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# The Pedagogical Possibilities of Editing a Digital Text in the Shakespeare Classroom

WHITNEY B. TAYLOR

Inviting students to inhabit positions of authority when studying Shakespeare can deepen their engagement with his work. I am specifically interested in how asking students who come to the classroom with varying levels of previous experience with Shakespeare or college-level literary analysis to become editors of Shakespeare can multiply their points of access to his plays. The openness of the editing assignment that I lay out below allowed students to approach the play in light of their particular strengths, viewpoints, or interests, while also requiring that they practice close reading, writing, and research skills. The assignment required students to choose a scene from one of the plays on the syllabus, identify a particular audience for their edition such as high schoolers, college students, or a theater group, and write an introduction arguing for their editing choices. In this paper, I discuss the context for the editing assignment, its foundation in critical pedagogy, the assignment's outcomes, and how it might offer some insights into teaching first-generation students more generally.

The specific course in which I asked students to become editors was "Staging Desire in Renaissance Comedy," an upper-level class in which we read early modern lyric poetry alongside Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, four of his comedies, and either Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* or Aphra Behn's *The Rover*. I have taught the course twice, and its enrollment has included English majors, theater students who have acted in Shakespeare's plays, and students reading Shakespeare for the first time or for the first time in college (and, certainly, some students fell into more than one of these categories). I taught the course at Northwestern University, and while the student population has become more diverse over the past several years, only about 10% of NU students are first-generation college students. As several of the papers in our seminar note, I have found that many first-generation students are drawn to reading Shakespeare – or other early modern authors, such as Milton – while in college.<sup>1</sup> One of the benefits and challenges of teaching early modern courses at Northwestern, then, is that they often attract a variety of students who bring different levels of preparedness and previous experience with Shakespeare and college-level writing to the classroom. The robust theater program at NU can further invigorate and complicate the class dynamic. While theater students enliven a class discussion (and, helpfully, are willing to perform), their previous

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investment in the plays or particular characters can make students unfamiliar with Shakespeare less comfortable participating. Conversely, some theater majors are less comfortable with the level of close reading expected in an upper-level English course. In the second iteration of the course, I had about five students who identified as first-generation and at least ten students who had not yet read Shakespeare in college (out of a total group of thirty). Given these varied levels of experience with Shakespeare, my second version of the “Staging Desire” course replaced a literary analysis essay with a digital assignment asking students to edit a scene from one of our plays. The editing project was designed to give students the flexibility to be creative as well as analytical, allowing them to adapt the assignment to their own perspectives and strengths while still thinking deeply about Shakespeare and developing their writing and interpretation skills.

Asking students to become editors dovetails with my larger goal of finding strategies to give students authority in the classroom; these strategies, informed by critical pedagogy, have been especially helpful when teaching first-generation college students across my early modern and other courses. Before graduate school, I taught in the Atlanta Urban Debate League (AUDL), working especially with middle and high school students in Atlanta Housing Authority communities. We sought specifically to empower students to find and express their own voices through learning the specific skills in analysis, research, and communication necessary for debate. Henry Giroux writes that critical pedagogy is invested in “pedagogical practices capable of creating the conditions for producing citizens who are critical, self-reflective, knowledgeable, and willing to make moral judgments and act in a socially responsible way.”<sup>2</sup> The pedagogical approaches that I learned from teaching debate inform my investment in giving students opportunities to claim authority and to collaborate in creating dialogue within a class that can extend to enhancing their sense of agency outside of the classroom as well.<sup>3</sup> My goals when designing the editing assignment included placing students in a position of authority to make Shakespeare’s work more approachable, learning more interactive, and students more comfortable making their own critical interventions. In turn, I hoped editing would give students common ground and confidence when speaking to me or one another about the plays, since they could all speak as experts about the choices they made for their editions.

