

CHAPTER I

An Introduction Is Like a Book

The answer to the riddle in Figure 1.1 is, of course, a book: “for the paper is white as snow, and the inke is as blacke as a crow, and the leaues more pliant then a wand.”¹ The book you are holding presumably does not have a “silken lace” tied around it. I certainly hope you are not experiencing an ambivalent “sad cheare,” not when we are only on page 1. But you get the idea. A book has a set of material properties familiar to anyone who has seen or handled one, let alone read it. And the more familiar books of all types become, the more precise and nuanced one’s bookish references can be. A familiarity with pagination conventions, for instance, makes my reference to “page 1” elicit no surprise, even though I have already been writing to you for several pages.

Unless, that is, you are reading this book in digital form. In this case, your device’s settings will determine the color of letters and background you see. Perhaps, like me, you prefer screen reading in “dark mode,” and thus your letters are “white as snow,” the background “blacke as any crow.” You cannot turn “plyant” leaves. If you are reading these words in a portable document format (PDF) file or web browser, you cannot turn leaves at all: you must *scroll* through a remediated form of the book, remembering how the codex (a set of stacked pages bound on one side) replaced the scroll as the dominant text technology in the West.² Or perhaps you are reading this on a *tablet*, originally the term for a stiff sheet made of clay or waxed wood and used for writing.³ If you think this is a useful point, be sure to mark it with your *stylus*, the term for the sharp instrument used for making and erasing letters on the wax tablet.⁴

¹ Anonymous, *The Booke of Meery. Riddles* (London, 1629), sig. B3r. STC 3323.

² The standard account remains Colin H. Roberts, T. C. Skeat, and Colin H. Roberts, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1983).

³ *OED* s.v. “tablet n.”

⁴ *OED* s.v. “style n.”

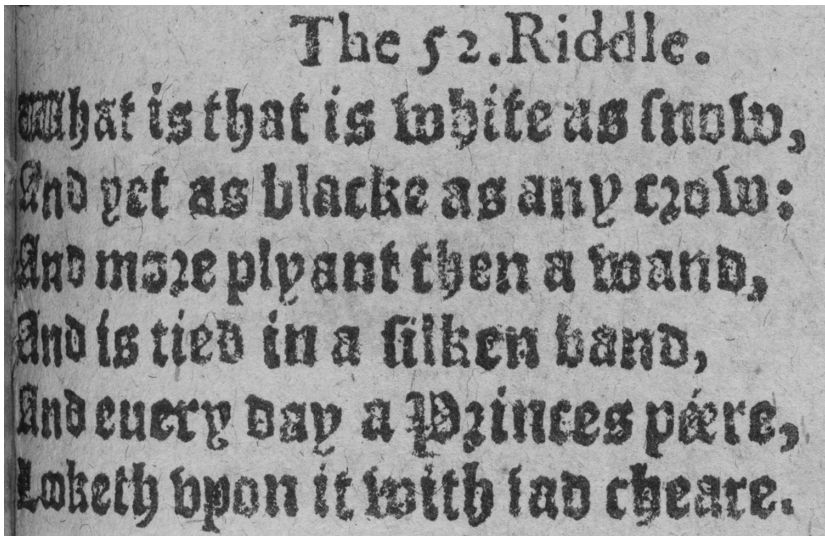


Figure 1.1 Detail of *The Booke of Meery. Riddles* (London, 1629), sig. B3r, RB 82977, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Your plight, dear hypothetical digital reader, draws me to the broad point of this chapter and the animating spirit of the entire book: the lexicon arising from text technologies shapes how we think about and describe the world. There is not merely a “rhetoric of the page,” as Laurie Maguire has brilliantly described, but a rhetoric of every aspect of the book, “invit[ing] readers to respond imaginatively.”⁵ Just as digital technologies have recently required the use of new terms, many of which are old terms, so too has a set of words and phrases clustered around books. We already encountered a few of these in the Preface. These vocabularies of the book have expanded and morphed over centuries, particularly in the time period often called “early modern” (ca. 1500–1700). One difference is key, however: while terms such as *scroll* and *tablet* have thus far been taken from one text technology and straightforwardly applied to a new one, the language of books has been used expansively in a bewildering variety of situations.⁶ Think of the way “turn over a new leaf” creates narratives of selfhood in both religious and secular contexts. As Andrew Piper writes,

⁵ Laurie Maguire, *The Rhetoric of the Page* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 5.

⁶ Already, of course, many terms have migrated out of their initial digital usage into other areas. One now speaks of having “bandwidth” for time commitments, of “unsubscribing” from a friendship, and of “rebooting” the cause of social justice. Future scholars will write *How the World Became a Computer*, noting how these terms preceded computers.

“the materiality of the book” provides “contours ... to the imagination itself.”⁷ Books shape language; language shapes the world.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England abounded in bookish words. Although someone familiar with Shakespeare’s plays might assume that the era’s dominant figures came from the theater – “all the world’s a stage,” after all – books furnished a flexible and widespread figurative repertoire to English writers.⁸ Playwrights and poets used the bookish lexicon to make new kinds of art. Pamphleteers appealed to books to stage political attacks. Preachers, as we have seen, formulated theological arguments using metaphors of page and binding. Scientists claimed to leaf through the Book of Nature. Always rhetorically situated and rarely systematic, this lexicon did not merely offer a linguistic tool; it created a broad conceptual resource for writers and readers. In this book, I argue that books gave early modern writers the language to describe and reshape the world around them – even as most of this language was inherited from earlier traditions and media or imported from other cultures and languages. At a scale and range far beyond what scholars have explored, this language expressed and, in turn, gave form to religious, political, racial, scientific, and literary questions that remain alive today.

This book applies what scholars know about books as objects to books as symbols, figures, and implements of the imagination. This first chapter’s task is to stake out the contribution and intervention of the entire book, a task complicated by the many moving parts an argument like mine entails. The first moving part is to consider the broad context in which bookish VOCABULARIES have signified in human cultures and to articulate how this book extends and critiques orthodox accounts of the “book as symbol.” The second part necessarily deals with printing technologies (or TYPOGRAPHIES), which have justifiably occupied significant attention in those orthodox accounts of the book’s place in culture. The printing press has often been recruited to support what thinkers such as Derrida and Foucault have theorized about the “totality” of the book. These first two sections therefore sketch out the broad field of knowledge in which my study positions itself.

In these broad scholarly contexts, new ECOLOGIES of the book have arisen in recent book history and textual scholarship focused on early modern

⁷ Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 2.

⁸ See Lynda G. Christian, *Theatrum Mundi: The History of an Idea*, Harvard Dissertations in Comparative Literature (New York: Garland, 1987); William Egginton, *How the World Became a Stage: Presence, Theatricality, and the Question of Modernity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003); and William N. West, *Common Understandings, Poetic Confusion: Playhouses & Playgoers in Elizabethan England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

England. These ecologies decompose the “totality” of the book and instead emphasize the precarity, fragmentation, and social embeddedness of books, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These centuries are often understood as the inauguration of the modern era, tightly linked with the printing press and the book as a symbol of totality. The stakes of *How the World Became a Book* therefore concern books’ place in the MODERNITIES to which they have been linked. My overall project is to *demodernize* our understanding of books’ symbolic value. To accomplish this multifaceted feat, I draw on the rich and ever-generative method of scholarly PHILOLOGIES for studying language at scale. In the hope of avoiding any “sad cheare,” the chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the phrases “is a book” and “like a book” to show premodern English writers performing BIBLIOGRAPHIES – literally, book writings, or writings of the book.

Vocabularies

The World’s a Book in Folio, printed all
 With God’s great Works in letters Capitall:
 Each Creature is a Page; and each Effect,
 A faire Character, void of all defect.⁹

I am hardly the first to argue for books’ special symbolic place in human cultures generally, or in early modern England specifically. As a range of scholars from P. Gabrielle Foreman to Leah Price and from Brian Cummings to Jacques Derrida and the German philologist Ernst Robert Curtius have explored, the history of the book is the study not merely of material artifacts – how they are constructed, circulated, used, and archived – but also the study of how those artifacts signify in and profoundly shape human experience.¹⁰ To return to the example stated earlier, scholars of late Roman culture have shown how Christianity became identified with the codex as opposed to the scroll.¹¹ Christians did not merely

⁹ Guillaume Du Bartas, *Du Bartas His Deuine Weekes and Workes*, trans. Josuah Sylvester (London, 1611), sig. C3v. STC 21651. For an extended discussion of these lines, see Chapter 6.

¹⁰ See P. Gabrielle Foreman, “Slavery, Black Visual Culture, and the Promises and Problems of Print in the Work of David Drake, Theaster Gates, and Glenn Ligon,” in *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, ed. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 29–61; Leah Price, *What We Talk about When We Talk about Books* (New York: Basic Books, 2019); Brian Cummings, *Bibliophobia: The End and the Beginning of the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

¹¹ See Roberts, Skeat, and Roberts, *The Birth of the Codex*. See also Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002); M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

use the codex form as a means of textual transmission, though of course that is true. Rather, their use of the codex entailed a symbolic, imaginative, sensory, and rhetorical absorption of and assimilation to the codex form. The book acquired symbolic value, which in turn organized culture.

