transparently, toward the details and cycles of agricultural work, and diachronically toward layers of previous poetic works."[477] Reading Dryden's translation of the *Georgics* (1697), Jenny Davidson argues that the georgic's mediating of agricultural labor in the form of poetry allows us to see the multiple valences of the word culture in the period: "Virgil's poem displays its own worries about culture's part in the struggle between improvement and degeneration, and

[475] Grainger to Percy, June 5, 1762, *Illustrations of the Eighteenth Century*, VII:278, 281.
[476] Grainger found or heard the tragic tale of Bryan and Pereene, about an English sailor who jumps off his vessel and tries to swim to his long-separated love but is eaten by a shark before he reaches the shore. But in introducing Grainger's contribution in the *Reliques*, Percy first calls attention to an act of correction: an unrelated poem of Grainger's needs correcting because a printer printed the wrong version, so he reprints the revised version. He then returns to the project at hand and tells the tragic tale. See *Reliques*, I:313-16. Percy corrects the couplet of Grainger's "Ode on Solitude": "Or at the purple dawn of day / Tadmor's marble wastes survey" from **"**turned her magic ray" (314). This is the only account I can find in the *Reliques* of Percy correcting a poem that's not under consideration in the cultural history.
[477] Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Modernity*, 28.

the *Georgics* is haunted both by the dangers of luxury … and by the limits on culture's power to alter the natural world…"[478] Thus the genre both revels in its remediations (re-mediations and remedies) and sees the ways in which those remediations form incomplete labor: there is an unassimilable difference between physical and imaginative labor. The term has multiple meanings, but those meanings do not map onto one another completely or unproblematically.

Before Bolter and Grusin theorized "remediation," the term had agricultural roots, so to speak: environmental remediators labor to remove contaminants or pollutants from soil, groundwater.[479] That meaning fits in well with Theobald's notion of editorial work as weeding a garden: the metaphor indicates the ways in which eighteenth-century conjectural cultural editors like Percy differentiated and then redefined the multiple meanings of culture, as a cultural product of writing could be "improved" in the same way that a field could be cultivated by being remediated. Percy could joke to his gentlemanly editor-gardener friend Shenstone, who preferred shaped gardens and shaped pages clear of editorial farrago: "When you come to revise your poems, let me beseech you Not [sic] to be too excessive in your corrections. Your taste is so exceedingly refined, and you are so incapable of being satisfied, that I always tremble when you take up the pruning hook."[480] After Shenstone's death the printer James Dodsley, Percy, the poet Richard Jago, and others helped compile a cultural history of Leasowes, complete with drawings, lyrics, and remembrances of the "cultur'd vales" of the estate, remediating

[478] Davidson, 59.
[479] Thinking in terms of the different discourses Davidson analyzes in *Breeding*, it makes sense that remediation is also used in educational contexts—a related form of culture as remedy.
[480] *Percy Letters,* VII:131-2.

the remediated garden in print.[481] In a recursive twist, there is a georgic that discusses the remediated landscape of Shenstone's gardens, the site of so many editorial meetings among Percy and his friends. In *Edge-Hill* (1767), Jago writes of Leasowes:

> Nor can the Muse, while she these Scenes surveys,
> Forget her Shenstone, in the youthful Toil
> Associate; whose bright Dawn of Genius oft
> Smooth'd my incondite Verse; whose friendly Voice
> Call'd me from giddy Sports to follow him
> Intent on better Themes—call'd me to taste
> The Charms of British Song, the pictur'd Page
> Admire, or mark his imitative Skill;
> Or with him range in solitary Shades,
> And scoop rude Grottos in the shelving Bank.[482]

Percy and his friends could use remediation to tie Shenstone the author, editor, and gardener to a place—to make him timeless through collation, illustration, and other paratextual activities. Remediation is a process of remaking conceptual space in recursive, mosaic form; it is also a means of remaking the earth's media. It is both material and conceptual, and the oscillation between those two states can be generative rather than just speculative. It can produce theories from conjectures. It can also produce hyper-mediation such that it is freighted down by the weight of those artifacts of conjectures.

Eighteenth-century georgics often recombine with prospect poems and other conjectural features in order to tell a story of cultural improvement—and generic innovation—over time. They can indulge in their prospects *of* remediation, *by* remediation by visualizing "a glittering verbal *tekhne*, producing a medium (*to metaxu*, that 'in-between') capable of stimulating a work of reading that was not assumed to be

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[481] William Shenstone, *Works* (London, 1764).
[482] Richard Jago, *Edge-Hill* (London: 1767), ll.340-350. See also Jago's second edition, dedicated to Shenstone, with a different, evocative title: *Labour, and genius: or, the mill-stream, and the cascade* (London: 1768).

the same as the work it described or—since the *Georgics* are not after all very realistic—the work it simulated." That remediation occurs "within a movement fascinated by optical and linguistic mediums."[483] Grainger's project is invested in interrogating multiple versions of culture through transposing, denaturalizing, and then re-imagining the features of the georgic, then further improving (or at least hyper-mediating) that immersion into Caribbean labor with hundreds of annotations about cultivation on the island, the history of conquest, ethnographic descriptions, and other data. In Young's terms, *The Sugar-Cane* articulates and redefines culture along many different antitheses. These antitheses include: gentlemanly composition and scholarly annotation, ethnographic history and high English poetic culture, cultivation and improvement, and an imagined community of generally articulated English values transplanted through colonization.

That Atlantic ground for such poetic innovation was untilled, in more ways than one. In his preface, Grainger assesses the history of the georgic form and its contemporary practitioners, and says he can use technological terms of art (a generic convention in georgics, which registers the anxiety about the tension between poetry and labor) because "their example is a sufficient apology for me, for in their steps I shall always be proud to tread."[484] Grainger had reviewed Dyer's *The Fleece* for the *Monthly Review* in 1757 and cites others in the opening lines of the poem, as scholarly labor joined to poetic labor:

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[483] Goodman, 21. Goodman names these other eighteenth-century georgics: John Philips, *Cyder* (1708) John Gay, *Rural Sports* (1173, rev. 1720) William Somervile, *The Chace* (1735), Christopher Smart, *The Hop-Garden* (1752), John Dyer, *The Fleece* (1757), Richard Jago, *Edge-Hill* (1767), and James Thomson *The Seasons* (1730, rev. 1746) (151n.33). Grainger cites *Cyder*, *The Chace,* and *Hop-Garden*.