A brief discussion of critical pedagogy can offer some context for the pedagogical scaffolding underlying the editing assignment and for thinking about other approaches to first-generation Shakespeare in our seminar as well. Paulo Freire wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a founding text in critical pedagogy, in 1968, responding specifically to “the *coloniality of power* inherent in Brazilian society of the early twentieth century . . . a political economy that thrived on the poverty of the majority of the people.”<sup>4</sup> *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is thus especially invested in addressing dehumanizing structures that reinforce class oppression, but his work offers a foundation for understanding other structures of oppression as well, including oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, religion, or a person’s access to education.<sup>5</sup> Because of its attention to structures of oppression and students’ identities within those structures, critical pedagogy has been found to

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benefit first-generation students' experiences of college. Rashné Jehangir, for instance, writes about the benefits of a critical pedagogy approach in college multicultural learning communities, which "[begin by] fostering students' participation in and sense of belonging to the learning community . . . by engaging them in a process of self-examination and empowerment through awareness of their personal and academic identities."<sup>6</sup> Critical pedagogy approaches in the classroom can create spaces for students to participate in and feel more a part of a community in which they are "co-learners" or "co-teachers" especially when approaching an author such as Shakespeare.

While an in-depth discussion of critical pedagogy exceeds the scope of this paper, I will highlight its principles that relate to our discussion of teaching first-generation students of Shakespeare. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* famously critiques a banking concept of education, in which "the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor," so "the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits."<sup>7</sup> The banking model of education reinforces inequality and discrimination because it conceives of "knowledge [as] a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry."<sup>8</sup> In turn, students become passive objects, vessels of received knowledge, rather than critical or creative thinkers, since a banking model of education conditions students to adapt to systems of oppression rather than examine their places in, question, or change those systems.<sup>9</sup>

Freire advocates, instead, a problem-posing pedagogy in which students become subjects in their own learning, as opposed to the banking concept's privileging of the teacher's agency alone. Teachers and students in this model are partners in education through communication, dialogue, and collaboration, reflecting together on questions of culture and power relevant to students and the world they inhabit: "The students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. . . . The role of the problem-posing educator is to create; together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos*."<sup>10</sup> Freire theorizes how students can become active in their own learning in the classroom, as well as the stakes of that approach outside of the classroom: "people [teacher and student] develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation."<sup>11</sup> Critical pedagogy thus intersects with many of our seminar papers' concerns with how professors can best serve students who may be less familiar with or prepared for college because of exclusionary power structures, as well as how the ways we teach Shakespeare can offer students opportunities for examining their own experiences, grappling with the power of language, and questioning systems of oppression.

Many of the papers from our seminar discussed approaches that give students, especially first-generation or underrepresented populations, a feeling of

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ownership and authority in relation to Shakespeare's plays in a variety of forms, including: students' memorization of speeches, inviting their affective engagement with the plays or into dialogue with Shakespeare's biography, independent reading groups, foregrounding questions or problems in the plays, exercises that question canonicity, or assigning performances of scenes from the plays.<sup>12</sup> For instance, Dean Clement reinvigorates memorizing Shakespeare's speeches as a way for students to gain ownership of Shakespeare in part by creating their own web of associations with his work, which can filter into their lives and communities outside of the classroom.<sup>13</sup> Erin Kelly's performance assignment encourages students' ownership of Shakespeare by asking them both to perform a scene and to lead a discussion after their performances. Students can claim authority twice over, as they are in charge of interpreting the scene and – as Kelly notes – also become “academic experts” on their scene and performance.<sup>14</sup> The performance assignment offers students “cultural ownership” of the material, while also fostering student collaboration and a sense of belonging to a supportive community. Finally, cultivating student collaboration and interpretative authority on the page, Rebecca Olson developed a large-scale editing project that empowered students at Oregon State to create their own complete edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, which is “the first open-source, scholarly edition of *Romeo & Juliet*. It was edited by students – for students – prioritizing aesthetic appeal and ease of reading.”<sup>15</sup> As our papers and seminar discussion show, making Shakespeare accessible and engaging for students from diverse backgrounds implicitly (or explicitly<sup>16</sup>) incorporates many approaches from critical pedagogy, as we look for opportunities to foster insight, collaboration, and space for students to bring their own experiences into conversation with Shakespeare.