The example of the codex's ascendancy is instructive precisely because it falls far outside the chronological and geographical scope of this book. It reminds us that books and other text technologies have held symbolic value in most human cultures, for better and worse.¹² For instance, the "book of nature" metaphor, the subject of Chapter 6, circulated widely in classical and medieval cultures, informing the figure's explosive use in the seventeenth century. In one of the best-known pieces of scholarship on the book as symbol (a book chapter titled "The Book as Symbol," if you can believe it), Curtius observes that "the use of writing and the book in figurative language occurs in all periods of world literature."¹³ For Curtius, a culture that maintains an interdependent relationship with books – what he calls "life relations" – will inevitably use books as figures for thought and expression because they so deeply invest in the symbolic value of the book. Cummings extends Curtius's account, observing how "even in its textual [i.e., physical] form, the book becomes more than itself, a visual representation not only of the contents within but of the idea of the book altogether."¹⁴ Bookish language (e.g., the "book of nature") indexes the bookishness of a culture.

It works the other way around too, and here we come closer to the present study's concern with early modern England. If the vocabularies of books *express* a culture's relationship with books, they also *produce* that relationship. That is, if Curtius and those in his wake are right that different cultures are bookish in different ways, to varying degrees, then we must also ask how cultures become bookish and how that bookishness develops over time. Happily, scholarship on early modern England

¹² For instance, indigenous peoples of North America viewed the printed books of European colonials with ambivalence and had a distinctive relationship with text technologies. See Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds., *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, *History of the Book in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Phillip H. Round, *Removable Type: Histories of the Book in Indian Country, 1663–1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Matt Cohen, *The Networked Wilderness: Communicating in Early New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Kelly Wisecup, *Assembled for Use: Indigenous Compilation and the Archives of Early Native American Literatures*, *The Henry Roe Cloud Series on American Indians and Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

¹³ Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Bollingen Series 36 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 303.

¹⁴ Brian Cummings, "The Book as Symbol," in *The Book: A Global History*, ed. Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 95. See also Cummings's remarkably capacious account of book-fear and book-wonder: *Bibliophobia*.

has long begun addressing these questions by showing how, in particular moments, the culture's bookishness enhanced. James Kearney has argued that the Reformation "sparked ... a crisis in representation and language," in which material books became objects both to cling to (the Bible) and repudiate (because iconoclastic), thus requiring a reimagining of the book's symbolic value.¹⁵ Sarah Wall-Randell has demonstrated how "immaterial books" can "tell us far more than can 'material' traces about the many and diverse ways in which early modern writers and readers thought about books." The "immaterial potential" of books make them "useful objects for the early modern imagination."¹⁶ More specifically focused on book metaphors, Charlotte Scott has argued that "the metaphoric function that both the book and the stage were able to provide for the world was supported by their dual ability to accommodate and represent the self," while Frederick Kiefer has shown how "metaphoric books" in early modern plays "can reveal nothing less than certain directions in Renaissance culture."¹⁷ More recently, Rachel Stenner has focused on printing technology to show how "writers in the late medieval and early modern periods created imaginative depictions of the print trade as a means of analysing their evolving media ecology and understanding of their place within it."¹⁸ These and other scholars have begun to articulate how early modern English culture's relationship with books took shape.

I extend this scholarly inquiry in several important ways. First, as the Preface already warned, I present many examples of bookish language from early modern England. Ranging across these examples to assemble an unprecedented level of detail from the cultural record, I will show how books became imprinted on the English cultural imagination. While scholars since Curtius have understandably sought bookish language in exemplary or canonical writings such as those of Luther, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Dante, and Milton, I reject exemplarity in favor of expansiveness.¹⁹ Shakespeare's bookishness appears here, but so does that of obscure preachers, anonymous poets, and cranky politicians. Second, I expand the

¹⁵ James Kearney, *The Incarnate Text: Imagining the Book in Reformation England*, Material Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 2.

¹⁶ Sarah Wall-Randell, *The Immaterial Book: Reading and Romance in Early Modern England* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), 3.

¹⁷ Charlotte Scott, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book*, Oxford Shakespeare Topics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2; Frederick Kiefer, *Writing on the Renaissance Stage: Written Words, Printed Pages, Metaphoric Books* (Newark: Associated University Presses, 1996), 12.

¹⁸ Rachel Stenner, *The Typographic Imaginary in Early Modern English Literature*, Material Readings in Early Modern Culture (New York: Routledge, 2019), 1.

¹⁹ I have emulated Maguire's *The Rhetoric of the Page* as a model of expansiveness.

scope of inquiry from metaphors to all bookish language. In this respect, I follow Harry Newman's "challenge [to] the binary opposition between the figurative and the material," emphasizing instead the "complex linguistic, material and historical networks" of text technologies.²⁰ For instance, the key phrase of Chapter 7, "the art of printing," refers to printing technology itself, just as the language of book size in Chapter 4 often refers to actual big or small books. Third, as I will elaborate in the later sections, the bookishness of the world surged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even if Piper is right that "becoming bookish" in the nineteenth century "necessitated significant reorganizations of both social and individual identities" and Christina Lupton is right that eighteenth-century writers "flaunt with great energy the way [their] texts are produced and circulated as paper, print, and commodity," I contend that both shifts were already occurring, with differences, centuries before.²¹ Finally, as far as possible given the number of examples, I strive to interpret those examples as rhetorically situated utterances. While the scholars mentioned earlier have sensitively contextualized and thoughtfully traced how the discourse of material objects "worked itself into the semantics of the period, wending its way through discourses beyond the literary, into pedagogy, anatomy, law, [and] finance," other scholars have been less careful. Indeed, a major problem of Curtius's influential chapter is that he skips from choice examples to "life relationship" without asking the very question at the heart of this book: what are writers doing with the language of books?²²

The stakes of these bookish vocabularies are alarmingly high because books and the intellectual formation they make possible have exerted a profound, if imperfectly understood, influence on culture. For much of the last few centuries of Western culture (and beyond), books have helped constitute what Charles Taylor calls a "social imaginary," a primary way "people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectation that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie

²⁰ Harry Newman, *Impressive Shakespeare: Identity, Authority and the Imprint in Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 10. See also Helen Smith, "'A Man in Print?' Shakespeare and the Representation of the Press," in *Shakespeare's Book: Essays in Reading, Writing and Reception*, ed. Richard Meek, Jane Rickard, and Richard Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 59–78.

²¹ Piper, *Dreaming in Books*, 3; Christina Lupton, *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, *Material Texts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 4.

²² For another example, in *Divine Art, Infernal Machine*, Eisenstein collects many examples of writers responding to the printing press and printed books but takes those examples at face value and does not regard them as rhetorically situated and motivated statements.

these expectations.”²³ The cultural identification with the book as a symbol has become more noticeable as it has waned in recent decades. Writing in the late 1990s, the French scholar Régis Debray argued that the advent of digital technologies would decenter the book, not just from reading habits but from an entire cultural imaginary, irrespective of the number of books one reads (or does not read). Debray helpfully articulates the importance of the codex as a “symbolic matrix, the affective and mental schematization in whose dependence we bind ourselves [...] to the world of meaning.”²⁴ The material specificity of the codex is “an existential code unto itself, a unifying factor of a culture.”²⁵ For Debray, books have a social symbolic function separate from (but also emerging from) their use as a technology of inscription.

Despite Debray’s assumption of a single common culture and universal literacy, his claim that digital technologies will displace the “symbolic matrix” of the book has proven oddly prophetic in the twenty-first century. One result of this displacement is that we see anew that the codex has been a unifying symbol only for some people, some of the time. Just to pick the easiest of examples, if you were born a woman in the 1400s or an enslaved black African in 1840, you would not have characterized the book as a “unifying factor of culture.” Coming to terms with the past entails a clear response to the way books, as a chief symbol of Western culture, have been used to exclude or discriminate (or worse).

The pervasiveness and apparent normativity of books have led some scholars to offer maximalist interpretations of their place in the world. For instance, one of the key premises of Jacques Derrida’s thought is that “the idea of the book is the idea of a totality, finite or infinite, of the signifier.” For Derrida, this totality makes the idea of the book “profoundly alien to the sense of writing [*écriture*],” which Juliet Fleming glosses as the term for Derrida’s conviction that “a thing never exists *as such* but always and only in its relation to and difference from other things.”²⁶ This means that the book-as-totality stands against the writing that, for Derrida, underpins all meaning.²⁷ Hans Blumenberg, no bosom buddy of Derrida, nevertheless agrees that the book’s

²³ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Public Planet Books (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.

²⁴ Régis Debray, “The Book as Symbolic Object,” in *The Future of the Book*, ed. Geoffrey Nunberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 141.

²⁵ Debray, 141.

²⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Fortieth-Anniversary Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 19; Juliet Fleming, *Cultural Graphology: Writing after Derrida* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 8.