[484] James Grainger, Preface to *The Sugar-Cane* (1764) in John Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger's* The Sugar-Cane (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2000). Grainger had reviewed Dyer's The Fleece for the *Monthly Review* in 1757 and cites others in the opening lines of the poem, scholarly labor joined to poetic labor.

> Spirit of Inspiration, that did'st lead
> Th' Ascrean Poet to the sacred Mount,
> And taught'st him all the precepts of the swain;
> Descend from Heaven, and guide my trembling steps
> To Fame's eternal Dome, where Maro reigns;
> Where pastoral Dyer, where Pomona's Bard,
> And Smart and Sommerville in varying strains,
> Their sylvan lore convey: O may I join
> This choral band, and from their precepts learn
> To deck my theme, which though to song unknown,
> Is most momentous to my Country's weal! (7-17)

Such labor-poetry wordplay occurred to many readers of this West-Indian-Virgilian georgic. Percy excitedly described the poem to the gardener Shenstone as a marvel in reworking the land of the georgic: "He has taken Possession of a Field for Poetry, which is both large, and fertile, and yet un-occupied; And the Cultivation of which must be a popular measure to Many Amongst us."[485]

Thus like the dream vision and the conjectural history, the georgic is a recursive genre that plays on the labor that is being described and the poetic labor involved in translating and transposing it. The georgic's self-reflexivity in conceptualizing poetic labor may be useful, then, for conceptualizing critical labor at remediating so many different, discrete packets of evidence in narratives about the past. *The Sugar-Cane* is not very good poetry, but its hyper-mediations gesture toward Grainger's ideas for georgics as scholarship. In the preface, he duly cites Joseph Addison's "On the Art of Virgil's *Georgics,*"[486] which defines the features of the genre as educative in laying out a prospect: "It raises in our Minds a pleasing variety of Scenes and Landskips, whilst it

[485] Percy to Shenstone, August 10, 1762, *Percy Letters,* VII:159. Johnson made a similar joke in his review of the poem in the *Critical Review* in 1764: "The poet had an untrodden country to clear; and though he may not have entirely subdued the native rudeness of the soil, yet he certainly has opened a delightful tract for future cultivation." "Review of *The Sugar-Cane*," *Critical Review* XII, 270-77, 276.

[486] James Grainger. "Review of Dyer's *The Fleece*." *Monthly Review* XVI (1757), 328-40. "Virgil's *Georgics* have done him more honour than all his other poems put together…For the lower or more familiar the object described is, the greater must be the power of language to preserve it from debasement" (329).

teaches us: and makes the driest of its Precepts look like a Description. A Georgic therefore is some part of the Science of Husbandry put into a pleasing Dress, and set off with all the Beauties and Embellishments of Poetry."[487] When Grainger transplants the form to the West Indies, he highlights this specific feature of local detail as a far-away curiosity. At the same time, he self-consciously improves the genre into a practical primer in medicine and colonial agriculture by introducing and emphasizing the feature of scholarly annotation.

The Sugar-Cane is a cultural history that tries to address time and place in its critical features and tries to be educative as a document of cultural history. It exhaustively tries to render the fullest context it possibly can. It does so incompletely and incoherently, thus registering its historicity in a less assimilable, generalizable way than could make it a useful cultural-historical document. David S. Shields criticizes the hyper-mediation: the "pages are freighted with lengthy explanatory footnotes." He plays up the distinction between cultivation and taste in his criticism of the explanatory apparatus: "For a reader interested in botany, material culture, or history of the West Indies, these footnotes can be fascinating reading. A lover of *belles lettres* sees the profusion and length as indices of verses inadequate to the task at hand."[488] Shaun Irlam calls it "second-degree aestheticization of agrarian-capitalist relations by dressing the slave-economy of the colonies in the antique weeds of pastoral feudalism."[489] Irlam's strong language indicates the ways the poem can reveal the political context of the past through contemporary

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[487] Joseph Addison. "An Essay on Virgil's Georgics." *Miscellaneous Works, in Verse and Prose of the late Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.* (London, 1726), I:257-8.
[488] David S. Shields. *Oracles of Empire: Poetry, Politics, and Commerce in British America.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). 73.
[489] Shaun Irlam, "'Wish You Were Here': Exporting England in James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*." *ELH* 68 (2001) 377-396, 380.

theoretical language—this is an apt description of the poem but it also indicates the problems of situating it fully in the past without structuring devices. Like *Hau Kiou Choaan*, it is as document that oscillates so much as to be glitchy. Grainger's contemporary editor John Gilmore describes this oscillation in approving terms: "While Grainger is imposing a European model on Caribbean reality, he is also to some extent doing the reverse: the Caribbean reality is being imposed on the European model, on a scale to which there is nothing earlier which is comparable in English."[490]

That sugar formed a significant part of the colonial economy for the English raised its subject matter to a level beyond curiosity. Reviewing the poem for the *Critical Review* in 1764, Samuel Johnson said he was surprised but interested in the unlikely topic of the sugar-cane, for it "demands by its commercial value the attention of a mercantile, and by its physical curiosity, that of a philosophical nation."[491] The stakes of the expanding colonial project were not lost on Percy and Johnson as they reviewed the poem in the *London Chronicle*: "the poet concludes the whole with an address to the mother country; and with a premonition of the dangerous consequences likely to arise from that independency to which the northern countries are gradually advancing."[492] Irlam reads Grainger's remediation as an attempt at a political remediation that has questionable chances to succeed. He reads the poem as an attempt to render the natural history of the colony in familiar terms and thus "stabilize colonial social relations and domesticate the foreign, Caribbean terrain in terms of familiar social, literary, and agricultural codes produced within the already constructed georgic discourse of the English landscape."[493]

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[490] Gilmore, 64-65.
[491] "Review of *The Sugar-Cane*." *Critical Review* XII, 271
[492] continuation of "Review of *The Sugar-Cane*." *London Chronicle* (July 7-10, 1764), 28.
[493] Irlam, 379.