Critical pedagogy in the Shakespeare classroom can be especially empowering for first-generation college students precisely because of his works' intimidating claim to cultural capital, which our seminar discussed as both a potential attraction and obstacle to studying his work. While “bardolatry” may make Shakespeare seem especially daunting or irrelevant to students, his apparent unquestionable authority and unapproachability also multiplies the liberating benefits of creating positions of authority for students reading his work.<sup>17</sup> As Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell write regarding critical pedagogy and teaching Shakespeare in high school English classes, “Creating classroom learning spaces where a sixteen-year-old student can see herself as having something to say to an author like Shakespeare is itself an empowering act that has implications not only for future readings of Shakespeare but for future engagements with any texts that have the aura of immutability or ultimate authority.”<sup>18</sup> Learning to read, analyze, or respond to Shakespeare, they argue, can prepare students to think critically about other “hegemonic texts” they will encounter, from “legislation...[to] mortgage offers,” i.e., “‘sacred’ texts that emerge in the everyday lives of citizens . . . the very texts that need to be critiqued, contextualized, and ultimately re-written by critically empowered and critically literate citizens.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, many Shakespeare (or other early modern drama) classes call into question the divide between “high” and popular culture,

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an intervention that itself invites students to question hierarchies regarding what texts are meant for interpretation, as opposed to pleasure, and who is authorized to read or speak about them. Critical pedagogy, then, offers a framework for creating more spaces for dialogue in the Shakespeare classroom, as well as thinking about how students becoming subjects in their own learning about Shakespeare in particular might give them the confidence and tools to critically engage other authoritative texts outside of our classrooms.

I developed an assignment on undergraduate student editing, a practice often reserved for experts and authority figures, because talking about editorial choices in my previous classes had often fostered more inclusive classroom discussions in which learning became an expressly collaborative “process of inquiry.”<sup>20</sup> The most influential of those discussions occurred in an upper-level Renaissance English and Gender Studies course when we read Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher’s *Love’s Cure, or The Martial Maid* in an edition that lacked many in-depth scholarly notes.<sup>21</sup> I was worried about reading a less annotated edition of the play, which I assigned not by choice but out of necessity (i.e., the text’s availability), but reading a play with fewer glosses, especially after reading more heavily-annotated plays earlier in the quarter, activated students’ curiosity and creativity. My concern about the edition led me to foreground the text’s lack of prescriptive notes as a chance for students to imagine how they would gloss or annotate a particular line or word themselves. The lack of notes became productive and freeing because there was not as much paratext to provide a “right” answer or circumscribe students’ interpretations, and I asked the class to discuss what notes they would add to frame the work for a reader. Of course, it helped that we read *Love’s Cure* towards the end of the term, when students already had a foundation in early modern history and literature (augmented, it should be noted, by the notes in their other play editions). The class had also practiced writing literary analyses and using the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) enough that they were neither all at sea nor positing completely implausible readings of the play when confronted by the less-annotated edition. Quite a few students looked up words on their own, complementing the glosses I offered or clarified in class, and reading the play together became a more overtly collaborative endeavor than even the group’s typically lively discussions (which was perhaps especially appropriate for a play written in collaboration).

I should note that we read *Love’s Cure* in a class on early modern gender nonconformity, comprised of more Gender Studies than English students; hence, the class did not have much prior experience with literary analysis or reading early modern texts in spite of being upper-level. Throughout the class, I also had emphasized that reading Shakespeare in the context of queer theory and transgender studies in particular put them in conversation with evolving fields of scholarship, and we would thus explore together its possibilities or limitations in our primary texts.<sup>22</sup> In retrospect, encouraging students to enter conversations by framing our critical approach as a still-developing field of study granted students “more inclusive points of access” to our primary readings, in keeping with the approach Kyle Grady’s essay advocates for to invite students of color into discussions of race in early modern literature.<sup>23</sup> By the time we approached *Love’s*

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*Cure*, I hoped I had set a tone in which learning was a partnership, as I offered them historical and theoretical background, context, and answers to their questions, while inviting them to collaboratively address our central questions about gender and sexuality.

The experience taught me that asking students – perhaps especially students who were previously unfamiliar with early modern history and literature – to imagine themselves as editors opened up more opportunities for them to respond to the text, helping cultivate what Perry Guevara’s essay calls “response-ability.”<sup>24</sup> While their responses were grounded in what they had learned earlier in the term, the lack of in-depth notes made students less fearful of making mistakes and more authorized to interpret the play from their own perspectives, including discussing how the play connected to their experiences of queerness or questions of social justice. As we finished up the play, the class came to view their editing choices as a potential way to give their peers access to the questions the play staged and provoked, saying that they wished we could make our own edition of the play for other readers in gender studies classes. As a result, I wanted to develop a more formal opportunity for undergraduate students to edit an early modern play, ideally in an assignment that leaned itself to the kind of collaboration we were able to do in our discussions of *Love’s Cure*.<sup>25</sup>