²⁷ Derrida dials up the rhetoric, calling the book “the encyclopedic protection of theology and of logocentrism against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy.” See *Of Grammatology*, 19.

power is its “production of totality,” so that when humans come to experience the world as a book that can be read, that experience can only take the form of a “totality.”²⁸ In the accounts of both these famous thinkers, a book can symbolize in culture only as a coherent whole, a totalizing symbol, and an autonomous and violent artifact. Later in this chapter, I will dispute both these claims by situating them in recent scholarship on the history of the book. For now, my point is that the vocabularies of the book index central questions of human cultures: what is knowledge? What kind of thing is the self, and how does it relate to others? How does consciousness operate? How do form and medium relate to content and concept? These may not necessarily be bookish questions, but they have long been given bookish answers.

Typographies

O *Printing!* how hast thou disturb'd the Peace of Mankind! that Lead, when moulded into Bullets, is not so mortal as when founded into Letters!²⁹

Next, we must deal with the Gutenberg in the room. When Andrew Marvell wrote the line above, published in 1672, he could look back on more than two centuries to conclude that “*Printing*” had “disturb'd the Peace of Mankind.” The account already known to Marvell and his contemporaries is downright mythical today: printing with movable type was introduced to Europe in the mid fifteenth century by a man named Johannes Gutenberg.³⁰ In short, the process of printing involves assembling pieces of type (each with the form of a letter and usually made of lead, hence Marvell’s joke), covering that type in ink, and pressing the ink onto paper.³¹ This “art of printing,” otherwise known as typography (literally, “type writing”) eventually spread around Europe (see Chapter 7). The social acceleration arising from the printing press is a major reason this book focuses on early modern England.³²

Marvell’s claim of printing’s disruptive power sounds like an argument for the press as an “agent of change.” Pieces of type are more violent than bullets! The letter killeth! His grand political statement is not

²⁸ Hans Blumenberg, *The Readability of the World*, trans. Robert Savage and David Roberts, Signale/Transfer: German Thought in Translation (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022), 9.

²⁹ Andrew Marvell, *The Rehearsal Transpos'd* (London, 1672), sig. B2v. Wing M878.

³⁰ See Andrew Pettegree’s accessible account in *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 21–42.

³¹ This is a drastic overreduction of the process, of course. See Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

³² See Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, New Directions in Critical Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

so straightforward as it might seem, however, and it gives rise to a crucial point concerning narratives about typography. Marvell's irony becomes apparent with more context: this line comes from a printed book, a piece of "controversial" literature attacking Marvell's opponent, Samuel Parker. Moreover, Marvell himself had witnessed firsthand the rapid expansion of printed texts circulating in London in the 1640s and was in many ways a beneficiary of that expansion.³³ If printing is more deadly than bullets, Marvell wielded the weapon well. Instead of a naïve belief in the transformative power of printing, his line reminds us that this power, if it exists, thrives because a culture of the book supports it. Printing's capacity for harm is in fact the product of the rhetorical effort of writers like Marvell.

For the last few decades of the twentieth century, scholarship on printing and printed books occurred in an erudite ping-pong match pitting technological determinism against technological instrumentalism.³⁴ Marvell's bullets hint at the most extreme versions of these two positions: do guns kill people, or do people kill people using guns? Determinism, often associated in book history with the work of Marshall McLuhan and Elizabeth Eisenstein, tends to emphasize the transformations not just made possible but caused by the printing press. Eisenstein famously proclaimed the press inaugurated a "communications revolution," while McLuhan much more modestly argued that "the typographic explosion extended the minds and voices of men to reconstitute the human dialogue on a world scale that has bridged the ages."³⁵

Instrumentalism, on the other hand, emphasizes the human and cultural agency in transformations associated with technology. In book history, Adrian Johns's trenchant critique of Eisenstein is the most canonical instance, but there are many others, including Michael Warner's argument that "the assumption that technology is prior to culture results in a kind of retrodetermination whereby the political history of a technology is converted into the unfolding nature of that technology."³⁶ Writing about early modern England, David McKitterick fairly stresses how printing throughout

³³ See Jesse M. Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³⁴ Perhaps the best-known intervention in the determinism/instrumentalism squabble is Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986).

³⁵ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), xi, 25, 30, 39; Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 1st MIT Press ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 170; Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy; the Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

³⁶ Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 9.

the period was “a process liable and subject to change as a result both of its own mechanisms and of the assumptions and expectations of those who exploit its technological possibilities to greater and lesser extent.”³⁷ Even recent attempts to moderate the extremes, including McKitterick’s appeal both to printing’s “mechanisms” and to its “exploit[ers],” do so in a manner still framed by opposing views about technology in culture.

I wade into this quagmire to articulate how *How the World Became a Book* pertains to printing. Most of the language of books I present in this study is not specific to the press or printed books. The leaf one turns over can be paper or parchment, marked by hand or machine (or both). Moreover, even though most of the evidence presented here appeared in printed materials from early modern England (see the “philologies” section below), it emerges from long classical and medieval traditions that existed long before William Caxton set up the first press in England in 1476. The “book of nature” metaphor goes back millennia, for example.³⁸ Except where I am concerned specifically with printing (in Chapters 2 and 7) or where the writers I cite appeal to it, I treat the concept of books as broadly and flexibly as possible.³⁹ This scope reflects my broader inquiry about books and bookishness. I resist what Bonnie Mak has described as an effort to “demarcate the printed book” that has “fractured the broader history of the codex and communication technologies.”⁴⁰

That said, however, it is difficult to deny printing any role in the increased prominence of books in the English cultural imagination. It is true that media determinists in the vein of McLuhan and Eisenstein have overdrawn their claims about the impact of printing, just as twentieth-century bibliographers and those in their wake have uncritically taken up the language of printing in a way that reinforces its social normativity.⁴¹ But it seems equally reactionary to deny what D. F. McKenzie (himself no determinist) describes as early modern writers’ “exhilarating acknowledgement of [printing’s] resources, a craftmanly pleasure in the exploration of [printed books’] materiality, and the provision of a skilled service” to an increasing number

³⁷ David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.

³⁸ See Jesse M. Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages: Language Theory, Mythology, and Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Blumenberg, *The Readability of the World*.

³⁹ Importantly, even the language of printing and impressions is broader than the printing press and can refer to coins, seals, and more. See Newman, *Impressive Shakespeare*.

⁴⁰ Bonnie Mak, *How the Page Matters*, Studies in Book and Print Culture Series (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 6.

⁴¹ See Masten, *Queer Philologies*.

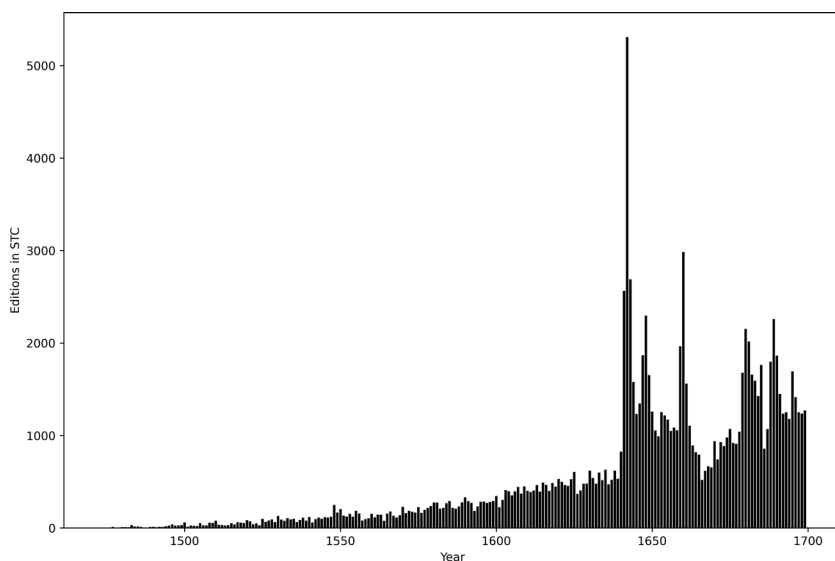


Figure 1.2 Editions in the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC).

of readers.⁴² Rather than depending on contested features of printing, such as Eisenstein's "fixity" or McLuhan's triad of "continuity, uniformity, and repeatability," I rely on the sheer increase in the number and prevalence of books and other text technologies in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Again, this increase is not limited to printed books, since scholars have persuasively shown that the rising number of printed books in England was matched, if not exceeded, by a rise in manuscripts and other non-codex books.⁴³ Figure 1.2 shows the number of editions per year listed in the English Short Title Catalogue before 1700. Given loss rates, this chart likely reflects an undercount, but it also underscores the abundance and prevalence of books throughout the period. Even before the spike in 1642, editions with print runs in the hundreds and even thousands meant that

⁴² D. F. McKenzie, *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays*, ed. Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez (University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 258. See also Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 17 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Lander, *Inventing Polemic*.