Like Jago, Grainger memorializes his friends' remediating labors and projects in his own georgic:

> Yet 'mid this blest ebriety, some tears,
> For friends I left in Albion's distant isle,
> For Johnson, Percy, White, escape mine eyes:
> For her, fair Auth'ress!…
> ….O were y e all here,
> …
> How would your converse charm the lonely hour?
> Your converse, where mild wisdom tempers mirth;
> And charity, the petulance of wit;
> How would your converse polish my rude lays,
> With what new, noble images adorn? (III.507-520)

Grainger memorializes his "Social Family" of collaborative editors in the poem; they are agents of improvement, they are very much within the thematic realm of the georgic.[494] The work of remediation is explicitly discussed in the poem, adding another layer of mediating priority to the georgic's generic conventions. Yet in Latour's terms, the social element of their presence is also more complicated than mere citation can suggest. They are English interlopers in the Caribbean text, yet they are also objects of culture. Percy had corrected the poem that he appears in—what kind of mediation can capture that strange agency?

Kurt Heinzelman argues that the georgic genre is "subversively archaeological in seeing history as embedded, repetitive, and inescapable; it postulates a scene of nationalism that is global and imperialistic but honors, above all things, a rhetoric of local detail."[495] Reframing of the georgic's generic features as archaeology, another field of study that has its roots in antiquarianism that is remediated through systematizatizing,

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[494] Gilmore explains that James White translated Aristophanes' *The Clouds* (1759) and wrote a grammar, *The English Verb* (1761). Charlotte Lennox is the "fair Auth'ress."
[495] Kurt Heinzelman. "Roman Georgic in the Georgian Age: A Theory of Romantic Genre," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 33 (1991) 182-214, 184.

disciplinary projects in the eighteenth century, indicates the ways in which the genre could also be a space for Foucault's emergence to occur in a genealogy.[496] Grainger zooms in to focus on an ethnographic or technological detail of cultural difference, then zooms out wildly, then back again. Groom's description of the *Reliques* is a useful frame for *The Sugar-Cane*: "an imminent disaster: texts existed in countless variations, flourishing rhizomatically rather than arboreally, and … miscellaneous, minor"[497] That is, *The Sugar-Cane* is a cultural object that extends, attenuatedly and experimentally, the kind of labor that one can do with remediating texts. Grainger does not carve out a space for his poem in the canon of English poetry, as Thomas Gray would do in *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard*[498]—rather, he overloads the concept of culture with too many conflicting meanings, too many notes, too much conflicted labor.

Grainger's transposed, translated georgic is a kind of limit case to the problem of situated knowledge, for what it preserves and guides in its interpretations is both hyper-local and gesturing toward a classical history of poetic labor.[499] Is the knowledge it produces, in poetry and in Grainger's hyper-mediated annotations, specific or universal,

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[496] Foucault: "The isolation of different points of emergence does not conform to the successive configurations of an identical meaning; rather, they result from substitutions, displacements, disguised conquests, and systematic reversals. If interpretation were the slow exposure of the meaning hidden in an origin, then only metaphysics could interpret the development of humanity. But if interpretation is the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules, which in itself has no essential meaning, in order to impose a direction, to bend it to a new will, to force its participation in a different game, and to subject it to secondary rules, then the development of humanity is a series of interpretations. The role of genealogy is to record its history: the history of morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as events on the stage of historical process" ("Nietzsche, History, Genealogy," 151-52).
[497] Groom, 12.
[498] See Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[499] The first note to the poem is Grainger's three-page footnote about the cultural history of sugar: the Arabic and Hebrew etymology of he word, conjectural history of the transport of the sugar cane to the New World, Spanish and Portuguese methods of cultivating the plant on St. Christopher and the surrounding islands, the two references to sugar in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. His priorities as an editor had not changed from his days of editing Tibullus.

artifactualized as documentary evidence or artifactualized as cultural taste? Its problematic status is one that McLane sees in the *Reliques* as well: "Whether the dating of cultures can ever push us to imagine futures as well as pasts—this is still our question inasmuch as we are willing to reflect on our own historicization and prospects."[500]

The flexibility of "culture" as a term produces hyper-proliferable, flimsy reflexivity—so might emphasizing these situated qualities *as mediations* generate, recursively, some more substantial self-reflexive alternatives? Gitelman sees the potential in studying "media [as] reflexive historical subjects," in which the very problems of novelty, historicity, and recursiveness in artifacts such as historical sound recordings and new media objects make them interesting to study *because it is impossible to get "outside" them to describe them*. She argues that "[i]nquiring into the history of a medium that helped construct that inquiring itself *is sort of like attempting to stand in the same river twice*: impossible, but it is important to try, at least so the (historicity of the) grounds of inquiry become clear."[501] In *The Myth of Print Culture*, Dane, too, reveals some self-reflexive tendencies as he looks back at the myth-busting—and –making—he has engaged in his disciplinary critique:

> I began thinking of this work as a polemic I have been conducting for several years [in which] I would critique … the notion of the bibliographical grand *recit*, that large general abstraction within which all material evidence is placed, and which defines out of existence the very possibility of counter-evidence. … But I have discovered, of course, my own version of the narrative I have critiqued…[502]

That is, the very act of narrating the past is a form of abstraction, whether or not one believes in abstractions as a valuable part of producing knowledge.

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[500] McLane, *Balladeering*, 42.
[501] Gitelman, 20-21.
[502] Dane, 191.

Conclusion: Errant Paths and the Future of the Book

Where has this errant path led?

