


“If the Mona Lisa is in the
Louvre, where is *King Lear*?”

Bernard McKenna

[Confession . . .]

- False Pretenses

- 
- A large black left bracket and a large yellow right bracket are positioned at the top of the slide. A horizontal line with a light green-to-white gradient runs across the slide, passing through the middle of the brackets.
- I'm not going to discuss in depth the “Mona Lisa” or even *King Lear*
 - The title isn't even my creation: It's George Bornstein's from *Material Modernism*

[Why use the title?]

- It helps frame the issues well

[Issues:]

- The copy of the “Mona Lisa” in an art history text, most students recognize, differs from the original
- The copy of a work of literature in a student anthology may also not represent the original

“Copies” of *King Lear*

- “Folio” and “Quarto” text differ in significant ways (Both likely to have been written by Shakespeare)
- For over a hundred years, theatres performed a “happy” version of the play (Not written by Shakespeare)
- Later “scholarly” editions restored Shakespeare to *Lear* but combined, sometimes awkwardly the folio and quarto versions

[What's the original?]

- A PBL exercise studying the versions of *King Lear* to determine the “original” would be a very rewarding experience for students
- Given the complexity of the sources and versions, however, such a PBL exercise would take weeks

[OK but the original?]

- Jay Halio's edited version of *King Lear* of course.
- Jay Halio is a professor emeritus in the English Department

[A Manageable Project]

- Less complex PBL problems have the potential to teach many of the same lessons

[Lessons/Objectives I]

- Help students explore how a text of a work of literature comes to their anthologies
- Help students to explore some of the potential problems that might change the text from its “original” version
- Help students explore the role of editors in the (re)creation of the original text for an anthology

[Lessons/Objectives II]

- Help students explore how to create notes/annotations to help explain parts of the work for readers
- Help students explore valid sources for notes/annotations and what constitutes a valid source
- Help students explore how notes/annotations change a readers relationship with a text

Lessons/Objectives III

- Help students explore the role of printers/publishers in the creation of copies of a literary work
- Help students explore the process of bringing a text to the page before the computer age
- Help students achieve a sense of intimacy with a literary work
- Help students achieve a personal connection with the writer

[The exercise:]

- Students in groups prepare versions of a fair-copy manuscript poem
- The groups compare versions and discuss differences in the groups' copies of the original
- The groups discuss the implications of the differences in the poem
- Students in groups prepare notes on the poem/author
- The groups compare versions of the notes
- The groups discuss the sources used for the notes
- The groups discuss the ways editors in their transcription/choice of texts and in their notes influence the way students read poems and other literary works

[Terms]

- “Foul” Papers
- Draft(s)
- “Fair Copy”
- Proof Copy

Sonnet

written at Donnington Castle near Newbury, said to have been the latest residence of Chauceer, & celebrated for its resistance to the Parliamentary Army during the Civil Wars.

Oh for some gentle spirit to surround
With clinging ivy thy high-seated towers
Fair Donnington, & wipe from Chauceer's bowers
The last inde touch of war! All sight all sound
Of the old strife soon hatched from the ground
Hath banished. Here the trench no longer lones,
But like a bosky dell, begirt with flowers
And garlanded with May, sinks dimpling round,
A very spot for youthful lovers' dreams
In the prime hour. Gisitis' mournful lay,
The half-told tale sounds still sweeter here—
Oh for some hand to hide with ivy spray
Wain's savages, & chase the jarring themes
Of King & State, Roundhead & Cavalier.

M. H. Mitford

impetuous, and
at once beneath
had no sooner
spat their poison
ung, it shrivelled
bear the sneers of
having strength of
er like a porcupine
to his enemies, he
pation as a relief,
spirits, plunged him
For six weeks he
at a man does to
et the better of him)
as far as he could
r to appreciate the
ts glory'—his own

1821, Haydon wrote
, with some verbal
adding several other
opening phrase runs
onal abuse, and want
ave sunk in that way
at he was an apothecary
on—"I remonstrated
no purpose." The
ipation, six weeks of
occurred after Keats
right word) in the letter to

*"a ... of little half told ...

[Initial Student Response]

- Excitement
- Students stress the differences in studying a digital image of a manuscript “fair copy” of a poem as opposed to a copy of a work in an anthology
- Comment on how the image creates a sense of intimacy between the writer and the reader and the time in which the writer worked and our time

[Explore the Image as a Class]

- Study the ink
- Study the paper
- Note the signature
- Note the handwriting
- What does the image tell you about the writer?

[In Groups:]

- Transcribe the image
- Look up difficult words in the *OED* online
- Research references/allusions in the *Times* [of London] *Digital Archive*
- Research the author in the *DNB* online

[Compare “Copies”]

- Of the different groups’ versions of the poem
- Of the different groups’ versions and the published version

[Published Form]

- Prepare a proof copy with notes/annotations of the poem
- Discuss ways to recreate the experience of reading the original poem in the text

[

Give it a try?

]

XVII.

WRITTEN IN A FRIEND'S ALBUM.

Book of memorials fair! I cannot trace
 On thy white page the quaintly pencilled bower;
 I have no skill to bid the vivid flower
 Bloom 'mid thy leaves; nor with the immortal grace
 Of proud Apollo, or the goddess face
 Of Hebe deck them. 'Las! my ruder power
 Can but bear record faint of many an hour
 Passed thou mute witness in thy dwelling-place.
 Oh happiest hours, that ever me befall,
 Rich in commingling mind, in fancy's play!
 Oh happiest hours, whether in music's thrall,
 Or converse sweet as music pass the day!
 Oh happiest hours! and most beloved of all
 The cherished friend that speeds them on their way!

XVIII.

ON VISITING DONNINGTON CASTLE,

SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE LATEST RESIDENCE OF CHAUCER, AND
 CELEBRATED FOR ITS RESISTANCE TO THE ARMY OF THE
 PARLIAMENT DURING THE CIVIL WARS.

Oh, for some gentle spirit to surround
 With clinging ivy thy high-seated towers,
 Fair Donnington, and wipe from Chaucer's bowers
 The last rude touch of war! All sight, all sound
 Of the old strife boon nature from the ground
 Hath banished. Here the trench no longer lours,
 But, like a bosky dell, begirt with flowers
 And garlanded with May, sinks dimpling round

[Author]

- Mary Russell Mitford (1787–1855), was a “playwright and writer, [who] was born on 16 December 1787 at 37 Broad Street, Alresford, Hampshire” (*DNB*)

[Implications]

- For digital anthologies
- For digital versions of letters
- For the way students relate to literary works
- “Print Culture”

[Next Step]

- Currently, I'm finishing an article that I plan to submit to the PBL database that will make the exercise available to a wider audience