⁴³ See Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol, eds., *Print, Manuscript, & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000).

more and more books were available for purchase, circulation, reading – and the imagination. Thus, if printing underlies this project, it does so as a major factor in early modern England’s media consciousness. The chapters of this book maintain the conviction that Lupton’s brilliant claim about the eighteenth century – “that acceptance of a new medium can coexist with a high level of critical consciousness about its presence” – was already true for many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers.⁴⁴

Ecologies

Yea this mans brow, like to a title leafe,
Foretells the nature of a tragicke volume,
So lookes the strond, whereon the imperious fload,
Hath left a witnest vsurpation.⁴⁵

Early in Shakespeare’s *The second part of Henrie the fourth* (1600), the Earl of Northumberland sees the messenger Morton enter and knows he brings bad news. The Earl describes Morton’s face (“brow”) as a “title leafe” or title page, which in Shakespeare’s time served to advertise a book’s genre (“foretell” its “nature”).⁴⁶ Figure 1.3 shows the title page of the very book from which this line comes, for instance. It tells us to expect Henry’s death, the coronation of his son, and additional entertainment from John Falstaff and “swaggering Pistoll.” Morton’s face, like this title page, sets the expectations of those who see it.

Northumberland is not finished, however. Having introduced the figure of the title page to say he knows bad news is coming, the Earl adds another comparison: the “strond” is the sandy, wrinkly area uncovered during the sea’s low tide. Having usurped the land, just as Northumberland believes Henry IV usurped the throne of Richard II, the sea retreats and leaves the wrinkled “witness” of its imperiousness. Morton’s face, like the sand, is wrinkled with sorrow, and those wrinkles explain what makes the messenger’s face appear like the title page of a tragedy. The dark lines of a furrowed brow resemble the dark lines of the furrowed sand resemble the dark lines of the title page.

⁴⁴ Lupton, *Knowing Books*, xi. See also Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2005); Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006); John Guillory, “Genesis of the Media Concept,” *Critical Inquiry* 36, no. 2 (2010): 321–62, <https://doi.org/10.1086/648528>.

⁴⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Second Part of Henrie the Fourth* (London, 1600), sig. A3r. STC 22288.

⁴⁶ See Whitney Trettien, “Title Pages,” in *Book Parts*, ed. Dennis Duncan and Adam Smyth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 39–49.

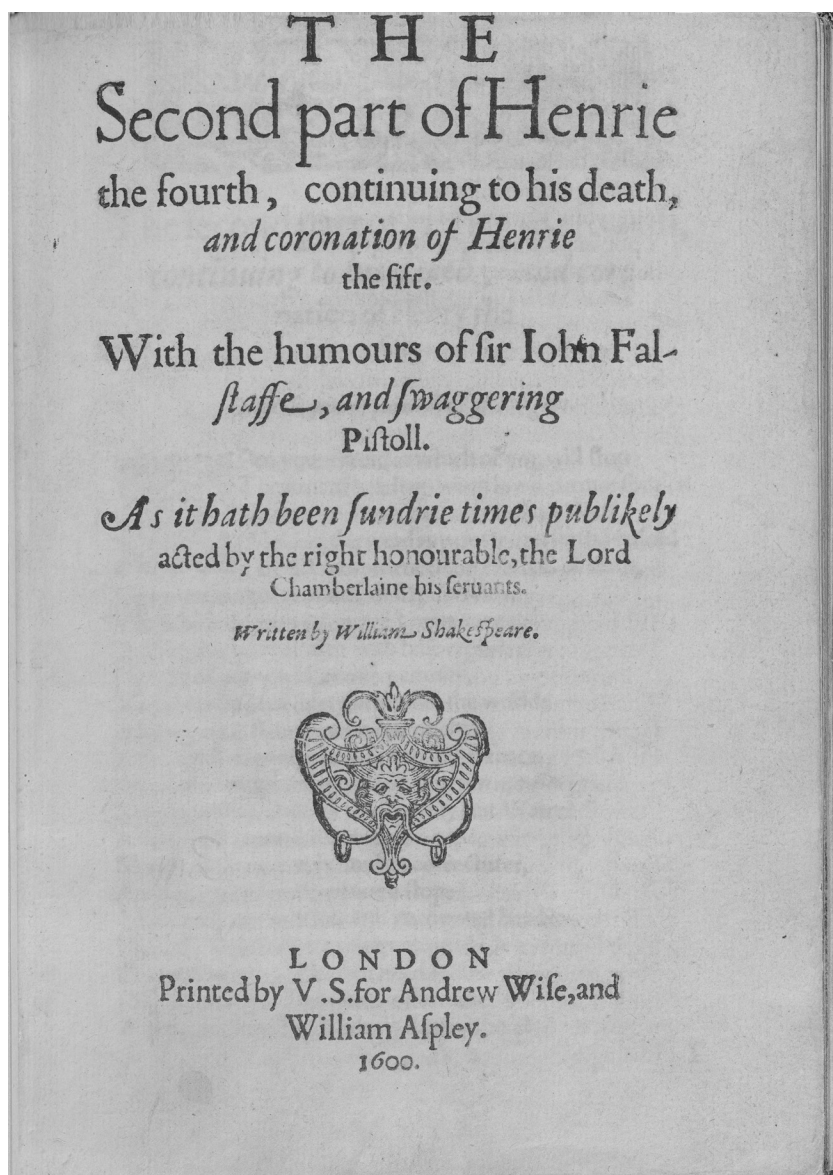


Figure 1.3 William Shakespeare, *THE Second part of Henrie the fourth* (1600), sig. A1r, STC 22288, image 113289, Folger Shakespeare Library.

The point is not to disentangle this vivid double image, but rather to call attention to its entangledness. Even by itself, the bookish metaphor is mixed up in the semantics and economics of the early modern title page. Still further, the comparisons of a man's face to a "title leaf" and the "strond" mutually explain and complicate one another. The book comparison emerges from a fecund set of imaginative possibilities that were hardly unique to Shakespeare, even if Shakespeare could powerfully draw them out. To study what writers do with the language of books – and what the language of books does to writers – means confronting the rich cultural entanglements of that language. And those entanglements arise, as Northumberland's line illustrates and as I will argue in this section, from the semantic richness of books themselves.

Recent scholarship in book history has stressed an ecology of books. Not limited to biology, ecology can refer to the study of the "interrelationship between any system and its environment."⁴⁷ An ecology of the book is therefore not (or not just) a playful metaphor but refers to the study of text technologies and their relationship to one another and to their environments. Although a few scholars have appealed to this particular term to designate how they approach material texts, most book historical scholarship is implicitly pursuing just such an ecology.⁴⁸ In the characteristically vivid phrasing of Johanna Drucker, the signal contribution of this recent scholarship is that "a *book is conceived as a distributed object [...] a set of intersecting events, material conditions, and activities.*" A book is never just a book but one of many "event spaces within an ecology of changing conditions."⁴⁹

In early modern studies, decades of work in textual studies and new materialism have led to the widespread acceptance of many key book historical insights, spurring in turn this new ecological study. Chief among these insights is, in Heidi Brayman, Jesse Lander, and Zachary Lesser's words, that "early modern literary works exist always and only in their material instantiations," though we may as well expand this to include works of all kinds.⁵⁰ Taking this conclusion as a premise for further study, scholars have begun to

⁴⁷ OED s.v. "ecology n. 1c."

⁴⁸ For instance, see Joshua Calhoun, *The Nature of the Page: Poetry, Papermaking, and the Ecology of Texts in Renaissance England*, Material Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020). The term "media ecologies" is more popular, in part because it links book history with the jazzier and more capacious field of media studies.

⁴⁹ Johanna Drucker, "Distributed and Conditional Documents: Conceptualizing Bibliographical Alterities," *MATLIT: Materialidades Da Literatura* 2, no. 1 (November 8, 2014): 12. Emphasis in original. See also Johanna Drucker, "Performative Materiality and Theoretical Approaches to Interface," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 007, no. 1 (July 1, 2013).

⁵⁰ Heidi Brayman Hackel, Zachary Lesser, and Jesse Lander, eds., *The Book in History, the Book as History: New Intersections of the Material Text: Essays in Honor of David Scott Kastan*, The Beinecke Series in the History of the Book (New Haven: Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, 2016), 12.

ask, for example, how material concerns affected the collection and definition of poetry, how printed texts emulate theatrical performance, how women writers used the materiality of writing as a knowledge practice, how book owners used scissors and glue to fashion bespoke texts, and how “literal representation (typography) and literary representation (fictionality) go hand in hand.”⁵¹ Growing “beyond the book,” these and many other projects critically study the “interrelationship” between text objects and the environment of their production, circulation, and even destruction.⁵²

This new textual ecology has necessarily revised approaches to printing and printed books. Rather than “monologic or logocentric,” Pauline Reid writes, an early modern printed book was in fact a “fragile, fragmented material object ... culturally coded as both a thing and a medium.”⁵³ Scholars such as Lisa Maruca and Rachel Stenner have paid revitalized attention to print houses to show, in Maruca’s words, how “those who worked within the many professions of the print trade ... understood books and other print products to be the result of *collaboration* of many hands and the process of textual production to include not only writing but also the work—and workers—of technology.”⁵⁴ Maruca does not use the word “ecology,” but the shoe fits. Adam Smyth offers an elegant summary of the situation:

⁵¹ Maguire, *The Rhetoric of the Page*, 22. See also Claire M. L. Bourne, *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Megan Heffernan, *Making the Miscellany: Poetry, Print, and the History of the Book in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021); Whitney Trettien, *Cut/Copy/Paste: Fragments from the History of Bookwork* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022); Whitney Sperrazza, *Anatomical Forms: The Science of the Body in Early Modern Women’s Poetry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2025).