In this conclusion, I want to put the editorial societies of mind that Pope, Bentley, Theobald, Percy, and their many collaborators and antagonists have generated to the test of preservation by considering it with Douglas Davis's conceptual digital artwork *The World's First Collaborative Sentence*, which was "open" to the public for generative contributions between 1994 and 2000. The Whitney Museum acquired the poem in 1995, socialized it, institutionalized it, creating a feedback loop of worldwide popularity proliferating more interactions and acclaim for the project: "From its inception, the *Sentence* has received a torrent of words, sounds, and images, contributors having learned about the site by word-of-mouth, web-based references, or press attention. The appeal of the Sentence is that it gives the world a space in which to speak its collective and its individual mind."[503] Designed by Davis as a tribute to multimedia artist Nam June Paik, it traveled digitally to other museums, notably the Kwangzu Biennale in South Korea in 1995 and then to the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie in Germany in 1999, producing huge influxes of multi-lingual contributions to the project. As it grew, contributors tested the bounds of the project by adding not only new languages but also new media and new forms of meta-commentary inside the constraints of the prompt.[504]

[503] Donald B. Davis, *The World's First Collaborative Sentence* (1994-2000) Description from: http://whitney.org/www/artport/collection/index.shtml

[504] From Davis's explanation on the Whitney's website: "The only 'rule' of the *Sentence* is that no one is allowed to type a period at the end of their contributions. Though ingenious users have occasionally found ways to break this rule, the vast majority have abided by it with great passion, criticizing those who discover ways to type a period at the end of a grammatically completed thought." This play resembles Housman's labor to explain thinking in terms of grammatical structures, only to find himself limited by his

They further tested the bounds of how to mediate a society of the mind. Their associations and links in a Latourian Actor-Network theory are various and plentiful.

By 2005, however, the server that stored the project and its worldwide contributions was no longer in service: "When Whitney curators decided to resurrect the piece last year, the art didn't work. Once innovative, 'The World's First Collaborative Sentence' now mostly just crashed browsers. The rudimentary code and links were out of date. There was endlessly scrolling and seemingly indecipherable text in a format that had long ago ceased being cutting edge."[505] What had been the exciting, generative part of the project—the collaborative, experimental, meta-play with mediations in images, languages (and codes to render non-Western characters and alphabets), and grammar—became illegible because of its multifarious digital "moving parts" that rendered the metaphor of mosaics into something that seemed irrevocably broken. And what happened to their sociality, or their status as social interactions mediated by the poem, technology, and institution? What social function does a broken server (or servers) serve?

What happened when Elizabeth Eisenstein announced that historiographies of print technology were broken and were producing only a glut of undifferentiable monographs? What happened when Robert Darnton surveyed the fields of book history, bibliography, textual criticism, and other related disciplines to find an unweeded garden of promiscuous approaches? Even when they produced and reproduced errors of scale,

metaphors. Davis continues: "The *Sentence* may well go on forever, or at least until a superior force or the limitations of web technology calls a halt to it. As the skills of users have increased, the *Sentence* has grown to incorporate far more than words. In addition to texts, there are now photographs, video, sounds, graphics, and links to thousands of other websites, contributed by people of all ages and cultures. Among the contributions are musings, rants, lyrical poems, political and spiritual tracts, fragments of thought, and philosophical speculation, as well as occasional vulgarities. They address such concerns as art, literature, sexuality, religion, the nature of play, the meaning of the 'sentence' itself, and the vaster subjects of life and death."

[505] Melena Ryzik, "When Artworks Crash: Restorers Face Digital Test," *The New York Times* (June 9, 2013).

generosity, and fact, these assessments of broken multitudes had self-organizing properties. At the historical moment when *The Textual Condition* and "The Rationale of the Hypertext" looked like a theoretical and practical tool for bibliographers and textual scholars, speculation about the future of the book was very much in vogue. It could be utopian, as in McGann's and Marcus's horizons of editing, or it could be a dystopian wasteland of moribund links—and minds. Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, critics such as Sven Birkerts and Nicholas Carr wrote elegies for print technology that dramatized fears about hyper-mediation.[506] Tellingly, like the Ancients-Moderns debate that occurred centuries before in proliferating pamphlet technology, both visions of the future of reading and knowledge production seized on correcting errors as markers of possibility. The errors could be preserved and studied as historical artifacts in McGann's rubric, or they could be proliferated in the nightmare version of hyper-mediation of rampant illegible errors that lay waste to humanism.

Birkerts' elegiac language calls backward to these concerns about hyper-mediation from the Ancients-Moderns debate about how to understand the past:

> All that has been said, known, and done will yield to the dance of the fingertips on the terminal keys. Space becomes hyperspace, and time, hypertime ('hyper-' being the fashionable new prefix that invokes the nonlinear and nonsequential 'space' made possible by computer technologies). One gathers the data of otherness, but through a medium which seems to level the feel—the truth—of that otherness. The field of knowledge is rendered as a lateral and synchronic enterprise susceptible to collage, not as a depth phenomenon. And if our media restructure our perceptions, as McLuhan and others have argued, then we may start producing generations who know a great deal of 'information' about the past but who have no purchase on pastness itself.[507]

[506] Sven Birkerts, *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* (1994) (New York: Faber and Faber, 2006).
[507] Birkerts, 137.