Encouraging students to think about editorial choices places them in an authoritative position as both editors and as critical readers, destabilizing the authority of both Shakespeare and of editorial apparatuses and, in turn, cultivating their own interpretative authority. Specifically, student editors learn to question the authority of footnotes and glosses that they may otherwise assume are so authoritative or objective as to be unworthy of interrogation. To prepare students for making their own edition of a scene in my “Staging Desire” course, I focused more than usual on editorial choices in class discussion. (I primarily confined our discussion to glosses and footnotes, only occasionally adding editors’ choices between textual variants into the mix.) On a basic level, questioning footnotes requires *reading* the notes in the first place. By paying more attention to notes, I hope students can better understand the play, as well as see models for the kind of philological and glossing work that I ask them to do in their papers. Second, as they read and disagree with a gloss, students have to articulate their own argument for an interpretation of a moment in a play. Third, I point out and want students to notice the ways in which paratexts, including introductions and annotations, are not neutral spaces that simply report ‘the facts,’ but are driven by an editor’s interpretive choices. In these ways, they learn to actively respond to rather than passively receive the notes or paratexts more generally.

In the classroom, encouraging students to consult or even disagree with the footnotes loosens up the conversation, so that students are less worried about getting the correct answer and often end up proposing multiple interpretative possibilities for lines in the plays. When I point out a note in class discussion, we discuss how notes can add layers of meaning to the text and/or foreclose the possibility of an interpretation with a narrower gloss. In this way, our class discussions model how decisions that seem minor or purely objective –

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such as defining a word – build a larger interpretative frame for a text and potentially determine a reader's response to or understanding of a passage. Students who are working from different editions can also bring up how their own edition handles a gloss differently in order to spark discussion. Since this particular course focused on questions of desire, I made it a point to add glosses of sex puns or moments of homoeroticism that were less often laid out in the footnotes in some of our editions. While I was careful to tell students “this editor is more interested in *x* or *y* here” rather than simply saying a note was wrong (again, since the goal was to multiply interpretative possibilities rather than shut them down), students became invested in noticing glosses that they worried deflated an important reading of a particular moment. Then, we would discuss how students might additionally or differently gloss the line(s) or scene. Focusing on editorial choices was only one aspect of class discussion, but it added a layer to our conversations that honored the richness of the material while creating more vectors for access to thinking together about Shakespeare.

The editing assignment extends the premise of teaching students to question authority by positioning them not only to deconstruct or question meaning, but to create meaning for their own readership. Even as student editing adapts a set of specialized skills usually meant for experts to an undergrad level, the majority of my students were less anxious about editing than about writing a formal paper on Shakespeare. I hoped editing would help students grow more comfortable writing, discussing, and thinking about Shakespeare, since they would take responsibility for advancing a particular interpretation of a scene for readers. Editing clearly breaks down the parts of a good literary analysis and meets many of the same objectives as an essay assignment, requiring students to: attend to particular features of the language, develop academic writing skills, frame an argument built on close readings, and link local readings to larger themes or questions about the material. By selecting an audience, students can scale the level of difficulty in analysis with which they frame their edition. Being an editor additionally helps students understand how their analytical work should illuminate a particular perspective or question for an audience rather than simply demonstrate proficiency for the teacher. Finally, presenting an edition to a specific audience helped students think through how readers, writers, and editors create meaning together.

I have included the editing assignment in full at the end of this paper, but I will briefly lay out its context and requirements. This assignment followed a first paper and shorter writing assignments, about two-thirds of the way through the quarter, after we had read four plays: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. The first essay assignment had entailed developing an argument around investigating a word in the *OED*. (We also practiced using *OED* entries in class.) In order to help shape their editions, students started by choosing an audience, and then identified a central thematic concern, question, or organizing principle for their editing choices. I provided a list of resources, and students were welcome to cite scholarship or historical sources in their notes; however, the only resource that I required them to use was the *OED*. In another course, an editing assignment

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could be a great way to introduce or develop students' research skills, but it was not necessary for my objectives here – and the quarter was too short to do justice to a research component.