⁵² Lisa Maruca and Kate Ozment, “What Is Critical Bibliography?,” *Criticism* 64, no. 3/4 (Summer/Fall 2022): 231, <https://doi.org/10.1353/crt.2022.a899716>. Several recent monographs and collections model these new ecologies. See Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Alexandra Gillespie and Deidre Lynch, eds., *The Unfinished Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198830801.001.0001>; Zachary Lesser, *Ghosts, Holes, Rips and Scrapes: Shakespeare in 1619, Bibliography in the Longue Durée* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021); Claire M. L. Bourne, ed., *Shakespeare/Text: Contemporary Readings in Textual Studies, Editing and Performance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021); Adam Smyth, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of the Book in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023); Jonathan Sawday, *Blanks, Print, Space, and Void in English Renaissance Literature: An Archaeology of Absence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023). Compare the older but still important model in John Barnard, D. F. McKenzie, and Maureen Bell, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Vol. 4: 1557–1695*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁵³ Pauline Reid, *Reading by Design: The Visual Interfaces of the English Renaissance Book* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 3–4. See also Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature*, 1st ed., *Material Texts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

⁵⁴ Lisa Maruca, *The Work of Print: Authorship and the English Text Trades, 1660–1760*, *Literary Conjugations* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 17–18. See also Stenner, *The Typographic Imaginary in Early Modern English Literature*.

[A] book is no less ideological than a text, the network of signs that is its physical form, no less demanding of interpretation. So we should read material form rather as we read literary form: attentively and exactly, with an awareness of how bibliographical codes shift across a volume; ... with an awareness of the traditions and conventions underpinning the physical book, and the ways in which those traditions and conventions are sustained or resisted; with the knowledge that the conventional bibliographical or literary critical terms and priorities might exclude or trivialize some material features; with a sense of the labour and the various agents behind the material object; with attention to what is being signified and by what means.⁵⁵

Like Smyth, the scholar known as Randall McLeod/Random Cloud/Random Clod has focused on undermining appeals to the “continuity, uniformity, and repeatability” of printing for his entire career.⁵⁶ As I have written elsewhere, textual scholars now treat books as literary scholars have long treated language.⁵⁷

How the World Became a Book in Shakespeare's England carries this ecology of the book into language. If books are and always have been “distributed objects,” then we must not let their crucial place in the English cultural imaginary languish in an outdated model that treats them as mere bounded wholes. Curtius, Derrida, Blumenberg, and many others declared that books hold symbolic value in a culture, but they assumed books function in cultures primarily as unities, containers, and conduits. Scholars' newfound and critical awareness of the ecologies of books calls these assumptions into question. Indeed, Juliet Fleming has appealed to Derrida's own notion of writing (*écriture*) to look beyond widespread assumptions “that each printed book is a totality, whose ideal form is somehow established at the end of the production process, beyond which point it can only be compromised by further material alteration; and that the printed book is the best stronghold

⁵⁵ Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England*, 12. Along different lines but in the same direction, Joseph A. Dane has queried concepts such as “print culture” and evidence. See Joseph A. Dane, *The Myth of Print Culture: Essays on Evidence, Textuality, and Bibliographical Method*, Studies in Book and Print Culture (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Joseph A. Dane, *Out of Sorts: On Typography and Print Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Joseph A. Dane, *Blind Impressions: Methods and Mythologies in Book History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

⁵⁶ See, for instance, Randall McLeod, “Information on Information,” *Text* 5 (1991): 241–81. Part of the point of Prof. Cloud's variant name spellings is to embody the extreme variability and instability of early modern texts. He has also published as R. Macgeddon in “An Epilogue: Hammered,” in *Negotiating the Jacobean Printed Book*, ed. Pete Langman (London: Routledge, 2016), 137–99.

⁵⁷ Jonathan P. Lamb, *Shakespeare in the Marketplace of Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). See also Allison K. Deutermann and András Kiséry, eds., *Formal Matters: Reading the Materials of English Renaissance Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

for the information it contains.”⁵⁸ The recent book history scholarship to which I am appealing here has amply demonstrated how these assumptions would not compute for early modern English readers and writers. As Fleming writes elsewhere, “while the advent of printing technology ... is usually understood to be coterminous with, if not identical to, an increase in intellectual and technological abstraction” – totality, once again – “to the early modern English it may rather have represented a mode of materializing thought more densely.”⁵⁹ These new ecologies reform how we regard not only material texts from early modern England but the language and symbolic codes to which those texts give rise.

In this book, I study how this new and more critical view of early modern books works itself out in and through language. The figure of the “Book of Nature,” as we will see in Chapter 6, does not always or primarily refer to a *totality* of archived knowledge but rather provides a way of describing a collected repertoire of knowledge.⁶⁰ Even when writers appeal to books as bounded wholes, as they often do when appealing to the size of books (see Chapter 4), they are usually *refuting* the assumption that “the printed book is the best stronghold for the information it contains.”⁶¹ And as Chapter 3 will discuss, the title page affords a set of uses unrelated to the totality of the book, which Shakespeare appropriates for dramatic effect in Morton’s wrinkly “title leafe” of a face. Overall, I argue that books impressed themselves on English culture far less as stable, autonomous, and self-contained carriers of data than as messy, collaborative, fragile, and ideologically loaded objects of media consciousness.

Modernities

VVe liue in a printing age, wherein there is no man either so vainely, or factiously, or filthily disposed, but there are crept out of all sorts vnauthorized authors, to fill and fit his humor, and if a mans deuotion serue him not to goe to the Church of GOD, he neede but repayre to a Stationers shop and reade a sermon of the diuels: I loath to speake it, euery rednosed rimester is an author, euery drunken mans dreame is a booke, and he whose talent of little wit is hardly worth a farthing, yet layeth about him so outrageously, as

⁵⁸ Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 98.

⁵⁹ Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England*, Material Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 44.

⁶⁰ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

⁶¹ Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 98.

if all Helicon had run through his pen, in a word, scarce a cat can looke out of a gutter, but out starts a half peny Chronicler[.]⁶²

A major question underlying this study is how we should approach the bookishness (or the becoming bookish) of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English culture without, on the one hand, lumping it into a form of nascent modernity or, on the other, ignoring undeniable connections with the modern. We cannot deny that many writers of this period, from early to late, felt themselves to be living in a new kind of world. Some used the word “modern” to describe this world as it compares to the “ancient” one. Still others, like the writer quoted above (“R. W.,” possibly Robert Wilson), spoke of this new age as having something to do with books. R. W. declares his a “printing age,” in which “vnauthorized authors” meet demand for reading material (“euery drunken mans dreame”) with ample supply (“euery rednosed rimester is an author”). No-talent writers behave as if they are vehicles for the Muses (associated with the springs of Mount Helicon), while cheap books (“half peny Chronicler[s]”) abound so greatly that they seem to appear out of street gutters. Here is a vivid picture of the proliferation that signals a media consciousness much earlier than conventional scholarly narratives would suggest. You would think R. W. was describing a digital social media platform.

If this text comes from *early modern* England, then it does not apparently conform to most definitions of “modernity” or “the modern era.” Modernity is both deeply familiar and notoriously difficult to define. Early uses of “modern” simply meant “new” or “recent” as opposed to “ancient,” and the word still conveys recency or a break from tradition, like the related term “modernism.”⁶³ Scholars use the term as a marker of a particular historical period, even when they debate the span of that period. Ann Blair and Nicholas Popper describe how so-called Whig histories of steady progress “created a sense that over the period from roughly 1450 to the end of the eighteenth-century—bracketed by the invention of the printing press or Columbus’s voyage on one end, and Enlightenment and French Revolution on the other—modern subjectivity, institutions, and social structures came into being.”⁶⁴ Blair and Popper, along with many other scholars of history, culture, literature, and technology, resist such a narrative. Some push the modern era forward to the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while others emphasize that “the

⁶² R. W., *Martine Mar-Sixtus* (London, 1591), sig. A3v. STC 24913.

⁶³ See OED s.v. “modern adj.” See Margreta de Grazia, “The Modern Divide: From Either Side,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 3 (September 1, 2007): 453–67.