Birkerts and Milton are both writing stories of belatedness in heightened literary forms of elegy and epic: so where does Bentley fit into Birkerts' dark vision? Bentley's hyper-mediated work reflects historical versions of some of those claims, and his overbearing emendation of Adam and Eve's final steps as "social" rather than "solitary" suggests his desire for *Paradise Lost* to be forward-looking rather than backward-facing. Bentley's sense of the past was both particular and eccentric. His marginal notes are distracting and de-center Milton's authority, at the same time that they also make over-determined claims about authorial intention. As the librarian at Christ Church during the Ancients-Moderns controversy, he was the gatekeeper to the texts that any scholar would want to study for promoting their cause. He boasted of his position of access and control, only to be satirized as petty and officious as trying to control something so large and amorphous as the entire classical past.[508]

"Pastness," like "historicity," is a form of mediating one's experience in time, space, and technology. In this way, it is a generative critical error to imagine that experience as a concept to be "lost" as Milton or Birkerts would have it, for it is always reconstituting itself in self-critical genres like the epic, elegy, and editorial apparatus—each of which is explicitly concerned with a sense of belatedness to past authors' achievements. They are also each explicitly concerned with theories of mind: how do you explain the ways of God to man? How do you imagine the future, given the probability

[508] See Levine: "…Bentley had challenged a more formidable society than he allowed. The Christ Church men… were no mere scholars but in every sense men of the world; and like gentlemen and men of taste in their time, they were accomplished Latinists and convinced disciples of antiquity. …To the men of Christ Church, real scholarship appeared mere pedantry. Unfortuately, the quarrel over Phalaris seemed to require a range of classical, especially Greek, learning that was quite beyond them. Nevertheless, they had in their favor style and wit enough, a strong sense of cohesion, and sufficient Latin and Greek among them to respond vigorously. And they were sure they had a cause that was worth defending" (54).

that dream visions may mediate something other than the metaphors of painting and cinema in the future.

Where does Percy fit when he makes incoherent assemblages of older texts and plagiarized, reprinted, incomplete editorial apparatuses? Or what about forward-looking Theobald, who saw his work as socializing a method for future editors? Their error corrections generated these concepts of historicity as a form of interpretation for preservation. Douglas Davis's work challenges Birkerts' elegy—first by confirming the immateriality of a work of art and then by showing new forms of collaboration, preservation, canonization, and networked thinking that such a concept engenders, even and especially when it breaks. The work of editing and "unediting" all of those contributions from their coded state into a more stable digital preservation is an act of cultural "gatekeeping" that Birkerts worries is disappearing. While the digital humanities boom has occasioned many new instaurations of knowledge, it also has a vested interest in consolidation, even in conservatism, as a bulwark against deprofessionalization and planned obsolescence of academic structures from the twentieth century. With these very legitimate fears of larger budgetary and institutional crises—which are much larger than crises in editing—Birkerts' work also puts Dane's work in *The Myth of Print Culture* into some historical perspective. Dane's claims about the need to examine particular book objects, polemical and insistently narrow as they may be, are his defense against de-institutionalization of libraries and archives. He worries about what happens to print when it is subsumed in the abstraction of a "culture" or the remediation of digital technology. Marcus's term "unediting"—with her attention on both specific variants and on the aura of historicity generated by iteration—poses a methodological challenge to

Dane's hyper-focus by proposing a mediated prospect that can zoom in and out—from a wide survey of historical change through media to particular instantiations out of which emerge theories about the nature of those changes.

I can imagine that Davis's work could inspire a similar kind of crisis to the one McLeod/Cloud argued for in "FIAT fLUX," as the broken links challenge tools for studying images, character sets, and other artifacts of previous mediation. In my own experiments, I have proposed glitch poetics as one inheritor of Cloud's work—indeed, those glitches seem to come from, or are stored in, *clouds* of overloaded data. Yet the glitch wants to remain glitchy, promiscuous, and unassimilable in the institutional demands to consolidate protocols for preservation, reading, publishing and scholarship. I would rather the glitch revel in obsolescence than to be assimilated into familiar historical narratives, for "…Instead of an immense extension of aesthetics, as media optimists envisioned, computing technologies soon turned out to have an anaesthetic effect, threatening to turn the user of a tool into a mere consumer of anachronisms."[509] The anachronism reveals the intellectual labor of making claims about how we might study the past in the future—it erases discontinuities in favor of speculative conflations. Krapp argues that hyperlink enthusiasts devoted an enormous amount of attention to finding past analog precursors like the eighteenth-century commonplace book, the index file, Vannevar Bush's Memex, and other forms of displaying distributed information. Yet they did not consider "how to explain the anachronism of claiming precursors and forefathers while presenting a radical departure. It is a curious side effect of positing such a paradigm shift that the logic of the break is applied to itself, and suddenly, with

[509] Krapp, 6, 3.

hindsight, it appears as if everyone knew it all along: as hypertext is hyped, much of what it supposedly superseded turns into hypertext *avant la lettre*."

Many of the scholars under study in this dissertation, have used this strategy of digitally enabled retrospection as a thought experiment to study knowledge production in the Enlightenment. McGann's *Textual Condition and Radiant Textuality*, Alan Galey's strategic anachronisms for studying Milton and Shakespeare as mediating figures in the history of information, Peter Stallybrass's work on the database, Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday's *The Renaissance Computer*, among others, all use this gambit in a non-superficial way, beyond simply tagging print technology as "*avant la lettre*." That backwards look to analog forms may also be a way of asserting the newness of the media objects, in Manovich, Kirschenbaum, Bolter and Grusin.[510] Some of those authors take a page from McLuhan's mosaic model; others use transmedia strategies of conflation and subsumption. Manovich's *Language of New Media* has also suffered a sense of datedness, as its sweeping perspective. Galloway argues that the book's datedness comes from its sweep and its inattention to distinctions—what had been a provocative gambit, even just for attracting others to the argument, was now obsolete. The project was not worthless for its diachronic orientation: "…the simple premise of the book—that new media may be defined via reference to a foundational language or set of formal and poetic qualities identified across all sorts of new media objects, and indeed across historical and social context," but "we are required to think critically and historically because of the very fact that the digital is so structural, so abstract, so synchronic."[511] For Galloway, Bolter and Grusin's work falls under the same rubric of emphasizing novelty

[510] Krapp, 7.
[511] Galloway, 2.

and juxtaposition over discrete observations. Galloway is right about the need for distinctions—he recalls Grafton's and Dane's arguments about not subsuming media history into a theory in favor of discrete, deep historicist study. Yet they are not irremediable: from Eisenstein's argument about technological change that provoked disciplinary change, and from Bolter's prior experience with revising *Writing Space* through reflections on futurism that did not come to pass, we can see these promiscuous theories as strategies of interfacing with contingent forms and fears of planned obsolescence. They are artifacts, but not irremediable ones. "*Avant la lettre*" is a kind of interpolation of the past into the present: interpolation in the form of an argument. With Bentley's keen eye and ambitions, we can see that correcting those interpolations surely proliferates more errors—but it also may engender more new strategies of criticism.