The assignment staggered due dates, so that students would have time to think about and develop their approach to a scene. Students were required to: (1) Input a scene from one of our plays into a Google Doc;<sup>26</sup> (2) Annotate the scene with a minimum of twenty glosses; (3) Write a brief introduction, making an argument for their editing choices; (4) Insert links from their scene to at least two other students' editions (of the same or a different play) to demonstrate connections or divergences between their interpretative choices; and (5) Insert comments on at least three other students' glosses and edits. I wanted students to comment on one another's work so that they would learn from each other, practice some early modern(-esque) collaboration, and have to imagine an audience other than me reading and interacting with their work.

Overall, the students' work on their editions exceeded my expectations. They seemed to enjoy the assignment, and the combination of structure and freedom enabled them to think creatively about what they wanted their edition to "do" for readers while practicing their literary analysis skills. Many students chose a scene and approach that allowed them to explore their interests without the limits on evidence selection necessitated by writing a paper. For instance, one student's edition highlighted the interpretative significance of *Midsummer's* many allusions to mythology because of her excitement about a Classics course the same quarter; another focused on glossing the biblical allusions in *Merchant of Venice*. Several chose to gloss particular scenes to deconstruct the gendered power dynamics in their plays; one examined racialized language in *Merchant's* conceptualization of mercantilism and exchange. Theater students tended to craft editions for actors staging an imagined performance, focusing on how stage directions and blocking decisions in their scene would connect to interpretative implications for the play as a whole. For example, one student's edition of scenes from *Twelfth Night* amended pronouns, played with blocking, and offered annotations exploring what it would mean for Feste to be a female character. Others focused on a particular audience, e.g., creating facing-page editions "translating" Shakespeare for young readers, glossing an edition to convey potential queer readings for a high school audience, or specifically highlighting the language of male friendship for a college audience. A few of the advanced English majors got more creative than I thought they would, incorporating their other interests in literature or history to frame their editions. One student's edition, for instance, drew from her senior thesis research to re-locate *Merchant of Venice* in the American Civil War. Only one student did the minimum number of glosses (twenty), with the majority inserting somewhere between twenty-five and fifty notes. The class's glosses were also by and large much longer than necessary, as they fleshed out arguments for how we might read a particular word, phrase, or line in different ways. In my discussions with students after the assignment, I learned that the profusion of glosses resulted both from their curiosity about discovering everything that may be of interest in their scenes as well as their sometimes-unexpected investment in showing how their edition of

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the play could reveal something new to the reader. They were practicing close reading, then, in conjunction with seeing how their interpretations could connect questions or problems in Shakespeare to their larger interests and concerns, many of which regarded the relationship between language and power.

One of the most rewarding outcomes of the assignment was watching students think collaboratively about the plays in both the digital editions and class discussion. Students were generous and insightful reading their editions alongside one another, and inserting comments in each other's work. As a result, the class noticed new connections between the plays at the level of Shakespeare's language and thematic concerns, while also positing connections between their own interests and approaches to the plays. Our discussions in the latter part of the class were particularly rich (perhaps, too, a factor of them being more comfortable later in the quarter), as students would bring up one another's points and glosses in class. Imagining themselves as editors empowered several students who had been more timid about proposing readings in class to contribute to discussion. I had not imagined all of these possibilities until I saw how the students shaped the assignment for themselves, which reinforced the benefits of giving learners room to claim authority in their own learning. Finally, I did see improvement between editing a scene and writing final papers, as students' practice of the parts of a literary analysis in a different medium freed up their thinking about the plays and helped them develop and add depth to their essays. Essentially, student editors could work from the assumption that their choices and analysis of a play mattered, a position that made them more comfortable asserting their readings or questions in discussion and papers.

Some challenges with this assignment include that – at a basic level – it does require access to and some knowledge of the technology, digital platforms, and resources that we used to make the editions collaborative. Also, I am unsure if the editing assignment, in this form, would work in a lower-level course, since it was enabled in part by students' expectations that they would have to do more independent work in an upper-level class. For a lower-level class, extending the project to edit a scene or scenes over the course of the term either as a class or meeting one-on-one with the professor at key stages about individual editions, similar to the process of drafting papers, might make it better suited to an introductory course. In response to how the assignment might be adapted for a lower-level class, Erin Kelly helpfully suggested a version of the assignment in which students could propose how they would organize and introduce their own collected works edition of texts from a class syllabus. The breakdown of due dates was generally beneficial, but it also meant that students who were already less on top of their work had multiple deadlines they might miss. Finally, because the editions' requirements and my rubric were so exact, yet flexible, I had a difficult time grading students who completed all the parts of the assignment on time. Happily, my difficulty evaluating editions resulted from the majority of the class going above and beyond the assignment's requirements, but weighting the edition as much as I would a second paper did make final grades skew higher than they might have otherwise. Final grades were also higher because I do think editing improved students' work on their final papers more

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than writing another essay typically does. Given how much work the editions were, though, I'm not sure that I would want to give students less credit for the work in the future.