⁶⁴ Ann Blair and Nicholas Popper, eds., *New Horizons in Early Modern Scholarship* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), 3.

elements of emergent modernity detectable in these years [1450–1900] now seem contingent and precarious rather than inexorable, universal, and irreversible.”⁶⁵ Still others find supposedly “modern” social and cultural formations on the other side of what William Kuskin calls “the firewall of 1500.”⁶⁶ Amid these contested start and end dates, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are loosely viewed as the beginning of the “modern” era in Europe, with the mid twentieth century sometimes cited as the end.⁶⁷

What exactly *is* modernity, though? Chronological parameters of the period arise from understandings of what it means to be “modern.” Steven B. Smith offers a helpful list of modernity’s associated features:

the sovereign individual as the unique locus of moral responsibility, the separation of state and civil society as distinct realms of authority, the secularization of society or at least the lessening of the public role of religion, the elevation of science and scientific forms of rationality as the standard for knowledge, and a political regime based on the recognition of rights as the sole basis of its legitimacy.⁶⁸

We could add to this list of selfhood, statehood, secularity, science, and rights. Achille Mbembe has powerfully argued that racialized dehumanization underpins and makes possible these social formations: “the Black Man is in effect the ghost of modernity.”⁶⁹ Hartmut Rosa has argued that “social acceleration is the key to understanding modernity and the modernization process.”⁷⁰ Paul Connerton looks to economics, defining modernity as “the objective transformation of the social fabric unleashed by the advent of the capitalist world market which tears down feudal and ancestral limitations on a global scale, and psychologically the enlargement of life chances through the gradual freeing from fixed status hierarchies.”⁷¹ None of these necessarily excludes the other, of course, and that is part of the

⁶⁵ Blair and Popper, 4.

⁶⁶ William Kuskin, *Recursive Origins: Writing at the Transition to Modernity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 44. In the case of the supposedly modern category of race, see Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁶⁷ A slightly dated but capacious sampling is Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist, eds., *Postmodernism: Critical Concepts*, 4 vols., Routledge Critical Concepts (New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁶⁸ Steven B. Smith, *Modernity and Its Discontents: Making and Unmaking the Bourgeois from Machiavelli to Bellow* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), ix. See also Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

⁶⁹ Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, trans. Laurent Dubois (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 129.

⁷⁰ Rosa, *Social Acceleration*, xii.

⁷¹ Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4.

point: instead of a “monolithic, unified, and singular” modernity – remember “totality” above! – we now have “a world of multiple competing modernities engaged in relentless transmission and conflict.”⁷² A once totalizing narrative of the modern has given way to a messier and more accurate (not to mention more interesting) account of modernity.

Critical accounts of modernity, like critiques of modern assumptions about books, observe that its apparent grand totality hardly seems plausible or even possible. Margreta de Grazia has argued that modernity’s “existence as a period concept has depended” on the way “modern” suggests the “possibility of a spontaneously generated *new*, with no connection to the past.”⁷³ The “modern” works like a cudgel for artificially separating oneself from dependence on the past; to shift metaphors, it is a broom that sweeps away the modern man’s footsteps from the snow behind him. Going still further, Bruno Latour has memorably argued that “we have never been modern” because modernity depends on a false separation of Nature and Society (or Culture), humans and nonhumans, all the while encouraging nature–culture hybrids to flourish. Scientific instruments, for instance, seem to offer human knowers (Society) an objective understanding of nonhuman species (Nature), but the instruments themselves hybridize nature and society and depend on a chain of associations to produce knowledge. As Latour writes, moderns feel themselves “pushed by time’s arrow in such a way that *behind them* lies an archaic past unhappily combining Facts and Values, and *before them* lies a more or less radiant future in which the distinction between Facts and Values will finally be sharp and clear.”⁷⁴ Latour calls this era of unsustainable Nature–Society separation the “modern parenthesis,” which began in the late seventeenth century and from which we are only beginning to emerge.⁷⁵

The stakes of the term “early modern” are therefore just as high as those of the vocabularies of books, and for related reasons. De Grazia articulates the point by reference to academic specializations: “whether you work on one side or the other of the medieval/modern divide determines nothing less than relevance.”⁷⁶ Two terms used for the years 1500–1700, “early

⁷² Blair and Popper, *New Horizons in Early Modern Scholarship*, 5.

⁷³ de Grazia, “The Modern Divide,” 454.

⁷⁴ Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 8. See also *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁷⁵ Bruno Latour, “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern,” *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (January 1, 2004): 236.

⁷⁶ de Grazia, “The Modern Divide,” 453. De Grazia wryly notes how “whatever the subject in question (subjectivity, representation, racism, nationalism, capitalism, empire, new science), it is readily and commonly supposed that the modern *here* and *now* has a special rapport with the early modern *there* and *then*” (458).

modern” and “Renaissance,” hook that period to the emergence of the modern features listed above. Another increasingly popular term, “premodern,” defines the period against the modernity it seeks to preempt.⁷⁷ Any study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England must contend with the “modern parenthesis.” This is especially the case if the study pertains to books and printing, since printing so frequently links arms with modernity (and vice versa) in scholarly narratives.⁷⁸

I dwell so long on the question of modernity to highlight its urgency: we live in a world variously described as postmodern, nonmodern, or late modern. We live on the latter side of Latour’s parenthesis, in which a modern epistemological project that once seemed so inevitable and irrevocable has been seriously called into question, even by its adherents. We must, in Vanessa Machado de Oliveira’s shocking phrase, hospice modernity.⁷⁹ A central conviction motivating this book is that one of the best ways to come to terms with our side of the “modern parenthesis” is to study the other. I therefore aim to *demodernize* books’ symbolic value in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English culture without losing track of the undeniable fact that people throughout this period felt themselves mixed up in large-scale changes wrought by, among other things, books.⁸⁰ In detaching books’ symbolic relationship with modernity and instead exploring how the book signified in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England “in accordance with its own discursive expression,” I suggest models for thinking bookishly in the twenty-first century.⁸¹

In practice, what does it mean to decompose narratives of books and modernity? How might we avoid making the mistake de Grazia warns against – reflexively “crediting some new aspect of modernity to the early modern” – while remaining alive to the complex entanglements of the premodern and the modern?⁸² We might look to the quotation that opened this

⁷⁷ See Bruce W. Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

⁷⁸ For instance, Siskin and Warner argue that “Enlightenment is an event in the history of mediation,” linked in turn with printing. See Clifford Siskin and William Warner, eds., *This Is Enlightenment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁷⁹ Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, *Hospicing Modernity: Facing Humanity’s Wrongs and the Implications for Social Activism* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2021).

⁸⁰ It is not lost on me that, as Smith and others have noted, “modern” gained widespread currency in England as part of a bookish dispute known as the “battle of the books.” See Smith, *Modernity and Its Discontents*, 1–6. I take the urge to “demodernize” from De Grazia’s superb *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). De Grazia demodernizes Shakespeare’s supposedly modern play.

⁸¹ Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 16.

⁸² de Grazia, “The Modern Divide,” 463.

section for guidance. Does R. W.'s cantankerous description of his "printing age" reflect a nascent modernity? He hints at capitalism, but he paints a picture of *failed* supply and demand. He hints at modern authorship, but only by its inverse, "vauthorized authors." He hints at a modern public sphere, but he frames the books growing in gutters as Latourian hybrids, startled to life by stray cats. R. W.'s books resemble Reid's description of printed books as "fragile, fragmented material object[s]" much better than Derrida's "totality of the signifier" or Debray's "symbolic matrix" even if we, looking back through the modern parenthesis, might perceive some through-lines.⁸³

Following R. W.'s lead, in this book I explore the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English language of books without assuming a modern future. I use the terms "early modern," "premodern," and "Renaissance" interchangeably to emphasize the multiple temporal models built into those frames. The titular phrase "Shakespeare's England" likewise gestures at Shakespeare's ambivalent status as "icon of modernity" to some and talisman of the premodern past to others.⁸⁴ Moreover, as previous sections of this chapter have already explored, I extend an ecology of books precisely because it resists the impulse to modernize indecorously. Some of this book's chapters draw explicit and even linear connections to the modern era, but most do the harder and messier work of asking what ideas were like before they were modern – if they ever were.

Philologies

As trauellers haue many oster, but fewe frie[n]ds: so they that cursorily read all things hand ouer head, do runne ouer much, and remember little.⁸⁵

The line above comes from the "Reading of bookes" section in Francis Meres's *Palladis tamia Wits treasury* (1598), a book better known for its mention of "mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*" and its tantalizing reference to the now-lost play "*Loue labours wonne*."⁸⁶ Meres has a lot to say about books, which get their own section before the one on reading from which I quote. Like most of the witty sayings in *Palladis tamia*, this one takes the "as ... so ..." linguistic form.⁸⁷ Like travelers who have few friends even though they have many hosts, those who read hastily and

⁸³ Reid, *Reading by Design*, 3–4.

⁸⁴ Kuskin, *Recursive Origins*, 7.

⁸⁵ Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia Wits Treasury* (London, 1598), sig. Mm3r. STC 17834.

⁸⁶ Meres, sig. Ooiv–Oo2r. STC 17834.

⁸⁷ See Catherine Nicholson, "Algorithm and Analogy: Distant Reading in 1598," *PMLA* 132, no. 3 (2017): 643–50.

recklessly (“hand ouer head”) may cast their eyes over many words but retain few of them.⁸⁸

As I teased in the Preface, this book features many, many examples. Such an abundance of evidence, which ranges from familiar and canonical instances to obscure and anonymous ones, puts me at risk of becoming Meres’s traveler-reader, covering “much” but remembering “little.” These examples span over 200 years of English writing, from William Caxton to William Congreve. They cover the spectrum of genres, from poem to polemic to scientific treatise. They address as much of the language of books as possible. This task calls for a rigorous, critical scholarly method to order and interpret so many examples, a method that can turn hosts into friends. That method is philology.