I am conscious of how frequently I have used that phrase, sometimes ironically and sometimes provocatively, in this dissertation; as I am looking at its frequency, I realize that, like "cliché" the term comes from media inscription history as a notice that a proof has been struck before an engraver's name has been entered. So "hypertext *avant la lettre*" can be seen as a recursive puzzle about negotiating between print and digital modes of inscription. We confront obsolescence not with certainty but with strategic uncertainty: Lisa Gitelman describes how inscription media technologies evince "the discomforts that the varied and questionable textuality of new inscribed forms seemed to inspire, and the largely uncalculated negotiations that helped those inscriptions make sense in a changing world."[512] "*Avant la lettre*" is an anachronism, commonplace, an easy shorthand that masks historical distinctions—but because it is a cliché, it also carries with it some self-awareness of its limitations. It is a strategy for dealing with what Gitelman

[512] Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines,* 14.

"uncalculated negotiations," the contingencies of fast-changing modes of digital inscription.

As we cyclically rehearse these contentious debates about what to do with the past, there's a kind of critical glitch which super-charges debates about the death of the author, the future of the book, the sins and pleasures of adaptations into new media. Those debates are swarms of self-reflexive questions about what errors—and possibilities—lie in remediating the past. Remediation as a concept is founded on a kind of ahistoricist play with recontextualization and perspectival leaps that expose what we had not seen before. Those errors cannot be corrected and erased, for in correcting them with new claims of historicism, objectivity, or eternal truths, we engender new possibilities for critical errancy. As Benjamin Franklin puts it: , "... error is endlessly diversified; it has no reality, but is the pure and simple creation of the mind that invents it. In this field, the soul has room enough to expand herself, to display all her boundless faculties, and all their beautiful and interesting extravagancies and absurdities."[513]

[513] Quoted in Kathryn Schulz, *Being Wrong: Adventures on the Margin of Error* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011), [i].

ERRATA.

PAge 16. line 2. after Doctrine, read, In another Instance. P. 17. l. 8. for Personality, r. Deity. P. 69. l. 11. r. into. P. 81. l. 8. for confirming, r. continuing. P. 83. l. 13. r. subrogatum, l. 24. r. subrogatur. P. 86. l. 2, a. dele, or improve, l. 23. r. 1691. P. 124. l. 4. dele, till. P. 166. l. 28, 29. r. For, to the End they might. P. 184. l. 23. r. which. P. 191. l. 5. for one, r. on. P. 207. l. 2. after to, add be.

1

OF THE
GROWTH
OF
ERROR.

The Introduction.

GREAT and Pernicious Errors having been insensibly spread through this Nation, an Account of their Rise, and Progress, and of the various and sundry Methods which have been taken for their Propagation, will not, I presume, be unnecessary; but rather a Caution to young Students, a prevention of their Fall, if not a means to recover others, that have been already tainted.

And, that I may be the more clear and distinct in the Account I give, I must, in the first place, mention the Errors my Discourse is of. For, though there is a great Cognation and Alliance between one Error and another, and the most opposite Heresies

B at

The Growth of Error (1697) (fig. 1)

From Early English Books Online

ERRATA.

Pag.	Lin.		Pag.	Lin.	
60	14	for *one*, read *own*.	125	7	after *by*, r. *the*.
61	11	for *shou'd*, r. *might*.	131	3	for *many*, r. *may*.
ibid	14	after *Intelligence*, r. *without the help of External Bodies*	156	10	for *shew*, r. *shewing*.
			160	19	after *relation*, r. *in*.
83	9	for *came*, r. *come*.	165	7	for *any* r. *some*.
121	7	after *there*, r. *are*.	187	19	for *have* r. *hath*.
124	1	f. *acception*, r. *acceptation*.			

☞ Page 12, line 5, after *General Ideas whatsoever*, these Words are to be Inserted, *viz*. To be plain, I own my self able to abstract in one Sense, as when I consider some particular Parts or Qualities separated from others, with which thô they are united in some Object, yet it is possible they may really Exist without them. But I deny that I can abstract from one another, or conceive separately, those Qualities which it is impossible shou'd Exist so separated; or that I can frame a General Notion by abstracting from Particulars in the manner aforesaid. Which two last are the proper Acceptations of *Abstraction*.

***A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Bishop George Berkeley (1710) (fig. 2)**

Do errors come from abstraction?

[48]

ſitory Rumour, and ſuch, with Submiſſion to his Honourable Patrons, is Mr. POPE's Poetical Reputation.

I am willing to own very frankly, that a Work of this Nature is not capable of a Fable, but then it is very capable of an Unity of Deſign; but this Author has corrupted the Unity of his Deſign, by unexpectedly ſhifting his Scene, and deſerting *The Temple of Fame* for the Temple of Rumour.

Chaucer

This annotation appears in the Eighteenth-Century Collections Online digital scan of the English Short Title Catalog's microfilm copy of John Dennis's *Remarks upon Mr. Pope's translation of Homer, with two letters concerning Windsor Forest, and The temple of fame* (1717). (fig. 3)

<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=uclosangeles&tabID=T001&docId=CB127176280&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>.