I hope that the premises behind this assignment, if not the editing project itself, can be extended to empower and challenge students to claim authority to enjoy and think critically about literature in other contexts as well. Before this experience, I only discussed editing in early modern classes; now I ask hypothetical questions about how students would write introductions for or annotate readings in my other classes as well – especially in my first-year seminars, which enroll more first-generation students. In those classes, too, imagining aspects of framing an edition gets students talking to each other about key questions posed by – or that they would like to pose to – our materials, while often unwittingly practicing close reading and argumentation skills. Teaching editing and actively engaging with paratexts as a method of inquiry is just one among many strategies that can create dialogue with students by giving them more authority in the classroom.

As becoming editors invites students to think more freely about Shakespeare's plays beyond "cracking the code" of his language, editing authorizes students at different levels of preparedness to propose their own questions, readings, or simply what they think an audience can get out of reading Shakespeare's work. In this way, editions can be at once more outward facing *and* more personal to students than writing a paper, as editing allows them to present what a play or scene means to them for their readers or bring their own experiences to bear in creating an edition. At the same time, practicing editing can make Shakespeare more approachable, providing the class with a shared vocabulary and set of skills for making interpretative choices and entering conversation about the plays. Critical pedagogy approaches can inform our teaching of Shakespeare as creative and collaborative, treating his cultural capital as an entry point for students to think critically about texts with unquestioned cultural authority in general and to question the very systems of oppression that may present his work as inaccessible or unrelated to them. I ultimately learned how an editing assignment – or simply inviting more discussion of editorial choices – can put students who come to early modern writing with different levels of experience and investments into conversation with one another as well as with Shakespeare.

## Notes

1. See, especially, Stephanie Pietros, "If we shadows have offended": Shakespeare's 'Problems' and First-Generation Students," in this volume.

2. Henry A. Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 3. Giroux is specifically interested in critical pedagogy's role in educating ethically responsible citizens essential to maintaining a democracy. While this paper does not delve

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into critical pedagogy's political project beyond the scope of our discussion, I do hope to suggest that critical pedagogy offers a paradigm well-suited for teaching first-generation or underrepresented college students because of its investment in incorporating students' own voices and perspectives in class dialogue and its subsequent aim to cultivate their sense of authority in their lives, including questioning the oppressive structures that may make them feel excluded or alienated from the college experience.

3. Three especially influential works that informed UDL pedagogy included Herbert Kohl's *I Won't Learn from You: And Other Thoughts on Creative Maladjustment* (New York: New Press, 1995); Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which I discuss below; and Jonathon Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991). I am indebted to Melissa M. Wade, Betty Maddox, James Roland, and Isaac Wolf, among others in the UDL, for introducing me to critical pedagogy.

4. Antonia Darder, *The Student Guide to Freire's Pedagogy* (London, Bloomsbury Academic: 2018), ix. Darder references (and italicizes) the term from Anibal Quijano's "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Napantla: Views from the South*, 1.3 (2000): 533-580.

5. Donaldo Macedo's "Introduction to the 50th Anniversary Edition" of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* includes a discussion of criticisms that Freire did not adequately address race in the book, and how his work can be extended to address multiple kinds of oppression. See Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 50th Anniversary Edition*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1970. 2018 reprint), 1-34. See also Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo, "A Dialogue, Language, and Race," *Harvard Educational Review* 65.3 (Fall 1995): 377-402.

6. Rashné Jehangir, "In Their Own Words: Voices of First-Generation College Students in a Multicultural Learning Community," *Opportunity Matters* 1 (2008): 22-32. For other discussions of how critical pedagogy can help address the specific challenges of first-generation college students, see Peter Barbatis, "Underprepared, Ethnically Diverse Community College Students: Factors Contributing to Persistence," *Journal of Developmental Education* 33.3 (2010): 14-24; and Carrie Freie and Kirstin R. Bratt, "Nice Girls Become Teachers: Experiences of Female First-Generation College Students Majoring in Elementary Education," *Critical Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century: A New Generation of Scholars*, ed. Curry Stephenson Malott and Bradley Profilio, (Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2011), 377-398.

7. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 72.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 73-77. I do not cite critical pedagogy to critique lecturing, reading guides, or other ways of more directly supporting students as they read Shakespeare, which can be especially necessary to help students grapple with the density of language and difficulty of the plots—not to mention that students often do want right answers and direction in an early modern class. I discuss critical pedagogy, instead, to think through ways we might – in tandem with more traditional approaches – invite students into dialogue with Shakespeare and one another, and create classroom environments in which they have the authority to engage in knowledge-making based on what they learn.

10. Ibid., 81.

11. Ibid., 83.

12. I refer, respectively, to the assignments mentioned in seminar essays by Dean Clement; Perry Guevara and Mardy Philippian; Catherine E. Thomas; Stephanie Pietros, Cassie Miura, and Loreen Giese; Kerry Cooke; and Erin Kelly, Jeanne McCarthy, Caroline McManus, and John Mitchell. Revised versions of the essays by Clement, Guevara, Philippian, Thomas, Pietros, Miura, Cooke, and Kelly appear in this volume.

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13. William Dean Clement, “L(E)arned Empowerment: Memorizing Shakespeare for First Generation Students,” in this volume.
14. Erin Kelly, “Mutual Meaning Making: Dramatic Staging and Student-Led Discussion in the Shakespeare Classroom,” in this volume.
15. *Editing Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*, Rebecca Olson and student scholars at Oregon State University, 2019, [www.editingshakespeare.org](http://www.editingshakespeare.org). The project has been hosted by Open Oregon State and Oregon State University at <http://library.open.oregonstate.edu/romeoandjuliet/>.
16. Guevara cites Freire in his paper’s discussion of developing his “Shakespeare for Social Justice” community engagement program for students; Perry Guevara, “Toward Speech Therapy: Affect, Pedagogy, and Shakespeare in Prison,” in this volume.
17. Stephanie Pietros’s paper on teaching Shakespeare by organizing a course around his problem plays reflects on the benefits students found in approaching Shakespeare’s daunting authority precisely by demystifying it and reading his work through the “lens of problems.” Also see Cassie M. Miura’s “Empowering First-Generation Students: Bardolatry and the Shakespeare Survey,” in this volume.
18. Jeffrey M.R. Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell, *The Art of Critical Pedagogy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 53.
19. Ibid.
20. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 72.
21. We read the play from the Fredson Bowers’ collection of Beaumont and Fletcher’s works. Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Love’s Cure, or The Martial Maid*, ed. George Walton Williams, *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, vol. 3, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, reprint 2008), 1-111. While Williams does offer notes, they are not very directive because the collection is not targeted to students or the non-academic reader in the same way that the other editions we read in class were.
22. When I asked students at the beginning of the quarter what they hoped to get out of the course, many of the students wrote that they identified as queer and hoped to gain an understanding of “people like me” in the Renaissance. Their responses made me especially aware of opening up discussions to collaborative thinking about the works we read and making space for students to comment on the texts’ potential relevance to current events or discussions in gender studies, even as I included lectures on historical context from early modern culture, law, or medicine. I found Perry Guevara’s seminar essay, “Toward Speech Therapy: Affect, Pedagogy, and Shakespeare in Prison,” on affective response and reparative reading, incredibly helpful for reflecting further on the course.
23. Kyle Grady, “The Miseducation of Irie Jones’: Representation and Identification in the Shakespeare Classroom,” in this volume.
24. Guevara, “Toward Speech Therapy,” in this volume.
25. Another crucial – and practical – impetus for creating the editing assignment was that one of my colleagues, Melissa Vise, had just taught a digital humanities course on medieval mysticism in which she required students to become glossators for one of their readings. Her assignment, which she generously shared with me, inspired me to create an on-line editing assignment as a way to guide students through editorial work on a manageable scale. My thanks to Dr. Vise, an Assistant Professor of History at Washington & Lee University.
26. Google Docs was not the best forum for this assignment, since we all had to share the documents with one another. A more ideal medium, which my colleague had

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used for her medieval course, would be the program Confluence, which was not available through our library resources.