“Philology” means a love (philo-) of words (-logos). The poet John Skelton personifies it as “Dame Phylogoly” to claim she “gave me a gyfte in my neste when I lay, / To lerne all langage and hyt to speke aptlye.”⁸⁹ Over the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, philology has come to refer not merely to a general love of or skill with language (implied in Skelton’s use) but to a lively and contested branch of knowledge concerned with language and texts. In European contexts, the word refers to historical linguistics, the study of language change over time.⁹⁰ It is easy to see how that institutionally specific meaning, which calcified a century ago, links with broader and far grander definitions offered more recently: Roman Jakobson supposedly called philology “the art of reading slowly,” while Hans Gumbrecht calls it “a configuration of scholarly skills that are geared toward historical text curatorship.”⁹¹ Edward Said defines it as the study of texts “whose meaning is to be unceasingly decoded by acts of reading and interpretation grounded in the shapes of words as bearers of reality, a reality hidden, misleading, resistant, and difficult,” while Jerome McGann (not to be outdone) calls it the “science of archival memory” whose task is “to preserve, monitor, investigate, and augment our cultural inheritance.”⁹²

⁸⁸ OED s.v. “hand over head adv. n. & adj.”

⁸⁹ OED s.v. “philology n.”

⁹⁰ OED s.v., “philology n.” See also Sheldon Pollock, “Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World,” *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (2009): 931–61, <https://doi.org/10.1086/599594>; Jonathan P. Lamb, “Computational Philology,” *Memoria Di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies* 7 (December 31, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.13133/2283-8759/17248>.

⁹¹ Quoted in Jan Ziolkowski, “‘What Is Philology’: Introduction,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 27, no. 1 (1990): 6; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Powers of Philology: Dynamics of Textual Scholarship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 2.

⁹² Edward W. Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Columbia Themes in Philosophy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 58; Jerome McGann, “Philology in a New Key,” *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 2 (January 1, 2013): 338 and 334, <https://doi.org/10.1086/668528>.

Despite recent accusations otherwise, philology is how we retain a living relationship with the cultural past.⁹³

Like much of the work on which it draws, *How the World Became a Book* is therefore proudly philological in both stance and method.⁹⁴ However illuminating the definitions above – I did warn you there would be a lot of examples – Michelle Warren’s speaks most brilliantly to the present study: philology is both “a set of techniques for producing language histories and edited texts from all periods” and “a general attitude toward the construct- edness of textuality in a transhistorical perspective.”⁹⁵ Method and stance. This book pursues a philology of the language of books in premodern English culture because philology is best situated both to decompose the book’s symbolic place in culture and to sever its affiliation with the totalities of the modern. I therefore offer a philology of the book, rather than a cultural history, a textual study, an anthropology of thought, or a literary analysis of exemplary texts.

Admittedly, philology has fallen on hard times. Its use in the preservation of vernacular languages has created unfortunate associations with European nationalism.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, recent scholarship has revised and expanded philology’s scope, a project to which I too am committed. Masten’s *Queer Philologies* offers a helpful model. Masten first advances a philological practice that “investigates the etymology, circulation, transformation, and constitutive power of some ‘key words’ within early modern lexicons and discourses of sex and gender,” but then he pulls the rug out from under us, insisting “that this discipline [i.e., philology] can be read

⁹³ John Guillory, *Professing Criticism: Essays on the Organization of Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 168–98.

⁹⁴ Role models in this vein include Brad Pasanek, *Metaphors of Mind: An Eighteenth-Century Dictionary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015); Hugh Craig and Brett Greatley-Hirsch, *Style, Computers, and Early Modern Drama: Beyond Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Daniel Shore, *Cyberformalism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018); Andrew Piper, *Enumerations: Data and Literary Study* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018); Maguire, *The Rhetoric of the Page*; Bourne, *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England*; Jenny C. Mann, *The Trials of Orpheus: Poetry, Science, and the Early Modern Sublime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021); Urvashi Chakravarty, *Fictions of Consent: Slavery, Servitude, and Free Service in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022). As far as I recall, only one of these scholars (Shore) assumes the label “philology,” but I take them all to be doing philological work.

⁹⁵ Michelle R. Warren, “Introduction: Relating Philology, Practicing Humanism,” *PMLA* 125, no. 2 (2010): 283.

⁹⁶ Marc Nichanian and Narine Jallatyan, “Philology from the Point of View of Its Victims,” *Boundary 2* 48, no. 1 (February 1, 2021): 177–206, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01903659-8821473>; Eduardo Ramos, “Philology and Racist Appropriations of the Medieval,” *Literature Compass* 20, no. 7–9 (2023): e12734, <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12734>.

and practiced in a way that will highlight its own normativizing categories and elisions.”⁹⁷ In the same spirit, Daniel Shore has called for a “more promiscuous philology” that “look[s] not only at words but through them ... to the categories they occupy.”⁹⁸ Shore, who like me searches digital datasets to craft “qualitative philological narratives,” emphasizes the “fragility” of philology: “its responsiveness to the singular, its unwillingness to rule out the possibility that the one text that is always, constitutively missing from an archive has the potential to transform an entire story, revise or discredit a claim, dispense with some explanations and suggest new ones, or upset accounts of origin, influence, and diffusion.”⁹⁹ Philology is indeed a useful set of techniques for studying the cultural past, but it also requires and makes possible a persistent self-critique of its methods and stance.

What does this self-critique look like for *How the World Became a Book in Shakespeare's England*? The most obvious “normativizing categor[y] and elision” is my use of the Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP) data to gather examples of the language of books for philological study. Although the EEBO-TCP repository contains over 2 billion words transcribed from over 60,000 books, it offers a small and highly selective subset of the cultural record from premodern England.¹⁰⁰ As a fraction of the more than 146,000 “image sets” of printed books in Early English Books Online, which are in turn a fraction of extant books printed in English, which are in turn a fraction of the books actually printed in the period (the vast majority of which were written by men whose social position made possible both learning to write and publishing), which are in turn a fraction of all materials written during the period, the TCP dataset is hardly comprehensive. Indeed, it skews heavily in favor of middle- and upper-class male writers and against women, heterodox writers, and those who could not write, as well as books not in English. Most writers I cite in

⁹⁷ Masten, *Queer Philologies*, 15 and 23.

⁹⁸ Shore, *Cyberformalism*, xi.

⁹⁹ Shore, 58.

¹⁰⁰ On EEBO, see Diana Kichuk, “Metamorphosis: Remediation in Early English Books Online (EEBO),” *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 22, no. 3 (June 18, 2007): 291–303, <https://doi.org/10.1093/lc/fqm018>; Ian Gadd, “The Use and Misuse of Early English Books Online,” *Literature Compass* 6, no. 3 (2009): 680–92, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2009.00632.x>; Michael Gavin, “How to Think about EEBO,” *Textual Cultures* 11, no. 1–2 (2017): 70–105, <https://doi.org/10.14434/textual.v11i1-2.23570>. On archival visibility and invisibility, see Imtiaz H. Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500–1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*, Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Michelle Caswell, *Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work*, 1st ed., Routledge Studies in Archives (Milton: Taylor & Francis, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003001355>.

this book are male, and most of the books were printed in England. The best I can do in the face of this critical limitation is to remain resolutely awake to what it means for the philological narratives I pursue: the cultural imaginaries I trace here will always fall along some range of “normative.”

Another, related problem is what we might call the representational fallacy, in which a certain number of examples are said to (but cannot possibly) stand in for an entire culture. The presumably apocryphal statement made by (or to?) the eminent historian Keith Thomas illustrates this fallacy: “if I am not persuaded by your third example, I will not be persuaded by your fifteenth.” But here we reach the very necessity that makes the self-aware, scaled, and sticky philology of this book such a virtue. The many writers I cite here do not *stand in for* their culture; they *constitute* it by using the language of books to do things in the world. Five-thousand examples may not represent all premodern English culture (not least because they leave out most women, children, and those who cannot read or write), but they do allow us to sketch a cultural imaginary far more complex and engaging than analyzing a few exemplary writers would permit. Philology is at once a method for “producing language histories” and a stance toward culture.¹⁰¹ It seeks not representatives but citizens of premodern England.

Bibliographies

The heart is a booke, legible enough, and intelligible in it selfe; but we have so interlined that booke with impertinent knowledge, and so clasped up that booke, for feare of reading our owne history, our owne sins, as that we are the greatest strangers, and the least conversant with the examination of our owne hearts.¹⁰²

To summarize, this book offers PHILOGIES of the TYPOGRAPHIES and broader ECOLOGIES of the bookish VOCABULARIES of early modern England while avoiding the impulse to impose unwarranted MODERNITIES. Instead of debating how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England became *modern*, I show how it became *bookish* in and through the expressive, conceptual repertoire of books.¹⁰³ The world became a book when the language of books gave people a way to talk about it.