ZOOMING OUT: GARDENS AS PIXELATED LANDSCAPES (fig. 4)

Interpolating the text of "Windsor Forest" into the code of an image generates color variations and transpositions. Here is the natural form of that kind of image: an aerial photograph of a Dutch tulip field, which I've discussed as an example of the New Aesthetic's visualizing the world through the estranging perspective of a digital device. The garden plot and the glitched image are both composed—and yet they also have randomness inherent in their creation as bulbs grow and errors manifest in unexpected ways. Flower cultivation here is a seed's reproduction code rendering and then glitching, at least as seen by a poetic visionary with an aerial digital camera. The New Aesthetic can glitch our understandings of metaphors, which generate not just errors (this is not that) but also new ways of thinking about how a poet codes the landscape with his prospect and plants metaphors in the scene.

thejaymo:

> Flying over the Tulips Fields in Anna Paulowna
>
> it looks like the earth corrupted and stopped rendering correctly

INTERPOLATION (fig. 5)

For my first foray into glitching Alexander Pope, I experimented with a simple method of interpolating text into the code of a .bmp image of the frontispiece to *Pope Alexander* (1729), a satirical attack on the poet's Catholicism, which I retrieved from the Wikipedia commons of images in the public domain. I opened the .bmp file in a text editor and pasted the text of Pope's "Windsor Forest," into the middle of what the text editor had rendered the .bmp file as—gibberish. When I interpolated the chaotic, incomprehensible text with Pope's well-wrought couplets about gardens, the plot of the image was upended. The composed image is still recognizable, but there are horizontal and vertical transpositions and basic red/green/blue discolorations.

INTERPOLATION II (fig. 6)

This image resembles the "pixelated" tulip fields with even more color variation. Here I interpolated not just the text of "Windsor Forest" but also the code for another image. The other image doesn't appear in the image like a collage because the image isn't legible as visual content, just code. The interpolation doesn't recognize text or image in their medium—only as information. If we think, in Swift's terms, as satire as a distorting glass, what does playing with algorithms and code as distorting techniques do to the content of the satire? By random chance, this interpolation leaves the text "His Holiness and his Prime Minister" intact, and one can read the other writing at the bottom of the image in blue tint, as well. The image of Pope has been broken, however. One does not want to push too hard on these images for intentionality—indeed, the intention only appears in selection of the image, not its creation—so what kinds of interpretation can we practice on "reading" the different parts of this glitched satire?

ZOOMING IN: PERCEIVING PIXELS (fig. 7)

I began to get tired of the .bmp glitches consisting solely of tinted and jumbled bands of images, so I zoomed in to see the pixels at the edges of the bands of color. At this level of zoom, I could detect individual pixels in a random assortment of colors at the edges of the tinted bands. What is the difference between focusing on the bands of color as opposed to the rainbow jumble at the constitutive level of the pixel on this bitmap?

"Media, by altering the environment, evoke in us unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act—the way we perceive the world. When these ratios change, men change." (McLuhan and Fiore, 41)

REMEDIATION, SELF-INTERPOLATION (fig. 8)

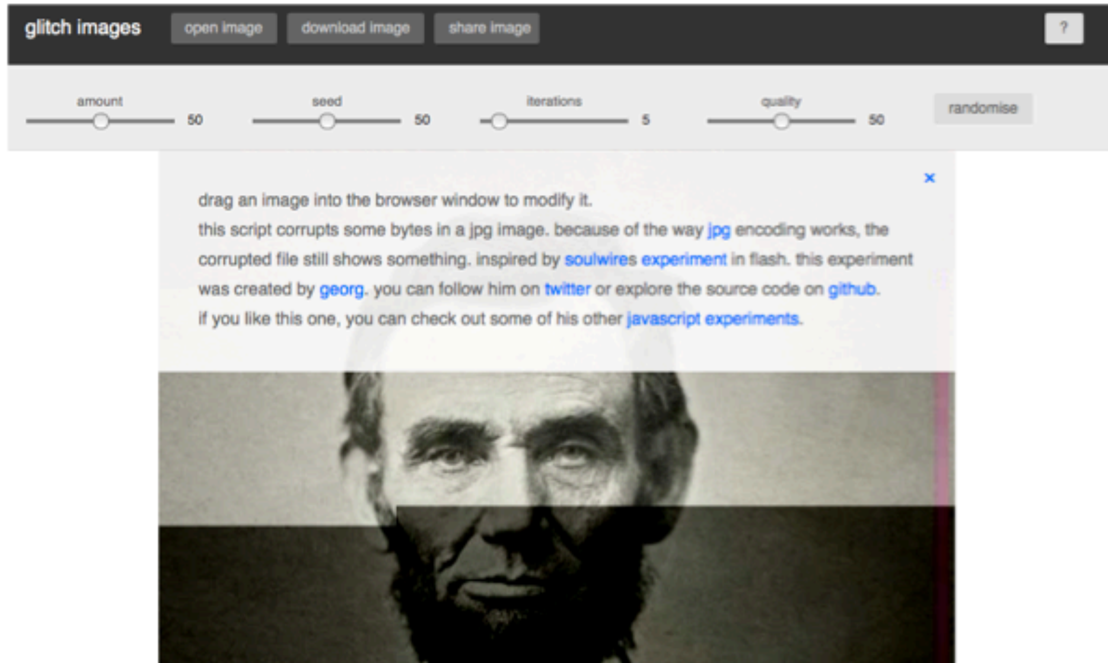
I changed from the bitmap format to the jpeg format for this series, and I interpolated a photograph of myself into the code for the image of Pope. As I noted in "Interpolation II," the two images won't combine in a collage, and the second image will show up as a distortion, not an image in itself. There are multiple authors present: the engraver, the distorter (me, present in my image that's been interpolated as code), Pope himself… each serves a different function in the image and its awareness of itself as a medium. How does this image present alternatives to thinking about the role of editors on a page and the multiple conflicts of agency that may occur?

SELF-INTERPOLATION, REMEDIATION II (fig. 9)

In this iteration, the original image of Pope is barely visible in the upper left-hand corner, and only some of the lettering is visible. Yet the title of the Dunciad remains unglitched in the upper center of the image. How does this image resemble critical anxieties about marginalization of authors, characters, editors, translators, printers, readers? I am particularly taken with the tiny mosaic next to the Dunciad title: neon pink and aqua stripes, black and white dots, bright purple and olive patterns underneath, magentas and purples speckles. These are random artifacts, aesthetic distractions—do they have their own place in this kind of study?