**Whitney Taylor** teaches literature and writing at Northwestern University. Her research explores concepts of inspiration and breath in early modern medicine and literature, and her essay “Breathing Space: The Inspired Ecosystem of *Paradise Lost*” appears in *Renaissance Studies*.

**Appendix: Editing Desire in a Digital Text – Assignment Guidelines**

English 332: Staging Desire in Renaissance Comedy

The decisions that editors and scholars make when presenting and annotating a text shape a reader's reception of that text. This is your chance to become an editor and shape a reader's experience and interpretation of a scene in one of our plays. Though you might choose to be a "hands off" editor, you will still need to offer your readers context for your choices.

**Requirements for Your Edition:**

(1) You will choose one scene (or a pair of scenes, if your scene is brief) from one of our plays (with my approval). Create and enter your passage into your Google Docs page on Canvas, under "Collaborations," by Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_ at 6:00pm. The title of your Collaborations Page should include your chosen play and scene.

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Choose an audience for the edition and keep it in mind as you work: e.g., high schoolers; a class of undergraduates; scholars; actors or dramaturges; the general public; etc.

As you select your passage and audience, consider what purpose you'd like your edition to serve. You might:

- propound a specific close reading of the scene (or, you could annotate it to suggest multiple ways the passage might be read);
- give historical or literary context for the passage, e.g., focusing on the Elizabethan period or classical mythology, poetic tradition, history of the theater, religious context, etc.;
- explore the performance history of a scene;
- propose how you would stage the scene;
- compare the scene to another text that we have read (such as a poem or another play);
- highlight how the history and evolution of particular words might influence our reading;
- think through how this scene has generated or generates meaning in different historical – or a contemporary – context;
- explore the print history of a play by looking at two editions (NB: This option will be more time and labor intensive, especially if you don't have something in mind already, but I can help if you're interested in print history.);
- offer an edition that does some combination of the above possibilities.

Any approach you take will necessarily speak to the scene's significance in the play as a whole and should address at least one central thematic concern or question you think the play engages. (That is, there must be some organizing principle for your editing choices in the passage – not simply footnoting or listing definitions from the *OED*). You might think of your editing choices as directions for exploring a particular question or set of questions.

Next steps, due Sunday, [the next week], at 6pm:

(2) Annotate the text by selecting a word or phrase, and inserting a footnote with your commentary of that part of the text. You should enter a minimum of 20 glosses of the text, but you can gloss as many words or lines as you need to accomplish your edition's goal and make an argument. Be sure to cite any sources you use, following MLA Style.

Though you are welcome to supplement your glosses with external research (which I'm happy to help you track down), there is no need to do research beyond investigating words' definitions or connotations in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. For leads or ideas, you are welcome to draw from the introductions and annotations in our required edition of your play, or investigate other editions of the plays (the Norton Shakespeare is on reserve at the Library). The library has many editions of these plays; if you can't find something you're seeking, I'm happy to share other

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editions or supplementary materials with you. See Canvas for a list of resources on Shakespeare or early modern literature and culture.

Your glosses and editing decisions might include:

- what speech prefixes you'll use for each character;
- what stage directions you include;
- your own suggested interpretation of a line (or proffer multiple interpretations);
- relevant definitions (from the *Oxford English Dictionary* or *Shakespeare's Words*) for the usage of a word;
- historical or cultural context for a word or line;
- references to class lecture or discussion;
- references to other class materials (optional or required);
- inserting an image or map that elucidates this portion of text;
- making selections between textual variants (i.e., attending to how this word or phrase appears in different versions of the play);
- cutting lines or incorporating lines from elsewhere in the play (especially if your edition proposes a version of the scene for staging).

(3) Introduce your edition by writing a brief (2-3 page, double spaced) critical analysis of your scene(s), explaining the choices you made when annotating and interpreting the text. This is not a summary of what you did, but an argument about why you made these editorial choices, and what you think your editing/glossing choices add to or open up in a reader's interpretation of the work. Think of it as the reader's introduction to your edition of the play.

By Sunday [of the third week], at 11pm: Responses and Links to Classmates' Editing Assignments

(4) Link to at least two other student's pages (on this play or another play) to demonstrate connections, either between words in your scenes or related points of commentary (make the association or point of difference explicit in your comment bubble).

(5) Comment on at least three other students' glosses and edits by inserting comments on their texts or footnotes. You may disagree, as long as you do so respectfully.