¹⁰¹ Matt Cohen has recently called for a “destituent” philological stance. See “Textual Scholarship in the Situation,” *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts, Interpretation* 15, no. 2 (2022): 1–29. See also Derrick R. Spires, “On Liberation Bibliography: The 2021 BSA Annual Meeting Keynote,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 116, no. 1 (2022): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1086/717066>.

¹⁰² John Donne, *LXXX Sermons* (London, 1640), sig. Vuuv. STC 7038.

¹⁰³ I suppose it is time to acknowledge the shade thrown in my title. See Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).

As a palate cleanser for the chapters to come, this brief final section will combine the concerns of this introduction by focusing on the phrases “like a book” and “is a book.” These humble figures identify parts of human experience and culture with books and thus forge the very conceptual connection this entire project will explore. Even a sampling of English writers claiming something is or is like a book illustrates (1) the non-totalizing way books signify in premodern England, (2) the fact that printing technology does not necessarily dominate the bookish lexicon, (3) the ecological purchase of books on writers’ imaginations, (4) the way bookish figures resemble but are not identical to modern categories, and (5) the value of a philology of bookish language. “Bibliography” literally means “book writing”; here and in the chapters that follow we have a set of premodern bibliographies – writings not *of* but *with* books.¹⁰⁴

When John Donne claims, in the quotation that began this section, that the “heart is a booke,” he at once activates and complicates the resemblance of the human heart (already a metaphor for the center of personhood) to a book.¹⁰⁵ This book is not simply a bounded whole or vessel of information. It is an interactive device. Donne claims that we should know how to read it (it is both “legible” and “intelligible”), but we have impertinently written in it while refusing to examine it. He does not specify whether this book began as a manuscript or a printed book, and that is part of the point. The distinction is not relevant to Donne’s figurative work, especially since a printed book that has been “interlined” becomes a print–manuscript hybrid. The marked up, “clasped up” book gives Donne an evocative image of the dissonance that accompanies an unexamined heart. The congregant who hears or reads this sermon must become both the book and its reader.

Donne’s vivid metaphor extends the conventional comparison of the conscience to a book in which one’s actions are recorded. Many writers of the period cite John Crysostom’s “conscientia codex est in quo quotidiana peccata conscribuntur” (“conscience is a book in which daily sins are written”) as the source of this bookish comparison, and many expand on it. In a sermon, William Fisher quotes the proverbial statement, then exhorts his audience to “keepe this boke well & cleare fro[m] the blots and blemishes of sinne.”¹⁰⁶ Mathew Stoneham expands on the line to claim

¹⁰⁴ *OED* s.v. “bibliography n.”

¹⁰⁵ For a long history of this metaphor of selfhood, see Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ William Fisher, *A Godly Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse the 31. Day of October 1591* (London, 1592), sig. Cr. STC 10919.

that “the conscience it selfe performeth the office of an Accuser, Iudge, Tormentor, against our selues.”¹⁰⁷ Immanuel Bourne adds to the book of conscience “our good actions as well as our euill,” looking ahead to the day of judgment, when “both these shall be brought to light when the bookes shall bee opened.”¹⁰⁸ Like Donne, Peter Barker imagines a closed-up book of conscience but takes a gloomier view:

conscience is a booke, and God hath giuen euery man one to carry in his bosome, which though hee be vnwilling to open, yet at last he must needes vnclasp it, it is a monitor, and at last it will complaine, it is a watch, and at last it will giue warning: it is our Domesticall Chaplaine, & wil not alwayes stop his mouth, bu[t] cry out of the fullnes and foulness of iniquitie, of the ripenes and rottennesses of sinne, let a man haue so large and able a gorge that he can swallow and digest sinne as the Estridge [i.e., Ostridge] doth yron, and vpon digestion sleepe, and with Epimenides take a nappe of 47. yeares long, yet many times euen in sleeping, Conscience which he would restrayne and imprison will put him in minde of his sinne.¹⁰⁹

Barker imagines the conscience as a clasped up book that will eventually “cry out,” even if one can “swallow and digest” as much “sinne” as an Ostridge can eat iron (they were believed to be able to eat great quantities) and sleep as long as the mythical Epimenides, who fell asleep when he was supposed to be caring for sheep. To paraphrase the immortal words of Hank Williams, your cheatin’ book of conscience will tell on you.

These and many other writers who appeal to and expand upon the conscience as a book use the book to speak about human personhood as a record of moral action.¹¹⁰ References to blemishes and blots suggest a manuscript book, consistent with a recording of lived experience. The book can

¹⁰⁷ Mathew Stoneham, *A Treatise on the First Psalme* (London, 1610), sig. D3r. STC 23289.

¹⁰⁸ Immanuel Bourne, *The Anatomie of Conscience or a Threefold Reuelation of Those Three Most Secret Bookes: 1. The Booke of Gods Prescience. 2. The Booke of Mans Conscience. 3. The Booke of Life* (London, 1623), sig. C3v. STC 3416.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Barker, *A Iudicious and Painefull Exposition Vpon the Ten Commandements* (London, 1624), sig. H3r-v. STC 1425.

¹¹⁰ Other examples include Thomas Adams, *A Commentary or, Exposition Vpon the Diuine Second Epistle Generall, Written by the Blessed Apostle St. Peter* (London, 1633), sig. Oo0004r. STC 108. Jeremiah Dyke, *Tvvo Treatises the One of Good Conscience; Shewing the Nature, Meanes, Markes, Benefits, and Necessitie Thereof. The Other The Mischiefe and Misery of Scandalls, Both Taken and Given* (London, 1635), sig. A3r. STC 7428. Anthony Cade, *A Sermon Necessarie for These Times Shewing the Nature of Conscience* (London, 1639), sig. B3r. STC 4330. *Thrēnoikos The House of Mourning; Furnished with Directions for Preparations to Meditations of Consolations at the Houre of Death* (London, 1640), sig. Cc3v. STC 24049. G. D., *Rex Meus Est Deus, or, A Sermon Preached at the Common Place in Christs-Church in the City of Norwich* (London, 1643), sig. B2v. Wing D2061. John Stalham, *The Reviler Rebuked: Or, A Re-Inforcement of the Charge against the Quakers* (London, 1657), sig. Kkiv. Wing S5186.

be clasped up, overwritten, or forcibly opened. What is written in it can accuse, judge, and torment. This commonplace image contrasts sharply with the Cartesian comparison of the human person to a blank slate or *tabula rasa* (*table rase* in French). In this more familiar, indeed modern view of the self, which Rene Descartes and then John Locke popularized in Europe, the human person is born empty of all impressions and is formed by sensory data they receive.¹¹¹ Importantly, these two images of book and blank tablet are not *opposites*. Indeed, both use bookish technologies to talk about the formation of the self – one moralist, the other empiricist. But whereas the *tabula rasa* fits on a trajectory toward a “heads on a stick” modernity, the messier and unexpectedly bodily language of the book of conscience resists such an easy trajectory toward the modern. It provides a language for describing inwardness (“clasped vp”), but also a mechanism for mediating inwardness to others (reading). It provides a way to think about knowledge as both moral and conceptual but not fully disembodied or immaterial. It even provides a language for justice that also requires self-reflection. The inky book of conscience speaks more pertinently to a postmodern culture than Descartes’s blank iPad ever could.

How the World Became a Book in Shakespeare’s England records many examples as it traces paths through premodern English culture. To be sure, there are many possible paths even in a single phrase, but we cannot walk them all. Plenty of writers compared things other than the conscience to a book, for instance. Francis Davison writes that:

euery widdowes heart is like a booke,
Where her ioyes past imprinted doe remaine,
But when her iudgements eye therein doth looke
She doth not wish they were to come againe.¹¹²

According to Davison, widows recall the joys of marriage but do not, on further inspection, want them back. Thomas Dekker’s character Gazetto cynically tell a husband, “th’art a foole, to grieue that thy wife is taken away by the King to his priuate bed-chamber, Now like a booke call’d in, shee’ll sell better then euer shee did.”¹¹³ The joke, which is not funny, is that when the wife sleeps with the King, her social status will raise as a banned

¹¹¹ See Galen Strawson, *Locke on Personal Identity: Consciousness and Concernment*, Princeton Monographs in Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

¹¹² Francis Davison, *A Poetical Rapsodie Containing: Diuerse Sonnets, Odes, Elegies, Madrigals, Epigrams, Pastorals, Eglogues, with Other Poems, Both in Rime and Measured Verse* (London, 1611), sig. B6r. STC 6375.

¹¹³ Thomas Dekker, *A Tragi-Comedy: Called, Match Mee in London* (London, 1631), sig. H2v-H3r. STC 6529.

book's value raises when it has been "call'd in" by the authorities. Less offensive but still latently sexualized is Shakespeare's Hector, who says to Achilles: "O like a booke of sport thou'lt read me ore: / But ther's more in me then thou vnderstandst[.]"¹¹⁴ Following these pathways would require further philologies of bookish language, but like a book, an introduction must eventually end, if only because its reader loses patience.

¹¹⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida* (London, 1609), sig. I4r. STC 22331.