MEDIATED GLITCHING

(fig. 10) http://snorpey.github.io/jpg-glitch/



MEDIATED PROCEDURE (fig. 11)

This used to be an image of "The Distrest Poet," but it has been glitched beyond recognition. Hogarth's image has been painted, engraved, and reproduced in many media—including a digital medium from which I grabbed it—but I do not know how this glitched image was created because it was made by an automated program that glitches images based on user inputs for glitch amount, "seed," iterations, jpeg quality. The inputs are entered along sliding scales, but they do not seem to correspond to levels that can be controlled. In Galloway's terms, the interface is an abstraction that's made out of abstractions—and which abstracts the object under study and makes it illegible.

MEDIATED PROCEDURE (fig. 12)

In *The Medium is the Massage*, McLuhan and Fiore included a photo of a circuit on the edge of a thumb, "enlarged several hundred times" so as to indicate the scale of the electronic age: "The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village" (65, 67). The tiny pink, red, green, and blue mosaics here look like that enlarged image of a circuit. What is the digitally rendered image of the world being recreated into here?

MEDIATED PROCEDURE III (fig. 13)

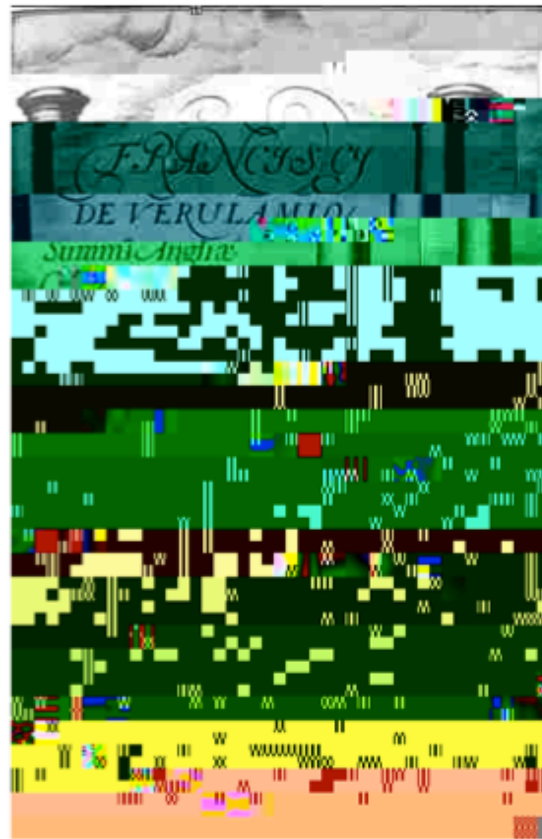
"When information is brushed against information..." (75-76)

McLuhan and Fiore leave this idea unfinished on the facing page: or the answer is a zoomed-in photograph of a woman's legs in complicatedly crocheted tights—their pattern so intricate that they resemble an abstract image at first, and the woman's legs are an afterthought. In their advertising-influenced book design, the zoomed-in pattern of hosiery is as abstract as the image of the zoomed in circuit. Both have fragments of human bodies in the pictures: a thumb, a leg. Here the woman in the photo has her arm separated from her body; the poet's head is also slightly off-center from his shoulders. How is the information of this image's code brushing up against the visual information of the engraving?

THE GLITCHED VIEW FROM THE NEW ATLANTIS (fig. 14)

"In the name of 'progress,' our official culture is striving to force the new media to do the work of the old." (81)

"Our official culture is striving to force the new media to do the work of the old. These are difficult times because we are witnessing a clash of cataclysmic proportions between two great technologies. We approach the new with the psychological conditioning and sensory response of he d. This clash naturally occurs in transition periods" (94).

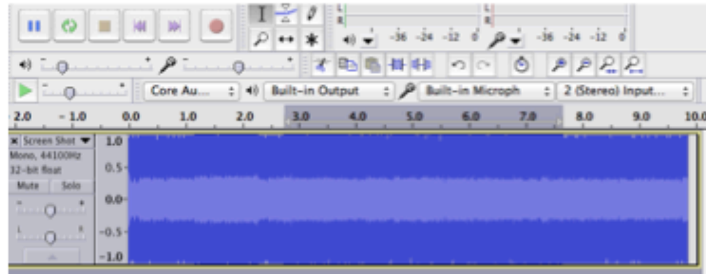


ANOTHER GLITCHED VIEW FROM THE NEW ATLANTIS (fig. 15)

"Environments are invisible. Their groundrules, pervasive structure, and overall patterns elude easy perception." (84-85)

AUDACITY (fig. 16)

Audacity is an sound editing interface. I imported the text of Jonathan Swift's *The Battel of the Books*, which is about a vortex of sound, as raw data. I listened to the raw data mediated into sound—it sounded like static, white noise—and here is what it looked like in the interface. The peaks and valleys of the data are merely artifacts of the graphic user interface: text has no sound, unless it is uttered orally.



In his satirical paratext to *Tale of a Tub*, Swift revealed how an annotating interface can produce artifacts of procedure that will fool credulous combatants like William Wotton. What kinds of strange behavior might Audacity's rendering of text as sound waves engender?

SWIFT'S GLITCH (fig. 17)

"The ear favors no particular 'point of view.' We are enveloped by sound. It forms a seamless web around us. We say, 'Music shall fill the air.' We never say, 'Music shall fill a particular segment of the air.'

"We hear sounds from everywhere, without ever having to focus. Sounds come from 'above,' from below,' from in 'front' of us, from 'behind' us, from our 'right,' from our 'left." We can't shut out sound automatically. We are simply not equipped with earlids. Where a visual space is an organized continuum of a uniformed, connected kind, the ear world is world of simultaneous relationships" (111)

SATIRE ON FALSE PERSPECTIVE, BY WILLIAM HOGARTH (1754) (fig. 18)

SATIRE ON SATIRE OF A FALSE PERSPECTIVE (2014) (fig. 19)

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